

SLIP END & DISTRICT

MARCH
2007

PARISH NEWS

50P
WHERE SOLD

*Slip End
School
Ofsted
Report*

*News
Inside ..*



The Parish @ Large

SCHOOLS

Slip End Lower: 720152

Five Oaks: 726058

Streetfield: 613421

Ashton: 663511

SPORT

Bowling Club: 412506

Tennis: 733253

Darts League: 425323

Football: 418494

Cricket: 414157

HALLS

Village Hall: 723109

Peter Edwards Hall: 455185

COMMUNITY

Brownies: 723109

Beavers: 725297

Cubs: 414157

Fly Tipping (SBDC): 472222

Friendship Club: 452978

Slip End Assoc: 414796

Mother's Union: 738435

Playgroup: 728865

Toddler Group 405931

Allotments: 736892

FoSELS (PTA):

alex.mcpherson@btinternet.com

Women's Institute: 421034

Police: 473412

Aircraft noise: 395382

Fly tipping: 01582 474031

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Christine Benson: 456200

Christinebenson@bensons-autosupplies.co.uk

Stephen Fuell: 417792

stevefuell@f2s.com

Philip Penman: 455185

PhilipPenman@aol.com

Geoff Daniel: 424363

Geoff@daniel67.freeserve.co.uk

Ken Crossett 414168

kencrossett@slipend.co.uk

Mike McKeivitt: 720596

mike.mckeivitt@mndassociation.org

Janet Crawley: 07752 902070

crawley_janet@yahoo.co.uk

CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Nikkie West: 402312

parishclerk@slipend.co.uk

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Anne Spencer 713267

anne@connorspencer.com

Philip Penman: 455185

PhilipPenman@aol.com

Ruth Gammons 738398

fairgreen@bopenworld.com

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Richard Stay: 724685

Richard.Stay@bedscc.gov.uk

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Margaret Moran: 01582 731882

sultanau@parliament.uk

CHURCHES

St Andrew's Church

Rev Joy Daniel 01582 424363

Wardens: David Kingston 416138

Ken Crossett 414168

Aley Green Methodist Church

Minister: Rev Julia Dowding 730129

Senior Steward: Ann Meader 733668

SHOPS & SERVICES

Post Office: At the Crossroads, telephone 401069

Monday to Friday 6.30 to 21.00 Saturday 7.00 to 21.00 - Sunday 7.30 to 21.00

Garage: Slip End Garage, Markyate Road, telephone 456888

Website: slipend.co.uk

Crime Figures

The Crime Figures for January are as follows:-

Theft from Motor Vehicle: 2

Theft: 2

Fraud: 3

There were two road accidents. One report of nuisance motorcycles at the school that resulted in a search but no trace was found.

Racism in Slip End?

Following on comments made by Cllr. Jim Thakoordin about racism in Slip End, a letter has been drafted to be submitted to the Commission for Racial Equality national head office in London and the Race Advisory Forum of Luton Borough Council. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the Standards Board for Councils.

The gist of the letter was to ask for guidance from these bodies on the appropriate action to take following the Parish being described by Mr Thakoordin and the local press as ‘Racist’ following a recent Court Case, the Defendant being an ex-resident of the village.

*Envirocrime Unit
South Beds District Council.*

The new Envirocrime unit is a re-think of the old SBDC Enforcement Team. They cover things like nuisance parking, abandoned vehicles and people who use areas within residential areas for repairing or selling cars.

It is now an offence to drop litter anywhere, previously this was only an offence on public land. So now if you are seen dropping litter on your neighbours front garden you can be fined. Business have to ensure that their frontage is litter free. Litter clearance notices can be used on privately owned land where refuse or dumping of waste is problematic. Fly tipping of a single bag is now considered littering. These notices can also be used for the cleaning up of graffiti on shop fronts or public places.

Now, the one you have all been waiting for. With regard to dog fouling and dog walking. New signs will go up soon regarding fines for not clearing up dog waste. Certain areas, also including ones with existing Bye Laws such as the Crawley playground, will be designated where dogs may only be exercised on a lead. There will be limits to the number of dogs one person can exercise at a time.

There are also notices about noise abatement and nuisance lighting, such as floodlights disturbing neighbouring properties. High hedges can also be dealt with at a charge of £400. That’s all for now, go careful out there.

*Christine Benson.
Chairman, Slip End Parish Council.*

Editorial comment: With regard to the dog fouling problems in certain parts of the village, readers are encouraged to report offences to:

*Envirocrime
South Bedfordshire District Council,
High Street North,
Dunstable,
Bedfordshire, LU6 1LF
Telephone: 01582 474031*

Also refer to the South Bedfordshire District Council website, www.southbeds.gov.uk and look under “Environment” for reporting methods and advice. The Council is introducing a new scheme which extends the areas where dog fouling will be prohibited. Council Environmental Officers are empowered to make spot fines and these powers are to be increased in 2007.

*We have no
problems with the
vast majority of
responsible dog
owners, but it
takes only one to
foul things up for
us all: stop it!*



Brownies

We now have 22 girls in our Brownies and we are busy rehearsing for a little show we are planning to put on sometime towards the end of April: watch this space.

We are lucky to be getting some help right now. Elizabeth Scott Flemings is taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and she will be with us for six months. When she completes her time with us we hope for another young lady to come along on the same basis.

We have said goodbye to Sandra who has been helping us over the past few years. Thanks from all of us, Sandra!

Here is what the Girls have to do to achieve their Entertainer's Badge:



1. Choose and plan an entertainment doing three of the following:

Recite a poem or tell a short story.

Act, mime or use puppets to tell a story of an historical event.

Perform a national dance or create your own dance to music.

Sing with or without accompaniment.

Play a piece on a musical instrument.

Perform a short magic show. Act as compère for a show put on by other Brownies who are working for their Entertainer badge.

2. Do each of the following:

Rehearse for your show. Plan make-up, costume and lighting. Make a programme for the event.

3. Entertain an audience and clear up afterwards.

*Gillian Plummer
Brown Owl*

FOIL APPEAL

*In aid of Guide Dogs
for the Blind*



*Please leave at
67 Five Oaks, Caddington
or call 480107 to arrange collection.*

County Councillor's Surgery

at Heathfield School, Caddington

*Meet Richard Stay to discuss local matters
which are of your concern or interest.*

*First Saturday of each month,
10am to 12 noon
(see Diary Page)*

ALLOTMENTS & GARDEN ASSOCIATION

Vegetable Garden

If the weather is good make a sowing of main crop potatoes.

Flower & Fruit Garden

Plant rose trees, making sure the ground is firm around them. Sow hardy annuals and any new perennials. Sow sweet peas outdoors, bed out wallflowers, polyanthus and double daisies.

Prune rose bushes, spray apple trees and graft apple and pear trees. Repair or lay new lawns.

PLANT SALE - ADVANCE NOTICE

Our bi-annual Slip End Plant Sale will be held this year on Saturday 19th May at The Old Bakery, 2 Summer Street. Please put the date in your diary then buy your bedding plants, cuttings, hanging baskets and a variety of fresh produce and home made jams on that day. There'll be a chance to discuss gardening matters and chat in general with one or two experts. You can't beat local knowledge!

If you have any queries, contributions or special requests please contact one of the following:

Val Church	458443
Joan Duncombe	404988
Rosemary Wickens	423622
Steve Lyons	414162
David Kingston	416138

WARNING

“A company that claims to collect unwanted goods for people in the Third World has been targeting homes in Wiltshire.

Helpmates Ltd and others have posted flyers asking residents to leave bags of unwanted clothing, towels and cosmetics outside for collection, so they can be sent to people in developing countries. The company is unlicensed to collect for charities. As such there are no controls on where the donations go, so items can be sold for profit by the people behind the operation.

Christine Wells, community support officer for Wiltshire Trading Standards, said: "To be sure that what you are giving away goes to charity, it is always better to deal with someone you know, such as a charity shop."

Be warned! Better to give unwanted items to a worthwhile charity, such as Noah.

Also see:

www.headington.org.uk/news/items/clothes_collection.htm



On Sunday the 4th of February we were invited by the Lions of Harpenden to their function, which is held at Harlow Leisure Centre. Thirty-one members attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. A big thank you to them and to The Grace Cook fund for the transport.

This month we are back to our weekly club and look forward to seeing you all there.

Pam King



March

Is there anything more thrilling,
When the merry birds are trilling,
Than a-walking and a-talking in the spring?
With a lass who smiles so sweetly
That she knocks you down completely
And you cannot dream of any other thing.

Yet a greater wonder's waiting,
Lads and lasses who are mating,
For as spring wears on to autumn
they may find
That a love which knows no ceasing,
Brings a joy that is increasing,
And the sunset years of loving are most kind.

Francis Gay

Emergency Information Scheme

'Message in a Bottle' has your fridge got the message? This bottle could save your life. Key Benefits are:

1. Used by anyone who feels vulnerable while living at home.
2. Provides emergency services with vital details of any illness or allergy.
3. Provides emergency services with a contact name if they are called to your home.
4. In Bedfordshire, it is available free from your local pharmacy or doctor's surgery.

Data Link, sometimes known as Message in a Bottle, is a voluntary scheme for anyone living at home who might be reassured to know that their essential information would be readily available to the Emergency Services, should they suffer an accident or sudden illness at home.

A clearly labelled plastic container with the relevant data for each member of the household is stored in the refrigerator. Two matching labels recognised by the Emergency Services and other care agencies, are displayed in your home, one on the outside of your fridge, the other on the inside of your front door.



Contact us to get your free data link bottle.

Tel: 01234 275275

Or write to us at:

*District
Neighbourhood Watch
Association
Communities & Partnership
Department
Greyfriars Police Station
Bedford MK40 1HR*

ALEY GREEN METHODIST CHURCH

Help us to see, O God, that what we love becomes a part of us, interfused with our lives, blended with mind and memory, joined to our souls.

Last year as well as raising over £5,000 towards the upkeep and running of our Church in Aley Green, we raised, with your help, a total of £24,500 for 22 charities. This is an increase on last year's giving of £750. We also gave to other Methodist charities through the church. A very BIG thank you to everyone who supported us. This is part of our mission - to make the world a better, safer, more caring and loving place to live in. The money we raise helps charities like JMA, NCH, MHA, Keech Cottage, RNLI, etc to help people in need. God has no hands (or money) but ours to help his people.

We have already started on this year's mission works and set dates for others. In January we were pleased to welcome 30 adults and teenagers to our New Year's meal. We all tucked into Lorna's soup, roast beef and pudding and people gave a donation for their meal. There was a raffle with 16 prizes. We raised £170 for the Pasque Hospice.

At the January coffee evening we raised £48 towards our heating fund. Our next coffee evening will be on Wednesday March 21st, 7.30 onwards. Drinks are free and we have a good selection of second hand books and Videos for sale. So please pop in and have a browse and treat yourself to something to cheer you up on these long winter evenings.

The Ecumenical Lent Meetings will be held on each Monday, 8 pm start. If you'd like to join us please ring Mike on 726630. Our Sunday school teachers were pleased to welcome two new children Jack and Katie to join our lively group. Sunday school runs every week 11 to noon. Children from age 3 are very welcome.

As you will have read in the last Newsletter, we are holding our 'Favourite Things' Flower Festival from 16th to 18th March. We will be

open on Friday 16th March 6pm till 9pm. Hot drinks and homemade cakes will be on sale as well as books, preserves, gifts and home made cards. Saturday 17th March 10.30am until 4.30pm light lunches, jacket potatoes, soup and roll etc. will be served from mid day onwards followed by afternoon tea.

On Mothering Sunday 18th March, 10.30 onwards (no morning service) we will be serving hot and cold drinks and home made cakes all day. If your 'mums' are coming to you for the day, please bring them along to look at the flowers. Most of the arrangements will be for sale so you can treat her to one. The festival will conclude with an evening service at 6pm led by our minister Rev Julia Dowding. If you've bought an arrangement you can collect it after the service at 7pm. Everyone will be most welcome to come to the flower festival and evening service.

Easter Dates

April 1st - Palm Sunday service led by Mrs D Chapman. 11am Sunday school as normal.

April 8th - Easter Day service led by Ms Jo Symonds.

We have done this for the past 2 years and it is good for the adults to see how hard the children and teachers work and to join them in their worship, Bible stories and Craft work. Other events are listed on the Diary page in this issue, so please come and join us.

We hope and pray that you will be able to join us at some if not all of these events and we thank you again for continuing to support our small Church at Aley Green.

May God Bless you all.

Ann Meader



SLIP END PLAYGROUP

Nearly New Sale

Saturday 10th March

2pm to 3:30pm

At Slip End Village Hall

**Clothing, equipment and toys for children aged 0 to 12 years
plus maternity-wear.**

Further Enquiries Phone: 01582 724888 or 01582 728865

Items to be labelled clearly with name, size and price (include 25% for Playgroup).

Labels to be pinned on with safety pins or use sticky labels.

Items to be provided on hangers if possible

Deliver goods to be sold between midday and 1pm on Saturday to Slip End Village Hall

Please return for your goods at 16:00hrs.

We are not responsible for any goods left after 4.30pm.

The Playgroup is doing very well at the moment with lots of children wanting to join us. We had too many on our list for our normal three mornings last term and so we started opening on Thursdays as well! We have kept that day this term too for the youngest children, and for some of the oldest children who are due to go on to the school next term.

We held a race-night and disco last term which raised a good sum of money which we used to help fund the children's Christmas parties for the Playgroup and the Toddler group. We are using some money now to replace our trampet, (small trampoline) which broke (in fairness it was over 12 years old and had been well used) and for some new tricycles and smaller toys.

This term we are holding a Nearly New Sale on Saturday 10th March in the Village Hall to help boost the funds of both groups.

Just a reminder that the Toddler Group is open from 1.30 to 3.00, every Tuesday of term time in the Village Hall. This group is run as a drop-in and parents, grandparents and child-minders with pre-school children and babies are welcome. (We use the door at the back of the Hall as the only entrance.)

Jill Acto



PARISH NEWS - A SELL OUT!

The last issue of Parish News was so well received, we sold out! It was necessary to have more printed to satisfy burgeoning demands. A nice problem for us, but it would help if all our readers ordered a regular delivery so that we can place a regularly consistent order with our printer.

We continue strive to improve editorial content and there are some ideas in the offing for the next few issues. But we need help: so if you have any item of local interest please send them in to us and we'll be pleased to print them, subject to space and editorial considerations.

If you have any pictures of local scenes and events in times past (rummage through those shoe boxes in the loft or under the bed), pass them to us for copying and we'll return your photographs. For contact details see the Diary page at the back of this issue.



It's Official Slip End is a "Good School"!

Last month I promised to share more news regarding the school's recent Ofsted report with you so here it is. The inspection in December was the first the school had received since 2001. A lot has changed since then, teachers, head teachers and facilities, all of which was reflected in the huge improvement recorded by the inspector.

Inspection dates are only notified a few days in advance and inspectors want to see a lot of paperwork and records not just observe actual teaching. "The inspection came at a very busy time in the school calendar as the school was preparing for Christmas," said Sue Smith, Slip End's Headteacher. The inspector was delighted with what he saw, commenting after in his letter to the children;

"All of you said you were very happy at school. I think you are right to be happy because Slip End is a good school. The teachers are working very hard to help you learn and because of this you get good results."

A Cut above Average

"Good results" is an understatement when it comes to Slip End. The Government says that by the age of 7 all children should have achieved level 2 in Literacy, Writing and Maths. That means they should all be able to read, write and have basic numeracy skills. At Slip End 100% of children achieve this which is well above county and national averages! This puts our school up there with the best.

This is due to the hard work by children and teachers alike. The report commented, "The teaching is good, and occasionally outstanding, because teachers work very hard to plan effective lessons, using appropriate resources." Sue echoed this, "All of our staff work extremely hard to ensure the children get the best education possible. They are a dedicated team who genuinely care about their pupils' welfare as well as their learning."

Another benefit to the children is that the class sizes in the main school currently average just 15 pupils meaning they get a lot more close attention and care.

A Broader Education

However, school should be about more than just reading and writing. Children should learn life skills and have the opportunity to experience a range of activities that enrich their young lives.

As Sue commented, "It was gratifying to see the report reflected how happy the children are and their very positive attitude. The children were keen to tell the inspector about the school and how much they like it, which made a great impression."

It certainly did, and he even commented, "Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good....The school puts a high focus on their personal development and pupils are familiar with a range of values, and of how they should behave." Which is, after all, what you want if children are to turn out as well rounded individuals.



Headteacher Sue Smith says "All of our staff work extremely hard to ensure the children get the best education possible."

Making an Impression

He also got first hand experience of how well the children understand manners and how to behave when he joined a group of them for lunch. Having enjoyed their company and finished his lunch he rose from the table to leave only to be told by one child that, if he'd finished, he had to sit back down and put his hand up if he wanted to get up. Children are taught to ask permission to leave the table and, as far as they were concerned, he needed to follow the rules too!

An Asset to the Community

It's nice to have a success story on our doorstep. Slip End school is an asset to the village and the local community. The children receive a good education but more than that they are happy, positive, individuals who enjoy their time there. They are learning in a place which is a central part of the community. Many

of the children benefit from getting to know the same adults at school, in church, at cubs and beavers, all of which takes place within the village.

The school has good facilities including an ICT suite, an outdoor swimming pool and numerous after school clubs and extra curricular activities. Year 4 pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit to France. Plus there is an active parent, teacher group, FoSELS, which raises additional funds and adds fun activities such as school discos and annual fairs.

Everyone's Welcome

If you have young children or even grandchildren in the area, not even necessarily the village, then Slip End School should be top of your list for their education. After all approximately 30% of pupils come from outside the village and we need to keep that number up if the school is to remain a part of the community.

"We have an open door policy," said Sue. "We always welcome visitors who would like to view the school and meet myself and my colleagues. I'm very proud of what we've achieved here and would love to show any prospective parent around."

If you would like to visit the school with a view to enrolling your child, then please contact the school on 01582 720152.

If you'd like to read the full Ofsted report in full then please go online to www.ofsted.gov.uk or the Slip End village website www.slipend.co.uk. Alternatively please call into the school office where there are hard copies of the report available.

Sandra Collins

Over the page is a transcript of the letter which the Ofsted Inspector, Geoff Timms sent to the Children of Slip End School ...

4 December 2006

Dear Children

Slip End Lower School, Ross Way, Slip End, Luton, LU1 4DD

I want to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me and the way you all helped me find out about your school. I especially want to thank the school council, who were very helpful and keen to talk about what they enjoy and what they would like to see change. All of you said you were very happy at school.

I think you are right to be happy because Slip End is a good school. The teachers are working very hard to help you learn and because of this you get good results and are doing lots of very enjoyable activities. You behave well in lessons and this helps the teachers to teach you. The school provides a lot of extra things for you such as visits and visitors and after school clubs. You make good use of these and they help you learn new skills and give you the chance to try new things. The adults all care for you well and help keep you safe. Those of you I had lunch with understood the importance of eating healthy food.

The school is good at deciding for itself what needs to get better. However, I also think there are three things teachers and governors can do that will help you reach even higher standards:

- help you get better at mathematics especially in Years 3 and 4;
- help you use computers more often in other subjects;
- help the school governors learn more about how the school works.

Thank you again for the way you all made me welcome. I hope the Christmas Fair raised lots of money and that you enjoy performing your Christmas show. Enjoy your time at Slip End and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead Inspector





Scenes from Slip End Lower School. The four pictures above show the lower school children, learning IT skills from an early age and even younger ones in the Foundation Group getting early grips with reading. And an earlier group: a picture taken on the day the "new" school opened over 30 years ago! These children are grown up now, with children of their own.





There's a strong connection between our two features this month. The children of Slip End Lower School are amongst the many thousands of others who put together all those shoe boxes. Here we see other children, not so far away in Ukraine who are not so lucky as ours, but who love to receive a few loving gifts at Christmas time.



A new local Natural Resource? With gas bubbling up in Woodside Road, are we living on a potential fortune? Has there been a goldfield under our feet all this time? Does the Parish Council have exploitation rights, will we all become millionaires overnight???? National grid has staked a claim by putting their signs up, can we contest them?



Sorry, don't get too excited. It might be their (our) gas after all, springing from their medium pressure gas main in upper Woodside.

"Don't worry", we are told, "this leak is remote from housing", but it might be best to put your ciggy out as you walk by the scene.

PN feels that having had Woodside road smashed to bits last year when Church Road was closed, flooding and gas leaks are what we might expect.

What's next?

Services & Events in March and up to Easter

Midweek Communion take place monthly at two venues in Slip End, details from Joy.

Thursday 1 st	8.00pm	<i>Footsteps</i> meet in the Family room
Sunday 4 th	10.30am	Family Communion
Monday 5 th	7.30pm	PCC in the Family Room
Wednesday 7 th	10.30am	Pram Service in the Family Room
Sunday 11 th	10.30am	Morning Praise inc Thanksgiving and Blessing of a child
	2.30pm	St Andrew's Ramblers meet at church
	6.15pm	3:16 meet in the Family Room
Monday 12 th	7.30pm	Deanery Synod at St Christophers
Thursday 15 th	8.00pm	<i>Footsteps</i> meet in the Family Room
Sunday 18 th	10.30am	Mothering Sunday-Holy Communion
Wednesday 21 st	10.30am	Pram Service in the Family Room
Friday 23 rd	2.30pm	Woodside Home Service
Sunday 25 th	9.15am	Holy Communion at East Hyde
	10.30am	Morning Praise
	6.15pm	3:16 meet in the Family Room
Thursday 29 th	7.30pm	<i>Faith in Football</i> : Alan West at The Rising Sun, ticket only
	-	No <i>Footsteps</i> meeting

April

Sunday 1 st	10.30am	Palm Sunday Family Communion
Monday 2 nd	7.00pm	Evening prayer in the Family Room
Tuesday 3 rd	7.00pm	Evening Prayer in the Family Room
Wednesday 4 th	7.00pm	Evening Prayer in the Family Room
Thursday 5 th	7.30pm	Maunday Thursday Agape in Church
Friday 6 th	11.30am	Good Friday procession of witness through the Village
	12 noon	Reflective service in Church
Easter Sunday	9.15am	Holy Communion at East Hyde
	10.30am	Holy Communion at St Andrews
Easter Monday		Pilgrimage to St Albans Abbey

Fancy a Walk?

Two annual favourites are recommended: the London Churches "Unlock" Walk and the Easter Monday Pilgrimage to St Albans. All are welcome to join in both. The youngsters will be particularly welcome to join in, especially on Easter Monday Pilgrimage which is geared for them (although some of our regular pilgrims are over 60 years young!).

As usual, a group from Slip End will be walking the next Unlock London Walk on Saturday the 21st April. It will be a return visit to the route of the 1st Unlock London walk, in Bermondsey and the Isle of Dogs. For

details look at www.unlock-urban.org. For information, please contact David on 416138 if you wish to join either of these outings.



COME AND SPEND AN EVENING WITH ALAN WEST ...



FAITH



IN

FOOTBALL

7.30PM

29TH MARCH

AT 'THE RISING SUN'

TICKETS JUST £2.50

**(PART-EXCHANGEABLE FOR A DRINK AT THE BAR
BUFFET SUPPER INCLUDED - CAN'T BE BAD!)**

Once Captain of Luton Town, Alan also played as an under-23 England International. These days he is the Senior Pastor at the Luton Christian Fellowship so come along for a lively evening at the Rising Sun.

*Tickets are limited, so get yours quick!
Call David on 416138 or Ken on 414168*





The Christmas 2006 campaign is just over, but some are hard at work already

for Christmas 2007! Some scan e-Bay and others keep a keen lookout in shops and supermarkets to snap up toys, pencils, toothbrushes, towels, clothing and lots more which come up from time to time at great value.

Julie Taylor has rediscovered dormant knitting skills and comes up with a woolly hat suggestion. Such items are very colourful and attractive, invaluable in the extreme cold winters. There is a colour picture of the hat knitted-up on our colour page at the back of this issue of Parish News.

Also this month, we report on Teresa Willson's visit to Ukraine, to see the Shoebox Operation from the other end.

Knitting Pattern for a Hat Ideal for Christmas Shoeboxes

(Fits age 5 to 9)

You will need under 50g double knitting wool (acrylic or wool/acrylic mix works best). And needles sizes 3.25mm (UK10) and 4mm (UK8)

Using 3.25mm needles, cast on 96 stitches and work 1x1 rib (i.e. K1, P1) for 10 cm. Change to 4mm needles and proceed in stocking stitch (i.e. knit a row purl a row). For first row make a stitch (by picking up the loop between two stitches) in the centre of the piece (97 stitches).

Continue for 10cms then commence shaping rows as follows:

1st: K1, * K2 together K6. Repeat from * to end.
2nd and alt. rows purl.

3rd: K1, * K2 together K5. Repeat from * to end.

5th: K1, * K2 together K4. Repeat from * to end.

7th: K1, * K2 together K3. Repeat from * to end.

9th: K1, * K2 together K2. Repeat from * to end.

11th: K1, * K2 together K1. Repeat from * to end.

13th: K1, * K2 together. Repeat from * to end.

Run yarn through remaining stitches, draw up and fasten off. Sew up the back seam: remember to reverse work for the turn back rib.

Variations

Possibilities are endless. Using stripes of different colours (random ones look good) uses up odds and ends of wool. There is no need to stick to stocking stitch either if you want to try out different patterns.

If you dislike rib, change the style by removing the turn back bit. Do 1.5cm of rib and when doing the main body of the hat do an extra 5 cm of stocking stitch to make a "beanie" style.

Pom poms look good too or, for a bigger hat, add stitches in multiples of 8 to make the shaping still work.

I am sure this is teaching grandma to suck eggs for many people, but when I re-discovered knitting a short while ago, and wanted to do hats for Operation Christmas Child, I didn't find it that easy to locate a pattern.

For any readers wanting to branch out into whacky designs there are quite a few listed on www.knittingpatterncentral.com But beware, most are American so their yarn weights and needle sizes need converting into English!

Julie

Report from Ukraine

Teresa Willson went with a group of 14 to meet some children who were to receive the shoeboxes.

After a very long journey they arrived at their destination near Odessa. The first place they visited was the City Shelter, which helps take children, aged 3 to 16, off the streets and works towards re-homing them. The home is well run, clean and orderly and you can tell the children are loved and cared for and, although they had very little money, the visitors were welcomed with bread and salt, which is the custom there. Before the boxes were handed out, the children put a show on for the OCC team.

It had been arranged for the team to visit the children's TB hospital on the Black Sea. Unfortunately, after a long journey, they were unable to visit the children as they were very sick and for their own protection as well as the children's, it was decided not to let them enter. However, shoeboxes were left for all the children. The condition of this hospital is in a desperate state, in need of urgent renovation.

After an overnight train journey to Simferpol in the Southern Crimea, the team attended a Christmas Day service at a Pentecostal Church. Some of the young orphan children performed a dance for them before the boxes were given out, much to the children's delight. Many children who attend the church suffer with HIV. On Christmas Day afternoon they visited a Boarding School/Orphanage (what we might call 'an institution'). The boxes were taken to the school hall where they were handed out.

The children disappeared from the hall and went to their living quarters in the building next door. This building is in a bad state, inside and out. Teresa was surprised by how sparse their surroundings were, with no toys to play with and hardly any furniture. Beds are set end to end and smell of urine. There is no lighting in the hallways and stairs, as the school could not afford the costs.

On the last day in the Southern Crimea, the group visited a street boy's rehabilitation centre. Boys aged 9 to 14 live there, having been forcibly removed from the streets by the police, most for petty crimes. Many boys arrive suffering from alcoholism, drug abuse and glue-sniffing caused almost in every case, by abusive parents. The team were told by Alexander, the director who runs the home, that one boy was sold to a paedophile by his mother for a bottle of vodka!

The centre has been open for six years and in that time nearly 500 boys have gone through. Out of that number 72 went back on the streets, 37 went to prison, but the rest have managed to stay out of trouble. The centre is run on military lines. When many of the children

arrive, they have scabies and sexual diseases (HIV etc).

Physical scars can be healed in 6 months but mental scars can last a lifetime.

The rehabilitation programme teaches the boys to look after themselves and learn practical skills such as gardening, shoe repairing, art and sewing. They were thrilled with their boxes and couldn't wait to share them with their friends. On the return to Odessa the team helped distribute shoeboxes, organised by the charity Mission Possible.

Many of these children are orphans or social orphans (taken from their parents into care). Wherever the group went, the children who received boxes showed their gratitude. For some this was their first ever gift, sent with love by strangers. All agreed it was a worthwhile, incredible journey, which all the OCC team will never forget.



A Snail's Tale

A barman was closing up for the night when he heard a knock at the door. He opened it and looked around but saw nobody. Then he looked down and saw a snail who said, "Can you get me a drink?"

The barman said: "Well, first of all, we're closed. And second, we don't serve snails."

Then he kicked the snail across the street!

About a year later, the same barman was closing up for the night when there was a knock at the door. He opened the door and saw nobody.

He looked down and there was the same snail.

The snail said "What did you do that for?"



Women's
Institute

It was lovely to see all the familiar faces for the start of the New Year. There is no need to feel alone or sad in Caddington. Just come along and join in on the third Thursday in the month, for a friendly natter, a cake and cuppa and to listen to our speaker for the evening.

At our February meeting one of members, Lorna Kalsz, took us on a visit to New Zealand and Iceland, backed up with glorious footage of the scenery, on video. I didn't realise New Zealand was covered in so much water. Iceland has to rely on vegetables being bought in as the earth there isn't compatible with growing root vegetables etc. It is a very expensive country in which to live. Working life starts at fourteen and finishes at seventy-four years of age!

The Spring Federation meeting is to be held at Stopsley Baptist Church on Monday 23rd April, speaker Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe MP. It will be nice not to have such a long journey as it is usually held at the Corn Exchange in Bedford.

Our forthcoming dates are listed on the Diary page: we meet monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 7.30 in the Baptist Church Hall, Caddington. Come and join us!

Patricia Crick

Simple Gifts

May you find serenity and tranquillity in a world you may not always understand or even like. May a kind word, a reassuring touch and a warm smile be yours every day of your life.

And may you give these gifts as well as receive them. May you find inner strength to determine your own worth by yourself and not be dependant on others' judgement on your accomplishments.

And may you always feel loved.

Anon



*WI activity in the 1940's:
"Knitting for Refugees".*



Delegates on their way to the 1930 AGM in Blackpool, "noted for fresh air and fun".



*"I hear your dear wife is going to give our Women's Institute a lecture"
"My dear lady, it's no use appealing to me, I can't stop her"*

Humour, 1920's style.

BRRRRR

During the brief snowy interlude last month a strange creature was spotted in a Summer Street garden, presumably driven from hiding by the cold and snow. Indeed the animal, apparently a cat - snake hybrid (a cake?) seems frozen stiff, rooted to the spot even though the photographer went as close as she dared. All very strange. *Perhaps this creature might be trained to frighten off the dog and its owner from their foul activities in Summer Street?*



CONNIE WATSON: A PS.....

In last month's issue of Parish News we featured Slip End's Senior resident, Connie Watson, 95 years young in February!



Both Connie's son Raymond and daughter Irene live in the Parish now. Ray and his wife (a lady originally from Switzerland) live in Aley Green and Irene has recently moved back to the area with husband Ken, now living in Woodside having lived in Caister for a number of years. It is good that this family are now all re-united in the same locality: best wishes to them all from Parish News!

Our junior sub-editor recalled that Irene might already be on the PN files, so photographic records were scoured and he came up with this picture of St Andrew's Choir, taken back in 1955. The picture has suffered a bit over the years and is not of the highest quality now, but may be interesting to local residents. That's



CRAFTS FOR EASTER

SLIP END VILLAGE HALL
SATURDAY MARCH 24TH
10AM TO 3PM

*For a stall call
Gillian on 01582 723109*

*See Diary page for dates of a series of Craft
Fayres through the coming months*

Irene in the front row, second left. Other remembered names are Ann Burton (front row, 2nd right), Paul Dorkins (back row, 3rd right) who became an actor and Michael Baldock (back row 3rd left). Michael recently retired to Norfolk from Markyate, where he owned the butcher's shop in the High Street. It was good to welcome Michael back at St Andrew's before Christmas, when he came to the Carol Service with his daughter and family, who live in Stopsley.

DIARY: *If you would like your events included, please contact the Editor*

March

- 3rd 10am to noon: Councillor's Surgery at Heathfield School, Caddington
5th 7:30pm Parish Council meeting at the Village Hall
10th Slip End Pay Group: Nearly New sale
16th - 18th Aley Green Methodist Church Flower Festival
20th Women's Institute: Members Night
24th Craft Fayre at the Village Hall: 10am to 3pm

April

- 2nd 7:30pm Parish Council meeting at the Village Hall
5th Aley Green Methodist Church: Stall at Houghton Regis Farmer's Market
7th 10am to noon: Councillor's Surgery at Heathfield School, Caddington
20th Women's Institute: Floral Demonstration by Mrs I. Stray
21st Aley Green Methodist Church: Beetle drive at 4.30pm
21st London Churches "Unlock" Walk

May

- 5th 10am to noon: Councillor's Surgery at Heathfield School, Caddington
7th 7:30pm Parish Council meeting at the Village Hall
12th Aley Green Methodist Church: Good as New Sale at 2.30pm
19th 10am to 1pm: St Andrew's "Plant People" Plant Sale at 2 Summer Street

June

- 2nd 10am to noon: Councillor's Surgery at Heathfield School, Caddington
4th 7:30pm Parish Council meeting at the Village Hall
9th Craft Fayre at the Village Hall

If you are a new reader and would like a copy of Parish News each month, please contact Brian Church 2 Summer Street 458443, churchbrn2@aol.com.

*Anything interesting to report about village activities, photos, holiday adventures, etc? Please contact us, letters and e-mails are very much encouraged. Views expressed by our contributors are not the editors own. **Articles should be sent by the 15th of March for the April issue to: Sue Briggs at 83 The Crescent, Caddington, email: cowells83@aol.com or David Kingston 7 Crawley Close, Slip End, davidgoodmankington@hotmail.com.***

We suggest pictures and items are sent in after the events rather than leaving it until the deadline.

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BINGO

*at the Village Hall
Thursdays at Eight*

Slip End & District Association