

# Sonning Parish Magazine



**Serving the Communities  
of Sonning and Charvil**



The ancient parish of Sonning, originally extending from Sonning Common to Sandhurst was one of the great blocks of land handed over to the Church in the 7th century. In 909 A.D. Sonning with Ramsbury, became a separate bishopric, the Bishop of Ramsbury/ Sonning maintaining a riverside Hall in the village. In 1075 the see was transferred to Old Sarum, ultimately Salisbury, whose bishops had their own Palace on the same site as the Saxon Hall until 1574, when the manor was transferred to the Crown.

St Andrew's Church in the heart of the village was founded in Saxon times - probably by Birinus, first bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames. It was largely rebuilt in 1852, during the incumbency of Canon Hugh Pearson; it was he who founded the Sonning Parish Magazine in 1869.

The White Hart Hotel, now known as The Great House, and partly 17th century, stands on the site of older buildings including the home of 'Elias the Ferryman' mentioned in a deed of 1100. The French Horn Hotel, in Sonning Eye, was built in the 1880s in front of the original old inn - now Bridge House - and its farm buildings. The Bull Inn, belonging to the Church, was originally known as Church House, a guesthouse for pilgrims to medieval St Sarik's Chapel in St Andrew's. Also adjoining the church is Deanery Garden one of Sir Edwin Lutyen's best-known country houses built at the turn of the century, just above the site of the ancient residence of the Deans of Salisbury who regularly visited Sonning, the parish being a 'Dean's Peculiar'.

Sonning Mill produced a regular supply of flour from Saxon time until 1969, after which it was converted into a 'Dinner Theatre', the first of its kind in Britain. The Pearson Hall is the principal venue for village functions

Within the village boundaries lie the Reading Blue Coat School at Holme Park (once the home of the Lord of the Manor) Sonning Church of England Primary School, King George's Field and other sports grounds, and Reading University Farm - all of which help to preserve the rural atmosphere of Sonning, the centre of which is now a conservation area.

The civil parish of Charvil is of relatively recent origin but the land on which it lies has long been part of the ecclesiastical parish of Sonning. In the 18th and 19th centuries it consisted of Charville Farm and a few cottages, which lay between the villages of Sonning and Twyford and adjacent to the London to Bath highway.

The development of Charvil began between the two World Wars, particularly after the new A4 road was constructed in the 1920s bypassing Twyford, and was accelerated after 1945. To meet the needs of this increasingly large community, St Patrick's dual-purpose Church and Hall was consecrated and opened in 1952; it remains within the ecclesiastical parish of Sonning. It was considerably extended and refurbished in 2001.

## St Andrew's Sonning Contacts

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## Forthcoming Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>What's on?</i>	<i>Page</i>
4 Dec	Sonning CE School PTA Christmas Fayre	R
9 Dec	Floral Arrangement Society AGM & Christmas Luncheon	25
14 Dec	Footprints coffee morning	18
19 Dec	St Andrew's Candlelit 9 Lessons and 9 Carols	19
24 Dec	St Andrew's Crib Service	19
24 Dec	St Andrew's Midnight Mass	19
25 Dec	St Andrew's Holy Communion	19
25 Dec	St Andrew's Family Communion	19
26 Dec	Parish Eucharist	19
15 Jan 2011	Sonning & Warren Conservatives Winter drinks	21
<b>Notes:</b>	<b>Deadline, January issue:</b> <b>4.00 pm Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010</b> R = Reminder from previous issue. D = Diary entry.	

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**Regular Services**  
**The Parish Church**

Sundays	8 am	Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
	10.30 am	Family Service, first Sunday of the month Parish Eucharist, second, fourth and fifth Sundays.  Matins, third Sunday.
	6.30 pm	Evensong, except third Sunday of the month, when it will be Holy Communion with the laying on of hands for those who wish it.
Wednesdays	10 am	Holy Communion at St Andrew's

**St Patrick's Charvil**

Sundays	9.30 am	Family Service, Third Sunday of the month Holy Communion, second and fourth Sundays Worship Service other Sundays.  Sunday School 9.30 am except third Sunday of the month
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*If you would like to arrange a Church Service in St. Andrew's Church you are asked to contact Sonia Boyles, the Parish Administrator for Baptisms. Sonia can also be contacted by email at: [standrews.sonning@btinternet.com](mailto:standrews.sonning@btinternet.com). For Weddings and funerals, contact the vicar on 0118 969 3298.*



The parish magazine staff wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year

## The Vicar's Letter

Dear friends,

### Two new priests

Such a good start has been made on the Stewardship Campaign and on increasing other income that the PCC has decided to fund a new post to join the Ministry Team to expand our work with families and young people. This is in line with what was presented to the parish prior to the Stewardship Campaign in June. The priest will live in the Park View Drive house following Michael Forrer's retirement at some stage next year.

In anticipation of Michael's retirement by July 2011 we will also be recruiting a new house for duty priest, focused on pastoral care for both villages and particularly for the 440 on the electoral roll. Unlike the present house for duty post, there will be no administrative role relating to St Patrick's.

After prayerful reflection and discussion it has been decided that the present house for duty post, dedicated to ministry at St. Patrick's will cease when Michael Forrer retires next year. This part time, unpaid post was set up as an experiment nine years ago, and Michael has given very good service in both villages and has worked hard. With Bob Peter's able assistance, the family service has recently showed signs of growth which is encouraging, but the hoped for expansion of the St Patrick's congregation in terms of communicant committed members has sadly not occurred during this period. Indeed, the core congregation who are needed in order to provide financial and other support for the church has rarely exceeded 20 since its opening in 1952. Indeed the worshipping life of the church ceased during the 1970's because very poor numbers, with the small band of regulars bussed down to St. Andrew's. There are many reasons for all of this , not least the nature of the village and perhaps the location of our building. As a consequence of these deliberations, oversight of St Patrick's church will revert back to me as Vicar, with our Lay Minister, Bob Peters taking a part in this. These are not easy issues to deal with, and we have proceeded with care and in a prayerful spirit at every turn. However, in a Christian community, sometimes we have to face up to stark truths, even though the process is not comfortable. It is in doing this that we can learn from what has passed, and God willing, build for the future in the process. We have to use the limited resources we have been given to the maximum effect to advance the mission of the church, and we believe that it is now time to try something new in the parish.

### Stipendiary Post

We will appoint a priest who will spend at least 50% of the time concentrating on outreach to families and young people, the majority of whom live in Charvil. When the parish was in its last interregnum, the PCC committed itself to trying to improve this area of ministry, and the last two

years have been spent planning, discussing and most importantly, praying about this. The new priest will need to have shown in previous posts the specific gifts and experience in this specialist ministry.

As well as starting new initiatives and building and coordinating a team of helpers for this work, the priest will also be of service in the parish, undertaking the usual priestly tasks.

### **House for Duty Post for Pastoral Ministry**

In addition to this new post, we will appoint a house for duty priest who will specialise in pastoral care both for the 440 on the electoral roll and those in the wider community. Michael Forrer's pastoral involvement with many people has been much valued, and this work needs to be continued, enhanced and expanded. This new house for duty priest will be able to devote two days a week to routine pastoral work, plus some Sunday duty.

In return for this work, the house and priest's expenses will be covered by the parish. The exact details of the housing that will be provided have yet to be finalised. The belief is that such a post would greatly enhance the scope and effectiveness of our pastoral ministry, and would be of good service in making pastoral contact with the not inconsiderable number of people on the electoral roll, more than half of whom don't live within the geographical parish. This will augment what I and our Lay Minister are already doing.

As we come to the end of 2010, we are aware that 2011 will bring some significant changes, and some new faces. I am most encouraged that the PCC have unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed these new ministries, and I am confident that these bold steps will enable us to greatly enhance the way in which we serve all age groups in both villages.

We are gearing up for another busy Christmas season in both churches, and may I warmly invite you to come and celebrate the birth of the Christ child with us. With warm wishes and (when it comes) a happy Christmas from all at the Vicarage.

**Jamie**

### **Notices**

#### **A prayer for our new Priests**

God our Father, send your Holy Spirit to fill us with vision, energy and prayer. Help us to be faithful to You in our work, in our churches and in our community. We ask for guidance and discernment for all involved in selecting our new priests. And may, even now, your Spirit move in the hearts of those who will be called here to serve.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

**Amen.**

**Service format:** Twelve people responded to our consultation about replacing Matins with a family communion on the third Sunday of the month. Ten were in favour of the change and two opposed. The PCC has discussed this and has unanimously decided to implement the worship committee's proposal from January 2011. Therefore all but the first Sunday of the month 10:30am services will be a communion service. On the third Sunday there will be a crèche for small children, and older children will be encouraged to join in the service. The intention is to continue to have 'adult worship', and this will feel very similar to what happens at the Parish Eucharist. The primary motivation behind the worship committee's proposal was to try to encourage more adults back to church on the third Sunday. These are the many regulars who vote with their feet when it is Matins. Evensong, which is a very similar service to Matins, takes place nearly every Sunday evening in St. Andrew's, and this small congregation will be most encouraged if those who value the traditions of the prayer Book came along.

A new rota for junior servers will be formed for the third Sunday (volunteers welcome) and the junior choir will be encouraged to attend. An order of service will be devised and be put into operation by Easter, having spent the first few months seeing what works best in terms of content. The evening service on the first Sunday will be communion and the third Sunday 6:30pm service will revert to Evensong. The traditional prayer book services at 8:00am and 6:30pm will continue to be upheld and cherished.

**New Format:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	10:30am: Family Service	6:30pm Holy Communion
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	10:30am: Parish Eucharist	6:30pm Evensong
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	10:30am: Family Communion	6:30pm Evensong
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	10:30am: Parish Eucharist	6:30pm Evensong
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	10:30am: Parish Eucharist	6:30pm Evensong

**Boxing Day:** Please note that the 10:30am Parish Eucharist will be the only service in either church on the 26<sup>th</sup> December.

**New Flag Officer:** Over the years Andrew Elliston and others have kindly put one of our flags up on special occasions. We are pleased that Tom Farncombe has agreed to carry on this good work, and now has a schedule for the year of church and state occasions when the flag should be flying.



**Magazine Price:** Would all readers please note that for cost reasons, from January 2011 this magazine will be priced at 40p per copy. Thank you for your understanding.

**Jamie**

# Footprints



**For all those  
dealing with the  
loss of a loved one,  
redundancy, divorce,  
or separation**

**Come and join us at an informal coffee  
morning on the second Tuesday of the month  
at 11.00am in the St Sarik Room of  
St. Andrew's Sonning  
(December 14<sup>th</sup> 2010)**

**An opportunity to meet with others facing the  
many pressures of bereavement and loss**

# CHRISTMAS AT ST. ANDREW'S SONNING-ON-THAMES



19th Dec  
6:30 pm

**CANDLELIT NINE LESSONS  
AND CAROLS**

Followed by refreshments

24th Dec  
4.00 pm

**CRIB SERVICE**  
For All Ages

24th Dec  
11.30 pm

**MIDNIGHT MASS**  
The Birth Of Christ

25th Dec  
8:00am

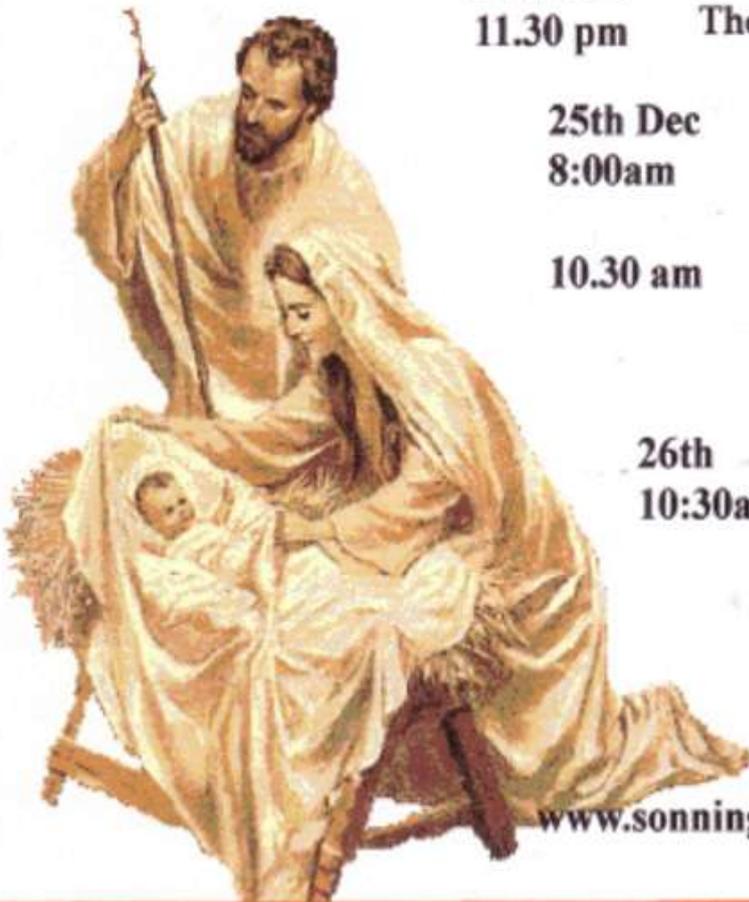
**HOLY COMMUNION**

10.30 am

**FAMILY COMMUNION**  
Bring a toy

26th  
10:30am

**PARISH EUCHARIST**



[www.sonningparish.org](http://www.sonningparish.org)



## Charvil Christmas Chatter

“Christmas is coming the goose is getting fat please put a penny in the old man’s hat, if you can’t manage a penny a halfpenny will do and if you can’t manage a halfpenny then God bless you” so the old rhyme goes.

In times of economic downturn the many charities that are synonymous with the British culture suffer seriously as do their clientele. The wealthy are well cushioned for the most part when downturns hit the country and the world. No doubt, like me, you have received many charity brochures as Christmas approaches. How do you decide which one to support? Does charity begin at home or further afield elsewhere in Africa or the Far East? The answer is to give some at home and some abroad. By and large I believe in this country most people are generous and give to those for whom Christmas is otherwise not a festival to be looked forward to. Certainly it is a time to ensure that our children appreciate the real meaning of Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, born in the humblest of surroundings - a stable, which must have smelt to high heaven. There are many children born into this world whose birth place is similarly primitive and basic, for which Christmas brings little joy and little to celebrate.

As in previous years at St Patrick’s the service of Nine Lessons and Carols will feature the children and young people of the Sunday Club doing all the readings. It is at the 9:30 service on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December and we hope you can make it. Also on the 5<sup>th</sup> December at 9:30 there will be our annual family toy service when the children bring toys for the disadvantaged children in Reading and the surrounding area. On Christmas day we will have a 9:30 Family Communion to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. See you at one or all of these events.

These are all opportunities to bring joy at Christmas through our own generosity to those who will be less fortunate than we will be. A very happy Christmas

**Love and prayers**  
**Michael & Family**

### From the Registers

#### **Baptisms**

7<sup>th</sup> November: Olivia Frances Maxwell  
7<sup>th</sup> November: William John Hubert Fisher  
21<sup>st</sup> November: Isabella Louise Sigridur Denoon-Slater

#### **Weddings**

30<sup>th</sup> October: Danny Wylde and Jemma Frances Pratley  
30<sup>th</sup> October: Darren James Turner and Naomi Michelle Bovis

#### **Funerals**

1<sup>st</sup> November: Reginald Green                      20<sup>th</sup> November: Baby Lewis Kettle  
24<sup>th</sup> November: Kate Garstone                      25<sup>th</sup> November: Jack Benstead

## Parish Walk

Dec 18<sup>th</sup>; meet 10.15am car park on Thames Valley Park Drive, at the end of the A329M extension, GR737739. Historical walk, Kennet and Thames. More info call me on 0118 926 8035 or mobile 07982 0483.

**Jean Milbourn**

## Reading & District Cigarette Card & Postcard Club

Fifty members, guests and members of the public attended Charvil Village Hall on October 14<sup>th</sup> to watch a video presentation followed by a 'question & answer' session by Ian Small on the work of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, based at Maidenhead. It brought home the shocking sacrifice and suffering caused by warfare, especially on the scale of both World Wars. The commission is responsible for 1.69 million graves in 150 countries in 23,000 burial sites, 2,500 war cemeteries and 200 plus war memorials/monuments. It began in 1915 through the foresight and work of one man, Fabian Ware. The annual cost of £45 million is paid proportionately according to their losses by the governments of the UK, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and India. The audience found it a very informative and moving evening.

The Club always seeks any old postcards (pre-1950) and cigarette cards for sale in their quarterly auctions from members of the public, please ring me on 0118 969 5155. Information on the Club and future programme can be found on the club website, [www.readingpostcards.com](http://www.readingpostcards.com) or ring the above number.

**Roy Sheppard**

## Conservative Association Sonning & Warren Branch Winter Drinks 2011

The Conservative Winter Drinks are to be held on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 12.00 noon at 101 Pound Lane, Sonning, by kind permission of Mr Paul Etherington & Ms Karen Gracie-Langrick.

Tickets costing £10.00 each can be obtained from Rosemary Digby (0118 9693277) or any member of the Committee. **Tickets must be purchased by January 3<sup>rd</sup> at the latest.** We look forward to seeing you there.

**Alison Russell**

## Thank you for supporting Heroes Christmas Fair



The sun shone and the masses turned up to support the Heroes Christmas Fair on 6<sup>th</sup> November. All the stalls were very busy including jams, cakes, raffle and auction prizes. The total profit made from the day was £1800 - an amazing result and thanks to everyone who supported. It was lovely to see The British Legion accept the offer to sit alongside Help for Heroes on the front door and collect money for the Poppy Appeal. Both charities are working **together** to support our troops and Gordon Barnett and myself felt that was important. There was a reason for holding the event and choosing the charity. Two years ago I underwent a spinal fusion operation having suffered a fractured spine. Now that I am getting back to fitness, I have set myself a challenge that I couldn't have achieved prior to the operation. In July 2011, I will be climbing the world's tallest freestanding mountain rise - Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in aid of Help 4 Heroes - 6 days to climb to the summit and 2 days to descend. I look forward to the challenge.

A month after my operation, I met two ex soldiers who had returned from Afghanistan as amputees and were supported by H4H. These committed and focused men not only made me laugh, but inspired me. My prosthetic back has been neatly stitched, and I promised that when I was given the all clear, I would embark on a challenge to raise money specifically for the H4H limb care. They are my inspiration to face this challenge head on, and raise as much money as possible for H4H.

I would like to thank the Church Choir for giving up their time to sing a mixture of Carols and war associated songs, which was very much appreciated by everyone and added to the ambience. Thanks also to Sonning Flower Club for giving up their time to take pre orders for Christmas Wreaths. If anyone would like one of these or a table decoration, please let me know. All proceeds go to the charity. I would also like to thank Rt Hon Theresa May MP, for giving up her valuable time to support the event and draw the raffle prizes. Lastly I would like to thank Gordon Barnett for supporting me and also to my friends and family (my parents, Vera Harris, John & Jan Hammond, Jane & Freya Hunt, Darren Smith, as well as other friends) for putting in a lot of hours and hard work on the day to make it work. A wonderful day and an amazing total raised for Help for Heroes. Thank you.

For more information please contact:

Sally Wilson on [wilsons18@sky.com](mailto:wilsons18@sky.com) or [www.bmycharity.com/V2/sallyclimbskilli2011](http://www.bmycharity.com/V2/sallyclimbskilli2011)  
(Please note that donations to Bmycharity webpage, do not incur any admin fee)

Sally Wilson

## Sonning Glebe WI

The speaker at our November meeting was Carla Miles-Robinson who gave us an interesting insight into Feng-Shui and de - cluttering your home and your mind. I am sure some of our members will have returned home and cleared away unwanted clutter which had been on their agenda for some time.

As mentioned in last month's magazine we are supporting "Operation Christmas Child" which is filling shoe boxes with presents for needy children. Three of our members have been extremely busy filling and wrapping 27 shoe boxes. Our thanks go to them and I am sure there will be many delighted children's faces on Christmas morning. We hold our Christmas party on the 13<sup>th</sup> December when members get together for a supper, games, singing carols and a visit from Father Christmas giving out bran tub presents.

As 2010 comes to a close we are looking forward to another interesting year for WI including a stimulating programme of speakers and events. If you wish to join us please give me a call on 0118 969 4897 or E mail [normanoakley@waitrose.com](mailto:normanoakley@waitrose.com). The members of Sonning Glebe WI would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and a peaceful and happy New Year.

Molly Oakley

### Royal British Legion Poppy Shop

I would like to thank all those that supported the Poppy Shop; as a result I was able to send to the Sonning Branch Poppy Appeal fund a cheque for £65.00. In addition to this we must bear in mind that the purchase of the merchandise in the first place raises money for the Royal British Legion nationwide.



There are a few items left, which are now available at sale prices:

Small sample vase:	£5.00 each
Pocket address books:	£5.00 each
Poppy wreath brooches:	£5.00 each
Leather key fobs:	£3.50 each
Legion ballpoint pens:	£2.00 each
Small blank note cards:	£4.00 each (pack of 10)

Do contact me if you are interested:

Tel 0118 969 6693, email [carole.barnett@talktalk.net](mailto:carole.barnett@talktalk.net)

Carole Barnett

## **Can Anyone Tell Me What Went Wrong?**

When I was a boy, living in Woodley, I spent most of my leisure time in Sonning. I joined the Church Lad's Brigade, led by someone in the village. We met in Dunsden. This was sometime in the 1930s. One Day we re-formed as the Cadet Corps because, it was said, we were not suitable to be associated with the Church.

I know of nothing that we did that was in any way untoward. Does anyone know the true history of this time, and the whys and wherefores?

**Rusty Atkins**

### **Sonning Parish Council**

#### **Support Your Community: "Sonning Lorry Spotters Club"**

Most residents of Sonning know that we run periodic 'lorry watch' sessions to catch and discourage overweight vehicles from passing through the restricted area and across the bridge. I am looking for more volunteers for the Sonning HGV Survey Team (Better known as the Sonning Lorry Spotters Club!). Recently, two members have left the team, one moving away and one going into full time employment. It is a difficult task with a so few volunteers to rely on each time.

We operate every 4 to 6 weeks but now we are scoring a number of 'kills' with the help of Oxfordshire Trading Standards, I would like to spread the load or even increase the frequency, to get the message home that the village is a 'no go area' to overweight vehicles. Whilst we are currently operating up to 6 hour periods the personal commitment is for one hour only, so it is not particularly onerous, but can be quite entertaining; time can fly when you are enjoying yourself and the weather is good. We need to operate with a minimum of 3 on duty and occasionally we are supported by a local bobby. Training and equipment is provided.

If you are interested I would be pleased to hear from you so I can give more detail. Please contact me on 0118 969 6762 or email [ken@kenpeters.co.uk](mailto:ken@kenpeters.co.uk) .

**Ken Peters**

### **Sonning CE Primary School**

Life at Sonning School continues to be very busy especially in these remaining weeks up to Christmas. As well as the Open Mornings for prospective parents for next academic year we have also welcomed our new January children for their induction visits. It was also lovely to welcome Sally Wilson as part of our Remembrance Service as she shared the work that she has been doing for Help for Heroes with the children.

We also had our celebration for St Andrew's Day in church and our Year 1 children are busy preparing for the part that they play in our whole school Carol Service on December 13<sup>th</sup> when they perform the Christmas nativity story. Several of these children are also looking forward to being part of the Crib Service on Christmas Eve in church.

A significant piece of work that has been achieved this term has been the review of our school's aims and mission statement. It was lovely for staff to work alongside Governors to discuss what our church school stands for and how we can communicate this distinctiveness in an effective and meaningful way. As a result our refreshed mission statement is: 'Our school values are to provide an education of the highest quality founded in our Christian belief' and this is supported by the summary statement:

**'LEARN, ENJOY, WORK AND ACHIEVE IN FAITH'**

Sadly our Early Years Teaching Assistant, Mrs Rodney, is leaving us at the end of the term and the Governors are in the process of recruiting a replacement. This position is for an experienced practitioner with NVQ Level 3 or equivalent in Early Years. Details can be found on the Wokingham website or from the school office should you or someone you know be interested. Interviews are planned to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Don't forget to join us for our Christmas Fayre on Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup> (11.30am - 2.30pm); our PTA has been working incredibly hard for this event in support of our school. We also look forward to welcoming members of the Monday Club to school the following week on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Here's hoping that we have a smoother and less snowy start to our Spring Term when we all return to school in January after the Christmas break.

**Lesley Green**

### **Sonning Floral Arrangement Society**

We had a pleasant meeting in November with Jenny Clarke demonstrating "Olden Days of Christmas". Not a chatty person like some, but nevertheless it was interesting to watch her work. She used some beautiful flowers punctuated by a bit of glitter here and there and then illuminated with tiny lights. One especially nice arrangement was in green, white and gold. After a cup of tea, all the designs were raffled at the end of the meeting.

Members are reminded of the Christmas lunch followed by the AGM on 9<sup>th</sup> December; 12.30 for 1.00pm. Mulled wine will be served, otherwise, bring your own drinks. Extra parking will be available at the old Fire Station in Pound Lane. The competition will be "Christmas in a Glass".

**Jane Gascoine**

## Hospice

“Hey boss, what’s with all these thick sweaters, scarves and fingerless gloves you migrated to? You’re not anticipating a real cold snap and the boiler breaking down again are you?” “No Jo, just getting ready for the carol singing at the hospice again, it’s mighty cold outdoors these days” I pondered this one, have I missed out somewhere, he’s never taken me outdoors, let alone to a hospice. “Boss can I come too” The boss winced, gave me his shrivelled with cold look and replied “No Jo, I’d never fit you in the back of the car, and besides you’d rapidly go out of tune, and David Baker has just been in to give you the pre Christmas overhaul. I’ll manage with the keyboard, it folds up, stays in tune and is a little more robust for extracurricular activities; mind you if it rains there is the risk of electrocution”. “Ah, doesn’t sound too appealing, I’ll pass and stay in the warm”.

“By the way what’s a hospice and how come you’re involved?” “Well Jo, Thames Hospicecare provides palliative care for seriously ill people. Frank volunteered us, he heard an appeal on Radio Berkshire from them a few years back for a band to support their ‘Light up a life’ service and we’ve been doing it ever since. It’s quite a moving experience” I thought about Should be Band and the musical offerings they’ve dealt out at the Christian Aid concerts in the past. “Carols don’t sound like your bag boss”. The boss sighed “Oh ye of little faith, we get by, thanks to a number of imported singers and musicians from here and St Andrew’s, and they keep asking us back, so we can’t be that bad”. “Or they can’t get anyone else boss”. “Quite so Jo, but it means a lot to the relatives and staff, so we get on with it. Christmas is a special time”.

**Joanna (the St Patrick’s Pianner)**

## Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

Following another very successful year, the Society held its 7<sup>th</sup> AGM on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November. A sizable turnout of members enjoyed not only a very enjoyable meal but also an excellent, informative talk by Dr Brian O’Callaghan, Head of Education and Lifelong Learning at the Royal Town Planning Institute, on his career in buildings.

Sonning’s conservation area is forty years old this year and a recent initiative of the Society, announced by Dr O’Callaghan at the AGM, has been the decision to undertake an assessment of our conservation area. This conservation area assessment, to be carried out in close collaboration with Sonning Parish Council, will look at our historic environment and will be a valuable aid to decision-making in the fields of planning and conservation for the future, focusing attention on maintaining and enhancing the historic character of our village.

Our Planning and Traffic Panel has had a particularly busy year. Working in partnership with the Parish Council Highways Working Group it has been looking to develop a strategy for managing the traffic flow within Sonning. Not an easy task! As part of this work they are currently developing a methodology to identify and report unnecessary signs around the village.

If you would like to learn more about the work of the Sonning and Sonning Eye Society or to join us in supporting the excellent work that is being carried out to preserve and protect our historic environment then please contact Diana Coulter on 0118 969 2132

**Mark Green**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Charvil Guides Centenary Year**

September 2009 marked 100 years since Lord Baden-Powell had been asked to provide 'something for the girls'. Thus our Centenary year ran from September 2009 to October 2010. 1<sup>st</sup> Charvil Guides attended a Launch party at Bulmershe School with activities ranging from cheer-leading to pottery painting. During the year we have worked on an Adventure 100 badge encouraging the guides to try new things and challenge themselves.

Our Young leader, Helen, took her adult Promise at the top of the Jungfrau on a Leader's trip to Switzerland - a real mountain top experience. Eleven girls took their Promise as Guides this year. A sunny weekend in June saw us camping with one hundred other guiding members at Thirtover, near Newbury and in August five girls and two leaders travelled all the way to Leeds for one night. We joined 15,000 others for a day of performing arts at Harewood House and an overnight camp, coming home with three special edition Centenary tents as souvenirs. During the year we have worked on 'Go for Its' based around chocolate and water activities. We have been bowling, visited Sonning Lock and much more.

Most of us celebrated the Centenary Finale in Trafalgar Square, though some stayed closer to home with a District event at Bluecoat School, Sonning. At 20:10 on 20/10 2010 every member of Girlguiding UK, some half a million of us, retook our Promise at the same moment. It was a memorable end to a wonderful year.

Now 2011 beckons and as we still have spaces in our unit, we hope to welcome new members, both girls and leaders.

**Ruth Hulley**

Christmas cheer - with tongue in cheek!

