



CROSSKEYS

The magazine for the Catholic Parish of Hampshire Downs



Photo: Tony Smith www.tatlysmith.com

Visitors to this year's Winchester's Christmas market have admired this nativity scene manned by Winchester Churches Together.

Jesus is the light shining in the darkness

At Christmas Isaiah proclaims: "The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone." Isaiah was proclaiming this message to his own people who had suffered much distress, injustice and indignity at the hands of their oppressors. This Christmas the message is proclaimed to us as we seek the light of Christ in the darkness and shadow of our own lives, writes Canon Paul Townsend.

As a priest I am privileged to be allowed to see much that is dark in human experience. It could be in the suffering of those I visited when I took my sabbatical in Palestine/Israel; it is often in the cold and sudden wrench of the death of a loved one or in the kind of sickness that causes deep anxiety. So often it is in the breakdown of a relationship, in some act of betrayal or in the termination of employment, homelessness or extreme financial hardship. These are just a few forms of that darkness that so often touch human lives and cause so much pain.

We all walk in the kind of darkness that Isaiah proclaims and my prayer and hope is that we will all see, with the eyes of faith, the light of Christ present in every aspect of our darkness and especially at Christmas time. St. John tells us that Jesus is the Word of God who became flesh and lived among us. He also says that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness did not overcome.

At Christmas we celebrate that moment in human history when God in Jesus Christ joined himself inseparably to human beings so that the pain of our suffering might give way to the joy and light of God. So our Christmas celebration has to be about seeing the presence of Jesus, who is the Light of the World, in our daily lives.

A few weeks ago, on the First Sunday of Advent, we began the Church's year, which this year is devoted to listening to St. Mark's Gospel. Mark wrote his Gospel for a small house church in Rome just after the death of the Emperor Nero who had a deep hatred of Christians. The community were in crisis and needed Mark to tell them that they could see Jesus present in their everyday lives.

The gift of being able to see Christ with the eyes of faith is a strong theme in Mark's Gospel and is offered to us this and every Christmas as the greatest Christmas gift ever. Nourish that gift with generous daily prayer,

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St Anne's students first in flying flag for greener world

St Anne's has become the first secondary school in Southampton to achieve the prestigious Green Flag Award. The Eco-Schools Team was informed of the award in November and celebrated by announcing a new scrap fashion competition and an organic 'feast' day, writes assistant head teacher James Rouse.

The school has been working on the Green Flag Award for some time, having been awarded the Silver Award in 2008. The Eco-Schools team has focused on reducing litter and energy consumption in the school as well as developing the biodiversity of the school site – not an easy option in a school with almost no grounds and in the middle of the city!

St Anne's has an Energy Certificate rating of 59, making it the lowest consumer of power per pupil of any secondary school in Southampton. Details of its Eco-Plan and other information can be found on the school website

<http://www.st-annes.southampton.sch.uk/school/>

Although a city school, St. Anne's has made the most of its grounds, using roof spaces as well as small spaces around the school, to increase biodiversity. The roof garden, for example, will be growing organic vegetables for a special 'feasting' day next year, as well as some herbs and flowering plants which are used in the food and design and technology departments. The Eco-Team also has plans to increase planting and will plan planting areas around the newly acquired Chapel for next year.

Members of the Eco-Team have also taken part in a range of competitions, including Grounds for



St Anne's students eco team is currently led by Abi Harvey, Megan Wood, Beth Unwin and Naoma Green.

Optimism and the Design Water Challenge. The team is currently led by Abi Harvey, Megan Wood, Beth Unwin and Naoma Green (pictured) who will also be seeking the STEM Leaders Award, as well as a number of students from each year group from Year 7 through to Year 10.

Mrs Beverley Murtagh, headmistress, is delighted: "As a Catholic school, we value our role as stewards of all that God has given us. This award is confirmation of that. Our students, led by our head of design and technology, Gina Longman, have worked very hard in ensuring that the school uses all the opportunities it can to be a greener school, not just as in the way we operate, but also as we educate our young women in how to lead greener lives in the future."



Christmas chart-toppers

The first Christmas chart-topper to enter at No.1 was Slade's Merry Xmas Everybody in 1973

The most consecutive Christmas No.1s is three by The Beatles (1963, 1964, 1965) and The Spice Girls (1996, 1997, 1998).

There has only been one instrumental Christmas No.1 Winifred Atwell's Let's Have Another Party.

The longest running Christmas No.1 was Whitney Houston's I Will Always Love You which topped the charts for 10 weeks and stayed at No.1 into February.

Only Christmas No.1 by female solo vocalists are Whitney Houston's 1992 Christmas hit I Will Always Love You and two UK X Factor winners, Leona Lewis's 'Moment Like This in 2006 and Alexandra Burke with Hallelujah in 2008.

The five all-time biggest UK Christmas hits are:

1. Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody. 1975/1991
2. Band Aid - Do They Know It's Christmas? 1984/1985
3. Jackie Wilson - Reet Petite. 1957/1986
4. Slade - Merry Xmas Everybody. 1973/1981/1983/1998
5. Whitney Houston - I Will Always Love You. 1992/1993

A choice of other Number ones at Christmas is included at the bottom of each page, along with the performer and year.

1952: Hear In My Heart - Al Martino (Nov 16)

Mapping far-flung connections around the world



Something for everyone – well that’s what we’re hoping to achieve: there’s a wide wide range of youth activities available in the parish these days, and it’s great to see so many young people taking part, writes Moira Redmond.

The list, and you’ll find some of these items described further in other parts of **CrossKeys**, includes: youth theatre, youth choir, youth band, altar servers (at the moment we have old hands trying to pass on their skills to a new generation of servers at St Peter’s School), the Confirmation programme, activities for Youth Sunday in November, and the Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And of course our two youth groups, which alternate to cover a large proportion of the school year. New people are welcome at any of these activities, just get in touch with us (below) and we’ll pass you on in the right direction.

The popular Inspire group is run by youth worker Peter McGeady and features food and team-building games, with some spiritual reflection at the end. The meetings are fortnightly, and the programme is running at the moment.

The original youth group took the theme Get Connected this autumn, and started with an art session led by Gerard Curran. We are always delighted to use the talents of parishioners, and we had Donal Brown in to talk about his work in Africa, and Franziska Weingart West reporting back on her adventures at World Youth Day in Madrid this summer.

We had the usual collection of quizzes and games – finding out what you most need if you’re on the moon(!), and the perennial favourite of trying to guess where in the world various weird objects come from. The cheap and cheerful prop of a giant world map came in handy yet again – for some people (adults and children) just looking at the map is enough entertainment, but we also marked it up with post-it notes to show farflung connections of all kinds.

The final session, led by Catherina Emery, was a riotous evening making marble runs from assorted bits and pieces, then timing the results.

And there was still time for pizza and socializing each week.

We have enjoyed being up at the school and St Stephen’s, we made the most of it, but we also are looking forward to youth group moving in to the new Pastoral Centre, where there will be all kinds of new opportunities and resources available, so watch out for that. We’re delighted also to welcome Sister Jiji to our team.

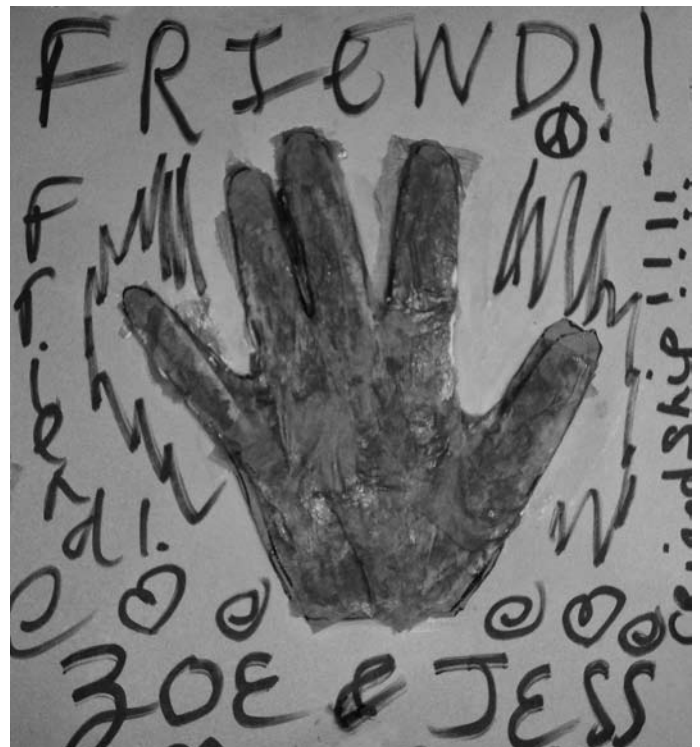
Thanks as ever to all our enthusiastic helpers. There’s always room for more young people, volunteers and ideas – get in touch, watch out for our occasional newsletter and announcements in the weekly parish newsletter, but above all, turn up.

Contact us via the Parish office, or at moirar@msn.com, or on Winchester 861123.

Liza, Marion, Moira & Sue – the youth team.



Some of the art work produced by youth group members.





Let us all renew our appreciation for the gift of Sacred Scripture

Our midnight landing at Gatwick brought an end to a marvellous pilgrimage to the Holy Lands of Jordan and Israel/Palestine with a group of 20 young people and their adult support team from our parish, writes Canon Paul Townsend.

A rainy and windy autumn Sussex was in sharp contrast to the sunshine and 30 degree centigrade temperatures in Galilee, Jerusalem and Mount Nebo. The desert conditions of the Syro-African rift valley provided an austere wilderness background to our time together which helped each of us grow in our appreciation of the sacred scriptures and our relationship with the risen Lord Jesus.

The young people were full of interest, enthusiasm and questions. As we celebrated the Eucharist in a boat on a windy Sea of Galilee, our singing was accompanied by instrumental music made possible because the young people had brought their musical instruments. Many young people said that this Eucharist in this place, listening to the Gospel of the calming of the storm, was something they would never forget.

An unforgettable experience because the Eucharist brought so many things together as it always does. The place, the land where Jesus lived, died and rose again is important. Just being in the place is remarkable because it is obviously the land of the Gospels. The Sea, the wilderness, the Jordan River and the people, all speak of the Palestine of Jesus' time and the undeniable truth that he was truly human and divine living in a real place with a geographical and cultural identity.

Being exhausted by the heat and the dust; savouring the sensation of standing in the very places where Jesus stood, brings a new exhilaration and depth of meaning when encountering the sacred texts of the New Testament. Strangely, the joy of sailing on the Sea of Galilee, visiting the site of the Empty Tomb, standing on the Southern Steps of the Temple on which Jesus most certainly stood, bathing in the Jordan at the place of Jesus' baptism, increase a person's relish for every word of scripture. The encounter with the sacred text is a sacramental encounter with the life giving Word of God who is Jesus Christ and one like us.

And that encounter for us on pilgrimage was not an isolated and individual experience. It was a gift which we were able to receive because we drew support and enlightenment from the faith, prayer and questions of one another. A solidarity and communal moment which provided the most appropriate context for the celebration of the Lord Jesus' certain and true presence in the Eucharist.

This was an unforgettable moment because Jesus was



Canon Paul Townsend celebrates Mass during the pilgrimage.

present in his word, in his risen humanity and in the love and companionship we shared with each other. Our last day was spent in the blazing heat of the Dead Sea where everyone enjoyed a float and a swim or a soak in the pool at Amman Beach or just a lazy time with a book or a Kindle being pestered by desert flies. Whichever it was, our joy of coming and being together is rooted in Jesus Christ, our faith in him and our membership of his Body the Church.

I would like to quote from Pope Benedict XVI: "As we call to mind the Word of God who became flesh in the Womb of Mary of Nazareth, our heart now turns to the land where the mystery of salvation was accomplished, and from which the word of God spreads to the ends of the earth. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word became flesh in a specific time and place, in a strip of land on the edges of the Roman Empire. The more we appreciate the universality and uniqueness of Christ's person, the more we look with gratitude to the land where Jesus was born, where he lived and where he gave his life for us." (Verbum Domini page 130)

As we celebrate the Lord's birth at Bethlehem, a place which we visited, let us all renew our appreciation for the gift of Sacred Scripture. All our traditions recognise the immense spiritual and community value of coming together to listen and reflect on the revealed Word of God. So many people in our time testify to the power scripture has to bring people closer to Christ and closer to what God has created them to be. My own hope is that our community will seize the opportunity and meet in neighbourhood groups to listen and to reflect on the Gospels and the scripture generally. Pope Benedict says this: "While it is a word addressed to each of us personally, it is also a word which builds community, which builds the Church". (Verbum Domini page 124)

Pilgrimage revives memories of Music and Movement



Does anyone else of my generation remember 'Music and Movement' at primary school back, well, a long time ago, asks Liz Slinn? On Friday mornings we turned on the radio in our classroom and sang, danced and learnt some rudimentary music. It was a welcome relief in the gruelling timetable of schooling then.

Well, over half-term in October we did just that on the Youth Pilgrimage. We moved to the Holy Lands with a variety of instruments, a hymn booklet, some unrealised inspiration and a lot of enthusiasm among the young musicians in the group.

Our first band and singing practice was on the back of the early morning bus to Mount Nebo where we celebrated Mass. It was there that we adults realised the talent we had in the group and the potential for all the other masses during the week. Several brass, a violin, a small keyboard, a recorder and some voices served us well and joyfully wherever we went. Young people and adults both, came forward with their offer to sing, lead the chants (yes, we sang the chants in the Holy Lands), be in a group of psalmists and even act as music stands in the most strangest of places!

During a lilting 'Alleluia' at one of our Masses, I noticed Julia Bray, with her talent for dance and drama, tapping her feet and wondering. Three days later our high point was Julia's inspired music and movement enactment of Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee in which 16 of our young people participated either in dance or in the band. We were on a boat in the middle of the lake and even our crew were amazed. Our little band of musicians, by this point, intuitively understood each other and had formed from individuals with talents into a coherent group who continued to evoke tears of joy and emotion on Mount Tabor, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Church of the Annunciation and so on.

Once again and as always I was reminded of the messages of Stewardship. The offering of our talents, no matter how small, into our Church community will cause them to flourish and grow from strength to strength with the support of each other and the work of the Holy Spirit. We become coherent and one in Christ through this Stewardship of our gifts. As Father Paul has said before "We do things best when we do them together."

Young and older came forward with talents of all kinds on our pilgrimage and we all surprised each other with what we had to bring to make a fulfilling and joyful experience for everyone. These were not just musical talents but it is music I want to finish



Talented musicians emerged on pilgrimage.

with as it is the Ministry which needs more people with talent in our parish.

Even if you think you only have a little can you be moved to bring your voice to one of the several choirs, all ages are welcome in the Youth Choir and the adult groups? Instrumentalists are welcome in the Youth band, the Music Group, or are you a secret piano player who could help out at Masses where there are no organists? (I have had to resurrect my piano playing for St Stephen's Masses and can cope with a couple of hymns at a Mass working in partnership with someone else.)

To keep our music alive we need more of you who can help and you may be surprised with what you have to offer. Our young people have set an example on their pilgrimage, so perhaps we can all follow.

Contact liz.slinn@hotmail.co.uk for further information.

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devotion to the weekly Sunday celebration of Mass and massive trust in the presence and power of Jesus Christ at work in our lives.

I want to wish everyone, and on behalf of the Sisters and Clergy of the Parish, a very happy and joyful Christmas. Please remember in your prayer those for whom the celebration of Christmas will be at best a challenge and at worst something done under threat of some kind of reprisal. Remember especially the Christians in the Holy Land and the families in Bethlehem and other West Bank cities that are experiencing tremendous hardship. Remember Sr Maria Grech and her out reach community in Bethlehem to whom I promised prayer and support from our parish.

There will be a crib collection in each of our churches and the money will be sent to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre to help their work in Israel/Palestine for all those in need.

Canon Paul Townsend



Explore – an educational charity with a Christian ethos

It is nearly two years since Canon Paul accorded me the privilege of allowing me to speak about the work of Explore to all the congregations in the Catholic Parish of Hampshire Downs, writes Rex Chester.

A progress report seems, overdue, especially in view of an article which appeared in The Guardian (November 15) entitled 'There's more to relationships than body parts.'

Setting the scene

A few brief quotes from this article will help to set the scene.

"James says he has picked up most of what he knows about sex from the television; the only sex education he had at school was the biological basics at primary school and a few brief talks at the end of Year 11."

"The U.K. still has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe."

"It's relationships that young people want to know about, dealing with emotions and real-life dilemmas as much as the nitty-gritty of sex" – chief executive of Sexual Health Charity 'Brook.'

"What we need is good quality relationships education; teaching them about respect, honesty trust and self-esteem."

Explore's mission

Against this background Explore's mission of 'enabling young people to get a better understanding of the realities of marriage in the context of today's society' seems more and more relevant.

Explore's clients

Since it became a registered charity in 2000 Explore has worked in over 170 schools, involving 33,000 students.

In the current academic year, here in Hampshire, it is anticipated that we shall have 25 client schools. What is particularly exciting is that this will include five out of the eight state maintained Catholic schools in the Portsmouth Diocese, St. Anne's and St. George's in Southampton, St Edmund's in Portsmouth, Oaklands in Waterlooville and Bishop Challoner in Basingstoke.

An added bonus is that we expect to start work in Winchester University early in the New Year – Explore's very first 'Uni' client!

Our principal resource

Our principal resources, without which the whole project would collapse are our couples – couples of all ages who share a deep concern about the current unacceptably high level of marriage and family breakdown in this country and would like to do something about it.

Explore's methodology

Explore's methodology works by bringing together volunteer married couples who undertake to share their actual experience of being married – the downs as well as the ups – with groups of students in a dialogue led by the young people themselves. Every Explore event is facilitated by an adviser-coach, trained by Explore.

In this process, which can best be described as 'experiential learning,' what the young people appreciate above all else is the honesty and openness of the couples.

Fr Michael Dennehy, co-ordinating Pastor for St Swithun Wells said recently 'marriage and family life are the priority for the Catholic Church' and that although marriage preparation was obligatory it had been recognised that there was a real need to start further back. This is where he felt Explore's methodology had an important contribution to make.

The Most Revd. Peter Smith, Archbishop of Southwark who is one of Explore's most distinguished Patrons wrote in a letter recently: "The focus of Explore is explicitly on the nature of the marriage relationship and family life within the Christian tradition. Explore works on a non-judgemental basis with the young people but provides a valuable method of outreach that offers insights and awareness of great value for all young people."

We are particularly proud that this year's president of the City of Winchester's Catenian Circle, who, with his wife, has participated in Explore's work in schools and colleges in Hampshire, has chosen Explore to be his Charity of the Year.

Queen's award for voluntary service

Explore (Hampshire) was nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2011. The award recognises excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community.

Appeal to all married couples

As Explore's work expands so the need for more couples willing to come forward prepared to share their experience of being married is ever increasing. Here is a heaven-sent opportunity for married couples to stand up and be counted for that God-given institution of marriage. The majority of couples who have taken part have said that they believe their own marriage has been enriched in the process, as well as expressing surprise at the courtesy and thoughtfulness of the students.

"It was almost like a crash course for life. The fact that we could ask anything, face to face with real

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Hearing from youngsters in St Peter's Youth Choir



St Peter's Youth Choir for children aged seven and up is so much more than just an ordinary choir. It is an absolute pleasure to hear the children singing at Mass, writes Teresa Morse.

The children have all bonded together regardless of their differences, gender, age and school. They gain confidence and close friendships. It is a choir that can open up opportunities and doors to all walks of life. Let's hear from the children themselves:

Amy is the older sister to Louise and Christopher Davis and is in Year 7 at Kings' School. She is now a member of the senior choir. Amy is a girl who lives life to the full. She said she goes to the choir, 'for fun, for you to learn how to sing well'. She does not know what she will be doing in the future, but for the present she is concentrating on her singing. At the Concert and Cakes performance in June 2011 she was awarded an achievement medal for all her efforts and dedication. We are looking forward to Amy performing her first solo.

Her sister Louise is being taught by Hilary Llystyn Jones who taught their mother how to sing while she was expecting Louise. It's obvious that you cannot stop her singing. Louise has other abilities too. She plays the violin and speaks German fluently. Keep up the good work.

New to the choir is their brother Christopher, too full of energy to have words to waste. It was Louise who said that he is learning to play the cello. However, his singing potential was immediately spotted by Jeanine McElroy. Jeanine knew instantly after one lesson that Christopher had pure talent. So watch this space and I am convinced we will be hearing a lot more from Christopher.

In contrast, Thomas Sharrock, who is also new to the choir, had plenty to say. Asked if he would ever audition for the X factor his reply was a definite 'No'. He believes in keeping it in the family. The only footsteps that he would be following would be his Granny's, who sings in the adult choir at St Peter's. Well done Thomas and well done Granny. He attends St Peter's Primary School with Louise and Christopher and he is also learning to play the cello.

Louise Morse attended voice gym with Jeanine at primary school and joined the choir in Year 7. She is now in Year 10 at Westgate. She said learning professional classical singing is one of the best things she has ever done. She loves singing at Mass and hopes to work in the theatre one day. She added, "Thanks to all the singing techniques that Hilary has taught me last year, I was able to sing the part of Mabel, a black American singer, in the



Some members of St Peter's Youth Choir.

school production of Fame, and this year I was able to change my voice and sing like a rock chic as I will be playing the Killer Queen in Westgate School's production of 'We will rock you' in March 2012."

Rebecca McElroy is the longest serving member of the choir. She has an excellent singing voice. At the Concert and Cake performance she sang Caro mio ben (Giuseppe Giordani) solo. After the concert she presented medals to all the children in the choir. Her talents have also been recognised by St Peter's Youth Theatre when she played Blousy in their version of Bugsy Malone in November. It was an awesome show.

Last but not least, we have Joe McElroy. He said that he has been 'singing for most of his life'. He mesmerised the audience at the Concert and Cake performance by his solo rendition of God be in my head (Philip Wilby). The applause he received was deafening. He is also an active sportsman playing centre midfield in Westgate School's football team.

These are the young celebrities we have at the moment. But there is room for plenty more.

All this could not be done without saying a big thank you to Jeanine and Hilary who devote their time and skills to the children and bring out the best in them. If you would like to join the choir on a Thursday in St Peter's Church (4.40pm to 5.45pm) ring Jeanine on 01962 865159.

The children will look forward to welcoming you.

PHOTOGRAPHS

CrossKeys' photo consultant, Tony Smith, has been appointed an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society. It's now Tony Smith ARPS. His own photographs are acknowledged where they appear, and he has also helped prepare most of the other illustrations.

His work can also be seen at www.taffysmith.com



Pastoral Centre works ahead of schedule



Photo: Tony Smith www.taffysmith.com

The parish Pastoral Centre is nearing completion.

After eight months of hard work by Felthams, the building of the new Pastoral Centre is almost complete with the internal decoration work and some landscaping to be completed, writes Sue Broadbent.

Costs have stayed within the original budget and the quality of the work is looking excellent. We have installed sustainable energy sources for heating and will be the first public building and church in Winchester to have an open loop ground source heat pump.

The kitchen will be able to cater for a range of lunch clubs as well as social events and all the rooms upstairs and down are accessible to all with a lift to the top floor and level access to the ground floor from the church. Guided tours for parish groups will start in January and we hope to have the building

handed over to us about a month early during March 2012.

The parish committee that has overseen the project has a vision of the building being a very special place; a place where spiritual, community, and secular things can happen alongside each other but with all being influenced by the way we work together in the building as a collective and collaborative body.

Now comes the difficult and exciting part of the project; helping all the parish groups and activities to imagine how the new building can support their work, how it can help them change the way they do things and how it can enable the parish to come together even more in faith love and hope to continue the work and mission of Christ.

1978: Mary's Boy Child / Oh My Lord - Boney M (Dec 9)



Do you recognise this? When was the picture taken? See the article below for details. You may be surprised.

I am sure everyone is familiar with the story of how St Francis of Assisi used real people and animals to act out the Nativity. At first he used wooden figures, speaking the part of each character himself, writes parish archivist John Thornhill.

It is said that to amuse the children, whenever he said 'Bethlehem' he made the word sound like a lamb bleating – try it, it really works – 'Bererererthlehem'. Within a couple of years his 'play' had become so popular that local people asked to act the parts and so our familiar nativity play had its beginnings, but St. Francis did not start the crib tradition.

His first little tableau was in 1223 but crib scenes were decorating houses and churches in Naples in the 1020s. Naples is now home to the world's largest nativity scene, which has 162 people, 80 animals, 28 angels and about 450 other smaller objects!

However the crib scene is even older than those in Naples. Pope Sixtus III created a 'cave of the Nativity' in about 432 and earlier still, a nativity fresco from the fourth century can be seen in the catacombs in Rome.

This includes the ox and the ass, although neither is mentioned in the Bible stories of Jesus' birth. Some believe that the tradition comes from Isaiah in the Old Testament, "The ox knows his owner and the

ass its master's crib" (1:3) and certainly St Francis included them.

Cribs became popular in churches and homes in Europe from the 16th century and all our Churches have their much-loved cribs. St. Stephen's has established a tradition with their 'travelling crib' of hand-knitted figures produced by local people.

Throughout Advent, the figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey spend each night with a family, who pass them on to another family next day. They return to the church every Sunday in Advent and finally on Christmas Day.

Most cribs though stay put, like the one at St Peter's, pictured here. But is it? The figures are right but even in black and white – surely, the colours are wrong? Not wrong, just different; for this photograph, from the Parish Archive, was taken in 1911 in the earlier St Peter's Church, now the Milner Hall.

Other photographs show all our figures were there, including the ox and the ass. Obviously they have been repainted over the years, probably many times. Does anyone remember this being done?

For me, there is something particularly special in the thought of them being cared for, loved and illustrating the Christmas story for a hundred years, and almost certainly longer.



Reflections on three years chairing the PPC

Having been chair of the Pastoral Parish Council (PPC) for nearly three years I am very sad to have had to resign this post as I now prepare to move to our new home in Devon, writes Angela Muxworthy.

A great deal has happened during those three years as our Churches have come together as one Parish. Canon Paul gave the Pastoral Council our scriptural context to develop pastoral activities from 1 Corinthians and the paragraph that follows is Canon Paul's message to us all.

"Gathering into Unity" — The more the different parts can be seen working in the same direction and coming together, the more we are open to the Holy Spirit. Our common purpose is Mission of Christ. Our task is looking outwards to the world. Our effectiveness is how we do this together by contributing our strengths, and gifts to the whole. Local groups have a responsibility to foster the clear identity of their area, but at the same time, together, have to be focusing on how we can do better the mission of the church. More important than the result is how we do it together as a single body.

Speaking again now for myself I have certainly seen a great and positive difference as groups formed, reformed and worked together, thus proving that the sum is always greater than the individual parts.

Canon's directive (recorded in the Parish Annual Reports) was the foundation of the work by the PPC as we reviewed the ministries of the parish and examined the way we operate. I kicked the whole process off with a meeting between the PPC and representatives from the different worshipping communities in the Parish. From these rich beginnings the concept of ministry clusters was born and amazing things have happened over the last few years. The clustering of ministries has led to coordinators for the different clusters being nominated (see the list within the Newsletter). The development of ministries continues in each of the clusters with groups working together. None more so than during the introduction of the new Translation of the Missal when liturgy, music, catechesis and enabling came together to coordinate the training, Mass leaflets and other resources necessary for the preparation of the introduction of the missal.

In parallel with the ministry development were changes in the way we work, thus ensuring that correct procedures were adopted and making the distinction between pastoral activities on the one hand and that of administrative management work on the other.

I have presented a word here, drawn a group together there, and in some instances poked my nose into problem areas – with the result that a great deal has happened in addition to my efforts as well as because of them. So what is different? Little is obvious in physical terms but in activities and ministry development I believe the Parish has moved on, and very positively so. More people are aware of the activities of the parish, more parishioners are getting involved and new groups have been formed. For example, Adult Formation is leading us so well in reflection and study throughout the liturgical year. This proves the many advantages of linking clusters, the structure allowing for the whole process of sharing and 'cross-pollenating' ideas. This is by no means all my own work but that of so many in the Parish. Thus I leave content and confident that the work will continue and positive results grow.

The area I think the spirit of the clusters can come together still more effectively is with the way we welcome and thereafter nurture those new to the parish. There must be a method of identifying newcomers' needs, talents and time they have to offer. They can then be put in touch with the relevant ministry lead, a relationship and rapport could result, allowing for future help one way and the other. This will require greater volunteer management than is currently exercised and greater awareness of the needs of ministries and the needs of others by everyone.

The new Pastoral Centre, built for people to gather, to meet, to talk, will allow for different behaviours to develop, to share, to communicate and to be open to the Holy Spirit.

Thank you to so many people, new friends and old, who have helped me over the past three years, I could not have managed without you. Farewell for now.

Ten years ago

The front page included an article by Fr Andrew Chandler headed 'Real peace for troubled times' and drawing by Naomi Hartley.



Among stories inside were news and features on music, child protection, Groundswell, support group for carers, working in Zambia, school notes and a wordsearch.

Farewell to several parish stalwarts



There have been departures of some key figures from the parish in the past six months.

Sr. Antonietta, of St Peter's Convent, has been unwell since summer and her recovery, which was mainly in Southampton, had been very slow. At the end of October she moved to the 'Casa Volto Santo Home' in Rome, a Nursing Home belonging to the Institute of 'Maestre Pie Filippini' of which Sr. Antonietta is a member.

Sr Antonietta came to England in 1955, immediately after her profession as one of the five foundation members of the Pontifical Institute in this country. She served in Winchester for 36 years in numerous ways.

Carmel McClean has resigned as sacristan in St Peter's after more than 25 years service of unstinting diligence, generosity and commitment. In addition to her role as sacristan, Carmel has looked after the church particularly with regard to the supplies of all items from altar wine to leaflets at the back. She has also been the person who locks and unlocks the church and has been the welcomer for so many who have come to St Peter's over the years.

After many years of service at St Stephen's, playing the organ and helping to organise the music, Kate Smith moved to Birmingham to be closer to her



Organist Kate Smith pictured on at her last day at St Stephen's with Sam Egerton-Kemp.

family. Her last Mass at St Stephen's was Sunday, November 6, when she was presented with a cheque and a collage of the church.

In August, Peter and Lynne Murnaghan, stalwarts first at St Thomas More, Weeke, and latterly at St Stephen's moved to Woodhill Manor, Liskeard, Cornwall, where they have set up a B and B. They found the property themselves, but had earlier been filmed with Aled Jones for an edition of BBC 2's Escape to the Country programme as they sought pastures new.

Christmas Down Under



Christmas 'Down Under' is never a white one. Eighty per cent of the time we have sunshine and blue skies and temperatures, depending upon location, ranging from 25 to 40 degrees C. It is also the summer holiday season when students have the long six or seven week holiday and are finishing the school year, writes Sylvia Tadd.

Australia is of course a mix of many ethnic groups; the UK, Northern Europe, Italy, Greece, China, Spain, France, the Middle East, Japan Vietnam and many others. Most of these groups will celebrate Christmas albeit with variations according to their cultural identities.

Those members of the Aboriginal community who accept Western ways and customs will celebrate Christmas in the same way as their fellow Australians. The common factor is that for most people it is an opportunity to be with friends and family.

The lead up to Christmas is very similar to that in the UK. The shopping malls are packed with shoppers, with the familiar red coated Santa Claus making an appearance. Carol services are held on the beaches, in churches and in schools, with carols

by candlelight being popular occasions. The shops are filled with Christmas music and Christmas cards are available with wintery snow scenes. Christmas decorations are proudly put up in cities and towns. Houses on the streets compete for the best lights and decorations and most families will have a decorated Christmas tree.

The Christmas meal, often eaten in the evening once the heat of the day has died down. A typical menu would include sea food, glazed ham, chilled melon, cold chicken, duck or turkey, cold deli meats, pasta salads, fruit salad, pavlovas, ice cream as well as Christmas edibles such as mince pies, Christmas cake, short bread and chocolates. In our family, as with many others, we have the traditional roast and trimmings on Christmas Eve with a cold buffet on Christmas day.

Certainly Christmas in Oz can feel rather strange after years of celebrating it within the Northern Hemisphere. However other than the weather, the celebrations are very similar. In fact it is a popular time for visitors and certainly there is a tradition in Sydney for international visitors to head for the well

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A night in the life of the Winchester Street Pastors

"You actually do this for free?", "Why would you want to spend your Saturday nights out in the cold and wet, without being paid?", "You must be mad!", "You are real angels" ... just some of the many responses we get from people out in Winchester when we patrol the city on a Friday or Saturday night, writes Clare Robinson.

So...why do we do it? Well, for most of us it is about wanting to be there for people – often young people, possibly the same age as our own children, who may for one reason or another, be in need of help when they are out in Winchester on a weekend evening. Maybe they've had a little (or a lot) too much to drink; maybe they've got into an argument with their friends or partner, or maybe it's a young woman who has become separated from her friends and is alone and vulnerable at 3am.

After the initial 'first night' nerves, back in June, when we had to (gently) make ourselves known to the door staff, police and night-time economy of our city, the Street Pastors have gone from strength to strength. Every night is different, but we go out onto the streets having prayed with our team, which includes Prayer Pastors who remain at the base and pray for us and the situations that arise, throughout the night. This sets us up well for the evening ahead and we go out knowing that Our Lord is with us and guiding our ministry.

Situations can develop rapidly, whether it's a rather raucous bunch of lads or girls out on a stag or hen night, or someone who has become upset or ill for various reasons. Our rucksacks carry an amazing array of helpful items – first aid kits, flip-flops (for the ladies who, at the end of the evening, can't walk in their high heels!), dog chews, water, hot chocolate and twix bars (for the street homeless) and lollipops, to mention just a few. It is amazing how stopping and chatting to a group of revellers who are on the verge of becoming unruly due to alcohol, and handing out a lollipop and water, can calm a situation. After all, it's not 'cool' to become aggressive with a lollipop in your mouth! The lollipops have become rather famous and we have even had a request from a police officer or two! We never put ourselves knowingly into a dangerous situation and have the back-up of radio contact with CCTV and police to assist us if necessary.

And what about God and religion then? Well, our primary purpose is just to be there, to offer help and assistance where needed and to be a visible presence of Christianity on the streets of Winchester. We are not there to preach. Of course, people frequently ask "so what's a Street Pastor?" and that gives us the perfect opportunity to explain our background,



Photo courtesy of The Hampshire Chronicle

Winchester Street Pastors on patrol.

which in turn often leads to some incredibly moving and in depth conversations about their experience and understanding of Our Lord and the place of religion in their lives.

And at the end of the evening – well, we finish as we started, with prayer and thanks to God for His presence that evening and with prayer and petition for anyone we met who is in need of His healing love. And after that, it's time to complete the report forms – how many bottles, broken glass, vomit (!) cleared up, first aid given and flip-flops handed out, as well as homeless people and young people (minors) we met and chatted to. In addition our 'stories from the streets', outlining the contact we made with people of all ages and walks of life, are a testimony of the need for this ministry in our city.

Hampshire Downs Parish is wholeheartedly supporting the Street Pastor initiative and all of us involved agree that we get so much personally from being able to be part of this ministry.

So how about it? Do you think you might like to get involved, either as a Street Pastor or Prayer Pastor? Commitment is for just one night per month and no prior experience is needed, as a thorough training programme takes place before you are 'let loose' on the streets. There's no upper age limit either – anyone over the age of 18 is invited to get involved. So, if you think this might be something you could do for our local community, please make yourself known to one of us at church, to Fr Paul, or direct to the co-ordinator Mark Hibbert-Hingston at winchester@streetpastors.org.uk

Come along and let your enthusiasm and a commitment to caring for other people help to make the streets of Winchester a more peaceful and enjoyable place for all.

Hampshire Downs Street Pastors:

Steve Taylor (Management Committee)
Gerard Dailly; Jon Egerton-Kemp; Mike Slinn;
Beverley Murtagh; Clare and Paul Robinson.

Greetings from the smiling coast of Africa



My name is Robert Slinn, a member of the Hampshire Downs Parish. I'm currently doing development work in The Gambia – a country situated in West Africa, and one of the poorest in the continent. Some of you may remember my previous **CrossKeys** articles from Mongolia, between 2007 and 2008. Well, my travels continue...

Upon arrival at Banjul International Airport it was immediately clear that The Gambia is economically a very poor country. Gambia stands in 151st place (out of 169 countries) on the Human Development Index, and as such faces many challenges. Unfortunately poverty is increasing – in 2003 about 59 per cent were classed as poor, living on less than \$1 a day. Now 61 per cent live on less than \$1 a day.

However, Gambia's motto of being 'the smiling coast of Africa' stands true – people are generally incredibly nice and welcoming. A trip to the local shops can take triple the time it would normally take, as one is stopped by people wanting to ask "how are you doing?" and "how's your family?" Life is laid-back and family-orientated, and there seems to be a strong community spirit among the population.

Religion plays an important role in the lives of Gambians. Gambia is a predominantly Muslim country, with Christians making up about 10 per cent of the population. Most Gambians are proud of their record of religious tolerance, with both Muslim and Christian living happily side-by-side. The Muslim festival of Tobaski (Eid al-Adha) has just passed, and now attention has turned to Christmas. I've been lucky enough to see Catholic life here firsthand, being a parishioner at the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Sunday Mass is packed, and music is provided by an excellent choir. We're treated to a mixture of English and Wolof (one of the local languages) hymns, all accompanied with the sound of African drums. Luckily the church has a back-up electricity generator, so thankfully the fans can keep going – otherwise being packed in a church building when temperatures reach the high 30s would not be fun. As Gambia officially is an English-speaking nation we've also had the introduction to the new Order of Mass, and so everyone is trying to get to grips with the responses. It's funny to think that parishioners in The Gambia and Hampshire Downs are going through the same process at the same time.

I'm currently working for the Gambian Ministry of Education, helping on a programme that gives Gambian graduates the chance to do voluntary work in countryside schools. Rural schools are understaffed, and thus whole generations of young



Robert Slinn with a group of youngsters.

people are missing out on access to education. This partly explains why the average length of schooling in The Gambia is only 2.8 years.

The volunteer teachers fill a gap, and develop themselves at the same time. For many of them it is the first time they visit the less-developed, poorer regions of their nation, and thus they become more aware of some of the difficulties their fellow Gambians face. More Gambian children receive an education, while the volunteer teachers have the chance to feel like they are making a difference, becoming active citizens in their own nation. This model of Gambian people helping themselves is something that I wholeheartedly back.

Before departing for The Gambia I was employed by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (the SVP) as their National Youth Development Officer. The SVP does great work in encouraging and supporting young Christians to reach out to others in their local communities. School and parish groups do work with the elderly, the disabled and the homeless, putting their faith into action.

In late December I will be doing a sponsored half marathon on behalf of the youth work that the SVP does. This run may be more difficult than I'm used to, as I will be taking on the high temperatures and humidity on the streets in The Gambia. I would be grateful for any support you could give me with my fundraising efforts. If you are interested in helping me to raise money for Youth SVP please visit my fundraising website:

<http://www.justgiving.com/Robert-Slinn1>.

Prayers are welcome too! Many thanks for any support you can give.

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Time to become involved with Olympics

Catholics were encouraged to take part in activities linked to the 2012 Olympic Games and inspire change during a presentation at the Catholic Women's League annual meeting in Worthing.

James Parker chief executive, co-ordinator and secretary to the John Paul II Foundation for Sport, Catholic Office for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, said there are more than nine million tickets for the Olympic Games (July 27 to August 12) and Paralympic Games (August 29 to September 9) which will attract 22,800 athletes, coaches and officials.

Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have said that sport at its best can serve as an "instrument for the moral and spiritual elevation of the human person."

Olympics/Paralympics events will be held in 10 Catholic dioceses: Brentwood, Southwark, Westminster, Northampton, Salford, Birmingham, Cardiff, Plymouth, Hexham and Newcastle, and Glasgow and the church's 2012 Vision is to use the power of the Games to inspire change.

'More Than Gold UK' is an ecumenical initiative established in 2007 whose vision is for churches and schools to reach their community in fresh and ongoing ways in Jesus' name and to engage with the 2012 Games through outreach/community, hospitality and service.

The six key initiatives for Catholics are: Torch Relay; Social Justice; Prayer; Festivals; Late Leagues/City Safe Havens; Athlete Family Homestay.

The torch relay runs from May 19 to July 27 and includes The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration and there will be opportunities for CWL to engage in Outreach by hosting a(n ecumenical) festival prayer and intercession.

Five key areas More Than Gold is addressing in social justice are: Homelessness, Fairtrade, environment, anti-human trafficking, sex trade and child labour.

There is a joint project headed up by the CWL, Union of Catholic Mothers, National Board of Catholic Women, Knights of St Columba and Catenians for secondary schools called the Olympic Peace Legacy which proposes 100 days of peace including A Sacred Truce: 50 days before/after Games, a possible London Peace Rally on June 9 in Trafalgar Square and a possible Olympic Peace Concert on October 28.

The vision is to create a legacy of peace for our young people within, and beyond, our inner cities. The Mission is a call to Catholic communities to create a legacy of peace through home, school and

parish.

Mr Parker suggested groups could hold Peace Games, rewarding teamwork; make Peace Walls to commemorate the Games; create Partner Groups from abroad; hold a Peace Music Festival or link with a new church or group to plan a Peace Project.

Another idea was to make a resource highlighting peace aspects of a parish's activity or to make a Peace Games plan and send it to the website - www.peacelegacy.org.uk

As part of an anti-trafficking/child labour/prostitution project another joint initiative by the different Catholic groups is to ask pupils to create a 5-8 minute DVD.

The Top 10-12 clips will be used as future school resource with a national prize presented by Archbishop Vincent Nichols.

The prayer initiative offers a Time to Shine with Christians praying during 2012 for some of the following: Special prayers for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; Holy Hours and Special Liturgies; 24/7 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and engaging the international Church to pray with us.

www.morethangold.org.uk/your-church/prayer.html

Festivals' training is being offered to groups from across the UK for a limited time by Fusion – training in Open Crowd Festivals and Share Jesus International –Community Festivals.

For a handbook on hosting a Big Screen Festival (notes about showing BBC events for free) and more info about festival training, see www.morethangold.org.uk/outreach/community-festivals.html or contact jenny.woods@morethangold.org.uk

For the late leagues/cafes/safe-havens aspect it is suggested staging evening sports events/engagement for youth to run from 6pm to about 10pm using local school/municipal sports facilities and disused high street shops as meeting places for young people, overseen by the Church: www.cafeinbox.info and www.youthcafe.info

The athlete family homestay project involves offering hospitality which is needed across the UK for eight days bed and breakfast along with travel to/from local station for guests.

There is an online registration for guests and hosts and will be the only real opportunity for local communities possibly to meet Olympians/Paralympians

For Catholics it is the most viable united way of





engaging with the sporting aspect of the 2012 Games.

Hosts and diocesan/deanery co-ordinators are needed and Mr Parker said it would be a fantastic way for CWL groups and branches to serve the local community and get publicity.

To find out more, and to register interest, see www.morethangold.org.uk/hospitality/host-an-athlete-s-family.html

The John Paul II Foundation for Sport was launched in 2010 by Benedict XVI and is the Catholic Church's Legacy of the 2012 Games, and a memorial to the life of Pope John Paul II

(www.johnpaul2foundation4sport.org).

The Foundation's Board is concentrating on:- Values/Spirit of Sport; Sporting Participation and Opportunities; Stewardship (bursaries and finance); Annual Awards; Research/Think-Tank. Tel: 07810 116508, Email: info@jp2f4s.org

Legacy in practice will involve: research around sport and spirituality; formation of JP II sports leaders; new sporting clubs and programmes; sports provision for special needs; greater collaboration between PE & RE; chaplaincy (professional/amateur levels); spiritual support for upcoming 'stars'; diocesan sports officers and international links: Vatican's Church and Sport office, Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, Russia Winter

Olympics in 2014 and World Cup Football in 2018, Brazil World Cup Football in 2014 and Summer Olympics in 2016, etc

What's available for Young People?

Schools' projects (Salford Diocese, www.relayofprayersalforddiocese.org.uk)

Torch Relay (More Than Gold, www.morethangold.org.uk/service/the-torch-relay.html)

Flame Congress, Wembley Arena 24 March 2012 (CYMFed, www.cymfed.org/congress/flame/2012/)

The Joshua Camp (the SION Community, www.thejoshuacamp.com)

Games Pastors/Temporary Chaplaincy (www.morethangold.org.uk/service/games-pastors.html)

Mini Olympics/Local Festivals (visit www.fusionyac.org and www.sharejesusinternational.com)

More contact details:

More Than Gold, Unit 37 Tileyard Studios, Tileyard Road, London, N7 9AH info@morethangold.org.uk 0845 475 2012

Catholic 2012 (James Parker) Anchor House, 81 Barking Road, London, E16 4HB james.parker@cbcew.org.uk | 07930 119381.

John Paul II Foundation for Sport, All Saints Pastoral Centre, Shenley Lane, London Colney | Herts | AL2 1AF, info@jp2f4s.org 07810 116508.

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couples was hugely empowering. Explore has had a huge impact on my life. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to any student who has ever wondered about how relationships work in reality."

(Year 11 student)

Do please PRAY for the Lord's guidance that He may empower you to want to share your experience of marriage and make a real difference to the next generation.

To find out more – visit our website: www.theexploreexperience.co.uk and/or contact Rex Chester – (01962) 626043 email: rex.chester2@btinternet.com

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I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas, and many best wishes for the New Year. I hope that 2012 brings you many moments of joy and peacefulness. Best wishes from The Gambia, If you wish to follow Robert's adventures, and discover a bit more about life in The Gambia, visit his weblog at <http://rob-in-gambia.blogspot.com/>

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known Bondi beach where up to 40,000 visitors often gather on Christmas day.

Interestingly the first recorded Christmas in Australia was celebrated on 25th December 1788 at Sydney Cove. Governor Arthur Phillips and his officers dined heartily, toasting the King of England and his family. For the majority of the white inhabitants however, the convicts, there was no change to their regular menu; bread rations only.

The only goodwill which seems to have been displayed was to one Michael Dennison. He was a convict who stole a pound of flour. He was sentenced to 200 lashes but since it was Christmas only 150 were actually dealt out to him in the end!

* * * * *

Sylvia Tadd was one of the founders of **Crosskeys** and editor (with Dinah) until 2007. That year she was 'deported' (actually she moved voluntarily) to the beautiful Sunshine Coast, Queensland where she lives near her married son and daughter and six grandchildren.



Christmas fun time



The altar at St Peter's pictured last Christmas.

A Christmas thought: STRESSED is just DESSERTS spelled backward, so here is a little Christmas fun to help you relax while testing the memory and teasing the brain

Only five Christmas No.1s have the word Christmas in the title. Can you name the years, titles and artists?

1955: Christmas Alphabet - Dicky Valentine

1974: Lonely This Christmas - Mud

1984 Do They Know It's Christmas? - Band Aid

1985 Merry Christmas Everyone - Shakin' Stevens

1989 Do They Know It's Christmas? - Band Aid 2

Merry Xmas Everybody - Slade (1973) has the word Xmas in the title but if you count this one it makes six.

CROSSKEYS

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Can you name the stars in the following top five Christmas movies.

1) It's a Wonderful Life - 1946, director Frank Capra;

2) Miracle on 34th Street - 1947, George Seaton;

3) Scrooge (aka A Christmas Carol) - 1951, Brian D. Hurst;

4) Holiday Inn - 1942, Mark Sandrich;

5) Scrooge - 1970, Ronald Neame

What do you have in December that you don't have in any other month?

The letter 'D'

Why are Christmas trees like bad knitters?

They both drop their needles

What do you get if you cross Father Christmas with a detective?

Santa Clues

What do you call a man who claps at Christmas?

Santappliance

What do you call someone who doesn't believe in Father Christmas?

A rebel without a Claus!

What comes at the end of Christmas Day?

The letter 'Y'

Answers: 1) James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore; 2) Edmund Gwenn, Maureen O'Hara, Natalie Wood; 3) Alastair Sim, Mervyn Johns, Michael Hordern; 4) Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Marjorie Reynolds; 5) Albert Finney, Alec Guinness, Edith Evans.