



CHRIST CHURCH  
MILTON-NEXT-GRAVESEND

# PARISH MAGAZINE



All-Age Service  
2nd Sunday each month

John Hill 2007

30p  
or  
donation

January  
2010



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Deadline for February magazine: Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January .  
Put on peg in the vestry, or hand to a Churchwarden,  
or email: [ianbbrown@phonecoop.coop](mailto:ianbbrown@phonecoop.coop)

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Christ Church Hall  
is available for hire.  
Contact: Mrs Joan Bennett  
01474 568585

Well equipped. Very  
suitable for meetings  
and children's parties.

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

It ain't those parts of the Bible that I  
can't understand that bother me, it is  
the parts that I do understand.  
Mark Twain



# Happy New Year to everyone.

As we look forward to 2010 we celebrate the ending of 2009 – God’s Gang have produced an interesting Advent Study (page 8), which can be seen as you enter the church; the church was full on a number of occasions during Advent – Christingle; Crib Service; Midnight service; farewell to Gwyneth Charles (pages 6,7 ). Ted Gwalter was remembered when his family joined us to commemorate the new kitchen hatch (page 12 ) and the life of Alan Cooper was celebrated with the Crucified Christ in front of a Christmas tree at his memorial service (page 5). The New Church and Secular Year brings new challenges. The weather is giving us something to think about and an opportunity to show that we can care about our neighbours. A new look 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday All-Age Service to participate in (page 3) and the introduction of the afternoon family service in the spring. The Beavers look forward to welcoming their new leader – more about our Baden Powell groups in future magazines. For the sports enthusiasts among us 2010 hosts The Winter Olympics; The Football World Cup in South Africa, Ebbsfleet United moving up the conference table and its owners MyFootballClub.co.uk being strengthened and showing that the “little people” can make a difference (just look at what happened with the ‘Christmas No 1’). We will also have an opportunity to make our voices heard when the general election takes place. The Climate Conference in Copenhagen demonstrated how difficult it is to get the world to agree on a common ideal – remember ‘Think Globally, Act Locally’ and we can help to make a difference – what will you do this year?

Editor

## New look 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays

From January, the morning service on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month will be a ‘new look’ all-age service of Holy Communion. Each month the service will reflect a

particular theme and the liturgy and music will be chosen to provide something for all, from the oldest to the youngest.

We are always delighted to welcome our uniformed organisations, who join us for these services.

Sue Brewer



Many thanks for your continued support of the Ellenor Lions Hospices.  
Registered Charity No. 1121561

# COFFEE MORNINGS

Cold Harbour Road  
10 am to 12 pm

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March  
Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May  
Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September  
Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December

## A Prayer for Winter

Dear Lord of hope,  
Be close to me through the Winter months,  
When days are shorter and darker,  
Let me feel Your presence.  
When winds blow stronger and colder,  
Let Your love warm and comfort me.  
Keep me safe in my going out  
And my coming in.  
Let me always remember -  
I never walk alone.



*"To those complaining about the lack of heating. Can I quote that well known Bible verse...  
"Many are cold but few are frozen"*

## Sunday Morning Coffee Rota

3rd Jan	Week 3	David & Shirley Whitehead
10th Jan	Week 4	Margaret Davies, Ian & Sheila Brown
17th Jan	Week 5	Barbara Bunyan, Audrey price, Mary Sargeant
24th Jan	Week 6	Sylvia Brown, Jasmine and Steve Humphries
31st Jan	Week 7	Joan and Bob Bennett, Ann Lennard, David Williams
7th Feb	Week 8	Colin and Linda Parsonson, Anne Thrush
14th Feb	Week 9	Jerry and Sally Higgins, Marylene Ewin

Maureen Fittell

# Alan Cooper

THE MAN who taught me art at school had served in the Navy and he once told us about an old sailor he had known whose favourite oath was “Jesus on a bicycle!” If I had known Alan then it would have made me think of him. One would not, perhaps, identify Alan with our Lord, although he was a firm and faithful Christian, but he certainly swore by his bicycle, and he taught a lot about art. If I did not know him in my school days, our paths met and ran side by side from the time I came to my first curacy at Christ Church. We recognised a common interest in many things: in painting and drawing: in stage design and the theatre: in church architecture and liturgy and perhaps, most of all, in daring to call a spade by its proper name. He was a forthright character and ever a bold controversialist, but he liked to be sure of his facts. All through the years of our friendship-nearly 49 of them-he paid me the quite undeserved complement of a steady flow of enquires about things he assumed I would know. The telephone would ring: “Hello James. Alan here. Can I pick your brains for a moment?” And I would be sent scurrying to my bookshelves. Yet his own store of knowledge, especially about painting and painters and picture restoration, was wonderfully extensive and his experience hardly less so. He had studied at Oxford, done National Service in Singapore, worked as a teacher in the local schools and Art College. When I first knew him he was designing window displays for Mansfield Shoes in Knightsbridge. He had worked in the Theatre, and once hinted at a passing acquaintance with Alicia Markova’s ballet shoes. (Don’t ask). He was an advisor to a leading firm of Church furnishers. As a free-lance painter he was hardly ever without a commission, and was ever quick to take out the sketch book he always carried in his pocket, to line out a proposal for a stage costume, or a set of Stations of the Cross, or a scheme of decoration for a whole parish church.

Like all true artists - perhaps like all honest men - he never felt he had done as well as could or should have done. There was always, for him, one step further to satisfaction. His advice as a teacher to his students was always, “Look!” To be able to show things as they are you must see things as they are, and never rub out. Use the wrong line as a guide to where to put the right one.

When he began to realise that his illnesses might be getting serious, he said to me in one of our regular phone calls, that he wouldn’t mind dying because he would find out what it is really like afterwards.

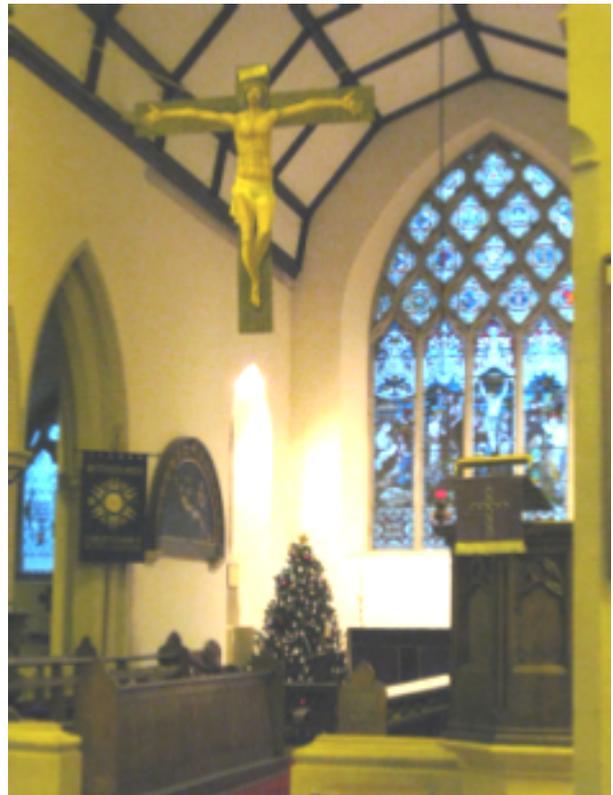
Now I am waiting for the phone to ring!

Reverend James Groves.

## Thank You!

Sheilah and Philip would like to say how much all the cards and personal comments received, and to see so many people in the church for the service meant to them.

We do know, however, that Alan will always be in Christ Church, a place which had meant so much to him.



# GWYNETH CHARLES



Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, was one of those days in the life of Christ Church which marked the end of another era. On that day the congregation said their official farewell to Gwyneth Charles, organist and Choir Director for almost thirty years. The service itself - officially "Carols by Candlelight" - was a particularly moving one for many, and none more so than for those past and present members of Christ Church Choir present at the service - and naturally for Gwyneth herself. After the service refreshments were

served in the Hall and tributes were paid to Gwyneth for those many years of dedication to the music in the church.

It is true to say that a very large part of her life has been concerned with music. She began learning to play the piano at the age of six, encouraged by her mother, a good pianist herself. When she was sixteen she then became organist at Christ Church, Arthur Lansley, encouraged Gwyneth to learn to play the organ. Eventually she became assistant organist at the church, first to Arthur himself, and then to his successors: Malcom Saxton, Denis Carden and Robert Featherstone.



Her encouragement and tutoring during this time came from Joe Levett, assistant organist at Rochester Cathedral.



When Robert left Christ Church to take up Holy Orders, she took over "temporarily", as she says herself. That temporary position has lasted from 1982 until 13<sup>th</sup> December this year. During that time she has seen the all-male choir, with its boy trebles, gradually change into the mixed choir it is today. Although she has "retired" there are no plans for her to cease playing entirely: "it has been a large part of my life" she says.

*Peter Shearan*

A musical tribute to Gwyneth from the choir on her retirement as Organist and Choir Director of Christ Church, Milton-Next-Gravesend. Sung at evensong 27<sup>th</sup> December.

## IMMORAL, IMPOSSIBLE, GOD ONLY KNOWS (Christ Church choir version)

Immoral, impossible, God only knows  
How tenors and basses, sopranos, altos,  
At service on Sunday are rarely the same  
As those who on Thursday to choir practice came.

Unready, unable to sight-read the notes,  
Nor counting, nor blending, we tightened our  
throats,  
T'was clear by her waving she wanted us to look  
But each of us stood with our nose in our book.

To fit us for service our Gwyneth worked hard.  
From Bach to Beethoven, no composer was barred.  
With Haydn and Rutter and Kendrick and Brahms,  
Hymns ancient and modern plus one or two psalms.

Each Thursday she taught us the mysteries of song.  
On Sunday we sang it – and still got it wrong!  
Her praise it was welcome, we sighed with relief.  
But sometimes our efforts were beyond all belief!

So now she is going, her duty well done.  
A medal she's earned and been very well won.  
When Jackie takes over we'll still try our best  
While Gwyneth relaxes, enjoying her rest.

So into the future the hymns will ring out,  
With new songs, responses and anthems no doubt.  
We'll look, and we'll listen, and do as we ought  
And try to remember what Gwyneth has taught.

(originally adapted by Marilyn Sherlock of the parish of Holy Cross, Newton Ferrers, Devon  
and re-adapted by John and Anne Thrush)

The younger children who came out to God's Gang before Christmas all helped to make a collage of the traditional stable Nativity scene.



Both age groups learned about the real meaning of Christmas by talking about the various characters in the story and took home tree decorations to colour in with different stickers on them each week:

For Mary, Joseph and Gabriel it was linked to obedience,

**”Say yes to God!”**

For the journey to Jerusalem and no room

at the inn it was linked to fulfilling prophecy, John the Baptist, generosity and great expectations so,

**“Go tell everyone!”**

For the birth of Jesus we thought of hope and everyman so,

**“God with us!”**

Martin looked at the older children's Christmas deconstructed with thoughts about creation, direction, the star, light, messengers in church with us all.



Then we did the shepherds, the angels and the star linked to earth and heaven,

God the creator, worship so, **“Come let us adore Him!”**

And we finished with Epiphany: the significance of the magi's gifts: gold for a king; frankincense for God's Son; myrrh for death and the King's crowns.

We could have done so much more but we hope it made us all take a little time out for the real meaning of Christmas and that something of this will carry on into 2010.

Sheila Brown



# First Steps

9<sup>th</sup> December 2009

It's a chilly morning with a hint of brightness as I walk up to Church to set things up for our First Steps service this afternoon. It's nice to see a bit of sunshine for a change. Today, as it's that time again, I are going to be telling the Christmas story with the help of some knitted Nativity figures that our Pre-school is lending us. Isn't that kind! Our naughty little sheep is really excited because he knows that sheep play a significant part in the story and he's really looking forward to hearing it again.

Anne and Isabelle soon arrive to give me a hand and Isabelle has brought her sheep Chloe with her and her monkey too. She tells me that monkey is Chloe's best friend now and not our naughty little sheep! I'm not going to mention it to him because he'll just be so upset, poor little fellow! Oh well! When everything is ready some new faces are first into Church to join us. It's Sugi with her three little girls, Abishaa, Apiraa and Aswara who are soon trying out the jingle bells to see what a great noise they make. And before we know where we are we've got quite a crowd, all happy and jingling ready for our service to begin.

I light the candles on our little altar as we sing "Candletime". Mollie's Mum Rachel can't be with us today because she's not well and I should really light a special candle for her but I don't want the Nativity figures to go up in flames when the children put them on the altar. So we all send her our love instead.

And then its time to tell the wonderful story of the birth of Jesus and as we tell each part, the children bring up the figures and place them on the altar. Billy wants to put Jesus in place but then changes his mind and poor Jesus goes flying. Oops! Luckily Jesus is

retrieved and is soon on the altar where he should be. And he's still smiling! While all this is going on we sing some of our favourite Christmas carols and songs and the children sing beautifully; "Away in a manger" and "Little Jesus, sweetly sleep" not forgetting some hearty renditions of "Jingle bells" and "Twinkle, twinkle little star". Oh what fun we have!

But when we get to the part of the story about the shepherds, we realise that "you know who" is missing again. And he was so good last time! Joseph spots him first. He and three of his friends have been perched on the pulpit the whole time, watching us, and nobody noticed! What a sneaky lot! Anyway they stay there for the rest of our service, joining in our songs and standing very quietly for our prayers. And we thank God for all the wonderful gifts that he gives to us every day and especially for the gift of Jesus, our Saviour.

And lo and behold our service is over and it's time to blow out our candles. It's been really nice to see Daniel's Granddad and Mollie's Dad today as well as very welcome new comers and much loved regulars. After play and refreshments in the Hall it's time to go home once again. We do hope that every one will join us at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. Our naughty little sheep has got a starring role. Great stuff! Our next First Steps is on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and every blessing in the New Year.

God Bless.

Rosemary Austin.

Birds can really go hungry during the winter when food and water supplies are scarce. The RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology both suggest feeding them all year round, but if we're talking survival, some times are more important than others. The RSPB advises that supper and breakfast are the most important meals for birds as they need an energy boost before and after a night's rest, especially in the winter and autumn when it's colder.



# CHRIST CHURCH AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

## AN EVENING OF ONE ACT PLAYS: November 2009



This evening gave us a trio of plays, all investigating the phenomenon that is relationships. We had the Common Man and his contact with a group of weirdos; the age gap; and the missed opportunities tales. All were directed and produced by that stalwart of CCADS, Helen Beck. And what a task she had set herself! The different tones of voice in which the plays were written had to be addressed, and, judging by the audience reaction on the night I attended, the result met with approval.

The set, which was meant to portray many places (particularly in the final play of the evening) was very well conceived, and little additional stage dressings were needed to convey each background: a lifebuoy (with "Sea Easta" emblazoned on it!); a notice proclaiming "Shakespeare in the Park"; and the bus stop sign all did that for us. Chairs and tables did the rest. The music, mainly of guitar and piano, befitted the subject matter. Sound effects were sometimes slightly too low on Thursday (we didn't hear the bus, for example) but perhaps improved on later nights: although we couldn't help but hear the explosion in the first play! Light and sound were in the capable hands of Richard Aucott and Angela Kirby.

And so to the plays themselves. "Sparrows" by Charles Mander set us off. If the plot involving blowing up a nuclear power station might have been somewhat macabre for today when we are frequently told of real terrorist activity, the absurdity of how this group of people intended to carry that out, let them off the hook. For the first half of the play we were led along by Joyce (Janet Porter), who had the lion's share of the lines, and who delivered them in a good forceful manner. But my attention kept going to Harold Makepeace (get it?) (David Horton). There is a great acting art in being able to do and say very little. Joyce ignored most of his feeble interjections, but his face told us everything. There was a huge range of expressions which were a joy to watch: I hope we see much more of that actor! Edward (Gerry Higgins), on his entrance, got somewhat lost behind the other two, and perhaps because he was eating a good bit of the time, we lost a lot of his words. His costume made up for that - he was obviously the nutter among nutters! The second half of the story introduced us to Sandra (Christine Kearsney) who began as she went on - trying to browbeat Harold into undertaking the delivery of the bomb - and was seemingly reasonable within the madness of the plot. The reiteration of the words "sparrows" gave the play its title, but gave us the best lines when one bird was given a funeral. Joyce came into her own then.

The second play brought together Deirdre (Zoe Tindill) and her aunt Tottie (Sally Higgins), as they arrived to watch an outdoor Shakespeare performance. The play's very simple denouement - that they had picked the wrong part of the park in which to sit - was a trifle puzzling. Why did they not notice that there was no-one else around them? and the very long explanation of the plot of "Much Ado about Nothing" did become tedious. The two actors used the script well, however, and both pointed up the contrast between the naivety of youth and the certainty of age. Tottie's accent was maintained throughout. She had many of the best lines, too, often sharply reminding her niece that she knew more about the Bard as she did, and managing to let us see that Deirdre's marital affairs were not all rosy.

The final play was certainly the best of the evening. A well-written and sensitively-directed piece, it held our attention throughout. We visited a café, a bus stop, and both their homes during the play and, although only billed as a two-hander, there were plenty of other unseen characters involved. The man - simply known as Him (Allister Kay) - and the woman (Lynne Chesterton) (Her) portrayed in brief interludes their life of knowing each other. Both gave splendid performances, and brought many other characters to us, simply by good acting. In one particularly good section of the play, the couple played cards, moving around the table whilst talking with unseen people and taking us through passages of time. Then there were the other characters: a non-speaking waitress (Trisha Stedman) who gave what she was asked; and the others brought to us by word of mouth only. We got to know Mrs Pugh, the bossy woman who ran the Evergreens club of the title; but we also got to know their pets: Her canary and His dog, very well indeed. The couple had almost stopped talking to one another after both had misunderstood the venue for a date, but the scene when they met again as he read the Financial Times was hilarious and well played. The "will they/ won't they" came to a satisfactory conclusion, just as we hoped it would. Put simply: we were interested and involved, and it came off.

Well done CCADS - after so many years you are still giving your audiences a good show.

*Peter Shearan*

# CHRIST CHURCH YOUTH CLUB

## Christ Church Youth Club

We meet Sundays in term-time

6 p.m. to 8 p. m.

In Christ Church Hall

Admission £1

### Spring Programme 2010

10th January	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
17th January	Drama and Music
24th January	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
31st January	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
7th February	Remote control evening
14th February	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
21st February	<b>Film Night</b>
28th February	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
7th March	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
14th March	Mothering Sunday Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...
21 st March	Drama and Music
28th March	Youth Activities darts, table tennis and more ...



An angel at Angelspace?

# Ted Gwalter

## Handyman extraordinaire

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December the family of Ted Gwalter gathered at Christ Church to hear Sue bless the new kitchen hatch in memory of Ted. Ted was a very practical person, always on hand to carry out repairs. Along with Joseph for many years he printed the parish magazine and when the size changed to A5 made a very simple but effective device for folding the magazine. His family wished to provide the church with a gift to commemorate his life at Christ Church, what better way than a long needed practical solution to kitchen hatch – hands up all who have wrestled with that confounded contraption in the past – 1, 2, 3, 4..... 365, just about everyone within the church and those who hire the hall!

Thank you Ted.





# FAIRTRADE LUNCH STOP

**Sandwiches, toasted sandwiches,  
homemade cakes, fresh fruit, snack bars**

**Tea,  
Fresh filter coffee,  
Hot Chocolate,  
Fruit Juices**

**View our  
Fairtrade Goods  
stands.**

**Come and enjoy a Fairtrade Lunch  
at Emmanuel Baptist Church,  
Windmill Street, Gravesend.**



The cost of your lunch will be  
what you consider to  
be a 'Fair' price for what you eat.

**Friday 15th January 2010  
12 - 2 pm**



## **BEATITUDES FOR RELATIONSHIPS**

(From the Mothers' Union Prayer Diary)

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves;  
they will have no end of fun.

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill;  
they will be saved a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses;  
they are on their way to becoming wise.

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves seriously;  
they will be valued by those about them.

Happy are you if you take small things seriously and face serious things calmly;  
you will go far in life.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown;  
you will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitudes of others;  
you will achieve clarity.

Blessed are those who think before they act and pray before they think;  
they will avoid many blunders.

Happy are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile;  
peace has begun to seep into your soul.

(Author unknown)

### **Support the Christmas Card Recycling Scheme**



**Woodland  
Trust**



Recycle your Christmas cards at WHSmith; TK Max; Marks and Spencer or leave them in the box at the back of the church and students from Ifield School Post 16 will take them for you.

Highlights this month !

# All-Age Service Burns Night

# January

<b>Sunday</b> 	January 31st RSPB Garden Bird Watch 	3 8 am Service 10 am Service	10 8 am Service 10 am All-Age Service 4 pm Evensong Youth Club	17 8 am Service 10 am Service Youth Club	24 8 am Service 10 am Service Youth Club First Boy Scout Troop Formed 1908
<b>Monday</b> 		4 Music Group	11 Cubs Brownies	18 Cubs Brownies	25  Burns Night Cubs Brownies
<b>Tuesday</b> 		5 Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh) 1666-1708	12	19	26  Australia Day
<b>Wednesday</b> 		6 Epiphany Open Church after 10am service First Steps 1:45pm 	13 Baptism of Jesus St Hilary's Day Open Church after 10am service Guides	20 Open Church after 10am service Vasant Panchami Hindu 1st day of spring Guides	27 Open Church after 10am service National Holocaust Memorial Day Guides
<b>Thursday</b> 		7 Orthodox Christmas Choir Practice	14 Makar Sankranti / Lohri Hindu winter festival Beavers Brownies Choir Practice	21 Beavers Brownies Choir Practice	28 Beavers Brownies Choir Practice
<b>Friday</b> 	1	8 Parent & Toddler Office Hours Scouts	15 New Moon Parent & Toddler Office Hours Scouts	22 Parent & Toddler Office Hours Scouts	29 Parent & Toddler Office Hours Scouts
<b>Saturday</b> 	2 Working Party	9	16	23	30 Buddhist New Year RSPB Garden Bird Watch 

# What happens at Christ Church?

## Sunday Services

8.00 am Holy Communion (said)

10.00 am Communion with crèche & God's Gang

On the 2nd Sunday "New Look" All-Age service

Evening Service - see inside magazine for details.

## Weekday Services

Holy Communion (said)

Monday and Saturday 8am.

Tuesday & Thursday 7.00am.

Wednesday 10.00am

For further information  
contact  
the Church Wardens

## Office hours

Friday 6:30 pm until 7:30 pm

## Open Church

Wednesday

After the 10 am  
service

## Clubs

There are a wide variety of clubs for you:-

Daily Christ Church Pre-school (2½ upwards)

Monday Cubs; Music Group; Brownies

Tuesday

Wednesday Guides; Mothers Union (1st Wednesday)

First Steps (under 5's and carers) 2nd Wednesday 1.45pm

Thursday Beavers; Brownies; Choir Practice

Friday Scouts; Amateur Dramatics ; Parent and Toddler

Saturday Working party (1st Saturday)

Sunday Christ Church Youth Club

