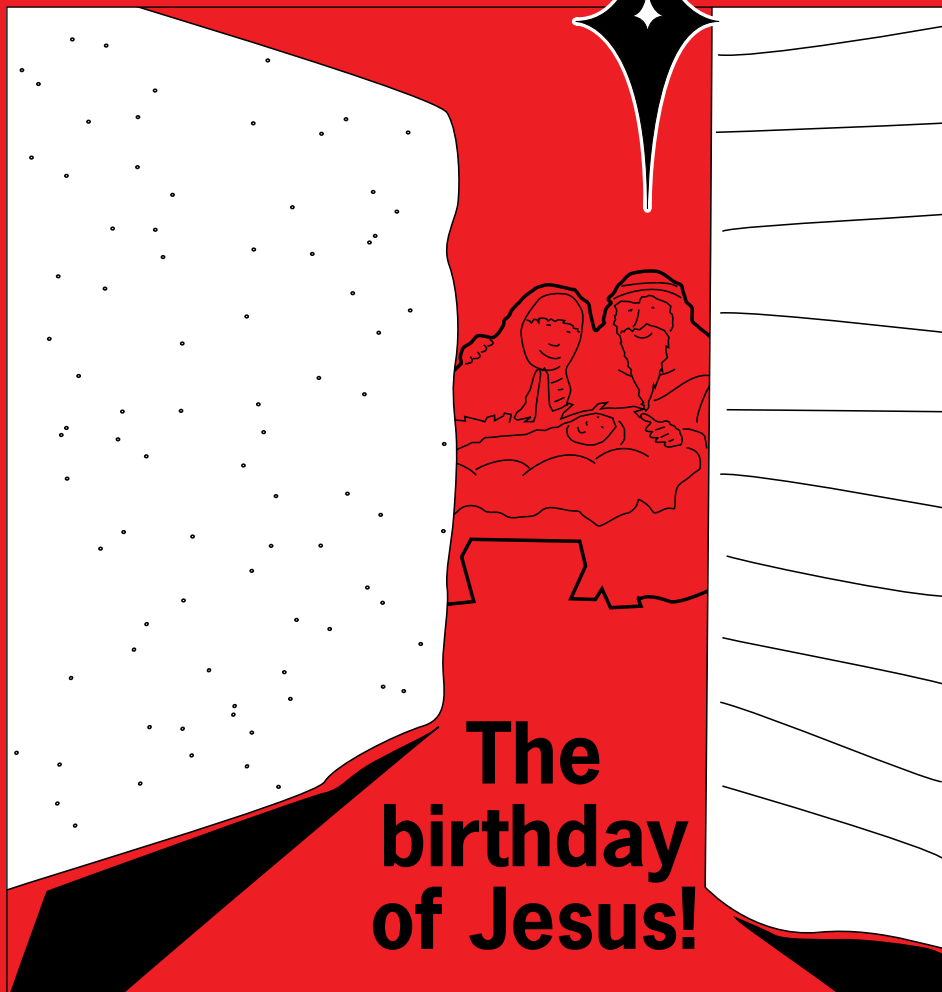


GoodNEWS

LINDFIELD URC'S VILLAGE MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2002



The birthday of Jesus!

- Alternative Christmas present ideas
- Local homeless charity founder interviewed
- Centre: special 'rip out' children's section



GoodNEWS

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Editorial



Busy time of year, busy magazine! Hopefully this full edition of GoodNEWS will give you an insight into what's on and a clear vision of just how important Christmas is for the church.

Stuart Dew reflects for us over his lifetime of Christmas's, in the Elder's letter on **page 1**. There is loads more on the festive feature from a look at the possible origin of Santa Claus – **page 6**, to remembering those who have fled from their homes, and are refugees this Christmas – **page 8**.

John Barling speaks to Worthing Churches Homeless Project founder, Rupert Bacon, on **page 14** as our Mission focus for December.

We go back over the past year with Ron Goodenough's church secretary's report, heard at November's members meeting but now in print and starts on **page 18**.

What with an evening out with Katy, Elena and Emma (**page 28**) and Tina's spiritual perspective on leaf sweeping (**page 26**) – you'd think we couldn't get any more in!

But you'd be wrong! There is exciting news on **page 3**, of a possible new minister for our church. So make sure you come to worship at a service on Sunday 8th December! Which is also an early copydate too!

David Tingley, editor



Christmas through six decades

When I was six, I was filled with the wonder of Christmas. I did go to Sunday School, but my wonder was much more to do with being taken to Selfridges in London, to travel on a rocket ship to Santa's secret kingdom.

At 16, I was a new and belligerent Christian. "Happy Christmas for Christians" I wrote on my Christmas cards. Why should unbelievers share our festival? I am sure I did not win many new friends that year.

By the age of 26, I was a parent, and my chief joy came in sharing the excitement of my first, young son.

When I was 36, I worked on Christmas Day. Lunch was taken in the BBC staff canteen. If I am honest now, I was a bit huffy that others were celebrating while I was producing news bulletins that only the most dedicated radio listener would hear.

Over my mid-life crisis, and by 46 I was totally absorbed by a new job. My wife bought all the presents. Christmas rushed up on me. I came to church on Christmas Day but I had been so busy that I was seriously exhausted and hardly took anything in.

This Christmas, I will be 56. For

the first time since school days, I will have a whole week off. My wife will still buy the presents, (what would I do without her?) but I hope that I will take time to prepare properly. I pray that I will slow down, get myself into the right frame of mind, heart and spirit, to appreciate the true wonder of Christmas. That is, that God sent His Son to earth – not as a great king or a mighty warrior, but as a tiny baby – to set out a new way for His people. To save us from ourselves. And goodness, how we need saving from ourselves as the year of 2002 draws to a close.

Of course, I could still be very busy and decide to wait until I am 66, when I am retired. I will have more time then. But who knows the future, except God Himself? *I should do it this year. And I pray that you will too.*

On behalf of the Elders, I wish you all a happy, blessed and wonder-filled Christmas.

Stuart Dew, Elder

Christmas Day lunch was taken in the BBC staff canteen and, if I am honest now, I was a bit huffy!



SUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this season of Advent; may it be a time to prepare again for the celebration of Christ's birth. • Pray for any who have lost loved ones during this past year. • For our worship leaders and preachers during this busy month.
MON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold doctors, nurses and all who work in health care services. • Pray for all regular weekday activities that happen on our premises. • Remember all who work 'behind the scenes' in the life of our church.
TUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for the future of our Brigades, that sufficient staff may be found. • Ask God for His guidance as we may be moving towards a time of making decisions in the life of this and Balcombe Church. • Pray for the United Reformed Churches at Uckfield and St Lukes, Silverhill.
WED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the Christmas Lunches on 11th & 13th Dec. Uphold the helpers, and ask God to richly bless all who attend them. • Pray for God's hand to be upon His servant who he desires to be called to the pastorate at Lindfield and Balcombe. • Pray for our Fire Service, and all who risk their own lives in helping others.
THUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise God for the many shoe boxes provided for Operation Christmas Child, and pray for God's protection on all who deliver them. • Pray for Helen Hall & her work on the Young Offenders Scheme. • Remember Mike Gardiner and all his loving pastoral work here.
FRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all our Children's & Young People's work, that God may especially bless it this Christmas-time. • Also pray for the children's/youth work in the Sussex East District • For the Meeting of District Council on Friday 6th December.
SAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank God for Compton House and its 10th Anniversary in November • Uphold all who are under great pressures at this season; the shop-keepers, the postmen, hospital staff and individuals. • Pray for the elderly, the house-bound & all who are unwell.

Progress in search for new minister

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL CHURCH MEMBERS AND REGULAR WORSHIPPERS

The Rev Colin Bones from Canford Heath URC in Poole will be 'preaching with a view' at all of our services on **December 8th**.

The Elders of both Lindfield and Balcombe considered Colin's CV and then met with him on Wednesday 13th November. Following this, a Special Elders' Meeting was held on Sunday 17th November when it was unanimously agreed to invite Colin to come and 'preach with a view' which he has willingly accepted.

There will also be opportunity to meet both Colin and his wife, Catherine, on **Saturday 7th December** when we will have a tea at 5.30pm followed by an informal time with them. We would aim to finish by about 7.30pm.

If you need transport to and from the evening please telephone Tina Elphick on 01444 484440.

An Elders' Meeting is arranged for Wednesday 11th December and there will then be a **Special Church Meeting**, for Church Members only the following day, **Thursday 12th December** at 8.00pm. At this meeting there will be opportunity to discuss the situation and then we will vote to decide whether or not it is right for Colin to be called to serve as our Minister.

It is appreciated that this is a busy time for many people but we would ask that the weekend and the Special Church Meeting are given the highest priority. This is both a very exciting time and an important one in our church life and we need to be absolutely sure of the Lord's will and plan. Please, therefore, make every effort to meet and hear Colin and attend the church meeting.

Please make this a priority in your prayers.

Ron Goodenough, secretary



Balcombe United Reformed Church

Services for this month are as follows:-

1st December Hymn Choice – Donald Nisbet – 11am

15th December CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE – 3.30pm

Richard Tucker will be leading our Christmas Carol Service this year.

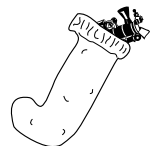
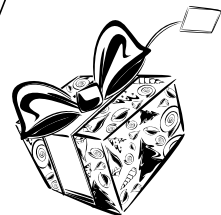
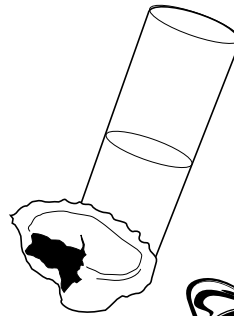
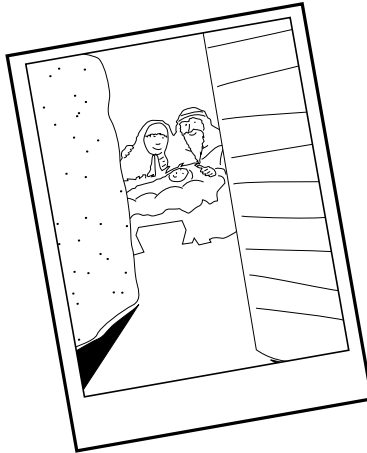
Visitors are most welcome to join us on this special afternoon occasion. Tea and mince pies will be served after the service.



King in stable shocker!

What if Jesus wasn't born in a stable? You would have thought that Joseph might at least have considered his fiancée's somewhat delicate position, as they entered the town! Why did God bother telling humble shepherds about Christ's birth – when there were many more important people in the world at the time? And if Christmas is a time of peace and joy, why are the crime rates double that of June? Above all, what does it matter to me?

The traditional nativity appears to point to a heavily pregnant woman limping over the Bethlehem threshold with her husband-to-be frantically trying to make the dire situation better by getting a room somewhere. Nick Cuthbert, in his booklet "12 myths of Christmas", explains that it is more likely that Mary and Joseph stayed with relatives (Joseph's forefathers lived there: Luke 2:3) as the 'inn' may not have been the local 'watering hole' that we may think of. "The Greek word for 'inn' that's used here [Luke 3:7] is only used one other time by Luke where it is translated 'guest room'. In another place where he does mean 'inn', Luke uses a totally different word." Cuthbert also suggests that they may have both



been in town for several weeks before it was time for Jesus to be born. So maybe Joseph had done a bit more planning than the poor guy gets credit for!

Soon after Christ's birth, an angel of the Lord appears to a bunch of shepherds telling them "a Saviour has been born to you" (Luke 2:11). Steve Chalke writes "Not only were these people at the bottom of the social pile when it came to the Roman Empire, they also found themselves excluded from the worshipping community of Israel by virtue of their profession". In an article featured in Christianity & Renewal magazine, Chalke highlights just how Jesus' birth would have impacted on the political leaders of the time. "So it is" says Chalke "that the child who would be the Saviour, not just of Israel but of the whole world, was born to lowly parents in a world dominated by the powerful and the privileged and so declared that God was on the side of the poor." Of course, it's still true today, the good news of Christ's kingdom is not for a select few, but for everybody.

So Christmas symbolically marks the time when Jesus entered the world. The message that Christ preached was that of peace and love, yet today it appears to have fallen on deaf ears, especially at this time of

year. One Mori poll suggests that there are three million family rows each Christmas! Divorce rates are higher directly after the festive season. Large cities state crime figures for violence, sexual offences, burglary and other crimes being twice as high in December as in June. For a number of years now Christmas has been a time of heightened alert from terrorist attacks of all kinds.

If anything these sad facts illustrate our need for a personal Saviour. Jesus did not come to give us all something to do before the Queen's speech – He came to give our life meaning, help us overcome fear of death and show love and forgiveness to us. This is just the beginning though. Maybe you have been or are going to church this Christmas – that is a great start, but please don't think that is all Jesus is about!

www.rejesus.co.uk is a good starting point for knowing more about this amazing story we are getting ready to celebrate. But you could of course come in to the church for a chat, just like many of our High Street neighbours – Lindfield URC is open every day of the week, we'd be pleased to talk with you at this special time of year. Don't just get caught up in the Christmas 'headlines'!



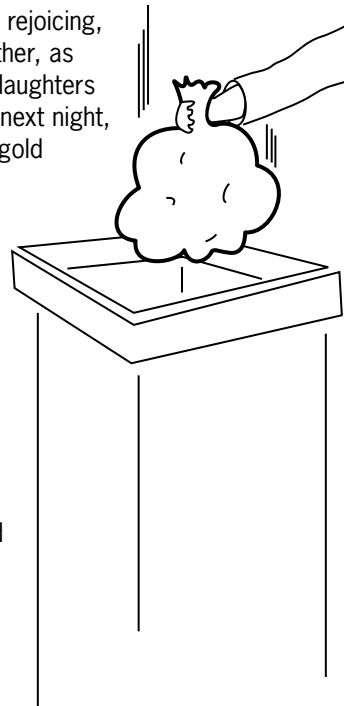
Who was Saint Nicholas?

Okay, so we know he has a beard, says "Ho, ho, ho" and his jacket only turned red when Coca-Cola got involved, but is there a Christian history to Father Christmas? The land we call Turkey, in Asia Minor, was the birthplace of Nicholas. Born into a wealthy Christian home, Nicholas was said to appreciate the gifts of love and care he received in Patara. These characteristics would become the essence of this man who was to become one of the most well-known Christians of all time.

Sadly for Nicholas, his parents died while he was still young. The reality of this loss evoked in the young man a desire to exemplify in his own life, the remembrance he held on to of his faithful parents. Faithful not only to him, as their son, but robust in their teaching the Christian faith to Nicholas.

Nicholas acquired his parents' wealth, but also their way of caring and commitment to others. Legend has it that Nicholas became brutally aware of the poverty of others when hearing of a local man who had three daughters who were of the age to be married. The father lacked the financial and material needs for a dowry – the custom of the time – so the daughters could not be offered in marriage. The end result was likely slavery, or prostitution for the three women. Secretly one night, Nicholas climbed onto the roof of the home of the man and his

daughters, and dropped a round bag of gold down the chimney. In the morning a stunned father found the miraculous gold and realised that at least his eldest daughter would be saved from the horrors that could be hers without a dowry. Great rejoicing, yet sadness for the father, as there were two other daughters that needed help. The next night, Nicholas repeated his gold drop. But how was this happening? Realising a third bag of gold might be forthcoming, the next night the father hid from sight in order to witness the actions of their benefactor. Nicholas made his third and final approach and released the bag of gold into the chimney and started to move away quickly. The father embraced Nicholas



and fell on his knees before the gift giver. Nicholas quickly asked the man to stand and thank God, not him, for God's goodness and for the gifts.

Nicholas made the city of Myra, mentioned in the book of Acts, his home – just a few miles from Patara on the Mediterranean coast.

A new bishop of Myra was being sought. The people prayed diligently. An elder churchman had a dream. The vision in the dream was that the priest should be in church early the next day and that the first person to enter the church should be the next bishop and his name would be Nicholas.

As was his custom, Nicholas made his way to the church for prayers as the angelus rang. Upon entering the church Nicholas saw the elderly man near the door. Nicholas greeted the priest with due respect and warmth. The priest said, "what is your name?". The answer came, 'Nicholas, your servant for Jesus' sake'. 'Praise God', exclaimed the priest and told Nicholas he was to be the next bishop. Stunned and bewildered, Nicholas said 'No!'. The priest escorted Nicholas to the clergy, as they knew of the man's vision;



they cheered and sang. Those who knew this Nicholas were especially overjoyed. Within weeks, Nicholas was ordained and consecrated and hailed Bishop of Myra.

These stories and miracles can inspire us today in our earthly pilgrimage. We often expect too little. His long cherished legacy needs revival today. His fame and Christian devotion would inspire nations like Russia, Greece, Northern France, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Christians of many lands and traditions continue to honour this saint of God. Although some traditions have minimised his position, giving way to the invention of Santa Claus, it is time to reclaim this saint for our own. He is our Santa Claus.

J M Rosenthal

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/stnicholas>



A place of protection

This Christmas, 12 million refugees – mostly in poor countries – are looking for a place to belong to and rebuild their lives. Christian charity Tearfund reminds us that God wants everyone to have a place to belong to. Through Jesus, he invites us all into his family, and asks us to welcome poor and lonely people too, like Nyanjok...

Refugees leave their homes because it is not safe to stay. But, arriving in a new country, it's often hard to get legal refugee status and the protection and practical help it brings.

Nyanjok fled to Cairo after her parents and eight-year-old son were killed when soldiers attacked their village. She's desperate to find a place of protection for her other six children. Tearfund partner, Joint Relief Ministries (JRM) is helping her apply for legal refugee status – but it can take up to two years. In the meantime, with no welfare provision, Nyanjok says it's hard to be a mother in the circumstances. She is now able to get some practical support though JRM, who run a free health clinic in the shantytown where they live. "They really help us" she smiles. "They gave us food when we didn't have any. They care about our problems."

Check out Isaiah 58:7!

When we consider Christmas time, do we consider that Jesus

and his family were refugees?

Soon after He was born an Angel told Joseph 'Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child and kill him'. (Matthew 2:13–15)

Jesus needed Mary and Joseph to protect him. As refugees they fled, it must have been a scary time for them, their son and his future was very important to them – and to us. In the Bible, God often says how important it is to offer protection to vulnerable people. Just as he "defends the cause of the fatherless and widow, and loves the alien [refugee], giving them food and clothing", he says "You are to love those who are aliens" too. (Deuteronomy 10:18–19)

God offers all of us a place of protection during life's storms. He invites us to come and take our place in his family this Christmas. As we do so in comfort, we should remember both practically and in prayer those who are refugees and away from home this Christmas time.

Toys under the tree



It was “Macy’s” department store in New York City that is said to have been the first to decorate its window display in the run up to Christmas, back in 1874. It is from there that we have developed into mean shopping machines, each Briton spending an average of £826 on food, drink and presents – according to research carried out by Switch last year.

The toys and games market is worth £850m at Christmas alone! One person who seeks to take a share of it is Gary Grant, owner of Britain’s biggest independent retail toy chain – ‘The Entertainer’.

However, when Gary became a Christian over ten years ago, Christ not only transformed his life, but his business too. Firstly, none of his shops open on Sundays, and, secondly, he only sells products which don’t conflict with the ‘welfare of children’. In an interview printed in Christianity & Renewal magazine, Gary Grant said “If it’s there, I’ve endorsed it and the child trusts me. So if we’re stocking something, I want to make sure it isn’t poison.”

That decision has cost the company £400,000 in Harry

Potter merchandise alone last year. Gary said he recognised it was one thing to read the Rowling books, but quite another to role-play being a witch, casting spells etc. His business sense may not seem sensible to all, but he quotes the Bible to back up his stance (see right).

Elsewhere in the children’s market, the Scottish Bible Society is distributing a state-of-the-art interactive CD-ROM giving the player the chance to go on a virtual pilgrimage to major sites and events of the Bible. More details on ‘Ultimate Adventure’ – see page 11.

And if you need a more unique gift this season, why not check out World Vision’s www.great-gifts.org – where you get the opportunity to buy practical items for those in the world who need it. For instance, £17 will buy ten chickens for a family in Uganda. They get to have eggs to eat or sell and chicks to share with family, friends and neighbours. You receive a certificate and card to give to the person who you are buying the gift for. They get to know that their present opportunity has helped someone who really needs it. See page 10.

**1 Samuel
2:30**

“Those who honour me, I will honour”.

**Romans
12:2**

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”.



The alternative gift catalogue

World Vision

GIFTS MY BASKET HOW TO ORDER REQUEST A CATALOGUE REAL LIFE STORIES TELL A FRIEND

Tel: 0845 075 7574

HOW DOES 'GREAT-GIFTS' WORK?

Step 1

Browse our gift range and buy online

Step 2

Your gift is dispatched overseas

Step 3

You receive a certificate and a card to give your friend or family member

For enquiries call World Vision on 0845 075 7574

Some example gifts available...



Gift A: 4 fruit trees for a family in Vietnam

This gift will give a family a regular crop of fruit. Not only will it improve their diet and health, they'll also be able to sell fruit at the market and earn a little extra income.

£10 Add to basket ??



Gift E: Train 8 health visitors in Ethiopia

Health visitors in Ethiopia play a vital role. Your gift will help them do their life-saving work, going into family homes and telling people about basic healthcare and educating them about HIV/AIDS.

£25 Add to basket ??



Gift O: A sewing machine and a career

This could be the best investment you'll make all year! Provide a sewing machine and 18 months' business training to a woman in Africa. Your reward? The knowledge that you're helping restore the dignity of a woman who was forced to work in the sex trade in order to survive. Now you can give her a brighter future.

£295 Add to basket ??

"I always dreamed of having a proper job and a normal life.

Thank you from my heart, for making this possible for me."

Helen, Chirundu, Zambia

...great gifts change lives

www.great-gifts.org

The present that lets you re-live Biblical times via CD-ROM

Bible Society's new multi-media, interactive CD-ROM gives young people the chance to go on a virtual pilgrimage to major sites and events of the Bible.

Ultimate Adventure is created as a 'walk-through' game that involves information gathering and problem solving to give access to the next part of the adventure. From a futuristic 'Hall of Time' situated by a tranquil Lake Galilee, players pick from nine interactive journeys, from the Exodus to the Resurrection. These immediately transport players to a different biblical landscape shortly after the events occurred.

After each adventure, 25 multiple choice questions test how much they have learnt.

In the course of playing, users can quiz fifty Bible characters. They can take the opportunity to seek out Paul in a dank cell beneath the palace of Governor Festus in Caesarea. Players decide whether to gather information to release the prisoner or keep him there!

Aimed at ages 10 and

upwards playing alone and 7 years up with adult support, the game has been designed for school, home and church use. Explanations of customs, beliefs and traditions, and the opportunity to make moral choices and to hear the Bible stories related by eye-witnesses, make it an exciting tool for the classroom or junior church.

Multimedia game judges were impressed enough to nominate Ultimate Adventure for an EMMA (Electronic Multi-Media Awards). Education advisors have backed it too. RE Advisor for RE Today Services Rosemary Rivett describes it as "superbly designed resource to support learning about the Bible guaranteed to engage, challenge and inform".

Ultimate Adventure runs on Windows and Macintosh computers and costs £39.95 (inc.VAT). It is available for order by telephoning Marston Christian Books on 01235 465612. Or you buy online at www.scottishbibles.com

"The characters were great and the graphics were cool ... It gives you a much better picture of just what it was like in those days. The scenery and clothes make you feel so much more part of it."

Freya Scott, 15.



Source: Word In Action, Bible Society Magazine, Winter 02/03

Sid Collins would like to say thank you to everyone for their prayers whilst he was in hospital in November, also for the Pastoral visit which happened at a time when it looked as though the operation would be postponed. For a second time, the presence of Mike helped ease the situation.

Mary and Chris Comber

give a belated thank you to everyone who, in any way, helped them in their 'smooth move' to Finches Gardens.

Bereavement

We extend our love to Jo and Paul Bloxham, Jo's sister Jane, and all of the family on the recent death of Wendy Musson, Jo and Jane's mother. The thanksgiving service was held on 12th November.

Boys' Brigade

A big thank you to all who in any way supported our coffee morning. A sum of £215 was raised.

The Fellowship

We shall be holding our Christmas Tea (at the church) on Wednesday 18th December at 2.45pm. There will be some entertainment. Do come and join us, if you are able, on this special afternoon.

Letter from Hilary Slatter:

Dear Friends

I had intended writing a letter to you all when I moved to Rustington at the end of May as I didn't have a chance to say goodbye. Everything happened so quickly in the end I hardly had time to turn round. Time seems to have gone very quickly but what with the electricity man, the gas man, the carpet man, the kitchen men, the decorator and shortly the bathroom workmen, it is not surprising. And then there is waiting for deliveries! I only managed 2 swims in the sea and it was super.

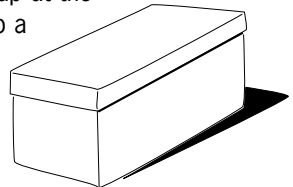
I am very pleased with my flat and Rustington is lovely. I do miss you all at Lindfield URC as Rustington URC is not quite the same – fewer people in the congregation and rather a lack of young people but I do see Kay and Peter McIntosh from time to time.

As Christmas is approaching, I will take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and hopefully a prosperous New Year.

My love to you all,
Hilary Slatter

Tallest shoebox tower yet!

Thank you to all those who made up shoeboxes to send to children in other parts of the world. We collected over 150 – our highest so far. It was great to see them piled up at the front of the church. Keep a watch out for updates from Samaritan's purse. When we receive them we will put them on the Missions Table. In the meantime if you have access to the internet the website is www.samaritanspurserg.org



Missions Group

A missive from the gnome's 'ome!

Yes, you are right, it is us again – the garden gnomes, but sad to say we have to bid you all at Lindfield a fond farewell!

You see, we're journeying on to new 'mission fields' – namely the Burgess Hill Baptist Church, which is just around the corner from the "gnome's 'ome"! Very convenient, and they do tea and coffee too!

So, before we go, we wanted to share with you all the other "good news" – that our Plant and Pud Sales (Spring into Summer etc) have produced a wonderful total of £600 for the Royal Alex. Children's Hospital, Brighton – The Rockinghorse Appeal.

So to everyone who helped and supported us in any way, our very grateful thanks. See, with love and team spirit, we can move mountains!

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and may the road taking us all into the year ahead be lit with the light and love of Jesus. Shalom.

Pad & Blossom!

POST BOX FOR CHRISTMAS CARDS

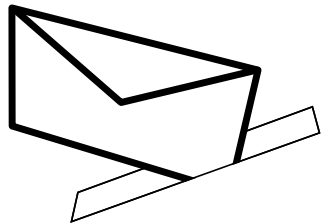
This will be sited in the concourse from Sunday 1st December for the use of Church members and regular worshippers only. Please address envelopes clearly with Christian name, surname and address.

A box for donations to Tearfund will be alongside.

Last posting date — Friday 13th December

Card collection date Sunday 15th December.

Please note: This is not a free service, so please give generously.



News

Adoptive children face a 'sad day'

Christian campaign groups described the House of Lords' decision to extend joint adoption of children to cohabiting couples as a "further victory for political correctness". CARE and the Evangelical Alliance said they

enthusiastically supported the majority of the Adoption and Children Bill, but hoped that the best interests of the child, rather than the "rights" of adults are put first.

Source: Christian Herald – the UK's only inter-church weekly. Subscribe on 01903 602100

Worthing Churches Homeless Project

It was a warm July afternoon when I met him. At the ripe young age of 94, Rupert Bacon, formerly a Baptist missionary to Brazil, now has his home at Lomas House, Worthing, a huge Edwardian property run by our old friends Peter and Kay McIntosh.

Its once fine kitchen garden had largely been reclaimed by brambles and weeds except for one modest area where vegetables were still being grown, this time by Rupert! Of course, his name was familiar to me. Rupert Bacon House was the new name that had been given to the Homeless Project's first residential property in Byron Road, Worthing. That's where I had heard it.

As we walked and talked, the miracle of what had taken place 12 years earlier unfolded when Rupert and others had the vision to do something positive for the town's many homeless. "Soup and sandwich" runs on the sea front had been established as a stop gap measure to feed the cold and hungry but long term measures were essential to help people back into society after personal and family traumas had led them into a homeless way of life. Rupert, then in his early 80s, had

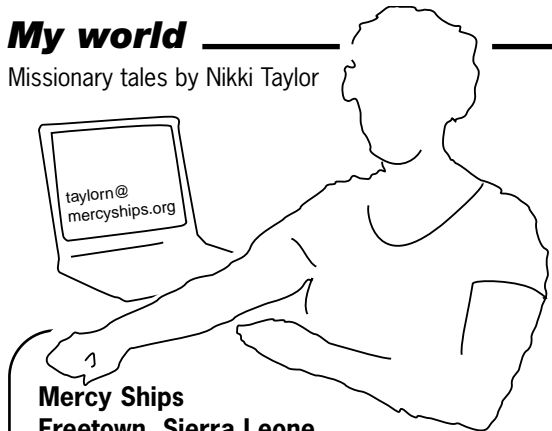
spotted a former Reading Room (one of hundreds up and down the land that had been established at the turn of the last century by local Trusts for working men) that had been empty for almost 70 years. His enquiries quickly led him, with the help of local clergy, into re-establishing the Trust. The property was sold for "a tidy sum" which was then used to kick start the newly formed Homeless Projects. Inside the house Rupert chatted with staff and offered words of encouragement to one of the residents.

On our return to Lomas House he quietly announced that a further Day Centre for the homeless was due to open the following day. Clearly the visionary mantle had been passed to a new generation carrying on the good work. What an inspiration Rupert has been, and still is!

Now WCHP has the direct access hostel at Rupert Bacon House for 14 single homeless people – no drink or drugs, but all meals provided. Cornerstone House in Byron Road takes 12 residents as a second stage in rehabilitation, where they become more independent, taking responsibility for shopping, cooking and cleaning.

My world

Missionary tales by Nikki Taylor



The recently opened St Clare's Day Centre includes offices and a range of "drop in" facilities – hot showers, breakfasts and evening meals plus advice and help. Run by a Board of Trustees with a general manager, Tony Chasteauneuf, 20 full time staff and over 120 volunteers, WCHP also continues to provide soup and sandwiches on the seafront 5 days a week.

During the past year well over 500 men and women have received help. 200 who would otherwise have been on the streets, found safe accommodation with friendly, caring Christian staff. Sadly, around 100 people were turned away, several on up to four occasions, simply because there were not enough beds. Now there are plans to open further emergency accommodation to cater for another 12 beds, for which urgent funding is sought.

Continuation of this very worthwhile work depends on charitable donations and grants. That's why we are giving them our support once again this December. Our Missions display area in the church concourse carries further information.

John Barling
Missions Group

Mercy Ships Freetown, Sierra Leone

When it rains, it really rains. The six month long rainy season is near the end. I love the change in seasons, you get the best of both worlds. Hot sun during the day and cool rain at night. We also get spectacular sunsets and fantastic lightning storms.

Delightfully, our cat is pregnant. We can expect wee kitties just after the ship comes, what fun! The kids on the ship love to see the cat at our house. They can't have pets on board.

The ship arrives on 9th November and we will all be arrayed in our Ashoby. This Nigerian word means family clothes. In special events the whole family is decked out in outfits from the same material, all in different styles. It looks spectacular.

But although the rain comes we have no water. We don't get any water when there is no power for the booster pump. Supplies have been low recently. We are all fed up of catching water from the roof and carting buckets of water around. No one has any clean clothes; it is just not fun. The grace of God is really needed when people get desperate and start using water to 'just wash one thing' when we don't have enough to drink or wash our bodies.

I heard good news just now: we got a full supply of water today, praise God. I will sleep in a clean bed tomorrow! Selfishness is hard to combat.

December diary

1st

Sunday

9.30am David Nibloe &
Gerry Willis
11.0am Gerry Willis
6.30pm Philip Wren

4th

Wednesday

6.30pm Village Night –
Church Open
**Check out the large
Fairtrade stall in the
church!!**

5th

Thursday

House Groups

7th

Saturday

5.30pm Tea for
members and regular
worshippers, an
opportunity to meet Colin
and Catherine Bones from
Canford Heath URC

8th

Sunday

*Rev Colin Bones will be
preaching at all three
services*

9.30am David Nibloe
& Rev Colin Bones
(Canford Heath URC)
11.0am Rev Colin Bones
12noon Copy Date for
January GoodNEWS
6.30pm Communion –
Richard Walters &
Rev Colin Bones

11th

Wednesday

12.30pm Lunch
Fellowship
8.00pm Special Elders'
Meeting

12th

Thursday

8.00pm Special Church
Meeting

13th

Friday

12.30pm Lunch
Fellowship
7.30pm Martyn Joseph
playing at Martlets Hall,
Burgess Hill (242888)

15th

Sunday

9.30am David Nibloe &
David Walters
11.0am Michael Davies
6.30pm Richard Walters
& Mike Gardiner

18th

Wednesday

2.45pm The Fellowship
(Christmas Tea)

19th

Thursday

7.30pm 'Night of Miracles'

22nd

Sunday

9.30am David Nibloe &
Stuart Dew •Service for all
the family
11.0am Communion
Barry Piper
6.30pm Richard Walters
& Ron Goodenough

24th

Christmas Eve **7.00pm** Celebrate
Emmanuel, God with Us

25th

Christmas Day **10.30am** Service for
all the Family

29th

Sunday

10.30am David Nibloe
& Mike Gardiner
(Please Note: One morning
service and no evening
service)



7 days

Our church is open 7 days a week – whether you want to pray quietly alone, have someone pray with you or just talk! You are welcome.

Mon–Sat 10am - 1pm
Sunday services

Sunday services explained...

The **9.30am service** is an opportunity for all age groups to join in a relaxed informal time. There is a crèche, and after about 20 minutes children and young people up to age 14 go out to their own groups on most Sundays.

Coffee is normally served between the morning services and after the evening one.

The **11.00am service** is usually more set and formal.

At **6.30pm** it is sometimes a celebration, sometimes a quieter ministry time and sometimes an open communion service or something quite different!

Personal prayer is available after every service. Prayer requests and brief statements of praise for answered prayer can be put in the red book on the concourse table. We can also offer personal prayer ministry at home or in hospital.

We **do not take up an offering** during the services, but all those wishing to give are invited to place a gift in one of the bowls at the doors before or after the service. Thank you.

Cassette **recordings of services** can be borrowed free from the church.

Church Secretary's Report 2001/02

Almost eleven months have elapsed since we said 'Goodbye' to Norman, our minister, and of course to Sarah. Many attended his farewell service and buffet lunch on 30th December when, from Hebrews 4: 12–16, he reminded us of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and that we can confidently approach him in repentance to receive grace and mercy in our time of need.

Within a few weeks of his departure we were able to appoint Mike Gardiner as part time Pastoral Assistant. Looking back we have been able to see the Lord's timing in this. He has spent considerable time getting to know as many people as possible, visiting members and those linked with the church, getting alongside and ministering to those with specific needs and has conducted a number of funerals with all the associated pastoral work required. I have personally appreciated Mike's encouragement, as I know many others have, including the Pastoral Group.

“it's not unusual to see over 100 at our 9.30 service”

Our membership now stands at 185, during the year two new members joined by transfer, three moved away from the area and sadly three died. It's been good to see numbers at our Sunday services being maintained; it's not unusual to see over 100 (including children) at our 9.30 service and almost as many at 11 o'clock. Recently around 150 attended the Brigades' Enrolment Service. Numbers at the 6.30 service have, however appeared to decline slightly. Without a minister, we have had to rely on outside speakers and more involvement from our own members, many of whom have high-pressure jobs. The regular commitment of our musicians and worship leaders is also valued and appreciated.

Many others are heavily involved and committed to the life of the church and play a vital role from teaching in Junior Church through to maintaining the fabric of the building; all are important.

We will look at the individual organisations within the church later but generally there are three basic areas that our activities fall into: our own members and regular worshippers, those outside of the church in our locality and those further afield throughout the world. A great deal of caring and supporting goes on within the fellowship, much of which is never seen except by those on the receiving end. Thank you to everyone active in this important aspect of church life, particularly the Pastoral Group who I know feel the pressure and responsibility. During the year 7 people attended a Bereavement Support Course and found this very helpful, some are continuing further. Then there is the neighbourhood that we should be reaching. In addition to the evangelism that takes place through our regular activities and organisations, we were able to conduct an Alpha Course this year. There is, however, some disappointment that we have not been able to do more, bearing in mind the

challenge and encouragement we received from our 'Unite 2001' weekend a year ago. Looking further afield, we have maintained our support for World Mission. Our total giving this year from General Fund and individual donations will be around £17,500, which is really encouraging. Our mission suppers have included the visit of Ernest Lloyd from Christian Witness to Israel and a Tearfund Evening.

As in the previous few years, an all-age group of about 50 attended Spring Harvest. We were challenged by the theme this year taken from the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, particularly about maintaining our first love for Jesus and not being 'lukewarm'.



Perhaps this year more than before we have been more aware of legislation which affects church life and how we operate. Health and Safety, Hygiene, Data Protection and Child Protection are all matters that are increasingly affecting charitable organisations. We are currently introducing new vetting procedures, recommended by the URC nationally, for those who work with young people. These will require significant administrative effort and some will feel them intrusive particularly, perhaps, those who have been involved in this work in the church for many years. We need to follow correct procedures and use common sense. It is important to emphasise that our children and young people need to be valued and protected.

Reports on the various organisations and activities are summarised as follows, firstly the Youth and Children's activities:

Stepping Stones, meeting every Tuesday morning during term time still attracts a good number of parents and toddlers with 30 children on the books and a number on a waiting list. Around 20 children attend each week. The purpose of the group remains to provide a happy and safe environment where parents/carers and children can make new friends and enjoy each other's company. The desire amongst the leaders is to get alongside those who may be struggling and to use opportunities to share their faith. They long to see a major breakthrough in adults coming to know the Lord for themselves. The group has varying needs including a very unwell baby who needed major heart surgery during the year. The group has been praying for him and, although he has Downs Syndrome, he has made good progress.

Junior Church has about 50 children on the books and 18 teachers. An average of 35 children attend each Sunday. First Steps and Ramblers have merged and are now known as Ramblers. Both Ramblers and Hikers continue to use Children's Ministry teaching material but Adventurers are currently trialing a new material this quarter called 'Roots'. The Carpe Diem group has recently completed a Youth Alpha course, which was very popular with the

Report cont.

youngsters who are now studying on a Sunday morning with 'Yo Yo!' In May a new format was started on the 2nd Sunday of the month. After the usual time in church all groups meet together in the Upper Room and this gathering is called 'Jigsaw'. The time together involves singing, drama, praying together in small groups and lots more. In July a Jigsaw band was formed with an Adventurer, three Carpe Diem members and one young person. Considering they had never played together before July, they are really good and the children respond better to singing along with a band rather than a CD.



After the summer break Carpe Diem had a Treasure Hunt and Barbecue followed by a video and then there was a J.C. F.A.B. B.Q. (Junior Church Fun and Barbecue), which was open to all children and parents. A fun afternoon was had by all, which included physical and mental skills, a bouncy castle, lots of food and was a good opportunity for teachers and parents to get to know one another.

14+ Group continues to meet on Sundays after the evening service either in the church lounge or in someone's home. Every six weeks or so there is a social activity, cinema, ice-skating, pizza etc. Numbers average half a dozen with a distinct lack of girls!! (in fact there aren't any). In addition to the leaders, assistance is given by other church members to lead and host and help in activities such as 'Grill a Christian' and that is much appreciated. The aims of the group are to:

- 1 Provide a focus for young people in the church at a potentially vulnerable age.
- 2 Enable the members to grow in their faith. In some cases to help them come to faith.
- 3 Create a 'safe' social environment for members to enjoy fellowship.
- 4 Be an 'entry' point to the church for young people from non-church families.
- 5 Encourage young people to build strong relationships with each other, and begin to organise themselves independently so that they will re-form and encourage each other when away from the framework of the group, particularly as this is the group from which members "leave" to go off to college etc.

The main specific need for the 14+ group at the present time is prayer.

The Girls' Brigade reports that during the year, probably more than any other, they have spent a great deal of time meeting and praying about their staffing difficulties. With a number wishing to stand down or take a break after many years' service they were left with insufficient staff to keep all sections of the Company open.

Until September the Company had been split into four sections; Explorers aged 5–7, Juniors aged 8–10, Seniors aged 11–13, and Brigaders aged 14+. However, due to lack of staff, it has not been possible to run a separate Explorer Section this term and Explorers, who were already part of the Company, are meeting with the Juniors. This means that it has not been possible to admit new Explorers to the Company, firstly because there are insufficient staff but secondly because the evening ends at 7.30 pm, which is very late for 5 year olds. On the staffing side there have been several new ladies come along to help in various ways on a Tuesday evening. It has been great to welcome them, and has meant that the Company can be kept open.

There are 30+ girls on the books, most of whom attend regularly, and one encouragement has been that there are now 4 Brigaders training to be young leaders in the Company and each of these 4 girls takes at least one badgework group with the Juniors.

One of the highlights of last term was the barbecue, when the group was joined by parents, brothers and sisters. During the evening badges and cups were presented to the girls, following which, the Brigaders had planned and prepared a supper as part of their badgework.

One other highlight of the year was the agreement of Heather Swann to become chaplain. She did so with some trepidation, but has been a great support to the staff, and comes along when she can on a Tuesday, and as well as talking to the girls, she can regularly be seen chatting to parents as they wait for their daughters.

Girls' Brigade is a "missionary" organisation not only to the girls who come along each week, but also to their parents. Although some of our girls attend Junior Church either in Lindfield or in other local churches, the higher proportion have no other connection with a church. Some of the badgework provides opportunities to talk about Jesus, but there is also a short epilogue at the end of each Tuesday evening. The involvement of church members in leading the epilogue is appreciated and any other volunteers who would like to be involved would be welcomed.

Please pray for the Company as a whole, and also for each individual girl and helper within the Company, as they attempt to fulfil the aim of Girls' Brigade, which is "To help girls become followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by self control, reverence and a sense of responsibility, to find true enrichment of life".



“The involvement of Church members in leading the epilogue [at GB] is appreciated and any other volunteers who would like to be involved would be welcomed.”

Report cont.

The Boys' Brigade reports that there are 38 boys on the books with 4 officers and 8 helpers and a 90% attendance. The aim as always is to 'Advance Christ's kingdom among the boys' and a great deal of planning goes into running the brigade through regular sectional and full staff meetings.

The highlights during the year included: two boys gaining their Queen's Badge, one Duke of Edinburgh's Award, two Bronze Awards and six more boys working towards theirs. It is encouraging to report that two boys gave their lives to Christ at Summer Camp, there is one young man now half way through his officer training, one long term helper becoming an officer and numbers are growing. As with the Girls' Brigade, a new chaplain was appointed during the year. David Walters has taken on this role and his involvement is much appreciated.

On the 23rd and 24th March a reunion was held for those who had attended the Boys' Brigade over the past thirty years with a Parade Service conducted by the Rev Jeremy Brown, now a Baptist Minister, who attended our BB as a young boy.

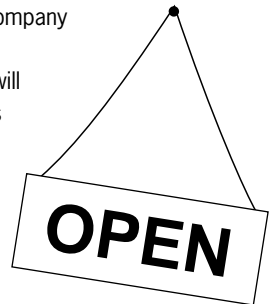
Sadly, however, it has not been possible to recruit more helpers. This is now a critical need. Numbers of boys are growing but staff numbers are falling and if this trend continues there will come a point when the Company will not.

At the end of this year, December 2002, our captain Terry Ward will be standing down. He has served faithfully as an officer for 30 years and as captain for 18 years. We must pay tribute to him for his tremendous commitment to Christ and to the Brigade and pray for wisdom as to the appointment of a new captain. There are many today whose lives have been impacted through his witness and dedication and we praise God for all he has done and what has been achieved for Christ's glory through the years. Thank you, Terry.

Turning to the other organisations and activities the reports are as follows:

The church continues to **open each morning**, giving people the opportunity to come and talk, pray or have a time of quiet. There are at present around 35 helpers who 'man' the concourse, some once a week to others once in six weeks. Each morning before opening the helpers spend time praying both for the morning ahead and for those who have written requests in the concourse prayer book. More help is needed, particularly on Friday mornings.

"Numbers of boys are growing but staff numbers are falling and if this trend continues there will come a point when the Company will not. This is now a critical need."

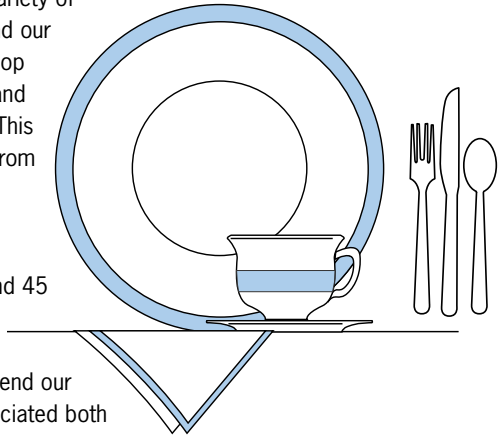


Pop-In now has a team of eleven helpers, and provides tea, coffee, biscuits and fellowship on Thursday mornings. Numbers vary, as do the ages of those who come – some with children in pushchairs to those in electric wheelchairs. Pop-In provides an opportunity for the beginnings of friendship evangelism and it would be good if more members were prepared to be involved as often the helpers are either busy or have conversations interrupted.

The Fellowship, meeting monthly, continues to attract an attendance of around 35 to hear speakers coming from a variety of backgrounds: Sightsavers, Social Services and our own Pastoral Assistant. The object is to develop Christian fellowship in a friendly atmosphere and to support the on-going work of the church. This year the Charity Lunch welcomed a speaker from 'Headway', a charity for those with head and brain injuries.

The two **Lunch Fellowships** are also opportunities for friendship evangelism. Around 45 meals are served at each sitting. Numbers have increased this year and it is encouraging that a good number regularly attend our services. The two teams of helpers are appreciated both in the practical side of the lunch and also getting alongside those who come. This year, the summer outing by coach to Eastbourne enjoyed glorious weather and a tea at Upperton URC, with a mystery tour on the way back. 'Were they really llamas we saw at Glynde?' was one comment overheard. Surplus funds from the lunches subsidised the outing and have been used this year to provide a microwave and fridge/freezer for the kitchen. Donations and proceeds from the bring-and-buy stall have been passed to Royal Agricultural Benevolent Fund, Headway and WorldShare.

'In Touch' for ladies saw a total of 45 attending a Quiet Day at Ashburnham led by Kay McIntosh and it is hoped to organise others at least once every two years. It has been encouraging to see between 20 and 25 ladies meeting monthly for fellowship and sharing and opening up on a few evenings with discussions about their own spiritual lives. The group provides the opportunity for inviting friends, for spiritual growth and for social interaction. The programme has also included a meal at Christmas, barbecue in the summer and visits to the local Operatic Society production.



Report cont.

Just one or two final points; we are still to work through many of the challenges from 'Unite 2001'. Although considerable time has elapsed we must not 'file away' what we learnt and take no action. I think it is natural during a pastoral vacancy for there to be a feeling of waiting, not knowing what a new minister's approach will be and also because there seems to be more that needs to be done with a number taking on extra work load.

During this time, however, could I make three pleas?

Firstly, a plea not just for a united church, which I think generally we do have, but also for an integrated one. We are one body and what happens in one department impacts others. The way we conduct ourselves personally can influence for good or ill other people's lives and whether they are attracted to or driven from our fellowship and ultimately the Lord.

Secondly a plea for prayer, not just inward looking but outward to the world around us. There are many opportunities in our church life for this and we were reminded of these at last month's meeting but sadly few are involved on a regular basis and do not see this as a priority. More is achieved through prayer than we appreciate.

Thirdly, a plea to maintain and maybe renew our passion for Jesus, for growing closer to him and for sharing the good news of the Gospel. Our motivation should not be to fill our church or reverse the trend in our denomination but to see people brought into a living relationship with Jesus, to experience forgiveness, and salvation in all its fullness.

Can I also say finally that I do appreciate all those who have prayed regularly for the elders, there have been a number of matters this year where we have needed the Lord's wisdom. Also, my own personal thanks to those who have encouraged me over the last few months and particularly to the eldership where there has been a sense of unity and mutual support. Charles Martin, our interim moderator, has also been a real encouragement and has gone the extra mile in supporting us both personally and also in our search for a new minister. A number of possibilities have been explored and one is currently pending.

Let's continue to seek the Lord's guidance for the future ministry and be prepared to accept that guidance and the challenges and changes that may well come with it for the church and for us as individuals.

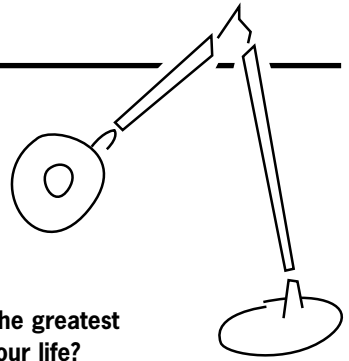
Ron Goodenough, Lindfield URC secretary

The way we conduct ourselves personally can influence for good or ill other people's lives and whether they are attracted to or driven from our fellowship and ultimately the Lord

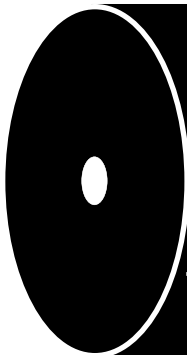


Twenty Questions

GoodNEWS takes a probing glimpse into the minds of those who come to the church! Twenty Questions gives you a chance to guess the interviewee and learn a bit more about them too! This month's guest is revealed on the foot of Page 32.



1. **Tell us one memorable date?**
30th June 2001
2. **Why?**
Our son was born
3. **All time favourite film?**
Singin' in the Rain
4. **What is your shoe size?**
5
5. **Describe your experience of God in a single sentence...**
Indescribable
6. **Jelly Babies or Jelly Beans?**
Jelly Beans
7. **Where is the furthest place that you have ever worked?**
Derby
8. **How long have you been coming to this church?**
Four years
9. **What year did you pass your Driving Test?**
1992
10. **What is your greatest ambition?**
Good question
11. **If you met Jesus in the street today, what one question would you ask Him?**
For once I would probably be speechless!
12. **Who has had the greatest influence on your life?**
My parents
13. **Where were you at the Silver Jubilee?**
At home in Wiltshire
14. **Plain, Milk or White?**
Milk
15. **Favourite holiday destination?**
Swanage, Dorset
16. **What would you do with the Millennium Dome?**
Turn it into a leisure complex
17. **Approximate height?**
5' 4"
18. **Most-read Bible verse?**
There are a few, it depends on what sort of day I've had
19. **Who is your hero?**
Alan Titchmarsh
20. **Broadsheet or Tabloid?**
Broadsheet



**You can listen to
this *Good*NEWS!**

**Just borrow the CD or tape
from the back of the church.**

The wind of change

If you were out and about in the village the other Sunday afternoon you might have seen this mad lady in her garden raking up leaves.

Yes, you've guessed, it was that blustery windy Sunday and the lady was me! I had spent the morning in prayer and worship at church, and when I got home about 12.30pm I found that a very large branch had broken off the oak tree outside our house, and smaller branches and twigs were covering the lawn, flower beds and paths. 'Leave it', said my husband, 'they will blow away' (he's not the keenest of gardeners), but the branches were too heavy to blow away and the leaves just seemed to be banking up, caught in the plants and dips. So out I went, well the sun was shining and the sky was blue between the clouds, ok it was a bit windy but two hours later I had filled six large bags mostly from the oak tree. I love that tree in the spring and summer, but oh how I wish it would go on holiday in the Autumn!

While I was working the strong wind made me think about the Holy Spirit, and how the early Christians described Him as a rushing noisy wind. My small gale had certainly cleared the rubbish off the tree. The large branch

that had fallen still had green leaves on it, but maybe it was rotten at its core and needed to go. The smaller branches and twigs were weak and maybe only decorative. The leaves had turned yellow and brown and had shed ready to leave room for fresh new growth.

My prayer is that each one of us will invite the Holy Spirit in to our lives, blowing away the dead useless rubbish, giving us room for new growth and closeness to each other and God. It may be frightening, we may feel a bit bare, but if we can trust Him who knows us inside out, who knows our decorative and weak bits, if we can be brave and trusting, I know it will be exciting too! You may have already asked the Holy Spirit in, last week, last month, last year, but we need to go on asking to be filled, renewed and refreshed. It's a bit like my garden – an on-going thing. That mad lady will be out there again next week clearing up; so join me now and ask Him in, see how many bags of rubbish you can throw away, see how new and exciting your relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour can be!

Tina Elphick



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Christmas Letter 2002

Dear Friends,

“A Paradox, a paradox, a most ingenious paradox.” - WS Gilbert

Isn't life a paradox? Two things illustrate that even as I sit writing to you. Yesterday I was in a glorious garden. It was full of country flowers. Most abundant were the Cosmos in every tint of pink imaginable. As I admired them a wasp sneaked up and stung me. This morning I have a seriously swollen left hand waiting for antihistamine tablets to take effect. The paradox of beauty hiding danger!

And here's another. Today is 11th September – the world is recalling the loss of thousands of lives when New York's Twin Towers were destroyed by suicide bombers. Yet we are also giving thanks for the remarkable rescuers and carers who laboured long and hard to bring succour. The paradox of what Rowan Williams calls “religious hatred redeemed by secular love”.

Christmas-time is a paradox as well. I have so often been aware of how our festivities, brash and compulsorily jolly, unwittingly stir up the renewal of sorrow in so many an aching heart – a paradox. Then there is the over-lavish gifts bought to bring happiness, but at such cost that there follow months of debt and anxiety – a paradox. And what about those toy weapons given to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace? – a paradox.

Not that any of these paradoxes are surprising. The whole idea behind Christmas is a paradox. We celebrate God coming to us in Jesus Christ – the Word made flesh. We marvel at the realisation that “love came down at Christmas”. And we join with the angels in singing “Glory to the new born King”. Yet in a sense the incarnation was anything but glorious. It was about God emptying himself of everything that set him apart from us so that in his humility and humanity he could be utterly at one with us. It is not that this self-emptying somehow waters down who God is, limits his majesty. No. For me, Jesus' revelation of an utterly self-giving God was the truest, fullest revelation of God that could be given. Sacrifice and loving to the uttermost are at the heart of what I believe God is, so Jesus, in the crude cradle and on the cruel cross, paints the most complete picture possible of a God whose supreme greatness is in his self-giving – a paradox.

I think that we find here a key to how the Church should be the Church. It, too, has got to be something of a paradox. Even as we pray and work for Church growth, for the building-up of the body of Christ, we need to take seriously the idea, suggested by a self-emptying Christ, that we will be built-up and effective when we are self-emptying: on the edge as servants of the poor rather than at the centre as cohorts of the powerful; more concerned for the healing of society than for the security of the Church; more ready to take Christ to the world than to bring the world into the Church. It's a paradox, but I think it's the way of being Church which is modelled for us in the way that Jesus was God.

“Mild he lays his glory by, born that Man for man might die”. That's the real paradox of Christmas. May yours be merry and rich in many things, but let's allow it also to model for us the best way to be the Church which, like Jesus, will find its real majesty in meekness.

Bethan and Jessica, from the Manse, and Christine, Glenys, Janette and Norman from the office, join me in sending Christian greetings to you all and thanking you for your friendship throughout 2002.

Yours sincerely
Nigel Uden
Nigel Uden

It's good to talk

On more than one occasion recently I have had the pleasure of meeting up with friends away from the usual local vicinity. The venue for this particular rendezvous is Leicester Square, and it is a chilly winter evening in November. Spurred on by the fact that I now find myself in London on a daily basis, it is especially nice for my wife, Emma, and myself to be meeting up with three friends who have grown up through the church, and are now in the dubiously fortunate position of living in the capital.

Elena left Lindfield to study Nursing just over a year ago, and now resides within the SE postcodes. Katy is a first year student of Speech Sciences living dangerously close to a huge 'HMV'. Emma is in the South-West doing teacher training.

We eventually find a warm restaurant after Emma explains she is late because she and her friends had become concerned that a fellow 'Halls' inhabitant hadn't been seen for a day or so, after leaving a worry-inducing note. Fortunately she goes on to say she did turn up safe and well, so we get the drinks order in and begin perusing the menu. Rumour has it that Emma's 'Halls of residence' boasts an almost 'show-home like' fitted kitchen, clearly enough of a pull to bring her neighbour back again!

Elena, now in her second year, tells us that she was reluctant to move from Halls, but now enjoys her shared house even more. Even though the food-share shopping seems a little tricky to understand to a 'civilian' like me – she seems to know which tub of butter to use – so that's OK!

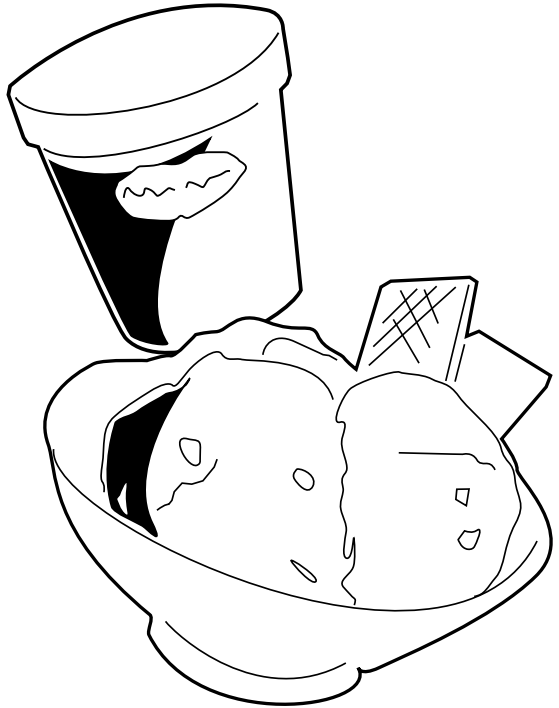
As we begin tucking in to our pasta, I am chuffed to learn that their faith has not been left behind in the move. Emma is set on the 11.30 service at HTB, Elena has just found a Baptist church near her house and Katy seems to be having a ball test-driving a few! Katy and Emma are off the next day on a Student Alpha away weekend, where up to 1000 students will be mulling the issues with Nicky Gumbel himself.

With the first course safely

away, our attentions turn to dessert. Just as decisions are beginning to be made, my wife excitedly reminds us of an establishment where the choices are even more in number and tastes even sweeter – before I can say “tin of baked beans” we are heading for Haagen Dazs!

Over her double-scoop, dollop of something Elena explains how she is currently on a three month placement in an A+E dept. The 12 hour shifts sound draining to me, but she plainly tells me the benefits – four days off in between! Whilst not the area of choice, Elena seems grateful of the experience in itself. Katy finds herself going out and about too, with a regular placement at an Afro-Caribbean Day Care Centre. She recounts their subtle cheating when they get to play Bingo, and I get to thinking how all that wisdom in old age isn't wasted after all! As Emma fires a spoonful of chocolate balls across the table, she explains how, on her course, they had just been learning about basic phonetics in their lectures, but I manage to break them up before this turns into some sort of self-help group for Speech & Language Therapists!

Leaving the smells of forty different ice creams behind, our number parts company, each going its separate ways, travelling back across town to



our various places of rest. The time together has been fantastic. To hear how their lives are changing and developing. I am struck with the feeling of pride as these guys work hard to get into incredibly noble and demanding careers. Emma and I pray for each of them that night, but we realise that we must be in touch with them and support them through all of their time away from home.

David Tingley

United Reformed Church Southern Synod

Lomas House, 43 Wordsworth Road, WORTHING, BN11 3JA



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LOMAS HOUSE belongs to the Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church. It is a newly refurbished 20 bed well-appointed home for retired missionaries, now also available for full board residential or day accommodation, with full facilities for any who wish to come. It is ideal for small groups or people needing a place to get away from it all for their own reasons. Most bedrooms are en-suite, with tea/coffee making facilities and free computer/internet access, and all diets are catered for. Daily prayer adds to the restoring nature of the house. Please get in touch with us for more details.

Revd Peter McIntosh (Director)

More than a

CAROL CONCERT...

Lindfield URC presents

Night of Miracles

A musical written by John W Peterson – but we will throw in a few carols for you to join in with too!

Come along and share in the festive season with us.

Following the concert there will be the customary refreshments of the season! All financial proceeds from the evening will go to St Peter and St James' Hospice.

19th Dec

7.30pm

A Mum's Christmas hassle!

Oh quick, give me a drink.
The turkey's still thawing away
in the sink.
Potatoes, parsnips and sprouts
yet to prepare.
And mother-in-law's spouting
loads of hot air.

I spent Wednesday in Crawley,
buying presents galore.
By the end of the day, my
knuckles scraped the floor.
The kids are excited;
the chocolate has gone
to their heads.
My husband has vanished,
and Nan's gone to bed.
I wonder if it was like this all
that long ago.
Was Mary hassled as she
wandered to and fro?
Bethlehem was crowded and
there was no room to be found.
Joseph's shoes had probably
worn to the ground.

The Innkeeper like me has no
time to spare.
He has guests to worry about
and meals to prepare.
Does he realise what he misses,
as he bids them goodbye?
He probably didn't even notice
the angels in the sky.
Jesus was born later in a
stable shed.
The Innkeeper was busy nursing
lots of sore heads.

He missed that great moment,
the Saviour's birth.
Have we missed it too, God's
entry to earth.
It is our responsibility after all,
To teach about the manger, the
baby and stall.
Otherwise each generation will
not understand
Why Christians celebrate the
birth of this great man.
Let's find time on Christmas day
to rejoice and be glad.
That God was gracious and sent
us His lad.

Do the trappings of Christmas
weigh us down?
As we wander around with
nothing but a frown.
We control our lives, let's take
control.
Let's turn off the TV and leave
the carrots to boil.
Let's spend a moment to
celebrate what God has done,
And go to church and have
some fun.
Do we celebrate Christmas past
or present,
As we look at our children who
were all heaven sent?

Zoe McQuillin

The back pages

GoodNEWS copydate schedule for 2003!

<u>COPYDATE</u>	<u>PUBLISH</u>
January	
8th Dec 02	29th Dec 02
February	
12th Jan	26th Jan
March	
9th Feb	23rd Feb
April	
16th Mar	30th Mar
May	
13th Apr	27th Apr
June	
18th May	1st Jun
July/August	
15th Jun	29th Jun
September	
17th Aug	31st Aug
October	
14th Sep	28th Sep
November	
12th Oct	26th Oct
December	
16th Nov	30th Nov
January 2004	
7th Dec	28th Dec

Many thanks for all your contributions – do keep them coming next year too! If you have typed it out, give us the disk or email it – that'll save us a bit of time! Remember to give your contact details too – in case we need to query something. Ta!

David & Emma Tingley

Flower Rota

		Arranging	Distributing
Dec	1	Lucy Thom	Fiona Tingley
	8	Lyn Tucker	Heather Swann
	15	Janet Wade	Sue Tester
	22	Christmas decor.	-
	29	Christmas decor.	-
Jan	5	Gladys Porter	Dorothy Forster
	12	Carol Walters	Betty Peter
	19	Jean Baxter	Jacqueline Wood
	26	Mary Comber	Iris Bingham

As in previous years we shall decorate our church with evergreen arrangements over Christmas. These can be done at home, but need to be brought to the church between 10am - 12noon on Thursday 19th December.

If you can help in this way, I would be very grateful. Also, if anybody has holly in their garden with berries or evergreens – this is also needed!

Please let me know what help you can give.

Betty Billins

Overheard

A: "Mrs X and I go to the same church."

B: "That's nice. Which one is that?"

A: "The ANGELICA church!"

**The Twenty Questions guest this month was
Annabel Goody**