



Welcome to the online  
version of the St Mary 's  
Parish Church Magazine



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



## Parish Church Magazine



**RECTOR:** The Revd Canon Greville Cross, The Rectory,  
Old Swinford, Stourbridge, DY8 2HA Tel: 01384 395410  
E-mail: [canon.cross@btinternet.com](mailto:canon.cross@btinternet.com)

**CURATE:** The Revd Ruth Atkinson, 58 Arlington Court,  
Old Swinford, Stourbridge, DY8 1NN Tel: 01384 373286  
E-mail: [home@riatkinson.plus.com](mailto:home@riatkinson.plus.com)

**JANUARY 2011**

**50p**

## SUNDAYS AT ST MARY'S

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Parish Communion and Children Together
6.30 pm	Evensong
10.00 am	(second Sunday) Worship Together

## WEEKDAYS AT ST MARY'S

Daily:	9.00 am - Morning Prayer (except Fridays and Saturdays) Morning Prayer on Thursdays will alternate between St Mary's and St Thomas'
Daily:	5.00 pm - Evening Prayer (except Fridays)
Wednesday:	1.30 pm - Noah's Ark at St Mary's (term time) parents & toddlers
Thursday:	10.30 am - Holy Communion in Lady Chapel
Thursday:	7.30 pm - Bell ringing Practice
Friday:	Choir Practice and Youth Groups (in term time)
Saturday:	10.00—12.00 am - Open Church —refreshments available
<b>Rector's and Curate's Day Off:</b> Friday	

## OTHER REGULAR EVENTS

Bible Study Groups:	Tuesday, last in month at 2.30 pm	(Tel: 379972)
Mothers' Union:	Second Tuesday at 2.15 pm	(Tel: 422677)
Outreach Group:	Occasional meetings	(Tel: 01562 851491)
Music Group Practice:	Second Saturday at 10.00 am	(Tel: 441003)
St Mary's Walking Group:	Last Saturday of the month.	Depart 9.30 am

<b>Reader Emeritus:</b>	Mr Roy Peacock	379972
<b>Reader:</b>	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
<b>Church Wardens:</b>	Mr Edward Haden	378104
	Mrs Marjorie Ferguson	393454
<b>Organist / Choirmaster:</b>	Mr Robin Walker	01905 353939
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr Richard Harris	395760
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
<b>Magazine Editors:</b>	Miss Gemma Sutton	07968 586285
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661

<b>Church Hall and</b>		
<b>Coach House: - Bookings</b>	Parish Office	441003
<b>Parish Administrator and</b>		
<b>Publicity Officer :</b>	Mr John Sutton	441003
<b>Parish Office:</b>	Open 9.00 am -12.00 noon Monday to Friday	441003
<b>Church website address:</b>	www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk E-mail: st.mary.os@btinternet.com	
<b>Magazine e-mail address:</b>	stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk	

## ENQUIRIES ABOUT WEDDINGS, BANNS OF MARRIAGE, BAPTISMS.

Please come to the Church on Saturday morning between 10.00 and 11.00 for Vestry Hour. You will be warmly welcomed. Tea and coffee will be available.

## DIARY FOR JANUARY 2011

Saturday 1	There will be no Open Church and Vestry Hour Today
<b>SUNDAY 2</b>	<b>THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS</b> Theme : The Epiphany 6.30 pm Carols, Music and Readings 7.30 pm First Tuesday Fellowship at the Rectory
Tuesday 4	The Epiphany
Thursday 6	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 8	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 9</b>	<b>THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST</b> 9.30 am Standing Committee 11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 2.15 pm Mothers' Union AGM in the Coach House
Tuesday 11	10.30 am Holy Communion
Thursday 13	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
Saturday 15	3.00 pm Book Launch : The Seventeenth Century Foleys by Roy Peacock 4.30 pm Light up a Life service for Mary Stevens Hospice
<b>SUNDAY 16</b>	<b>THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY</b> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins 7.30 pm Unity Prayers at Our Lady and All Saints 11.30 am Unity Prayers at St Thomas'
Tuesday 18	10.30 am Holy Communion
Wednesday 19	5.00 pm Unity Prayers at St Mary's
Thursday 20	10.00 am Unity Prayers at New Road Methodist Church
Friday 21	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
Saturday 22	<b>THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY</b> Sunday in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 10.00 am Preacher : Rev Stuart Scott (URC Minister) 6.30 pm United Service at New Road Methodist Church (Evensong as usual at St Mary's)
<b>SUNDAY 23</b>	12.30 pm Unity Prayers at St John's
Monday 24	The Conversion of St Paul
Tuesday 25	12.30 pm Unity Prayers at Hanbury Hill Baptist Church
Wednesday 26	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 27	10.30 am Mothers' Union Corporate Communion
Saturday 29	10.00 am Coffee Morning in the Narthex 10.00 am Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 30</b>	<b>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE</b>

### QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

*The Magi worshipped this baby even when it lay in a manger.  
Those heathen foreigners left home and country and went on a long journey,  
and came and worshipped him with fear and great trembling.  
We are citizens of heaven: let us imitate these foreigners.*

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year and, until Epiphany on 6<sup>th</sup> January, an ongoing Happy Christmas!

The end of 2010 saw some fond farewells. Steve Pepper retired as Head Teacher of Old Swinford Church of England Primary School after twenty-one years. With caring discipline, enthusiasm and fun the school has thrived under his leadership, receiving a well-earned 'outstanding' Ofsted report earlier this year. He has run a happy ship for both staff and pupils and developed and deepened the links with the Church. Old Swinford owes him a huge debt of gratitude for all that he has contributed to the community, and especially the children, and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

It was good that the governors were able to announce before the end of term the appointment of his successor Mr Ross Workman. He is a resident of Stourbridge and has wide educational experience including two former Headships. We look forward very much to welcoming him as he takes up his post in April.

Another former local head teacher took his leave of us to go on to greater things in December. In his life of public service Jock Poyner, with boundless energy, made a great difference to our town and surrounding area. His wartime service in the RAF – a radio operator in Lancaster bombers - brought him to the midlands and the marriage to his first wife kept him here. After her death he married a local GP and he and Brenda have been a valued part of St Mary's ever since. Jock cared deeply about society, served his community in local politics, and was instrumental in the foundation and development of Mary Stevens Hospice. His catch phrase 'never a dull moment' typified him and his attitude to life. Rest in peace dear Jock, 'good and faithful servant'.

Another person who gave of himself unstintingly in the service of his patients and the wider community was Dr David Chaloner. His sudden death in the middle of December has deprived the community of a deeply caring GP who was loved and valued by his patients and held in the highest regard by his colleagues. There will be an opportunity to celebrate his life at a service in St Mary's planned for 8th January. Meanwhile we would all want to extend our condolences to his wife Heather and all their family.

"The glory of God is man fully alive," wrote the second century theologian Irenaeus. People cannot be more fully alive than when they are fulfilling what they are meant to be and employing their God-given talents and abilities to the best of their ability. In these three good men, to whom I have referred, this is certainly true. Laus Deo.

With my prayers and best wishes,

*Greville*

## SERVICES IN JANUARY 2011

<b>2 January</b> 2nd Sunday of Christmas	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 60. 1 - 6	Ephesians 3. 1 - 12	Matthew 2. 1 - 12
	6.30 pm	Carols, Music and Readings		
<b>9 January</b> First Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am	Worship Together		
	6.30 pm Evensong	Joshua 3. 1 - 8, 14-end	Hebrews 1. 1-12	
<b>16 January</b> 2nd Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 49. 1 – 7	1 Corinthians 1. 1 - 9	John 1. 29 - 42
	6.30 pm Evensong	Ezekiel 2. 1 – 3:4	Galatians 1. 11 – end	
<b>23 January</b> 3rd Sunday After Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 9. 1-4	1 Corinthians 1. 10-18	Matthew 4. 12-23
	6.30 pm Evensong	Ecclesiastes 3. 1-11	1 Peter 1. 3-12	
<b>30 January</b> 4th Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Malachi 3. 1-5	Hebrews 2. 14-end	Luke 2. 22-40
	6.30 pm Evensong	Haggai 2. 1-9	John 2. 18-22	

### OUR LITTLE SCHOOL IN KENYA

We have just heard that after about 18 months of trying to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission.....

We have been granted permission to become a registered charity and should have the magic number within a couple of weeks.

Many thanks to all at St Mary's for their support in our efforts to bring hope to the little ones of Mtwapa.

**Jan and Brian Drew**

## THE UNNOTICED VISITOR

*A fantasy inspired by the ideas for the children's competition in last month's magazine*

The familiar squeal and screech of the wheels on the bend of the track indicated the approach of the train to its destination, shortly to be confirmed by the PA announcement that Stourbridge Junction would be the next 'station-stop'. The bearded stranger at the end of the compartment observed the bustle of the late-evening commuters as they gathered their belongings and prepared to disembark. They were in unusually high spirits this Friday evening; some in sober business suits, others in ethnic dress and casual attire, and a few in fancy dress evidently returning from office parties. This was no ordinary weekend as the date was 24 December and passengers were departing with joyful farewells and good wishes.

The stranger joined the crowd on the platform and as the travellers dispersed in their different directions he became part of the larger pedestrian group which was heading from the car park and followed them along Brook Road and Glasshouse Hill. He noted the inviting warmth and hospitality of the many inns along the way and was reminded of the inn-keeper's experiences that same evening in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. The shops in Oldswinford were brightly lit with displays of seasonal fare and the homes along Hagley Road were illuminated with all manner of decorations.

When he arrived in the town centre the High Street was buzzing with activity. Last-minute shoppers were mingling with party-goers and clubbers, and he was bemused by the evident excesses of the festive celebration. In his confusion the traveller found that he was returning along the way he came but noticed that he was once more in a flow of pedestrians with a focused direction towards Oldswinford. He heard the sound of bells ringing and then it came into view – the church with its tower illuminated for this special occasion. This was His Father's house, His church under his mother Mary's patronage, and everyone was coming to His birthday party.

Unnoticed he took a seat in the balcony pews as the church was already full. He looked down on the scene below and smiled with inner joy as he recognised the manger and the model of the Nativity by the vestry. Then the church fell silent before a solo chorister sang about events in that 'lowly cattle shed'. The visitor watched the congregation as the midnight service told the story of His miraculous birth – knowing that He was in their hearts. They also knew that He was present with them.

As the last of the worshippers departed at the end of the service, the lonely figure caught the Rector's notice. The last train had long gone and the stranger was invited into the warmth of the Rectory. This was no stable mean and bare, there was no guiding star, no shepherds or oriental kings, but there was that same love and goodwill to men, and glory shone around. As He sat in conversation with the Rector the visitor tried to comprehend the changes in the modern world since He last came to earth. He had been pleased to see so many of His faithful followers celebrating

His birthday and learned that His word and His teachings had spread to all corners of the World but was concerned that there was still conflict between nations as there had been in His earthly lifetime. Modern society was much troubled by crime, terrorism, injustice, inequality, poverty and homelessness. His Church was trying to address these issues both internationally and locally and it was acknowledged that there was still much work to do.

A few days later the visitor departed, as unnoticed as he had been when he arrived, confident that the Christian message was still very much alive and being proclaimed within the parish, and hopeful that it would be extended to an even wider following. He left with the comfort that His followers and worshippers in Oldswinford were being led by some of His finest messengers, musicians and choristers, and that St Mary's Church would continue to be a beacon for the Christian faith for many more centuries.

**Alec Beevers**

## **DIOCESAN CHOIRS FESTIVAL**

On Saturday 6th November, many members of St Mary's choir made their way to Worcester Cathedral to take part in the RSCM event in which other choirs from the diocese also took part.

Our day began at 2.00 pm and from then on we had a long rehearsal in order to practise the pieces and also adjust to singing in such a large building. Although the rehearsal was long we all managed to stay attentive and well behaved. The conductor, Christopher Allsop, and organist, Adrian Lucas, were both very passionate and managed to keep the extended choirs' spirits high. After the rehearsal we prepared for the evensong service, by eating tea and getting into our robes. The service turned out to be a huge success. We all sang beautifully along with the girls and men of the Cathedral choir, the Voluntary choir and other choirs from around the diocese. Within the service, choristers were awarded their Dean's (bronze), Bishop's (silver) and gold awards. Thomas Peart and Peter Thomson were presented with their bronze award by Dean Peter; William Peart received his silver award from Bishop David. Eleanor Peart, Francesca Casey and Lauren Holman had their gold awards presented also by Bishop David.

Big congratulations to those who received medals. Everyone was in mutual agreement as to how enjoyable the day was. We sang some great pieces of music which ran smoothly. The choir can only be excited for next year!

**Ellie Hartill**

This month's front cover depicts a handmade oil painting reproduction of *Adoration of the Kings (Epiphany)* c. 1476, a painting by Pietro Vannucci Perugino.



## **CAN WE HELP EACH OTHER?**

At this time of year in particular, getting to church can be hazardous for some. Would it help you to be able to ask for and accept a lift when it is needed? Would you like to offer that lift when you are able? With the Rector's encouragement we hope to create a list of those who might be able to help each other in this way. A sheet will be available at the back of church for anyone to sign with a telephone number and address, to enable contact and arrangements to be made. Perhaps the best plan would be to provide those looking for a lift with the contact details of those able to provide a lift. Then, when one is needed, a telephone call is all that is necessary to make the arrangements. For some this may be only an occasional need, for others it may become a mutually convenient more permanent arrangement. Let's see how it works.

**The Editors**

## **NEWS FROM THE CHURCH HALL**

The Church Christmas Market has now been held with great success despite the weather. We thank Katey and all her helpers for putting out and clearing away the chairs and tables and for leaving the hall so clean and tidy.

Arrangements are now being made for a Coffee Morning on Saturday 29 January 2011 in the Narthex from 10.00 am to 12 noon. We hope to have a sales table for cakes and jars of preserves and possibly a raffle.

The Hall Committee is looking at another fund-raising 'fun' night for May 2011. Watch this space.

**Ian Ferguson**

## **GOODBYE DIOCESAN NEWS**

Keen readers of the Diocesan News that is circulated with this parish magazine will be disappointed to know that the last edition will be delivered with the February magazine. The Bishop's Council has decided to cease production of the Diocesan News in order to finance the Prayer Diary, a quarterly publication, the first of which covered the period October – December 2010. The Prayer Diary is intended to support the Bishop's Council's focus for the Diocese on the 'Deepening of Prayer'.

Information and news from the diocesan offices will be available on the website at <http://info.cofe-worcester.org.uk> and a circular is to be provided to editors to maintain the link with parish magazines. The magazine committee will monitor this site and circular and will include in the parish magazine articles considered to be of real significance.

Please let us know how these changes affect you and whether our response does enough to support your interest. You might like to share your views of the Prayer Diary in a future issue of the St Mary's Parish Magazine or directly at [ssetchell@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:ssetchell@cofe-worcester.org.uk)

**The Editors**

## CHRISTMAS MARKET

With heavy snowfall the night before, there was a real concern that people might not be able to venture out to support the Christmas Market. How wrong could we be? In spite of the weather, the event was extremely well attended. Mr Steve Pepper, the retiring Headmaster of Oldswinford CofE Primary School, remarked how honoured he felt to have been asked to open the market and praised helpers for their work. The stalls looked attractive and were well stocked with gifts, cakes, groceries, preserves, books and plants which all had people eager to buy. This year we even had a turned wood stall which was selling items expertly made by Robin Walker's father.

The loud ringing of a bell and a hearty "Ho Ho Ho" soon heralded the arrival of Santa with a sack full of toys. Excited children were quickly queuing up outside the beautifully decorated Grotto to tell Santa their hopes for Christmas and to receive a gift.

The Church Hall was packed to capacity throughout the morning with many trying their luck on various games, the tombola and bottle stalls. Others were just enjoying a cup of coffee and a warm mince pie, listening to some of the choir singing beautifully above the chatter and laughter. It was lovely to see so many people working together and enjoying themselves. Apart from being a major fundraising occasion the market always proves to be a very social occasion leading into the Christmas festivities.

Thanks to Katey for all her hard work and organisation and also her team for once again providing us with a very successful and happy morning which raised in excess of £2000, no mean feat in these uncertain times.

**Avril Williams**

The various stalls raised:-

	£		£
Book Stall	62.25	Groceries and Preserves	69.93
Bottle Stall	90.00	Jewellery	350.45
Cake stall	249.30	Outreach	55.00
Plant Stall	51.50	Children's Group Jam Jars	49.50
Refreshments	102.78	Christmas Hamper Raffle	232.90
Donations	80.00	Soft Toys	94.00
Entrance Fees	210.00	Tombola	163.76
Turned Wood Stall	40.00	Father Christmas Grotto	42.00
Gift Stall	61.10	White Elephant Stall	85.96
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£2090.63</b>		

Thank you everyone for your contributions and help in making this a really enjoyable and financially successful event. Thanks also to the Church Hall Committee who, through the installation of additional glazing to the roof lights ensured that we kept warm in spite of the weather.

**Katey Fletcher**

# THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The three wise men had a long journey to find the newborn king. They were given a light to follow, a brilliant star, so they could find the way.

Colour in this picture and brighten up the moment when they first meet the baby Jesus and present him with his gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.



Here is a message written in code. Can you break the code? Clue:  
The first shall be last and last first!

8,22,22,16    2,12,6

21,18,9,8,7

7,19,22

16,18,13,20,23,12,14

12,21

20,12,23

Can you find all the words listed below in the word search?



ANGELS  
BETHLEHEM

BIRTH  
CENSUS

CHRIST  
DAVID

EAST  
EGYPT

ELISABETH

FLOCKS

FRANKINCENSE

GABRIEL

GIFTS

GOD

GOLD

HEROD

HOLY SPIRIT

IMMANUEL

JESUS

JOSEPH

KING OF THE JEWS

MANGER

MARY

MYRRH

NAZARETH

PROPHECY

SACRIFICE

SAVIOUR

SHEPHERDS

SON

STAR

SWADDLING

CLOTHES

THRONE

TIDINGS

VIRGIN

WISE MEN

## CUTHBERT OF LINDISFARNE

Cuthbert, the Bishop of Lindisfarne who became the great saint of the north country was born in 634. He entered the monastery of Melrose, in what is now lowland Scotland, soon after St Aidan's death in 651, which he had seen in a vision while caring for sheep in the Lammermuir Hills.

After a period of study under Boisil, the saintly prior of Melrose, he was ordained priest and began to journey about Northumbria preaching and administering the sacraments and rapidly acquiring a reputation for holiness and for the possession of miraculous powers. He spent a short period at Ripon where he helped found a new monastery, succeeded Boisil as prior of Melrose and was eventually sent to Lindisfarne to reform the way of life of the community as discipline there had become slack. At Lindisfarne Cuthbert found himself more and more attracted to the idea of a life of solitude. He began by withdrawing occasionally to a tiny islet only a few yards off the shore of the main island, accessible on foot at low tide. Later he moved to Farne island, directly opposite Bamburgh where he built himself a hermitage from which he could see nothing but the sky. He lived there for a number of years, visited only by the monks of his own community and by many people from far and near who had been attracted by his growing reputation for saintliness. In 684, after King Ecgfrith had visited the island to plead with him, Cuthbert bowed to pressure to accept election as a bishop, and the following Easter he was consecrated at York.

For a short space of two years Cuthbert returned to his earlier itinerant life. Then, feeling that the end of his life was approaching, he returned to his hermitage on Farne Island. He died on 20 March 687 attended by a small group of his brethren, and his passing was signalled across the sea to Lindisfarne by the waving of torches.

Cuthbert realised that he would be venerated as a saint and that his tomb would quickly attract pilgrims. He would have preferred a simple grave on Farne Island where he had a sarcophagus and a winding sheet in readiness, but he yielded to the wishes of the community and agreed that his body might be taken to Lindisfarne for burial. His body was placed in its casket and laid on the floor of the sanctuary.

In 793 Lindisfarne was raided and sacked by the Vikings. The community fled the island, but soon returned. As monastery after monastery suffered the same fate, in 875 Bishop Eardulf took the relics of St Cuthbert and other treasures of the monastery, including the Lindisfarne Gospels, and set off in search of a safer place. After several years wandering they settled at Chester-Le-Street. In 995 they moved to Ripon. After a few months the saint miraculously indicated that he wished a new home to be established for him at Durham.

In 1093 the foundation stone of the cathedral was laid. In 1104 the building of the cathedral was far enough advanced for Saint Cuthbert's relics to be solemnly translated to their new setting at the high altar.

Cuthbert's tomb is in the chapel of the Nine Altars in Durham Cathedral. It has the simple inscription 'Cuthbertus'. In Durham Cathedral library can be seen part of the lid of Cuthbert's wooden coffin showing the outlines of the symbols of Saint Luke and Saint John, the calf and eagle. Also on display are fragments of silver ornaments from the back of his portable altar which was found lying on his breast when his tomb was opened in 1827.

**Adrian Smith**

## **THINKING ABOUT A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE?**

Becoming healthier can improve all areas of your life. Not only will your physical health be far better, but emotionally you will be happier and less stressed. You will look great, your figure will be good, your skin will improve and you will have more energy. However, adopting a healthier lifestyle can sometimes be hard to do on your own.

Whatever health changes you are planning to make, talking to an NHS Dudley Health Trainer could be just the thing to get you started. Based in your local area, health trainers are local people that can support you on a one-to-one basis to lead a healthier lifestyle by working with you to identify and achieve your own personal goals.

Trained to provide advice and support on a whole range of health issues, including stopping smoking, losing weight, eating healthily, becoming more active and drinking sensibly, health trainers will not only meet you at a time and place to suit you, but will also offer you practical support, treat you with respect and be completely confidential.

If you would like help and support from a health trainer or for more information call **01384 322092** or visit **[www.dudley.nhs.uk/healthtrainers](http://www.dudley.nhs.uk/healthtrainers)**

## **THE FIRST SUNDAY IN JANUARY**

For the past few years this Sunday has been celebrated by an informal evening event in St Mary's which has replaced evensong at 6.30 pm. Less familiar carols have been sung to piano accompaniment; other musical items featuring guitar, violin and accordion have been enjoyed; readings from secular poetry and prose have interspersed the music.

The Rector has suggested that we continue the pattern this year and so there will be a similar sharing of talents on 2 January. If you have found pleasure in this before, we hope you will come again: if you have not been aware of this diversion we hope you will come along and participate in 2011.

**Convenor– Dorothy Gibson**

## A TWANG OR AN INTONATION OR AN ACCENT?

Lunching alone has the advantage that you can eavesdrop! Advice: don't look round—don't change your expression—don't order Waldorf salad (for you will only be able to hear your own crunching). From the table behind, Voice One raised, tones incredulous, "You surely don't mean you would not have chosen that school if you had heard the message before you did so?" Voice Two, tone exasperated, "Well if Alice hadn't gone there I couldn't have used that phone number could I?"

From the ensuing conversation I gathered that Alice had been unable to attend school and her mother had used the number provided to register this. In principle she approved the system but in practice was appalled by the recorded response to her call. "The accent was so thick that I had to call twice to decipher it and the woman couldn't even pronounce 'absence' properly." She went on to deplore the impression this must give to callers. Surely the school could find someone who spoke English clearly and accurately.

I stopped listening to ponder my own thoughts on accents, intonations, and strange turns of phrase and word usage in different parts of our island (and in every other land across the globe I expect!) My mother-in-law was astonished to hear that her cleaning woman had been 'braying' at the door; new to Yorkshire she was unfamiliar with this alternative for 'knocking' and imagined Mrs Duncan making donkey noises. A student from the Midlands discovering that 'bostin' was not generally accepted elsewhere and being surprised to realise, after living elsewhere herself, and watching a re-issue of 'Porridge', that Godber has a Birmingham accent. Whenever a reporter on TV takes viewers for an eyewitness account I am invariably baffled by what is said. On the other hand I love to hear the local farewell of 'Ta-ra a bit then' though not being a native I have never ventured to use it. Nor the very useful 'Ahr' which can mean 'yes' or 'no' or 'maybe' or 'well if you think so' depending on the tone in which it is uttered and the accompanying gesture(s) and grimace(s).

I hope someone will take me up on this. I have decided that for me clarity must have priority - and accuracy. I'd hate to lose all twangs and intonations and have everyone speaking what would once have been called 'BBC English' – which only newsreaders use nowadays. (And I must admit that I relish their round tones and assured delivery, especially of long and improbable sounding names of foreign diplomats and terrorists!)

**Granny**

### **FOUND.....**

.....a newspaper cutting that is at least sixty years old.

I am reminded of a verse on a notice board in the porch of a country church which read:

Every time I pass this lovely church,  
I pay a little visit,  
So when at last I'm carried in,  
The Lord won't say: "Who is it?"

**Barbara Freeston**

## WINTER

The first snowflakes falling from the sky,  
Relieve the grey edges of the city.  
They muffle the noise of the street, and fly  
Into the face of the homeless man:  
Sheltered only by shabby overcoat  
And woollen scarf around head and throat.

Assaulted by the hard, cold edge of wind  
That reddens and waters eyes and nose,  
His mouth full of hunger, he awaits.  
But in a world of greed he stands alone.  
His wet, upturned face catches the light  
In the street. Then he melts into the night.

**Pat Whalley**

## NEW STOURBRIDGE u3a

After childhood and then the years of employment, the third age is the period of retirement or semi-retirement

u3a exists to provide educational and leisure activities for men and women no longer in full time employment, at minimal cost. They draw upon the knowledge, experience, skills and enthusiasm of their members to organise interest groups, with a vast range of subjects such as art, foreign languages, music, history, geography, crafts, gardening, archaeology, astronomy and computing. They also offer activities such as walking groups, luncheon clubs, bridge groups, scrabble and theatre visits. You can see the possibilities are endless! The u3a believes the third age should be one of creativity, fulfilment and friendship.

Come and find out more at the launch meeting of our new Stourbridge Group on Thursday, 20 January 2011 at the New Road Methodist Church Centre, Stourbridge commencing 2.00pm.

**Mervyn and Janice Evans**



Our picture shows the four candidates for confirmation Megan Knowles, Eleanor Hartill, Alice Fowler and Martha Gaytten with Bishop Michael Hooper.

Congratulations to these members of our community who have now received their first communion.



## BOATING TO BIRMINGHAM—1995

That autumn, after months of planning, I finally purchased a new narrow boat from Stenson Marina, on the Trent and Mersey Canal near Burton-on-Trent. I named it the 'Waverley' after the last surviving Steam Paddle Ship still in service. This is also the name of Edinburgh's main railway station.

All I had to do was move it to its new home mooring in central Birmingham, forty-two miles and forty-nine locks from Stenson. So one Saturday, shortly before Christmas, we set off from the marina heading west towards Burton, my father joining me for the cruise.

The weather was cold, with a bitter wind, so we wrapped up warmly when steering 'Waverley', although once in the front cabin with a glowing fuel stove, it was very comfortable. We cruised past Burton's large breweries, with barrels stacked high outside, and on to the village of Branston, where we had a nice meal in a canalside pub.

The next morning, we arrived at Fradley, a canal junction, where we turned on to the Coventry Canal, passing a small swing bridge, which must be operated by a member of the boat crew. Fradley is, in many people's opinion, one of the nicest locations on the waterway and is centred around the 'Swan' public house and a boatyard. Further on, at Whittington Brook, near the village of Whittington, the canal changes again to the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, our route into the city.

Our final overnight stay was at Minworth, on the edge of the city suburbs. Sitting in the adjacent pub that evening, we could see 'Waverley' through the windows whilst we consumed our meal, often advisable on urban canals.

The final day of the cruise was a short distance, but heavy with locks, 27 in 7 miles, and all uphill as you approach the Birmingham Plateau. The first one was Minworth bottom lock, which we entered, closed the bottom gate behind the boat and opened the top paddles to fill the lock. I watched as 'Waverley' slowly rose to the top, a sight I never tire of seeing. Aston locks further on delayed us for nearly an hour, as one lock gate was obstructed by debris, probably bricks. Whilst I phoned British waterways for assistance two men helped my father get 'Waverley' through the lock, although within a few minutes the lock-keeper turned up with assorted tools to remove the obstruction.

Once past Aston locks progress improved and we soon climbed the remaining flight, named Farmer's Bridge, which rises into central Birmingham, running past the Telecom Tower and Birmingham Science Museum.

Having reached the summit, we cruised between the International Conference Centre and the National Indoor Arena, with their surrounding pubs and restaurants, before arriving at Sherborne Wharf, 'Waverley's' new mooring after three and a half day's cruising.. By now it was raining, which later turned to snow, but inside the boat, all was dry and warm, and 'Waverley's' first and memorable cruise was over.

**Michael Rolfe**

## **THIS MONTH'S RECIPE GRAPEFRUIT TEA BREAD**

My brief at work is 'always healthy'. It is not easy to make cakes low in fat and sugar that taste good but I think this fits the bill. It's good for children's lunch boxes when I use a tin of mandarin oranges in juice.

1 can (285g) grapefruit segments in juice  
6 oz (150g) self raising flour  
2oz (50g) oats  
1 tsp baking powder  
2oz (50g) margarine, softened (needs to be soft for this 'all in one' method)  
2oz (50g) caster sugar  
2oz (50g) sultanas  
1-2 beaten eggs (keep a little back until the end and adjust then)

The night before or several hours before, place sultanas in a dish and cover with the drained, roughly chopped grapefruit segments. Reserve the juice, put into a small pan.

In a food processor, process the margarine, sugar, eggs, flour and oats. When smooth add the fruit and blitz quickly to combine.

Pour into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Bake at 180c/gas 4 for 40 minutes approximately, until golden.

When cooked, boil the juice rapidly until you have a thick glaze (2tbsp approx) and apply to the loaf. Remove from the tin and cool on a cooling tray.

**Ann Jennings**

### **AND FOR THE WINE.....**

My friends think I'm most odd: I dislike citrus fruits, yet I regularly describe wines flowing with lemons/limes/tangerines and extol their virtues! Truth is these FLAVOURS may shine through in the wine but if it contains citric acid [the element I really dislike] it will have been added artificially. For the record it is malic and tartaric acid which predominate in wine. So to find a wine with pithy grapefruit characters is a bit of a misnomer. A glass of Gavi might lend some grapefruit notes, but really only the Gewurztraminer grape comes near with its lychee, pink grapefruit and floral streaks. The junior variant of our tea bread with mandarin segments isn't wine-friendly so we will stay with the grapefruit version and explore the Gewurztraminer route. Alsace bottlings commonly have a degree of sweetness these days [it is bright and sunny there and the fruit gets very ripe]. However the cake mixture might call for something even sweeter. Fortunate then that Gewurztraminer dessert wines are produced too. Sadly they are very expensive but have a wonderful intensity. So as an alternative let's think a slice of tea-bread in the afternoon sun and opt for a measure of white port: moderately sweet, intensely fruited - a delightful sip. There are many offerings in the modern lighter, softer style of white port, but I would recommend a glass of Niepoort white port. It's the real thing: make it your 2011 sipper !

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

28 November	Eleanor Hartill
5 December	Annalyn Mary Franks
	Henry James Bayliss

### Funerals

15 November	Jim Cutler	aged 89
17 November	Gary Thomas	aged 60
22 November	Pamela Kendall	aged 72
24 November	Bert Young	aged 79
30 November	Bill Masters	aged 78
2 December	June Griffiths	aged 77
6 December	Ray Thornycroft	aged 91
7 December	Jim Thornhill	aged 75
8 December	Lilian Lamas	aged 88

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### NEWS AND NOTES

Friday 3 December, the evening for 'setting up' ready for the Christmas Market on the next day. I set off to pick up my friend Anne May en-route to St Mary's. The wind was chilly and the roads icy. The coldest November for many a year.

Hard-working Katey had arrived in the hall so we were able to assemble our stall. Alison, Betty Taylor's daughter had been such a kind and supportive friend knitting some lovely cuddly animals, snowmen and even Father Christmas. We had been given two well-dressed clowns and a matching clock and these gifts formed the basis of our Outreach stall, displayed, we hoped, to appeal.

Elsewhere other stallholders were equally busy as books, tombola prizes, raffle hampers, jewellery, bottles, toys, plants, groceries and white elephant items were arranged to entice the customers.

The following morning beautiful home-made cakes appeared as the mince pies warmed in the kitchen and coffee brewed in the pots. Robin Walker had brought some very attractive turned wood products made with obvious care by his father. And despite his busy schedule Father Christmas came to visit and sat in his Grotto to bring joy to the children. What a special man!

All this created such a magical atmosphere in the hall into which our customers were invited to spend by the kind welcoming words of Steve Pepper so warmly introduced by our leader, Katey.

People supported our market with generosity and good cheer created by the friendliness and greetings shared throughout, and the wonderful musical contributions provided by the younger members of our choir.

A Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. May health and happiness be yours. With love.

## **ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP**

### **Ismere and Caunsall Walk**

Eleven of us enjoyed a morning walk in very cold but clear conditions with a dusting of snow on the ground. We started and finished at the Old Wagon and Horses Public House on the Kidderminster Road. We crossed the A451 from the pub and almost immediately found a ladies' skirt lying on the footpath. There was more than a little debate about what had caused this loss! After some road and bridle path walking we descended through The Fairy Glen, on the North Worcestershire Path, where in spite of the offer of a prize no one found a fairy! We crossed the A449 and the canal near Caunsall and followed the frozen canal to the bridge at Austcliffe where we paused for a coffee stop.

All thoughts of coffee were soon dispelled by Sally's kind invitation to share in some hot mulled wine. We continued past Westley Court to re-cross the A449 at Island Pool and after a gentle ascent we reached the large frozen lake at Whitehouse Farm. Here many of the men reverted to childhood, throwing stones to see if the ice would break or how far a stone could be slid across the lake. In a nearby field we espied some black sheep with a white tip to their tails and noses. This was explained to us as



where the sheep had been held to apply the black paint! After re-crossing the A451 we headed towards Churchill along Waggon Lane. There was some debate about the spelling of Wagon but after it was explained that the wagon was pulled by gg's all became clear! After a bridle path and field paths we came back to the A451 near the pub where three non-walkers joined us for an excellent lunch.

Our next walk is on Saturday 29 January 2011, to be lead by Sue; please bring your Network West Midlands Travel card, if you have one, as we will be using the train.

**Mike Blaxland**

### **MOTHERS' UNION PRAYER GROUP**

Our group meets once a month to share a quiet hour thinking, praying and discussing themes chosen for our study beforehand. We pray for the needs of the world and share our experiences together. The subjects chosen for the New Year are: light, forgiveness, peace and The Cross.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month from 10.30 am until 12 noon. For more details please contact me on 01384 394444

**Janice Sutton**

### **Children's Page Answers**

Seek you first the kingdom of God

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