FROM THE MANSE

Dear Friends,

The closure of many well-known companies due to the economic down-turn – Wedgwood, Apple, etc has been a reminder of the tough times we are living in. But none, perhaps, has caused more comment and upset than the final closure of Woolworths – which just managed, in



some of its stores, to limp into its centenary year before finally ceasing to trade.

I wonder why 'Woolies' has found such a place in the nation's affections. I suppose it's partly due to the fact that 'it's always been there' — in our lifetimes, at least. Also it was a pretty familiar place. When you walked into a Woolworths you would know instinctively what you would find and, generally, where you would find it. If you couldn't find what you were looking for elsewhere, you hoped that, at least, you would be able to get it there — a sort of 'store of last resort'.

But this 'brand recognition', which was one of the company's strengths, was also its greatest weakness. It was very telling that several of the people who were interviewed on television about its closure said things like 'we always used to go to Woolworth when we were growing up' or 'oh it's a shame it's closing, I've got very happy memories of the place'. Remarks like these speak volumes.

Yes, Woolworth was a treasured national institution, but one which not enough people shopped in now – whatever their previous shopping habits. Its predictability and status as 'shop of last resort' left it struggling in an increasingly competitive market and with lots of places selling its core products – not least the supermarkets. So, the bottom line is that Woolworths somehow failed to adapt to changed conditions, even though that wasn't its intention.

At this point in my letter I was going to elaborate on the example of Woolworths in relation to the Church today. But I think that the parallels must be obvious, so I will leave you to ponder them for yourself. If that sort of pondering doesn't come easily, go through this letter and cross out each 'Woolworths' and replace them with 'the Church'. Every blessing.

NEWS FROM ST. MARTINS.

With the exception of Val and Graham Thomas, who were on an extended trip to Australia, all our members were back from holiday in time for Christmas. Although Chris Hensleigh only returned on the Friday after approximately six weeks away, together with her sister Pat,she made the Chapel look most attractive and festive in readiness for the Sunday Carol Service.



It is always good to see Pat again at each Sunday service, during the time that she "winters" on St. Martins. Similarly, Mike and Sheila O'Grady have worshipped with us during their Autumn stay on the island, and we trust that they have felt welcome and at home within our fellowship.

Once again the Christmas tree party was held in the Reading Room, with good support from families who brought their children along to enjoy games, a visit from Father Christmas

and supper. Later the remaining adults took part in games and quizzes which had been prepared by Christopher. This year one section of quiz questions was based on the Nativity story and we needed to know whether traditional ideas were Bible based or not. It was trickier than you might think! As a result of our efforts £95 has been sent to Action for Children (NCH), along with a pleasing number of gifts that were left under the tree for less fortunate children.

The Carol Service was very well attended and it was good to welcome so many people. Familiar lessons were read by adults and young people; a special thank you to Sam, Sophie and Rosie who read well in front of a full chapel. The robust singing continued on Christmas Eve, when each home on the island was visited by a large group of carol singers led by Daph.

Unfortunately, sea conditions prevented St. Martins members from crossing to St. Marys for the joint Covenant Service when the address was given by the Revd.Steven Wild. Those of us who heard his message of love and equality at the foot of the cross, have much to reflect on as we seek healing within the churches and circuit.

Heather

THANK YOU

Patti and I would like to express our appreciation and heartfelt thanks for the love, prayers, cards and visits which helped make my recent protracted hospitalisation and surgery much more bearable.

It was wonderful to be home in time for Christmas even though we could not make the services – we enjoyed the carols on the radio though. Although these thanks are directed at all our many friends in Chapel I

must offer a particular thank you to David whose regular phone calls helped Patti so much, to Len and Sylvia for all they have done to smooth the way for us and finally to Colin Salter who despite health problems of his own spent many sociable hours with me at Treliske.

Such are the plans of mice and men that clearly our travelling expectations have gone out of the window but given current progress we hope to be back in Chapel soon, Love and thanks, Andy and Patti.

AUTOCHAIR SERVICE CALL

Anyone who has difficulty using steps to gain access to buildings might find this service helpful. Apparently it is fairly widely available on the mainland, but here at present it seems only available at Lloyds Bank. Maybe other outlets will provide it, hopefully including Council Offices. To use the service it is necessary to buy a remote control (A one-off purchase of £9.95p) which will alert the people inside to come out and help. Tel. 0800 458 3008 for further details.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year the service will be held at the Parish Church at 2pm.

Everyone is invited as we celebrate the fact that throughout this day, and everyday –

Men, women, and children are praising the name of the Lord. All welcome

SHROVE TUESDAY - TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts and is a day of penitence and a last chance for a celebration before Lent begins. Its name comes from the very old ritual of shriving that Christians used to undergo in the past, during which they confessed their sins and received absolution for them. Over 1000 years ago a monk wrote 'In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him' (Anglo-Saxon Ecclesiastical Institutes).

Shrove Tuesday was the last chance to indulge oneself and to use up foods

such as meat and fish, fats, eggs and milky foods that were not allowed during Lent and that would not keep for 40 days. This is why pancakes became associated with the day because making them would use up all the eggs, milk and fats in the house. Many places hold pancake races on Shrove Tuesday. They are thought to have originated in 1445 in Olney in Buckinghamshire. A woman had lost track of time while she was busy cooking pancakes in her kitchen. Suddenly she



heard the church bell ringing for confession and rushed out of her house and ran to the church still wearing her apron and carrying her frying pan. Olney has probably the most famous pancake race. The contestants have to run 415 yards wearing an apron and headscarf and tossing their pancake three times. The race ends at the church where the winner serves her pancake to the bell ringer and gets a kiss from him. She also receives a prayer book from the vicar.

In France the day is called Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) because of the need to use up fat. An alternative origin of the name comes from the ancient custom of parading a fat ox through the streets of Paris to remind people that they were not allowed to eat meat during Lent. In many towns in France, in New Orleans (USA) and in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil a carnival is held where people dress up in elaborate costumes and wear masks.

There are many other examples of celebrations being held on Shrove Tuesday all round the world.

Anne Gurr

The Manse, 33 Abbeygate, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1AX

Dear Friends.

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave Mary and I on our recent visit to your islands.

It was good to find much fine work going on in your circuit, and both Mary and I are delighted that you have invited us to serve among you from September 2009.

This will be my fourth appointment as a minister in the Methodist Church and will start my 19th year of ministry to our church. I look forward to continuing my calling to share the Good News of The Gospel among the people of The Isles of Scilly.

In the years to come we will get to know each other well, we will learn more about God's love and grace to us in Jesus His Son, and we will celebrate week by week how in Jesus God our Father has shared in all that makes us human.

Each day I thank God for my calling to be a minister in His church, and I will seek to be guided in the mighty power of His Holy Spirit as together we trust in the coming of His Kingdom, and set out together in mission and outreach to be His church here and to serve the present age.

Until we meet again I will be praying for the ongoing work of your church, and will continue to trust that we will know God's blessings as together we live our lives knowing Jesus as our living Lord and Saviour.

May his blessings continue to be seen in our love of one another.

Charles R Gibbs 1st December in the year of Our Lord 2008

A REFLECTION ON SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

John 9:1-41 1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Comment:

I suppose the Lord Jesus could have simply snapped his fingers. But he didn't. With his own spittle he made paste in the dust, then he smeared that paste onto the man's eyes, and sent him to wash it off at Siloam [the word means, "sent"]. It's interesting to reflect that the blind man never saw the One who healed him. He felt His hands, and the paste going onto his eyes - that's all. It's also worth reflecting on what that man must have been thinking as he made his way to Siloam. Finally, a third thing to reflect on, notice that very matter of fact concise report at the end of v 7: So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. Here's a man, then, who had not seen before in his life [he was born blind, don't forget]; a man who had not seen the One who healed him, a man who had just had probably the weirdest walk of his life - with paste on his eyes groping his way to Siloam. Now he's at home seeing, but not yet seeing what we're seeing - that there is indeed a worse sort of blindness than physical blindness.

Prayer:

Revelation 4:8: Day and night they never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is to come."

Action:

We live in a dark and blinded world. But the call on our lives is to be "salt" [ie preserving and guarding], and "light" [ie making it possible for others to see]. Let that provoke us to prayer and action

This devotional comes from www.standrewsbookshop.co.uk

LENT LUNCHES

These begin on Ash Wednesday, 25th Feb in the Parish Church Hall All proceeds from these simple lunches will go to the work of Christian Aid. The menu is soup followed by bread and cheese. Each year about a thousand pounds is raised during Lent from those who commit themselves to having this simple Lunch once a week during Lent. If you haven't been before please come this year and support those who prepare the lunch- and Christian Aid of course!

Change means change.

Atheist walking in a wood admiring nature. He is attacked by a Lion.



He struggles desperately but the Lion knocks him down and raises his paw for the killing blow. In desperation the Atheist shouts "God help me". There is a flash of lightning. Time stands still. Everything freezes and a great voice booms out "So at last you've come to believe have you?" Atheist says "I don't suppose you could make the lion a Christian?" Alright says God - Another flash of lightning. Time

clock re-starts. Things begin to move. Sure enough Lion still sitting on man's chest with one paw uplifted raises the other to it in an attitude of prayer. The atheist is greatly relieved until the lion prays "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly grateful."

Grumbling

A man decided to join a strict order of monks. One of their rules was that you could only say two words every five years. After 5 years of silence he went to the Father Abbot and said "Bed lumpy" The Abbot got him a new bed. Five years later he spoke again "Room cold" The Abbot moved him to a warmer room. At the end of 15 years he spoke again "I'm leaving" "Thank goodness " said the Abbot "everytime you speak you grumble.

On Darwin's Anniversary this month.

No philosophical theory which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of Genesis, that 'in the beginning God made heaven and earth.'

C S Lewis

NEWS FROM WILLIAM AND TRICIA

We have had no direct contact with Nathan since he arrived in Uganda as they haven't had internet at the base for the over a month access is a 2km walk & 20 min African taxi ride away. But we have been forwarded the following messages from other team leaders.

Hi, It's AMAZING here!!!!!!! We've been going into the local villages around the base, where most of the buildings are just mud huts. but when the kids see us coming they drop what ever they are doing and run to say hello. they are beautiful kids. ALL the dirt is red here. It's SO hard to get used to the African timing, breakfast is supposed to start at 7:30, most days it doesn't start until 8:30... it's very strange going from Swiss scheduling to african "flow time". It's around 30 degrees out, but so far I haven't gotten burnt or anything .On Monday we're going to the Ssese Islands, for four weeks where YWAM hasn't sent really any teams before, and apparently there's not a lot of electricity, so it'll be an adventure. So that means that we probably won't have any internet for the four weeks, but then we'll come back to Jinja for a few days and have internet again. The food here is... well not so nice. pretty much beans and rice or beans and posha (like palenta, only with white corn meal, and much stickier), we're lucky when we get potatoes with it, or shredded cabbage instead of beans, and for 2 meals a week we get chapota (something like a thick, greasy pita), which we celebrate over. breakfast is 2 small buns that are almost stale, and some gross tea stuff. for Christmas Matt and Kathleen bought peanut butter and nutilla for the buns. we were overjoyed! after i send this I'm gonna go and buy some peanut butter just to eat out of the jar for more protein. Oh we occasionally get meat, but it's cooked in a stew and they throw ALL of it into the stew! so lot's of pieces of fat, and sometimes you find tubular type things in the meat, we don't eat those parts :(for Christmas they butchered a sheep for a dinner we were putting on for some of the local widows and their children . I thought that would be good... they butchered the thing in the middle of a field with some of the dogs watching, not too sanitary... so needless to say we are not big fans of the food here. (except for the fresh pineapples and mangos!(Yumyum!!!)) Ministry has been really good. the first day me and a few others prayed for an older woman. Naomi, who was quite

sick, who couldn't stand up to ask for prayer.

We weren't too sure how sick she was then at Christmas she came to the dinner we put on, walking the whole 10 ish minutes to the base. Since then we've divided into a few teams, 6 people run kind of a kids sports camp type thing at the Discovery centre at the base, where the kids can just be kids, then 2 people are doing some spiritual warfare for this one couple, who the wife has some mental issues, yesterday they saw major breakthrough as she could snap in and out of normal conversation. Also four of us) have decided to do kind of house visits just building relationships with the locals, meeting need where we can. Yesterday we sat around with Naomi and some of the other women in the village learning to make baskets from banana leaves, and the strings of old canvas bags. Naomi told us a testimony... she said that when we first prayed for her she was on her death bed, and ever since she's been fine, she was smiling (kind of as she only has 2 and half teeth) and enjoying our company. There is also a man we've kind of been working with... most of the men are either dead from HIV or Drunkards - this man is one of the drunks, but he "wants to come back to God" he says that if God will give him lot's of money he will be able to change, and then he'll help the local people and go out and spread the gospel. We've told him that's not how it works, he has to change first as money won't change him. He doesn't get it.lit's hard and guite sad, every evening the women in the village gather to pray for change in the men, they are very strong, having to provide for their children. Their mud huts are just rented, and chickens and pigs run loose everywhere. But apparently a lot of change has taken place over the past 10 years or so, before most of the women were also drunks, and it was a very dark place. We're not too sure how much the women understand about God and Jesus etc. as they don't talk about their faith as it is their culture to just want to listen to us. But it just brightens our day when we hear about stories like Naomi. Yesterday a man who takes pictures for the locals took a picture of us with the few women who we were spending time with. This afternoon we'll pay him for the 2 copies of the picture, one for them to remember us, and one for us to remember them. We've really gotten a heart for these women . There's lots I could tell you.

Continued on Page 10

On Boxing Day we had our Christmas celebration and went to a local hotel, where we were able to swim and relax for the day and have some good food for once. The people are super friendly here. But whenever you walk past they cry out "Mzungu! Mzungu!!" which means white person, especially the men on bikes and motor bikes, they have seats on the back so they are used as taxis, it get's annoying after a while though, cause they think we're filthy rich. Prices almost ever where go up just because we're white. It's not fair but compared to home and especially

Switzerland it's still cheap, so we shouldn't complain. The red dirt gets into EVERYTHING!!! most of my clothes won't even be worth bringing back to Switzerland, I'll just leave them at the base to give to someone who needs them. we have to wash all of our clothes in buckets of just cold water with soap, so they don't even get very clean.

They are doing well on Sese Island, Nathan's text said he's loving Island life, I'm sure he's feeling more at home there! Their team had a clear calling to go to the Islands in the West during their time of preparation in

Switzerland while at the same time our base leader has been praying for a team to do work on the Western Islands God's will is for them to be there so I'm excited to hear news of their time!I know that he's had a huge impact in the community, his bold preaching was welcomed and he was invited back week after week to preach to the same congregation. He brings a lot of energy, creativity and just plain fun to his team.

Please be in constant prayer that God will provide a strong support, young adult fellowship and discipleship for Nathan when he gets home. I found re-entry into my own culture after DTS a huge challenge and spent many an hour in prayer over the phone to my DTS leader in Brazil . One of my DTS friends compared our own time to a "greenhouse", having protection, food and perfect conditions for spiritual growth and then likened going home to being transplanted into the wild.

Thank you all for your prayers and financial support for Nathan and his team. He has felt led to apply to, and has been accepted, on a Bible Core Course at YWAM in Worcester South Africa commencing in April this year. Please pray for God's continued guidance and provision for Nathan as he follows God's will, and wisdom and understanding as he studies His Word.

ESSENTIAL NEWSLETTER 05 DECEMBER – JANUARY

It's been an interesting month and a bit, with two weeks off for Christmas, but obviously in the run up to that time off, was amongst the busiest time here so far. Carolling, collecting, events, making hampers, as well as the usual inclusion work, street angels, Sanctuary youth clubs, Sunday meetings, teacher assistant work and all the jazz which goes with being here.

Some events and moments which stuck out before Christmas are... Youth Cell Carols.

Basically took out the youth cell group to various different houses to sing carols, but everyone had to be in fancy dress. We had Mr.Tickle, Footballer, a mouse, a surfer dude, a fairy, a king, etc. A very cold night for those of us who chose to wear a surf outfit.

After Christmas and before we returned to work at placement, we had a week of 'training'... we had three weeks of this back to back in September. January training was...busy...ludicrously challenging...

With sessions on 'Post-Christdom', 'Forgiveness', 'Identity', 'calling' and so on. My particular highlight, can't really be categorised, but was the day we had Mark Knight, who specialises in questioning... He raised questions on ...everything...Heaven and Hell, existence of Demons and Angels, Evil, something referred to as 'The Fall'...I think things people, don't necessarily like to bring up in general conversation ordinarily.

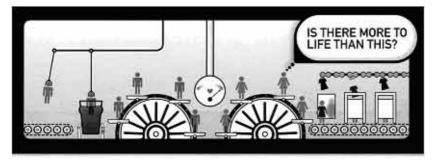
Also at training, each essential group from around England had to give a presentation on the work their doing in the places they have been sent. It was really informative and good to hear what other groups are experiencing. And obviously, Wetherby's best;p

There are a few event s coming up out of the norm, and inclusion work is getting busier over the next few weeks!

Thank you for all your support

Corentyn

We pray for our two young men, Corentyn and Nathan as they train to become bearers of the Good News and we send our love.



THE ALPHA COURSE

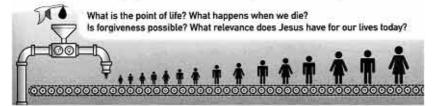
explore the meaning of life

sipha,or

Thursdays 7pm at Peter Laverock's house, L'abri, Rams Valley Beginning 8th January 2009

Running throughout January, February and into March Jen Nightingale 07765 624606 Peter Laverock 422199

Please pray for this course and everyone on it. Thank you.



WHAT IS ALPHA?

The Alpha course is an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith.

It's relaxed, low key, friendly and fun.

There is a meal together at the beginning of each session which gives an opportunity to get to know each other.

Listen, learn, discuss and discover. And ask anything. Alpha is a place where no question is too simple or too hostile.

And it's supported by all the main Christian denominations.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

The Alpha course consists of a series of talks looking at topics such as "Who is Jesus" and "Why and how do I pray? After each talk we divide into small groups for a time of discussion.

WHO IS ALPHA FOR?

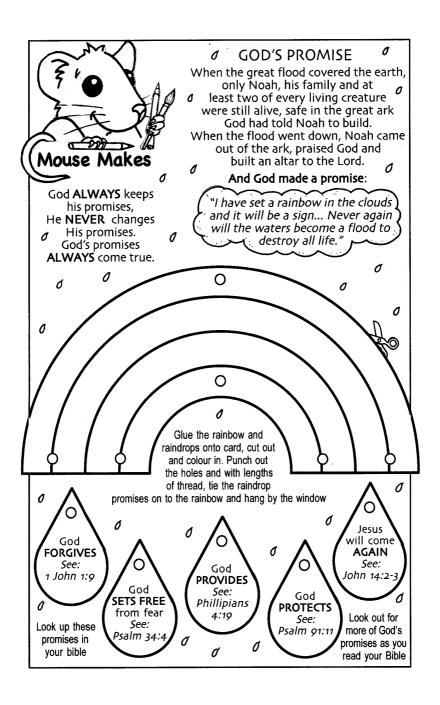
Alpha is for everyone, especially:

- Those wanting to investigate Christianity
- . New Christians
- · Newcomers to the church
- · Those who want to brush up on the basics

WHAT WILL IT COST?

There is no charge for the Alpha course, although you may be asked to make a contribution towards food.





PRAYER

Steven Wild recounted the following incident concerning prayer.

One day a student approached the Principal of Cliffe College because he was having difficulty getting out of bed to say his early morning prayers. He asked the Principal to pray for him, to which the Principal replied that he would pray for one leg only!

Making the point that we cannot expect God to answer our prayers if we do not make the effort ourselves to resolve the situation.

The Friday Fellowship group over the past two years or so, have studied prayer in its various forms including the Lord's Prayer and I was prompted to read again a book called 'The Ancient Aramaic Prayer of Jesus' by Dr. Rocco Errico, a specialist in Aramaic and the culture which influenced the Biblical writers. He has some very interesting things to say about the meanings of the Aramaic word for prayer, which like its English counterpart has various connotations. One idea is to set one's mind like a trap, the kind where the hunter has to lie patiently in wait for his guarry in order to close the trap himself. So we are to wait patiently to 'catch' God's guiding thoughts. Another meaning is to be completely still in one's mind – a state of total alertness and sensitivity towards God (something which I find very difficult!). Perhaps that is what the psalmist meant when he wrote 'Be still and know that I am God.' A third nuance is to be 'tuned-in' like we tune in to a radio station or television channel. On his last visit to us. Rev. Dr. Chris Blake guoted Boris Johnson as saying, when asked about his faith, that "It is like radio reception in the Chiltern Hills, it comes and goes." So we need to be constantly tuned in to God's wavelength, His broadcasting never stops. How often, I wonder do, I 'tune-out' God or 'jam' His programme with my own over-busy thoughts.

Regarding the Lord's Prayer Dr. Errico has many helpful observations, a summary of which I have set out below in the form of alterative phrases to the ones with which we are most familiar.

Our familiar form -

Dr. Errico's form

Our Father who art in heaven

Our Father who art in the universe (or Our universal Father)



Hallowed be thy name

Your name is set apart – is holy

Your kingdom come

Your counsel or advice guide us

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.....

Your desire or pleasure

Give us this day our daily bread.....

Give us all that is needful for our bodies and minds

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us *Untie us from our offences as we have freed our offenders*Lead us not into temptation

Do not let us fall into worldliness (or materialism)

But deliver us from evil Part us from our mistakes

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever

Yours is the kingdom, power and glory throughout all the ages

Amen Sealed in truth (I'll be faithful to everything I've said)

Sylvia Michell

THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day; I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbles about me, and heavier came each task. "Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered. He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty but the day toiled on, grey and bleak; I wondered why God didn't show me. He said," But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my keys at the lock, God gently and lovingly chided, "My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning, and paused before entering the day; I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.

Phoebe Tyler

DIARY DATES FEBRUARY

3rd –11th David will be away at the Annual District Ministers' Retreat

and then the District Ministers' Synod. In between he will be preaching at St. Agnes as part of an exchange with the

Revd. Nigel Deller who led services here last year.

7th Saturday Seekers, 1.30-3.30pm

12th St. Mary's Property Committee, 7.00 p.m.

18th St. Martin's Fellowship, 7.30 p.m.

25th Lent lunch Parish Church hall 12-noon -1.15

and for the next 2 weeks, following three weeks at the

Methodist Hall

27th Joint Lent Study Group Garden Pavilion

March

6th Women's World Day Of Prayer 2pm Parish Church

7th Saturday Seekers

17th St. Mary's Finance Committee

18th-22nd Fellowship Week, led by Revd. Martin Broadbent.

22nd Mothering Sunday

25th St. Martin's Fellowship, 7.30 p.m.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

For Barbara James; Jacky Pritchard; Philip Roberts;

Beryl Read; Keith Guy; Emily Smith. Remembering that Beryl and Keith's birthday is on the 29th February so they may even appear in next month's birthday list as well!

ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Craft Market £37.32; Carol Service £ 511.05;

Collection Christmas Day £184.11

Collecting Boxes 94.50

Grateful thanks G.J. Clarkson

EDITORIAL TEAM

Anne Gurr <u>manda.gurr@btinternet.com</u>

MaryRatcliffe <u>maryratcliffe@live.com</u>

Val Parker <u>martinandval.parker@virgin.net</u>

Contributors are reminded that copy is required by the 15th