

Cheltenham
United Reformed
Church

In Touch

April 2013

Welcome to *In Touch* – the magazine of Cheltenham United Reformed Church.

Cheltenham United Reformed Church is a joint Pastorate of the 3 United Reformed Churches in Cheltenham. This means that they share a Minister – Revd Maz Allen – and indeed they work very closely together in all respects. New readers, who may also be new to the area, can be assured of a warm welcome at all 3 Churches:-

St Andrew's United Reformed Church is situated in Cheltenham town centre. It is a former Presbyterian Church built in 1885. Recent renovations have retained its essential character whilst at the same time delivering an impressive facility meeting the needs of the 21st Century. Current membership is around the 100 mark.

Prestbury United Reformed Church serves the village of Prestbury to the north of Cheltenham. It is a former Congregational Chapel built in 1866. Current membership is around the 20 mark. Services are normally held at Prestbury on only the 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays of each month.

The Church in Warden Hill is a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) between the Anglican and URC communities serving the large residential districts of Hatherley and Warden Hill to the south of Cheltenham. Sunday morning services currently alternate between St Christopher's and the URC Centre with a typical congregation of 85. Ministry is shared between the URC Minister (Revd Maz Allen) and members of the Anglican South Cheltenham Team Ministry of whom the Revd Jacqui Hyde has particular responsibility for The Church in Warden Hill. The Church in Warden Hill has its own church magazine – *The Lantern* – but its activities and events are also publicised in this *In Touch* magazine.

The website of the Cheltenham United Reformed Church (www.urcic.org.uk) and the website of The Church in Warden Hill (www.tciwh.org.uk) are further sources of information about the churches.

Dear Friends,

With the weather supposedly getting warmer, we turn our attention to holidays, Spring and new life in our gardens. This promise of birth, new growth and well-being lifts our spirits from the memory of winter.

The early Church would have been in the throws of heightened expectation following Jesus' appearances after his resurrection. His followers would have been waiting for Jesus' return as though the horrors of the cross were but a dream. How long did it take – how many generations – before expectation turned to disappointment, turned to understanding, turned to joyous anticipation of a new life beyond death?

What bombardment of emotions did the early Church live through and can we say today that our own rollercoaster faith-journey is any different?

The former Pope talked about disturbing events within the Catholic Church "as if God were asleep". There are Christians of all denominations who cannot reconcile the pain humans inflict on each other with Jesus' declaration of God's love and mercy. Yet Jesus himself said 'Peace is my parting gift to you; my own peace such as the world cannot give'. We (in and of the world) fail miserably at living peaceably with our fellow humans if we do not have Christ at our centre. Those early Christians would have struggled long and hard, before realising that Christ didn't need to physically walk with them, he just needed to live in their hearts.

This month, as we straddle the seasons of Easter and Pentecost, let us do a little Spring-cleaning within ourselves to bring forth new life!

Yours in Christ,

Maz

CHELTENHAM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

In Memoriam: With regret we report the death of Margaret Brown on Thursday 18th February. A service of thanksgiving was held on 8th March at which many family members took part. Our love goes especially to her husband Alan at this sad time.

We also report the death of Alfred Wright on 21st February, after a short illness. Alfred was a well-known 'character' in SA and his thanksgiving service on 6th March reflected the respect in which he was held by family, friends and colleagues. We particularly hold Harriet in our prayers and hope she will be back at church with us very soon.

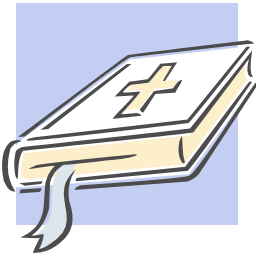
Our prayers: we hold in our prayers those for whom we are concerned: Tim and Gary Champkins, Celia Hodges, Irene Webber and Family, Sandy Heaven, Jeane Combes, Alan Brown, Harriet Wright, Dave and Pat Barnett, and John Mears.

Obituaries:

Nancy Champkins of Prestbury URC died on 14th February, aged 82. Nancy and her family – husband Fred and sons Tim and Gary – have had a long association with the church and her sons were baptised there in the 1960's. Nancy and Fred were originally from Stoke and moved here with Fred's work. Nancy worked as a typist at GCHQ and as dinner-lady at Pates. Fred sadly died in February 2012 and they were re-united after a year and a day. Nancy will be greatly missed at Prestbury; she had a deep personal faith, a dry sense of humour, great kindness and fortitude and a wonderful smile. Our thoughts are with Tim and Garry at this sad time.

At Prestbury we are also mourning the loss of Irene Webber's husband Theo. Although not a churchgoer, except on special occasions, he had been a practical supporter and good friend of the church; until his retirement he installed and maintained our electric systems and could always be called upon for advice. A newish grandfather, he had latterly made a great Father Christmas for the Urchins Baby & Toddler Group.

Our sympathies go to Irene and her daughters Debbie and Rachel and their families.



Spiritual Leaders of other Churches

We welcome news of the new Pope for the people of the Roman Catholic Church and the new Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, and pray that they will lead their church following through ever changing times.

John Standing

Letters....

From Carol Drummond

Following my mum's sudden death, I've been really touched by all the kindness and support I've received from everyone. It has meant a great deal to me and I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you.

From Peter Coulthurst

I would like to thank the firm 'Property and Poolcare' advertised in this In Touch, for doing three excellent jobs for me at my house. Their work is thoroughly recommended. *Peter*

Wednesday Women

The ladies enjoyed an excellent March meeting. Anne Strathie spoke about her recently published book Birdie Bowers-Captain Scott's Marvel.(soon to be in paperback). The illustrated talk was most informative and the slides were breathtaking.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 3rd of April.

This will be a games night preceded by refreshments at 7 15pm.

At the May meeting we look forward to Bob Alger telling us about his trip to Kenya. Looking further ahead our June evening will be our reading group night. The chosen book is 'A Street Cat Named Bob' by James Bowen.

ElsPET Carter



Refresh

Every Thursday
10am - 2pm

Relaxing Coffee shop

Christian books, cards
and gifts for sale

St. Andrew's United Reformed
Church
Montpellier Street
Cheltenham
GL50 1SP

01242 222005
kay@urcic.org.uk

C4 CHILDREN'S CHOIR

begin rehearsals for the comedy musical *Porridge* on
Friday 26th April, 6pm – 7pm
Prestbury URC.

Please encourage children/grandchildren to come along.

.....Prayer Pointers.....

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

Mark 16v6

For God so
loved the
world that
he gave his
one and only
Son, that
whoever
believes in
him should
not perish
but have
eternal life.
John3:16

St Andrew's Prayer Area

Come and spend some time in the prayer area this month. It's open from 10am – 2pm each day.

This month in the prayer area there is opportunity for you to come and meditate on the
Risen Lord Jesus.

- ❖ Worship God for the gift of new life that we can have because of Jesus death and resurrection.
- ❖ Ask for God's forgiveness for the ways we have lived for ourselves rather than for God.
- ❖ Pray that we may come to a deeper understanding of all that Jesus achieved in his death on the cross.
- ❖ Be challenged to share the good news of Jesus with others.



Oasis prayer time is on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from
12.15pm – 12.45pm.

Birds, Lancaster Pilot, and Maggie

Titles can be suggestive can't they, without really telling you anything? For example, in 1871, the artist James Whistler produced a painting called "Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1". See what I mean? All that tells us is that there's a lot of grey and black about. You need to go and have look at the picture to see what it is. Stick with me, I'm getting to the Forum. Well, titles of talks can be like that, capturing your attention with a hint or two but giving nothing away, just like the **Forum talk on Tuesday 9th April** when Peter Roberts will be telling us about "**Birds and the Lancaster Pilot**". Like Whistler's painting you'll have to come along and find out what the real significance of that title is.

Who comes to mind when you hear the name "Maggie"? Could be my cousin Margaret, but I wouldn't call her that if I were you - that would get you a smart clump round the ear! Then there's that politician from Grantham - yes, that's the one, had a big handbag and a husband called Dennis. But at the Forum we're thinking of a different Maggie altogether, Maggie Keswick Jencks. She it was who started what are now known as "Maggie's Centres" to help people whose lives have been disrupted by cancer. So on **Tuesday 23rd April** we shall be hearing all about "**Maggie's Centre**".

At our second meeting in February Pam Dainton brought to vivid life the stained glass windows at St Christopher's church in Warden Hill, assisted by Isabel Hitchings with some beautifully detailed pictures. As a result we shall all be looking more carefully at the windows next time we're in the church.

The **Forum meets at 2.30pm in the Garden Room at St Andrew's church**. Be good to see you there on **9th and/or 23rd April**. The Forum outing this year is planned for 11th June, and there's more about that in a separate piece elsewhere in this magazine.

And finally - have you noticed that whenever a speaker says that they go on for another twenty minutes - a last plea for any offers of talks, speakers or other ideas for the Forum from September onwards. And finally finally, - yes really, - that Whistler picture? No, it's not a modern art job with dollops of grey and black paint thrown everywhere, but a straightforward portrait of his mother, more usually known as "Whistler's Mother". Cunning that, eh?

Keith Norcott

The C4 Choir and “Jerusalem Joy”

“Jerusalem Joy” is brief retelling of the last days of Jesus, with modern style solos and choruses, rather more oratorio than drama. Consequently the C4 choir were able to concentrate on the singing this time, which they did with considerable gusto. And it was obvious they were having a lot of fun doing it. They had not had much opportunity for rehearsal, but they made up for that with sheer enthusiasm. So it was a slightly less demanding undertaking for them between bigger shows - they start rehearsing for their next one in April. Nonetheless, it was a thoroughly worthwhile and enjoyable show. Allow me though, just this once, to mention two particularly memorable moments of magic, Jesus’s grief-stricken solos before and after his crucifixion. Absolute show-stoppers!, and sung in such an emotionally charged way as to reduce some members of the audience to tears. Having said that, they were all good and their next show “Porridge” will undoubtedly be worth seeing and hearing.

Keith Norcott

Anyone for a Summer Garden and a Cream Tea?

So far the weather forecasters haven’t predicted a “barbecue summer” so there’s a fair chance we shall have some proper summer weather in June.

What better than a day out in a lovely country garden not too far away, followed by a delicious Cotswold cream tea. And the URC Forum isn’t going to miss out on that! So we’ve planned a visit **to Bourton Manor House Garden on Tuesday 11th June**. So there’s the prospect of a pleasant drive through the north Cotswolds, an amble around a 3 acre prize-winning garden and a typical, old-fashioned English tea. And all for a mere £16 inclusive. We’re not hogging it for ourselves though. We know there are quite a few people who don’t regularly attend the Forum who would love to come along, so we invite you to sign up on the lists in our churches, or call Ian or Joan Thomson . Problem is though, these trips get fully subscribed pretty quickly, so sign up soon. Go on, treat yourself, you know you’d love it!

Keith Norcott,

Gotherington Singers

Musical Director Margaret Crompton

Accompanist Sarah Harris

Present

Songs for an April Evening

Also featuring performances by

John Qualtrough Baritone

Lesley Crompton Clarinet

Saturday 20th April 7.30pm

St Andrew's Church

Montpellier Cheltenham

Tickets £8, including refreshments

Telephone

Showcase Fancy Dress and Dance Hire Montpellier 01242 224144

Proceeds to Cheltenham & North Corswold Branch of MS Society

Cheltenham Choral Society

Conductor: Ian Higginson



Petite Messe Solennelle

Original version

Gioacchino Rossini

St Andrews Church

Montpellier, Cheltenham



Saturday 27th April 2013
at 7.30pm

Tickets in advance £10

Under 13's Free

from

Tourist Office, 77 Promenade
Cheltenham

Tel No: 01242-522878

Web: www.visitcheltenham.info

and

St Andrew's Church
Weekdays 10.00am – 2.00pm

Charity NO:287756

Reading Group

The next meeting of the Reading Group will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd May at Prestbury URC, Cheltenham. The novel we are reading and discussing next will be 'The Women in White', a novel published in 1859 which is generally considered to be the first ever mystery novel. It set new standards of suspense and excitement and at the time outsold the works of Charles Dickens, who was Wilkie Collin's friend and mentor.



New members and/or past members would be most welcome. For any further information contact Mary Cummings on



Knit and Chat Group - More information from Donna Sutherland

The next meeting is on Thursday 18th April at St Andrew's at 1.00pm.

You are invited to

St Andrew's URC

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 21st April

‘THE LIGHT GROUP’

will meet at St Andrew’s on Tuesday 16th and
30th of April from 12.15pm – 1.15pm.

Everyone is very welcome to come along.

Do bring your lunch if you would like to.

Coffee and tea will be available.

We are going to be looking at Philippians.

Any questions please contact:

Kay 01242 222005

kay@urcic.org.uk

**Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.**

Psalm: 119:105

BIRTHDAY TEA AT THE MANSE

for April, May, June birthdays

SATURDAY 25TH MAY

3pm – 5pm





The Footsloggers walking party on a February walk led by Tim and Dorothy Odell on and around, Breden Hill.

Footsloggers:



Monday 8th April- Footsloggers Walking Group.

Details of the walk to be led by Cecil Sanderson, are to be found on Church Notice Boards nearer the time.



TLS Lite Course

The following dates have been agreed. If you wish to attend please contact Julie Jefferies by the 7th April 2013, so that your materials can be ordered. If you require transport please let Julie, Maz, Bob or Tony know. If you would just like to know more then speak to Bob, Maz, Tony or Julie.

Introduction Module You, God, the Bible and Worship

Tues 23rd April, 2013 at 7.00 pm Initial meal and launch at Broadway

Tues 7th May 2013 7.30 pm TLS Lite (1a) at Broadway

Tues 28th May 2013 7.30 pm TLS Lite (1b) at Broadway

Tues 4th June 2013 7.30 pm TLS Lite (1c) at Broadway

Getting to grips with the Bible

Tues 18th June TLS Lite (2a) at Prestbury

Tues 2nd July TLS Lite (2b) at Prestbury

Tues 16th July TLS Lite (2c) at Prestbury

Tues 30th July TLS Lite (2d) at Prestbury

Tues 13th August TLS Lite (2e) at Prestbury

There will also be one study day the date will be agreed when we start this module.

To contact Julie juliecjefferies@googlemail.com

Report from West Midlands Synod - 'Learning Faith', 9th March 2013

The opening worship was led by Revd. Neil Eldridge on the theme 'Rhythm of your Soul' using experiences from his sabbatical in 2012, in British Columbia.

Revs Stuart Jennings and Ruth Maxey gave a presentation on the work of **University Chaplains**, who develop spiritual encounters and chaplaincy mission for students of the Universities of Warwick, Coventry and Keele, touching the lives of more than 73,000 students collectively.

Their motto is 'Life affirming, Life shaping, World changing'. Some students returning home cannot always find a church in which to worship, showing the gulf that exists between chaplaincy and pastorate. The URC supports university chaplaincies through Special Category Ministry posts.

Open The Book got a good airing (Julie Jefferies is the national training officer) and we learned that 250,000 children heard weekly Bible stories in 1,473 primary schools up and down the country.

The **Synod Accounts** was presented by synod treasurer, David Black, who highlighted the underlying deficit problem facing this synod. We are basically surviving on the sale of manses and David emphasised the need to prioritize our use of resources to support mission.

Following the abandonment of the Zero Intolerance campaign, the synod continues to endorse the **Radical Welcome** initiative. We were encouraged to support 'Back to Church Sunday' and to focus on how we show welcome. Training days are available and also material to help congregations.

Mission Enabler. A new single-term post was agreed for a Mission Enabler , to be paid for either through Special Category Ministry (centrally paid) or through the synod's Mission Fund. The Mission Enabler would work with local churches to further God's mission in local communities and also train and equip the Area Ministers to fulfil , in due course, the tasks and responsibilities of mission enabling.

Delegates had concerns about creating yet another post when resources are scarce, but the vote was carried.

Deployment issues were discussed in groups, considering how we use our ministerial resources across our mission and our churches. Gloucestershire Area has to reduce stipendiary ministry from 6 to 4 ministers by 2016. We are being encouraged to look at our own resources and train more lay leaders.

Marcus Dann

Pensioners' Forum
at
St Andrew's United Reformed Church
(near Queen's Hotel)

Programme for 2013
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of the Month

You are invited to the following Talks 11am – 12 noon

Wednesday 3 April	Community Agents Amanda Wragg
Wednesday 1 May	Ovarian Cancer Maggie Morris & Jeni Craig
Wednesday 5 June	Victim Support Christine Nicholson
Wednesday 3 July	Which Hearing Aid? Hidden Hearing

FREE ENTRY – ALL ARE WELCOME

Coffee Bar open from 10.00am – 12 noon

Coffee/Tea 50p

www.urcic.org.uk

Pensioners' Forum – Wednesday 3rd April – Community Agents

Gloucestershire Village and Community Agents bridge the gap between the local community and statutory and voluntary organisations able to offer help or support. They provide high quality information, promote access to a wide range of services and identify unmet need in their communities. Our speaker is Amanda Wragg who is the Agent for Cheltenham. This is a free service if you are over 50 – made just for us.

As usual the coffee bar will be open from 10.00am and the talk will begin at 11.00am. Please invite your friends and neighbours.

Last month we were introduced to 'Reflexology'. A Reflexologist uses hands to apply gentle pressure to the feet which corresponds to relative imbalances in the body. It helps with any physical or emotional problem, creating deep relaxation, while helping the mind and body to balance and heal. Maggie Davis is a qualified Reflexologist with many years experience and is based at St Paul's Medical Centre. You can find further information on website www.reflexchelt.co.uk.

Ann Lewis

Community film show dates in Warden Hill, the dates in Brackets are Tony's Classic Film Shows:

Apr. 13 - (20), May 11 - (18), June 15 - (22).

Classic Film Show

The screenings will be one a month from January to June on a Saturday afternoon, fitted around Community Film. We will be at the Warden Hill URC Centre, showing at 2.15pm with the doors open at 2.00pm.

Classic Films Listings: Saturday afternoon in Warden Hill URC Centre

We are unable to give details online of the films to be shown for Copyright reasons.

Please contact classic.films@urcic.org.uk and community.films@urcic.org.uk for more details or see the posters in Church.

**Plus Another Classic Film Extra on
Tuesday 4th June 2013 at St Andrew's at 7pm**

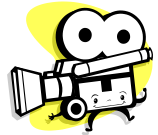
Community Film Show

Saturday 13th April 2013

in Warden Hill URC Centre

at 2.30pm (doors open at 2.15pm)

Free entry - Family and Friends welcome
Refreshments available



St Andrew's News:

St Andrew's Charity for April - Family Space

The modern world seems to have more than its fair share of family break-ups. When there are children involved there may well be difficulties in arranging for them to have contact with their parents, and these difficulties are made worse if the relationship between the parents has completely broken down. In such circumstances Family Space can provide a means for children to spend some time with their parents, either separately or as a family.

Family Space is a voluntary organisation run by trained staff and volunteers. In Cheltenham it has established a Child Contact Centre in St Silas church halls in Hesters Way, which is run by four local churches and the YMCA. The Centre runs regular sessions on Saturday afternoons, and makes arrangements for other meetings during the week for individual cases. Different arrangements are made for parents to spend time with the children, taking account of the likelihood of arguments, aggression or other abusive behaviour. Meetings can be "supported", with several families meeting at the same time with staff and volunteers on hand to provide advice and support, or "supervised", with a contact supervisor with the child at all times.

Under "supervised" contact, arrangements can be made so that parents do not have to meet each other if they do not wish to. In addition to the meeting rooms, the Centre has a range of toys, games and craft materials, and refreshments are available from the kitchen and tuck shop.

More information is available from the Family Space website or by phone on Cheltenham 580812.



Eco Church

Freecycle: Have you any useful items you no longer need that might be of use to someone else - please let Ann Lewis know with full details of the item and please leave your telephone number so we can get back to you.

- A Yogurt Maker and Coffee Maker - Electrical, (2 items). Carol Drummond - E-mail: ecochurch@urcic.org.uk
- Gents Bicycle and Office Supplies (folders & guides) (free of charge). Phone Tony Jeans
- Baby Belling Cooker 120RMk6 - 2 rings, grill and oven. Phone Avril Haseler
- Electric Trouser Press - Phone Avril Haseler

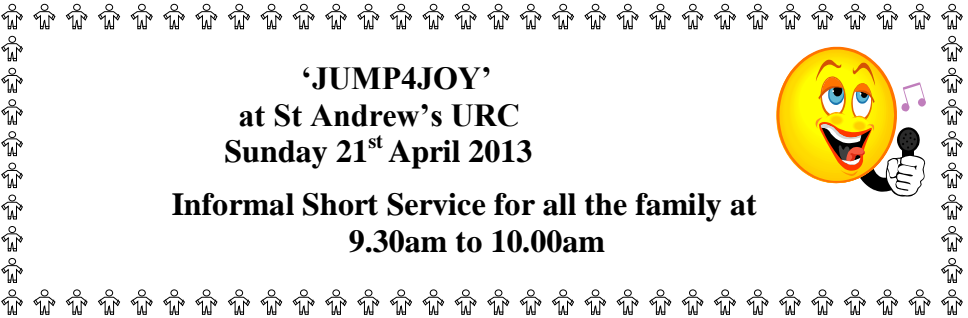
Thanks to everyone who supported our eco church activity to measure our carbon footprint either by sending in their results or completing the survey after our services on Sunday 17th March. The number of planets needed to support us ranged from 2.00 to 4.14. You can see a graphic illustration of the results on the Eco Church notice board in the church hall. The average for the UK is 3.1 planets.

The WWF survey looks at 4 main areas – Food, Travel, Home and Stuff – so you can see what makes the greatest contribution. Travel was an area which influenced most heavily the score for many of our participants as several people had taken long haul flights in the past year. The lowest so far has been under 2 planets. If you haven't yet had a chance to take part in the survey, you can find this at <http://footprintwwf.org.uk/>. Mail your results to ecochurch@urcic.org.uk.

Some eco-tips you may wish to consider from the WWF site:

- Food - plan a weekly food menu and take a shopping list
- Travel - Reduce your flying as much as possible. When you must fly use a Gold Standard offset scheme.
- Home - Run your washing machine at 40°C or less
- Stuff - Avoid over-packaged products

Carol Drummond



‘JUMP4JOY’
at St Andrew’s URC
Sunday 21st April 2013

Informal Short Service for all the family at
9.30am to 10.00am

Prestbury News:**Coffee Morning – Saturday 6th April 10.30am to 12.00noon**

Please join us for our monthly coffee morning at the Church on Saturday 6th April from 10.30am to 12.00noon. There will also be the usual mix of teas, coffees, cakes & good company!

It would be great to continue to see the familiar faces but also to see some new ones.

Prestbury Parish Cross

Prestbury URC again hosts the Parish Cross – a symbol of our Christian faith and unity at this time of Easter. It is floodlit at night making an impressive statement with the large shadow of the cross on the building. Our thanks go to Mike Aldridge for putting up the Cross ready for Palm Sunday and for setting up the floodlighting, and to Dee Graham from St Mary's for making the beautiful Easter Garland.

Annual Gift Month

Our Annual Gift appeal will be launched on Sunday 7th April. Please take one of the special envelopes and return it to the church with your donation anytime in the April. If you have signed up to Gift Aid then please ensure that your name or number is on the envelope.

The Church in Warden Hill News:

Gardening club

Membership renewal. 30 out of 60 people renewed their membership and we now warmly welcome 3 new members.

26 members went on to participate in the Quiz night with many question sections:

One of the questions asked required the identification in pictures of 'Garden Good Guys' and the pests they preyed on. These included Ladybirds, Hoverflies, Lacewings and the larvae of each. We were told that they all ate aphids, caterpillars, mealy bugs and lots more.

Another set of pictures focused on the damage which 'Garden Pests' would cause; examples of these were a cluster of slug's eggs, pigeon damage on a cabbage, leaf cutters and vine weevil.

Both these quiz questions proved to be quite difficult and answers were noted with interest.

For the next question, the committee group had suggested Royal Garden features. This was a difficult one to put together, as web sites didn't show any features, so instead, we had two question & answer sheets on the topic. The first covered various members of the Royal Family at different times in their lives, the other was specific to the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge.

The third Q & A sheet was titled 'Saints and Sinners' with a variety of slants, e.g. what is the name of The Saints football ground. What is the date of All Saints Day, Who is the patron saint of Mountaineers, who designed the Citroen C5 vehicle, etc. Most groups had more success with these.

A happy informal evening was, I hope, enjoyed by all despite being frustrated by 'The Bugs'.

A suggestion had been made about a club trip to Bowood House, either in June or July. Please contact Barbara for further details or visit the web site. The trip will have to be mid-week and will cost £25 plus £8 for the coach. The £25 covers admission and a two course lunch plus several other things as well.

Ross Bagley, the Head Gardener at Ragley Gardens, will be with us on 25th April with a virtual tour of the gardens.

Duncan Combs entertains us on May 30th with the “Magic of the Flowers” in Yunnan, China.

Dorothy Bake and Shaun Colvin (an article from the recent Lantern Magazine)

Sheep Wanted

I know we are only in Spring, but we will be needing a flock of sheep for ADVENT!!

We are planning a "Sheep theme" for various events, and will need lots of knitted/crocheted/woollen sheep, some larger, and some quite small.

What we need at the moment are patterns for sheep (we've already got some), suitable sheep-coloured wool, bits of felt for details - and stuffing (not the sage and onion variety, please).

If you have anything suitable, or would be a willing sheep-maker, please let Jacqui or me know.

Pam Dainton

(in my new guise as shepherdess?)

St Christopher's Senior Club

Due to the inclement weather, the meeting on 23rd January was cancelled. Eastern Promise was the title of our entertainment on January 30th. Ann Blagden introduced us to the intricacies of "belly dancing". We heard how teaching and performing had taken over Ann's life, after leaving her job in banking. The local paper wrote an article on the Saturday about belly dancing and by Monday forty ladies were on the waiting list to participate. This type of dancing originated thousands of years ago, mainly in temples and it was something good girls did not do! Ann explained about the history and culture of belly dancing and showed pictures of Turkish men participating in it. Ann then took off her gorgeous black velvet robe, trimmed with gold embroidery, to reveal a spectacular royal blue and gold Egyptian outfit, encrusted with hundreds of gold coloured coins. Originally these were real coins sewn on to keep money safe. Several veils of different colours and materials were passed around and we learnt that veils were an American idea. Ann then entertained us with wonderful music and dances, concluding with a dance depicting an eagle. We all agreed it was a fabulous afternoon.

Bingo was played on the 6th February; it being the first Wednesday of the month.

We welcomed Revd Maz Allen and Jeremy Hitchings on the 13th giving us a presentation on their recent expedition to Kenya. This year, 19 people, of different ages and from various parts of the world, travelled to Kenya to take part in the latest Kenya Projects (UK) trip. £26,000-00 was raised to pay for projects in St. Stephen's Children's Home where 90 children are looked after, and Utugi Boys' home where there are 50 boys.

We saw pictures of the local group sorting out piles of clothing, toys etc. in St. Christopher's large hall, so that every traveller would carry the same weight.

Maz has been involved with the Parish Church of St. Stephen's, Embu since the very beginning, ten years ago. We saw pictures of the church, now completed. Another project the team have been involved in was the drilling of a 150-foot deep borehole with two 5000 litres storage tanks, to provide clean water for the local health centre and the community. On 2nd January the Bishop, local preachers and Maz, as honoured guests, gathered to turn on the water and bless the borehole. When the water gushed out, the children were ecstatic, it is the first time they had ever seen clean water!

This will make such a difference to the community. At the health centre, we saw pictures of Maz painting [no health and safety here; she was perched on top of steps balanced on a table]. Five rooms were painted in all by the group, and the archaic plumbing was also sorted out. They also took out some much needed drugs. Before they left a wonderful party was held. 90 children were each given a new pair of shoes and a goody bag. The contents included tooth brushes, tooth paste, pens and pencils, toys etc., the broad grins on their faces said it all. The team then managed to get away on a safari for two days. They stayed at a lodge called The Ark an amazing wooden building, of course shaped like a boat and overlooking a water hole. We saw spectacular pictures of animals visiting the water, colourful flowers, Jeremy's mascot and brilliant sunrises. The afternoon brought back many wonderful memories for me, as Kenya is one of my favourite holiday destinations.

We meet every Wednesday at 2.15pm please join us for entertainment, refreshments and friendship.

Sheila Parry

St. Christopher's Senior Club Programme for April 2013 at 2.15pm

Date	Subject	Speaker
3 rd April	Beetle	
10 th April	Remember? (TBC)	
17 th April	Jordan & Petra	Pete Wilson
24 th April	West Brook Singers (TBC)	

Administration:

For many months now, the In Touch and other interesting articles are made available for you to read on the church website: www.urchic.org.uk, thankfully uploaded each month by our webmaster, Fiona Hall.

Should you wish not to receive your paper copy of In Touch (to save paper) and / or would like the Church notices sent to you by email, please feel free to email the church office with your request.

The In Touch Coordinators currently for respective churches are as follows:

Prestbury URC

Please see Ian Brooks directly or forward contributions via e-mail (ibrooks4@me.com). . Contributions most welcome.

The Church in Warden Hill

Please see Carole Pennington or Brian Miles directly or forward contributions via e-mail: magazine@urchic.org.uk or to church office, office@urchic.org.uk. Likewise contributions very welcome.

St Andrew's

Please see John Standring directly or forward contributions via e-mail: magazine@urchic.org.uk or to church office, office@urchic.org.uk.

TAI CHI QI GONG

Lida - telephone 01242 233949 e mail: lida@blueyonder.co.uk

QI GONG

**At St Andrew's
with
LIDA VLČEK**

NEXT SESSIONS

at 12.15pm

Thursday dates to be advised

NOTE LATER START TIME

Cost £5.00 per session

Future sessions to be announced

Gentle exercises especially geared to the needs of older people

Based on Chinese traditional practice

Promoting self healing and self regulation of the body

New members welcome – call Lida for information

Cheltenham URC - Prayer contd

31 Mar	Easter Sunday Luke 24, 1-12	Pittville area, Churches and Schools St Vincent's Support for the mentally ill Prayers for the World
7 Apr	Easter 2 Acts 5.27-32	All Saints/Centre area, Churches and Schools Bangladeshi Community, Peace and Reconciliation movements Prayers for the World
14 Apr	Easter 3 Acts 9.1-6, (7-20)	Wymans Brook area, Churches and Schools Leisure and Entertainment In Touch team Prayers for the World
21 Apr	Easter 4 Acts 9.36-43	Swindon Village area, Churches and Schools Small business and industry CURC World Church and Mission Prayers for the World
28 Apr	Easter 5 Acts 11, 1-18	St Paul's area, Churches, Schools and University Cheltenham Community Projects, Homelessness St Andrew's Junior Church Prayers for the World

The Oasis - St Andrew's

Come and spend some time in the prayer area this month. It's open from 10.00am - 2.00pm each day.

Oasis prayer time takes place every 2nd and 4th Tuesday (and possibly 5th Tuesday) of the month from 12.15pm to 12.45pm in the Sanctuary.

Let's encourage one another as we meet together to bring our prayers to God.

The Church in Warden Hill (St Christopher's)

Every Weekday: Morning Prayer at 8.00am.

Tuesday: Holy Communion & Morning Prayer 10.30am.

APRIL				
3	Wed	11.00am	SA	Pensioners Forum
		7.30pm	SA	Wednesday Women
6	Sat	10.30am	P	Coffee Morning
		6.00pm	CK	Scottish Dancing at Balcarras
7	Sun	10.30am	P	Family Worship
		10.30am	URCC	Worship Group
		11.00am	SA	Debbie Hunt
		6.00pm	SC	Holy Communion
9	Tues	12.15pm	SA	Prayer Time
		2.30pm	SA	Tuesday Forum
13	Sat	2.30pm	URCC	Community Film
14	Sun	10.30am	P	No Service
		10.30am	SC	Reverend Jacqui Hyde <i>Communion</i>
		11.00am	SA	Reverend Glyn Jenkins
		6.00pm	SC	Evensong
16	Tues	12.15pm	SA	Light Group
		7.30pm	URCC	TCiWH: ECC and AGM
18	Thur	1.00pm	SA	Knit and Chat
19	Fri	10.30am	Cleeve	House Group
20	Sat	2.15pm	URCC	Classic Film
21	Sun	9.30am	SA	Jump4Joy and Breakfast
		10.30am	P	Dr Tony Jeans
		10.30am	URCC	Reverend Nick Davies <i>Communion</i>
		11.00am	SA	Reverend Maz Allen <i>AGM</i>
		6.00pm	SC	Evensong
23	Tues	12.15pm	SA	Prayer Time
		2.30pm	SA	Tuesday Forum
		7.30pm	URCC	Church Council meet
25	Thur	7.30pm	SC	Gardening Club
26	Fri	6.00pm	P	C4 Choir rehearsal
		7.30pm	SA	Prue Leith Event
28	Sun	10.30am	P	Reverend Maz Allen <i>Communion</i>
		10.30am	SC	Reverend Jacqui Hyde <i>Communion</i>
		11.00am	SA	Bob Alger
		6.00pm	SC	Evensong
30	Tues	12.15pm	SA	Light Group

MAY				
4	Sat	10.30am	P	Coffee Morning
				Visit to Prom Praise
5	Sun	10.30am	P	Julie Jefferies <i>Family Worship</i>
		10.30am	URCC	Family Worship with Val Hobbs
		11.00am	SA	Reverend Maz Allen <i>Communion</i>
		6.00pm	SC	Holy Communion

Weekly Meetings				
	Mon	9.30am	SA	Mah Jong
		10.00am	P	Urchins (<i>not summer holidays</i>)
		4.30pm	WH SC	Rainbows (<i>term time only</i>)
		5.30pm	WHCC	Brownies (<i>term time only</i>)
	Tues	10.00am	SA	Parents and Toddlers
		8.00pm	WH SC	House Group
	Wed	9.15am	SC	Little Shepherds (<i>term time only</i>)
		2.15pm	WH SC	Senior Club
		7.00pm	WH SC	Bellringing
	Thur	10.00am	SA	Coffee Bar
		3.30pm	URCC	“Toast” (<i>term time only</i>)
		5.30pm	WH SC	Beavers (<i>term time only</i>)
		6.00pm	WH SC	Brownies (<i>term time only</i>)
		6.45pm	WH SC	Cubs (<i>term time only</i>)
	Fri	10.30am		Bible Study House Groups (<i>term time only</i>)
	Sat	10.00am	SA	Coffee Bar

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL ITEMS FOR THE MAY ISSUE REACH THE NOMINATED CONTRIBUTORS OR THE CHURCH OFFICE BY TUESDAY 16 APRIL. DISTRIBUTION DAY IS SUNDAY 28 APRIL.