

December 2002

BRIDGE

Correspondent: J Anderson, 7 Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury, CT4 5NA. 01227 830260

Christmas Card Delivery: The Nailbourne Scout Group is organising a Christmas Card Delivery again this year for Bridge village only. Special stamps, price still held at 10p, and decorated Christmas posting boxes will be at the following locations from December 7 to 19. Laurie Wakeham butcher, Bridge News Newsagent, Plough and Harrow public house, White Horse Inn, Nicholas James hairdressers, Bridgeway Stores.

The boxes will be emptied regularly and all stamped mail clearly and correctly addressed, will be delivered before Christmas. Cards taken to the box locations after December 19 cannot be delivered. The Scout Group hopes for your continued support.

Royal British Legion: Annual meeting of the Littlebourne and District branch, incorporating Bridge and Patribourne, among other villages in the area, was attended by 26 members. The outgoing president, Oswin Kent, thanked everyone for their support but felt that it was time to hand over. Chairman Doug Fenn praised members for helping make such a flourishing branch, and looked forward to another successful year.

Officers elected: President Hugh Wheeler, vice-presidents George Mills, Fred Bennett and Oswin Kent, chairman Doug Fenn, vice-chairman Fred Bennett, secretary Barbara Hunt, treasurer John

Hewett, service committee officer Tony Bevan, standard bearer Ray Tupper.

Branch officials were elected as follows: Poppy Appeal organiser Geoff Welch, publicity officer Barbara Hunt, Group 4 representative Barbara Hunt, membership representatives Fred Bennett, Wickhambreaux and Ickham; Doug Fenn, Littlebourne; Doug Cartwright, Bridge; Ray Tupper, Wingham.

A vote of thanks was recorded to Victor Gibbs and Barry Whiting for organising the Poppy Appeal collections in Wingham and Bridge respectively, also to the Recreation Club for their hospitality throughout the year.

The main annual Remembrance Day parade took place at St Vincent's Church, Littlebourne, on Sunday, November 10. The standard was carried by Tom Perry, the Exhortation was recited at the war memorial and the wreath was laid by the branch president Hugh Wheeler. After the silence Last Post and Reveille was sounded by trumpeter Fred Phillips, and the lesson at the service which followed, was read by Oswin Kent.

Branch representatives also attended other wreath laying services on Sunday, November 10, at other churches in the group. There was also a 11am wreath laying and silence ceremony held by branch representatives on Monday, November 11, at Wickhambreaux war memorial accompanied by pupils from the local primary school.

Twenty-seven members were present at a shortened November monthly meeting held in Dover, prior to a curry evening with Doug Fenn in the chair. The grand draw raised £543.50 for the Poppy Appeal. It was proposed and agreed that William Hawkins of Bekesbourne became a member of the branch.

The branch committee was elected as follows, Ray Tupper, Ron Bates, Sam Cork, Barbara Hunt, Fred Bennett, Hugh Wheeler, John James. Service committee: The Rev Allan, John Hewett, Dr Sykes, Jean Hammond, Pat Deverson, Fred Bennett, Doug Cartwright. The next branch meetings are on Tuesdays, December 10 and January 14.

WI: The Bridge and Patribourne branch December meeting, will be held a week earlier than usual at 7.30pm on Tuesday, December 10, in Bridge village hall. The guest speaker Mr Nixon will give a talk on Hoodeniers, the competition being a Christmas decoration.

Fish Scheme: Coffee Pop-Inn will be held in the Bridge village hall on Wednesday, December 10, from 10-11.15am. Anyone requiring a lift, ring Ann Medhurst on 830762.

WEA: Bridge Literature Course 2003. There is still time to join the second term of the 'Best of Booker' course starting on January 15, at the Plough and Harrow, High Street, Bridge, each Wednesday, from 10am to noon.

New students are very

welcome. This 10 week course will look at five recent Booker Prize winning or short listed novels including the 2002 winner, Yan Martel's Life of Pi. For further details ring 01304 840721.

Primary School: The Rev Paul Filmer conducted two Advent services for the pupils of Bridge and Patribourne School, both were well attended by parents and friends of the school. On Monday, November 25, Key Stage One held their service in St Peter's Church based on an Advent theme, both pupils and teachers read prayers.

Key Stage Two had their service on Tuesday, November 26, again this was based on Advent with the older pupils reading their poems and the teachers leading the prayers.

The netball team played a match against Diocesan Payne Smith School. After a closely fought match, Bridge won 6-2.

Years Five and Six recently watched a presentation by a team from BT. The theme was 'communication'. This was followed by enjoyable workshops in which the children used speaking and listening skills.

A Christmas bazaar for the pupils and families will be held at the school on December 6.

Flower arrangers: Are urgently needed to decorate St Peter's Church, Bridge, for the celebration of Christmas this year as several members of the team have retired. Also to set up a new rota for the coming year, they are desperate for new talent. If the numbers continue to drop, there will be fewer vases in the church. The usual amount of time spent is just two hours every six months. Any queries phone Viv on 830981.

Church news: Many Thanks to all the church family who recently made a generous donation of a new set of hymn books. The Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New contains a wide range of worship material from tradition hymns and carols to contemporary songs. The books will be used regularly within family services as well as other suitable occasions.

Diary: Monday, December 9, Caring and Sharing Group 7.30pm, 16 Riverside Close, Bridge. Tuesday, December 10, After Eights Group 8pm The Vicarage. Wednesday, December 11, Ears and Beers 6pm, Plough and Harrow, Bridge.

Church Services: Sunday, December 8, Advent 2. 10am Matins Mr C. Mclean St Mary's Church, Patribourne. 11am Family Service and Baptism The Rev P. Filmer and 6pm Advent lecture 3 Canon J. Packer. St Peter's Church Bridge. Other Churches in the Bridge Group, 8am BCP Communion the Rev P. Filmer St Peter's Church Bekesbourne. 9.30am Holy Communion Rev P. Filmer St Mary's Church Nackington. No Service at St Mary the Virgin Lower Hardres. 11am Bridge Methodist Church Service led by Mr R. Chadwick.

Neighbourhood Watch: Thieves will be looking for easy pickings and they know your home is likely

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to have more desirable and portable items in it than usual. The same advice applies to your car. Don't leave newly bought presents on view. Lock them in the boot. Be careful if someone tries to distract you while you are using a cash point – they may be trying to steal your bank card.

History Society: Bookings are still being taken for the special, nostalgic lunch based on a Victorian Golden Jubilee Christmas menu. This is to be held at the White Horse on Saturday, December 14, and to be made as authentic as possible in every detail. For menus and details please ring David Gilmore on 832450.

PARISH COUNCIL: December meeting will be held in the Hunter Room of Bridge village hall at the earlier time of 7pm on Thursday, December 12. All those on the parish electoral roll are welcome to attend.

BRIDGE WITH PATRIBOURNE

**Correspondent: J Anderson, 7
Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury,
CT4 5NA. 01227 830260**

Neighbourhood Watch: Motor vehicle dealers and repairers across the district are experiencing thefts of car keys from within their premises and vehicles subsequently being stolen. If you are leaving your vehicle and keys at a garage after

hours, please inquire what security arrangements are in place. Never just

drop your vehicle keys through a letter box and expect them to be safe. If you are going away at Christmas or New Year, think about household security. Lights timed to come on in the evenings will make your house look

occupied. Perhaps a neighbour could keep an eye on your property, go in regularly to clear junk mail and make sure all is well.

Carol Concert: The Salvation Army Band performed in the newly extended Bridge School Hall. In a departure from the previous concerts a larger number of contemporary carols were included in the programme. The pupils also contributed to the evening with two carols sung by their own choir. There was also the usual percussion performance provided by the children from the audience and the school. The band were then thanked on the behalf of those present by head teacher Anna Newton, after which refreshments were served.

Gardeners: More than 60 members attended the combined Christmas celebration and the 25th Anniversary of the relaunching of The Nailbourne Horticultural Society in Bridge Village Hall. After a glass of mulled wine, there was a Gardeners Question Time. The chairman of the panel was the current chairman of the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies, their own Roger Austin. He was accompanied by two well known Federation Judges, Barry and Diana Ridsdale.

There followed an outstanding buffet supper with suitable refreshment and a free raffle, as all members received a ticket on arrival. The president, John Anderson, not only thanked the panel of judges for their entertaining evening, but especially thanked Ann Medhurst for the magnificent spread she had provided. He went on also to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work in organising the evening and the members for attending and hoped that they would all put a entry in the spring show this year.

Carols: This Christmas, the Charlton Chorale will be touring around the hosteleries and restaurants in Bridge on Tuesday, December 17. The charity chosen this year is CHEK (Campaign for Health in East Kent). From 8pm, they will be visiting The Red Lion Inn, The Plough and Harrow, Skippers Restaurant and the White Horse Inn.

Girl Guiding: The 1st Bridge Guides meet on Wednesday evenings in Bridge Village Hall and

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we offer the Guides fun activities every week, aimed at helping them to develop social skills, respect for others, honesty and to develop spiritually. This term there were fund-raising events, cookouts, craft activities, sport, first aid training, attended the Remembrance Service and organised a talent show. The Guides' parents will be invited to this.

The Guides plan the term's programme in advance with some help from our Unit Guider Gill and her four Unit Helpers.

Surgery: North Nailbourne ward City Councillor Bill Oakey regrets to announce that owing to unforeseen circumstances, he has had to postpone his surgery at the Bekesbourne Village Hall on Saturday, December 21. A replacement date will be announced later.

Church News: Raleigh International. Amy Filmer invites you to her Christmas Open House on Friday, December 20, 10am to 10pm, at the Vicarage, 23 High Street, Bridge. Drop in and enjoy a glass of mulled wine or ginger punch with Christmas cake and mince pie for £5. All proceeds will be used to fund Amy's charity trip to Raleigh International to Costa Rica in February 2003. Please do come and support this event and start the festive celebrations early.

Bridge Group Diary. Saturday, December 14, 10.15am Lower Hardres Junior Choir St Mary the Virgin Church Lower Hardres.

Monday, December 16, 7pm, Choir Practice for carols at St Peter's Church Bridge. 7.30pm, Choir Practice for carols at St Mary's Church, Patrixbourne. 7.30pm Caring and Sharing Group, The Vicarage Bridge. Tuesday, December 17, 2.30pm, Carols at Saxon Lodge, Western Avenue, Bridge. Wednesday, December 18, 7.30pm, Choir Practice for carols at St Peter's Church Bridge.

Thursday, December 19, 9.15am End of term assembly at Bridge school. 7.30pm Choir Practice for carols at St Mary's Church Patrixbourne.

Church Services: Sunday, December 15, Advent 3. 10am Holy Communion Canon G. Manley and 6pm Advent Lecture 4 Canon J. Packer. No service at St Mary's Church Patrixbourne. Other Churches in the Bridge Group 8am BCP Communion Rev P. Filmer, St Mary's Church Nackington. 10am Holy Communion Rev P. Filmer, St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne. Benefice Crib Service Mrs M. Clarke St Mary the Virgin Lower Hardres. 11am Bridge Methodist Church Service led by Mrs M. Beckwith.

BRIDGE WITH PATRIBOURNE

Correspondent: J Anderson, 7
Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury,
CT4 5NA. 01227 830260

PARISH COUNCIL: Street Lighting
- Bifrons Path: Cllr Anderson
reported that Enterprise Inns have
confirmed their agreement to the
installation of the light within the
curtilage of The White Horse Inn
subject to Canterbury City Council
providing a wayleave or licence.

Parish Community Wardens
Project: Canterbury City Council
have advised of the Parish
Community Wardens Project and it
was Agreed to invite the
Community Warden Team
Manager to the next meeting to
give a presentation to councillors.

Christmas Trees: Cllr Walder
thanked all the dozen or so helpers,
including members of the scouts,
who were involved in erecting the
Christmas trees in the High Street.
Cllr Anderson thanked Cllrs
Walder and Gulvin for their work
in organising the display this year
and councillors would like to thank
residents for their donations. It was
unanimously agreed to make a £20
doantion to the Scout Group.

Annual Parish Meeting: It was
agreed to hold the Annual Parish
Meeting on March 27, 2003, and the
clerk was requested to book the
village hall for that date.

Planning applications received:
The following planning
applications have been received
and are under consideration:

CA/02/01495/Bri - Single-storey
extension to rear of dwelling at
Church Cottage, 104 High Street,
Bridge.

Ca/02/01239/Bri - Amended plans
for erection of bungalow on land
adjacent to Trees, Bridge Hill,
Bridge.

Planning applications granted: The
following planning applications
have been notified as granted:

CA/02/01252/Bri - Two-storey
extension to rear of dwelling at 38
High Street, Bridge.

CAL02/00131/Bri - Two-storey
extension to rear of dwelling at 38
High Street, Bridge.

Applications rejected: No planning
applications have been notified as
rejected.

Notice of proposed work to trees in
a Conservation Area: The following
notices of proposed work have been
received for which a Tree
Preservation Order is not being
served:

Reduce crown of multi-stemmed
Cypress in front garden by up to
one third at Springfield,
Conyngham Lane, Bridge.

WI: The president, Evelyn Oxlade,
welcomed members and one visitor
to the Christmas meeting and when
the business was completed, Daisy
Watson received the cup for the
most competition points over the
year. Dorothy King was the runner
up. Jean Foster's Christmas table
decoration won the December
competition. The Deal Hoodeners
then entertained the company to a
selection of Christmas songs and
sea shanties, with a brief history of
hoodening and how the group was
formed. Their main aim now is
raising money for local charities.
They finished the evening sharing
the branch buffet supper. The New
Year opens on January 21, at
7.30pm in the Bridge Village Hall
with a talk by Barry Whiting,
entitled Emergency Response. The
competition is any object
beginning with F.

Art in Bridge: An A4 Christmas
Exhibition of Contemporary Art is
being held at the Plough and

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Harrow in the High Street, Bridge until December 27 during normal opening hours, although alternative viewing can be arranged. All the 61 exhibits are A4 size or under and are for sale, with 10 per cent of the sale price going to the charity, Crisis.

CLIC4 Bridge: Following a discussion at its meeting in November 2000 the parish council undertook a survey of potential interest in a Communication, Learning and Information Centre in the village. The response was disappointing. It was decided that there was insufficient interest to warrant the necessary expenditure.

The recent development of the Bridge and Patricxbourne Church of England Primary School has provided a suite of personal computers for use by the children. The head teacher, Mrs Newton would be interested in enabling this information technology facility at the school to be used by members of the public, so long as safety and security requirements and also costs can be met.

The parish council is asked to decide how this kind offer of help to the community could be communicated best to the members of the parish. Anyone interested in this project or has any useful contribution to make, should write to the Bridge parish clerk Tina Burchell, 3 Cramner Close, Bekesbourne, Canterbury CT4 5DF.

Festive Dinner: The dinner held annually by the Bridge Ladies Group was held at the Red Lion in Bridge last Saturday night. Twenty-four members enjoyed an excellent meal.

Bridge CEP Primary School entertained 41 senior citizens to a Christmas afternoon tea in the school hall last Friday.

Prizegiving: At the full school assembly held at Bridge CEP Primary School last Friday morning, the Right Reverend Bishop of Dover, Stephen Venner, presented prizes of gift tokens to Ellen Simmons for designing the Christmas card to be used by the Bishop. There was also included a prize for the school. A prize was also presented to Christopher Downing for designing the Christmas card to be used by Graham Badman, the county strategic director of education. At the close of the proceedings the Bishop also gave the blessing.

Christmas arrangements: The Red Lion opens Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. New Year's Eve ticket only late bar. Skippers Restaurant, closed December 24 to 26, open Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, December 27 to 29, closed December 30, open December 31. Closed January 1 to 2.

The Plough and Harrow open next Friday and Saturday to 11.30pm. Sunday to 11pm. Open until midnight Christmas Eve.

Christmas Day open noon to 2pm only. Boxing Day noon to 3pm and 7pm to midnight. New Years Eve 7pm to 2am. New Year's Day, noon to 3pm and 7 to 11.30pm.

The White Horse open Christmas Eve, Open Christmas Day morning only. Closed Boxing Day, open New Year's Eve, space available for dinner. Closed New Year's Day.

Extra services: Extra services for Christmas in the Bridge Group. On Sunday, December 22, 10am Nativity at St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne. At 3pm Carols at St Mary the Virgin Church, Lower Hardres. At 6pm Carols at St Peter's Church, Bridge. On Monday, December 23, 7pm Carols, St Mary's Church, Patricbourne. On Tuesday, December 24, 4pm Christingle at St Peter's Church, Bridge. At 11.30pm Midnight Communion at St Peter's Church, Bridge. Also at St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne and St Mary's Church, Nackington. On Christmas Day, 8am Communion at St Peter's Church, Bridge, 9.30am Communion, St Mary's Church, Patricbourne. At 10am Family Service at St Mary the Virgin, Lower Hardres. At 11am Family Carols at St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne.

Church services: On Sunday, December 22, Advent 4, 8am BCP Communion with the Rev P. Filmer

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and 6pm Carol Service with Rev P. Filmer at St Peter's Church, Bridge. At 10am Holy Communion, Rev P. Filmer, St Mary's Church, Patrixbourne. Other churches in the Bridge Group, 9.30am Holy Communion with Canon R. Diss at St Mary's Church, Nackington. At 10am Benefice Nativity service with Mrs P. Kusel at St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne. At 3pm Evensong with carols, Rev P. Filmer, at St Mary the Virgin, Lower Hardres.

Christmas week, December 25, 11am Family carol service, Rev P. Filmer. on Sunday, December 29, 10am Benefice Holy Communion, Rev P. Filmer, St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne. Sunday, January 5, Epiphany 8am BCP with Rev P. Filmer at St Mary's Church, Patrixbourne. 9.30pm Holy Communion, Rev P. Filmer and 6pm Evensong with Rev P. Filmer and Margaret Clarke, St Peter's Church, Bridge. Other churches in the Bridge Group, 10am Family Service with Mrs P. Kusel, St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne. At 11am Holy Communion with Rev P. Filmer, St Mary the Virgin Church, Lower Hardres.

24th Dec 2002

BRIDGE

**Correspondent: J Anderson, 7
Dering Road, Bridge, Canterbury,
CT4 5NA. 01227 830260**

Neighbourhood Watch: Keep presents sight of anyone looking through your windows. There have been reports this week of bogus telephone calls where the householder is told they have won a prize and is asked for personal information such as passport or credit card numbers. There have also been reports of a bogus caller who claims the house next door is flooded.

Tug-o-war: This usual Boxing Day event between the public houses of Bridge will take place over the Nailbourne River in the Mill Lane Meadow at 11.30am. Do come and support your local team.

History Society: Twenty one

members dressed in Victorian costumes, sat down to a genuinely reproduced Victorian Christmas luncheon, prepared by the chef at the White Horse Inn. At the same time a history quiz was provided by way of entertainment. There being no outright winner, the treasurer, Maurice Raraty, was presented with a bottle of sherry. The standard of the costumes was so good, that it was agreed by the assembled company to abandon the judging of the best dressed effort.

The next event will take place on Tuesday, January 14, at 7.30pm in village hall. Paul Tritton will give a talk about the classic film 'A Canterbury Tale', set in Canterbury in 1944. This evocative film was made by Michael Powell, who was born in Bekesbourne. It was shot locally and is full of historic interest for its portrayal of many aspects of wartime Canterbury and the surrounding area. Extracts of the film will be shown. Everyone is welcome. The cost to members is £2 and to non-members £3. Anyone wanting to know more about this event, or about the society, can phone Jenny Vye on 830983 or John Bishop on 832596.

Carols: The Charlton Choral touring the inns and restaurants around Bridge on Tuesday evening, December 17, provided an outstandingly talented performance, at the same time raising more than £150 for CHEK. They would like to thank all the establishments for their hospitality – the Red Lion for providing liquid refreshment and the Plough and Harrow for hot mince pies.

Church services: On Sunday, December 29, Christmas 1, 10am Bridge Benefice Service, Holy Communion with the Rev Paul Filmer, at St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne, 11am Bridge Methodist Church service led by Miss J. Hall.

Barn at 7.45pm.

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BEKESBOURNE

Correspondent: J Thomas,
Cobham Court, Bekesbourne,
Canterbury, CT4 5ET. 01227 832573
s.thomas@which.net

Howletts: The park is closed on Christmas Day but open every other day from 10am to dusk with last admission at 3pm. The gate shop is open until 4pm.

Orange Mast: Cllrs Ash, Howells and Oakey and a number of Bekesbourne Hill residents met on Friday with the surveyor acting on behalf of Orange and the planning officer. It was determined that Bekesbourne Farm was not a suitable site for a telecommunications mast and the surveyor will therefore withdraw the application and seek another site. The petition circulated in advance of the meeting helped to sway the argument in the residents' favour and the organisers thank the 138 people who by signed.

British Legion: The Littlebourne and District branch of the Royal British Legion thanks all the house to house collectors and the shops, pubs, hotels, garages, schools and businesses who had static box collections for the Poppy Appeal. Thanks also to all those who help to man the collection point outside the Four Villages Shop in Littlebourne. The branch includes the villages of Adisham, Bekesbourne, Bramling, Goodnestone, Ickham, Littlebourne, Stodmarsh and Wickhambreaux and has raised £2,875.83 to date.

Church services: The services for Christmas week are: Holy Communion in St Peter's on Tuesday, 24, at 11.30pm; Holy Communion at 9.30am in St Mary's on Christmas morning and the Christmas Day Carol Service at 11am in St Peter's. The Benefice Christingle is at 4pm on Christmas Eve in St Peter's, Bridge.

Village Walk: The next local walk is on Wednesday, January 8. Meet at the village hall at 9.45am. People and dogs from other villages or from Canterbury are very welcome to join in these sociable and healthy excursions, but phone Joan Atkins in advance on 01227 831127 in case there are any last minute changes to the plans.

The Brownies meet in the Memorial Hall every Monday, from 6pm to 7.30pm. The next meeting after the Christmas holiday will be on January 13.

Neighbourhood Watch: An elderly Cliff Avenue resident was burgled recently after she left a door to her home unlocked. When she found the burglar hiding behind the curtains in her kitchen he said: "I was looking for you, madam." He ran out when she threatened him with her stick. Drawers in her bedroom had been opened and a black leather purse containing cash, notes and cheque cards had been stolen. The thief was described as white, slim, with black curly hair and approximately 5ft tall with a southern accent.

Choir: Beltinge Ladies Choir, conducted by Denise Float, has taken a Christmas break and resumes again on February 6. The choir which meets every Thursday in term-time, between 2pm and 4pm, in the Methodist Church, Glenbervie Drive, also accepts engagements to entertain in residential homes and for local clubs and organisations. There are, however, vacancies to be filled and anyone interested in joining should ring 01843 297515 or 01227 710948 for details. The ability to read music is a help but not essential. The singers' range of music is wide - from traditional church choral music to songs from the shows.

Churches: Services for Christmas Eve: St Bartholomew's: Children's Society Christingle Service 6.30pm. Midnight Mass 11.30pm. St Mary the Virgin, Reculver: Service at the Crib 4pm. First Communion of Christmas 11.30pm.

Services for Christmas Day: St Bartholomew's: Christmas Family Communion 10am. St Mary the Virgin: Christmas Morning Family Worship 10am. Beltinge Baptist Church, Reculver Road: Christmas Day Service 10.30am.

Services for Sunday, December 29: St Bartholomew's: Parish Eucharist 10am. There will be no evening service. St Mary the Virgin: Holy Communion 8am, Parish Eucharist 10am.

The Rev Michael Bowers and Rita thank all those who sent cards and good wishes on the occasion of Michael's Licensing service at Fen Ditton, and for the beautiful flower arrangement from parishioners at St Mary's and St Bartholomew's. And they were delighted to see so many of their friends at the Fen Ditton ceremony.

Beltinge Baptist Church, Reculver Road: Sunday Morning Worship 10.30pm. There will be no Sunday evening Service on December 29, but there will be a Watchnight Service on Tuesday, December 31, at 11.30pm.

Beltinge Methodist Church, Glenbervie Drive: Sunday Worship 9.30pm. The preacher will be the Rev George Baugh from - Sittingbourne.

Bishopsbourne.
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BISHOPSBOURNE

Correspondent: Malcolm Mitchell,
The Old Cottage, , Bishopsbourne,
CT4 5HT

Christmas services: There will be a family Communion at St Mary the Virgin Church on Christmas Day at 10am. Those members of the congregation unable to attend are welcome at any of the following services at churches making up the Barham Downs united benefice, of which Bishopsbourne is a member:

St John's, Barham, Christmas Eve
crib service, 5pm; midnight
Eucharist, 11.30pm.

St Giles's, Kingston, Christmas
Day, family Communion, 10am.

St Margaret of Antioch,
Womenswold, Christmas Day,
Communion, 10am.

On Sunday, December 29, there will be a united service for all four parishes at St Mary's, Bishopsbourne, at 10am. There will also be morning worship at 10am at Barham Methodist Chapel.

For details of any of the above services or any other church activities contact any of the following members of the ministry

team: The Rector, the Rev David Roper, telephone 01227 831340, e-mail david.roper@clara.co.uk the Curate, the Rev Lindsay Llewellyn, telephone 01227 454704, e-mail lindsay@hercomputer.fsworld.co.uk or the reader, Miss Mary Ambrose, telephone 01227 830856.

The Methodist Minister, the Rev Philip Barker, can be contacted on 01227 463180, e-mail philipbarker@tidyworld.co.uk and the worship steward, John Wilson, on 01227 831217.

Panto time: A Christmas Nativity pantomime, A Lad in a Manger, written by Michael Forster, was presented in St Mary's, Bishopsbourne, on Sunday, December 15, with a cast drawn from all four parishes in the Barham Downs benefice.

The traditional story was told with tongue in cheek by a range of up-to-date characters.

Thus, the three wise men became the three wise guys and King Herod, a sweetaholic, banned all confectionery-making apart from his own.

The witty script took the audience through the Christmas events, enlivened by one-liners that amused young and old alike. And, as with all pantos, the audience was able to contribute by hissing and booing the wicked Herod and cheering the heroes, Joe, the carpenter, played by John Andrews, and Mary his wife, a part taken by Bronwin Wakefield.

There was even a panto ass cavorting round the church, thanks to Kelly and Christie Miles

The inn at which there was no room was translated into the Ass and Emperor, over which Widow Swanky, Geoff Wakefield, presided in true panto dame fashion.

Sheila Castle, suitably bedecked with tinsel and a magic wand, played the part of an angel, popping up and down in the pulpit like a jack in the box to deliver her good news.

The sinister and despotic King Herod was played by Brian Davis. Seasonal songs and hymns were contributed by the choirs of the four churches.

Other members of the cast were Helen Davis as Ruth, Daphne Iles and Valerie Caless as the shepherds, John Parsons, Andrew Boltbee and Geoff Grabham as the three wise guys Caspar, Melchior and Balkthazar, dressed in spiv suits but bearing the usual gifts for the new born King.

The curate, the Rev Lindsay Llewellyn, played slave girl Salami, and the Rector, the Rev David Roper, set the scene by introducing the panto.

Carolling: A convivial evening was spent at the Mermaid Inn on Friday, December 20, with carol singing and the Christmas draw, with a bumper hand out of suitable seasonal prizes, organised by licensees Colin and Buntv Relf.