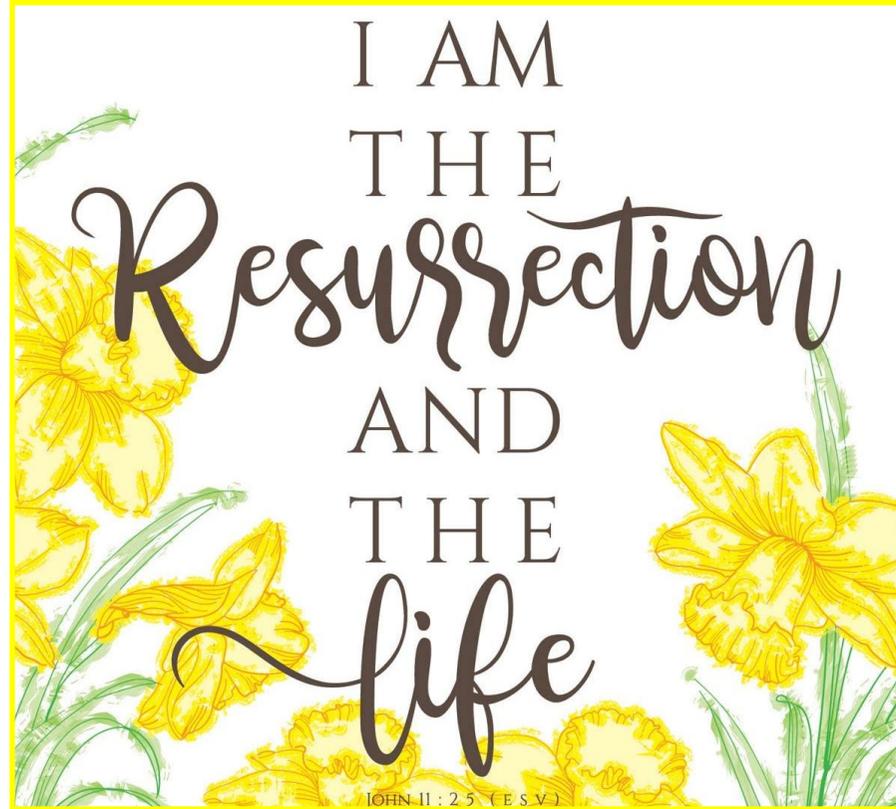




March 2021

*We can't bring you GRAPEVINE but we
can bring you an Offshoot*

Welcome



Poynton Parish Church



“Feed my sheep.”

The last recorded conversation between Jesus and Peter takes place in the morning, on the beach. As the waves crest, the birds circle, and the embers of the breakfast fire die down, Jesus’ last instruction to Peter is to feed his sheep.

He is of course talking about his people isn’t he. Jesus entrusts the spiritual feeding of the flock, to his people. The Good Shepherd tasks under-shepherds to continue in the work of nourishing them with real food: the word of God.

This passage is the last one I will preach to you as your curate. It’s on my mind a lot as I look to become responsible for feeding the flock at Dunham Massey!

What is this spiritual food that we are to nourish ourselves and each other with? It is no less than the word of God, the Bible. The same word that tells us of our sin, our Saviour, and his resurrection, which of course we particularly focus on this Easter time.

Life is full of uncertainties, tinged with hellos and goodbyes. As Jo and I look back on almost three years of life with you here in Poynton (yes, it was three years ago we had that vicarage BBQ that I was driving up the M1 to make on time!), we find ourselves feeling bittersweet.

There are many, many fond memories, and even fonder friendships we will take with us. Although now I come to think about it, most of these memories involve me doing daft things! Dancing to the Birdie Song at Living Well in a clerical collar, dressing up as Santa for Bright Stars *and* the Retired Lunch, S.T.U.P.I.D Man making his mark at holiday club, a live rabbit and spilt straw on Easter Sunday, the lockdown haircut!

God placed us in Poynton during a turbulent time in the life of the parish and the nation. Yet, we have still shared much joy. Poynton will remain a place of many ‘firsts.’ My first baptism, wedding, and funeral. The first time I presided over communion, the first time I preached my way through certain bits of the Bible, my first interregnum, my first (and hopefully last) pandemic!

And all the way through we have found love and support, care and compassion, laughter and unexpected quirks, joy and hope, and much patience as you “indulged the curate.”

My first sermon as your curate, from Mark’s gospel, encouraged us to take care what we listen to, and to make sure we are paying close attention to God’s word. That encouragement remains as I approach my last sermon in John 21. Just as Peter is to feed the flock with the word, then my prayer, my plea, for you as we say goodbye, is to keep God’s word as the epicentre of your life.

May God bless you all this Easter time.

Aled Seago





Dear Friends,

Holy Week and Easter are highlights of the church year - we hear again the story of Jesus turning his face towards Jerusalem, we remember the last supper, and praying in the garden, as well as the wonder of Jesus' death and resurrection! I'm so pleased that we'll be able to gather in person for some of our commemorations and celebrations. Whilst we are still some way from normal church life, I pray that these services (as well as the livestreams) will bring us Easter joy.

Yours in Christ,

Matthew

Holy Week and Easter Services Booking

For services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day, please book via the church website. (Available from 9am on Monday 15th March).

At each of our in-person services:

- there will be limits on numbers so that we can maintain social distancing
- we continue to ask adults to wear masks when attending (unless exempt)
- to limit social mixing we will manage entry and exit from the building.

Easter at St George's and St Martin's

The central message of Easter is love - the Bible tells us that Jesus was sent by God to demonstrate his great love.

This love was costly; Jesus suffers and dies before the joy of resurrection on Easter Day.

Easter is an invitation to discover this love for yourself, and to know new life and hope.

Maundy Thursday

10am communion service at St Martin's

Good Friday

10am: all-age service at St George's

2pm: livestreamed 'hour at the cross'

Easter Sunday

Available all day: pre-recorded all-age service

10am: communion service at St Martin's

11am: communion service at St George's

6pm: communion service at St George's

For details of how to book in to services and how to watch online, visit: www.poyntonparishchurch.org/easter

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The family and friends of those who have recently died:

16 th February 2021	Hilary Brownlee	aged 78
22 nd February 2021	Cissie Scragg	aged 92
9 th March 2021	Joan Ball	aged 101
15 th March 2021	Susan Markey	aged 73



Kneading and Rising

As I knead the flour
I think of all the many grains
That have been ground to make it.
Christ's church is like flour
Made up of many people of many races
Ground up to make a single dough.
As I watch the dough rise
I think of the yeast's power
Raising up the weight of flour and water.
Prayer in Christ is like rising dough
Drawing together every hope and fear
And lifting them up to God.



A
structure
or symbol,
consisting of
just two intersecting lines or pieces,
that are at right angles to each other,
forming a cross.
Made of wood,
Rough beams,
fixed.

A
Structure,
utilised
to crucify
wrong-doers, who were nailed or tied to it.
A cruel death, laboured breath, tortured thirst.
Such agony,
suffering,
a slow
death.

The
emblem
of belief
for Christians.
A reminder of Christ's death on the cross.
A full and complete sacrifice for all.
God's only son.
Atonement
for all
sin.

Three
beams on
Jesus's cross.
Two structural,
one a beaming radiance of pure light.
The light in the world sending God's message
of divine love
across the
entire
world.



Dear friends,

I know it has turned out to be a difficult start to the year for many. As we approach Easter, and hopefully the end of lockdowns, I pray the situation is improving for you and that through it we are able to come into a deeper realisation of God's loving presence, through his son's sacrifice on the cross.

It is almost one year since I said goodbye to Uganda and surely it has turned out to be a hugely different year than I expected. That's probably true for everyone! Thank you so much for your prayers and being part of my journey. I am sorry I am yet to embark on link visits and admittedly slow to connect through Zoom. I hope you understand when I say I needed space, rest and time to listen to God before communicating again. Perhaps the lockdowns and not having broadband were timely!



You may recall, from my last link letter, I was prayerfully considering with CMS the possibility of being seconded to the Diocese of Carlisle and their new charity called Restore Cumbria. I am excited to announce this has now happened. I am grateful to CMS for the support they have given me as I transitioned home. And feel blessed to continue the journey together. It really is exciting stuff !

At Restore Cumbria, we use different activities and fresh expressions to share the gospel with the community. To build community with those who feel isolated, who are especially struggling with life, on the margins. In practice, for me this will revolve around a warehouse in central Carlisle, which we only acquired in December. Here I am helping to setup a carpenter's workshop called Men's Shed. Our workshop will run alongside other Restore warehouse activities including sorting, recycling and upcycling donations coming in from a network of charity shops. While doing some practical work, we make time for fellowship, hopefully over a cuppa. You may recall I trained as a carpenter after leaving school, so feel the post is a good fit. Pardon the pun!

A smaller Men in Sheds project has been running for a few years in Carlisle. Set up by a young pioneer minister called Chris Harwood, the programme has proved popular and needed to expand into a bigger shed. I am now working with Chris, and a few others, to grow the ministry. We hope to link in with "eyes and ears on the ground" – charity shops, local church communities, social services and in time refugee groups – to seek out guys who would benefit from the shed activities. Current lockdown restrictions mean we are not able to start the ministry, but this is giving us time to carefully prepare and look at the detail, such as health and safety policy. Life seemed so much simpler in Uganda!

I remain a CMS mission partner, and continue to need prayer and financial support. I don't take it for granted – your focus may be Africa, where my heart somewhat remains! But I would very much appreciate it if you would consider continuing to support me, for this season. Details of my role can be found at churchmissionsociety.org/ion

Arriving home from Africa at the start of the pandemic, I have been able to help shield my parents in Penrith. As well as doing daily chores, I can now add hairdressing to my CV. I learned to do this as part of my Prepared To Serve course at All Nations Bible college way back in 1995, before I first went to Uganda with Tearfund. I still do cut my own hair,



you may have noticed! But now I can put my hidden talent and survival skills to good use cutting my Dad's hair too. Perhaps it's desperation on his part! Mum has so far resisted the offer of a number two all over!

Although carefully trying to isolate, last October I did test positive for COVID-19. Thankfully, I didn't pass on the bug to my parents. Five weeks on from the initial diagnosis I was scheduled to have an endoscopy, but the procedure was postponed as I continued to test positive for COVID. It wasn't until the end of January I thankfully received a negative result and was subsequently allowed to have the procedure. I'm relieved to report my stomach ulcers, which had developed after having bilharzia in Uganda eighteen months ago, have healed. I'm also glad to report my parents remain virus free and have now had their first vaccine doses.

It is my hope and prayer that my next link letter will share stories and pictures of the Men's Shed being well used. But for now, I continue to take it in turns, with volunteers, to keep isolated and only work alone in the shed.

With love and best wishes to you all,

Garry



Migration

Against an azure blue and almost cloudless autumn sky
the vapour trail of a passenger plane is seen on high,
while directly underneath skeins of migrating geese are heading
in their hundreds for their winter home;
and those of us whose feet are firmly planted on the ground and
may soon not wander very far, depending on our ranking and our tier,
can only wonder and marvel at the freedom
to come and go as once we could and would,
before the virus and the various lockdowns came;
but in spite of everything that binds us at present so tight
we know it's for our common good and that it's right
and also that in time it will surely pass and then,
like the migrating birds and the high flying passenger planes,
we'll all be able, God willing, to stretch our wings again.

©The Rev'd Alec Brown, Rural Dean of Great Budworth



Churchyard in Lockdown

I've been asked to put pen to paper and write a short piece about working in the churchyard during lockdown. I'm grateful that I have been able to carry on, as it would be difficult to work from home!



Two days are rarely the same; what needs doing urgently, state of the weather, the church timetable/calendar, can all make the working day interesting.

Mowing and clearing leaves around the churchyard have been a challenge over the past year. We have been unable to have a Saturday morning 'Churchyard Tidy', because of the lockdowns. Thankfully, I have had some help from volunteers during the lockdowns but this has been irregular because of the restrictions. Still, leaves have been cleared to allow the great show from snowdrops and crocuses. The daffs are appearing and the bluebells are waiting in the wings. Later there are patches of wild flowers to be mown around and the grass just keeps growing!

The rhododendrons have had a pruning and holly bushes a bit of a tidy up.

Two flowering cherry trees have been donated and these are now near the Lychgate, on either side.

The graves constantly need tidying up; they are now mostly cleared of Christmas wreaths, and the 'ashes' area under the East window always seem to need attention..

Like everyone, routines are different and days just seem to gel into each other. I look forward to when we can meet as a Church family at a service in the hall or grounds.

Brian Clarke

It is worth saying that the duties of verger seem to include sharing clock winding with bell ringers, and often being present at weddings, funerals and the interment of ashes. Not to mention the unscheduled calls and emergencies of the Hall!

Thank you Brian for your unfailingly cheerful responses to all our various requests for your help. (Ed.)



Harriet's on her way!

At Just-Ice Poynton we are very excited that Harriet, our ice cream trike, will have arrived with us by the time you read this article. She has been named after Harriet Tubman, who was herself a slave in Maryland USA in the mid 1800s. She must have been a formidable lady because she escaped from slavery but returned eleven times to lead over seventy slaves to safety.



Harriet can store six flavours of delicious artisan ice cream under her canopy and we hope to soon be serving it to you by popping up in Park Lane on sunny weekends this spring and summer. The current Covid restrictions lend themselves to takeaway treats, served and eaten in the open air so it's an ideal time to get started and capitalise on the current climate!

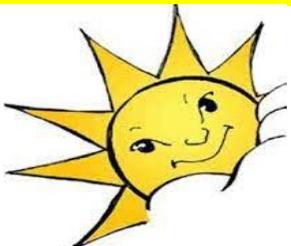
We have been delighted by our recent visits to home groups and other groups within the church – all via Zoom. Seventeen presentations have been given since the start of January and the way you have welcomed us, asked questions and engaged with our project has been a huge encouragement! We're also grateful to our church leadership team for making this possible.

In addition, we've received many offers of help – people willing to pray for us, help with DIY, deliver ice cream thankyou treats to our generous supporters and give financially to our project. We are grateful to each and every one of you!

We continue to pray that for our ice cream café we will get the premises of God's choosing, suitable for our purposes. Meanwhile, if you'd like to be kept updated with our news and developments as things progress, please visit our website, www.just-icepoynton.org, and subscribe to our email list.



*Jo Rodman
Chair of Trustees
Just-Ice Poynton
www.just-icepoynton.org*



I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

Coming Back to Church

Like a thief in the night,
Our freedoms were taken from us.
The doors to the church were closed.
Our access to God Himself was compromised.
Or was it?
Our Bibles remained on the bookshelf
Beside the biography of some famous footballer
And the legend of some film star
Or musician from our generation
And the word of some outspoken social commentator.
All these books so well used.
But the Bible still looking new,
The paper sleeve still covering the binding.

But while the church was locked,
Was it only His word that God left with us?
We all spend so much time
Staring at our mobile phones,
And yet
To talk to God
You don't need a device
Or a call allowance
Or a signal
Or a charger.
God has given us a free tariff
To call him night or day
For a two way conversation.



That's the power of prayer.

And what about the Holy Spirit.
Is He on furlough?
Of course not!

For God
It's business as usual.
Do you think the Creator of the Universe
Is in any way less powerful
Because His churches have had to close?

So here we are
Going to the shed
To get out our rusty bikes
And screw on the stabilizers
So we can ride back to church.



But we don't need
These metaphorical bikes
And although it is obviously
A good thing to go back to church,
God was all around us all the time.
And we have access to Him
All the time.

When we stop grumbling
About the church door being locked
And look back over the past year,
Maybe there has been something to learn.
Maybe we wait to renew
Our fellowship properly again,
But maybe our faith is actually stronger
Not diminished.
Perhaps we have had to draw
Closer to God
Because comfortable ways we knew
Have been challenged,
Including
The comfort of church.

Robert Smith



Dear All

Helen and I lit our new fire tonight and sat down to enjoy a glass of wine! We just wanted to thank you all again for the generous gift with which we bought this lovely wood burner.

I have been out searching for wood while exploring the lovely countryside around East Leake. We are gradually getting to know folk at the Parish Church which is really good. We have joined a homegroup and attend the after church zoom coffee. People are very friendly and we have been for a few walks with people. Gradually starting to feel part of things here.

We see the grandchildren from a distance, unfortunately. Hopefully that will change soon as we are eased from lockdown and as we get the second jab next month.

We're planning a few alterations to the house to make it our own. Looking forward to having folk round for coffee and perhaps a bbq!!

Thank you again. We miss you all very much.

Take care and God bless you

Andy and Helen



I dreamed I had an interview with God

“So, you would like to interview me?” God asked.

“If you have the time,” I said.

God smiled. “My time is eternity; what questions do you have in mind to ask me?”

“What surprises you most humankind?”

God answered: “That they get bored with childhood - they rush to grow up and then long to be children again.

That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health.

That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, so that they live neither for the present nor the future.

That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived...”

God’s hands took mine and we were silent for a while and then I asked.. “As a parent, what are some of life’s lessons you want your children to learn?”

God replied with a smile:

“To learn that they cannot make anyone love them. What they can do is to let themselves be loved.

To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives.

To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others.

To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but it is one who needs the least.

To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons one loves, and that it may take many years to heal them.

To learn to forgive by practising forgiveness.

To learn that there are persons who love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or show their feelings.

To learn that money can buy everything but happiness.

To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it very differently.

To learnt that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they must also forgive themselves.

And to learn that I am here - always.”

With thanks to Woodford Parish Church

An Old Easter Custom

Simnel cake is a traditional treat dating back to Tudor times, and now enjoying a revival in popularity. The name is probably derived from the Latin ‘simila’ meaning fine wheat flour. It became the custom to have it on the middle Sunday in Lent when its richness must have been a source of pleasure in the season of abstinence.



Different places such as Bury, Devizes and Shrewsbury had their own recipes and shapes but it is the Shrewsbury version which became the most popular and it still has a strong following especially in Shropshire and Herefordshire.

Described in his ‘Chambers Book of Days’ (early 19thc) Robert Chambers says that “when baked the crust becomes as hard as wood, leading to one recipient to believe it was a footstool.” Presumably it was not decorated with eleven balls of marzipan which represent the disciples, apart, of course, from Judas Iscariot.

If you fancy a more appetising version there are recipes from Mary Berry and Delia Smith on the internet!

Meet the Author – Ladies’ Event, 6th March

An audience of over fifty met local author Maria Johnson online via Zoom, where she was interviewed by Sarah Williams. Yes, we have another very talented author in our parish! Maria Johnson is the pen name of Jo Seago, the wife of Aled, our Curate.

Jo comes from North Wales and she met Aled at Lancaster University, where both were students. Jo has always been interested in writing and just about everything to do with words. She started writing stories when she was a girl but it was when Aled went to Oak Hill Bible College and they were living in London that Jo decided to become an author.

It was a few figures from a historical Lego set belonging to Jo’s elder brother that gave Jo, aged seven, the idea for the characters in her historical stories - particularly Daniel, who was to become the hero of Jo’s first two novels, which are set in Celtic times. ‘The Boy from the Snow,’ (2018) and its sequel ‘The Veiled Wolf’ (2019).

‘**LOTTIE’S LOCKET**, published on 26 November 2020, grew out of National Novel Writing Month ‘ (Nano Wri-mo) 2018. This one is a fantasy novel with a mystery element – a sort of ‘Narnia meets Poirot’. Whereas the readership of Jo’s historical novels is teens to adult, Lottie’s Locket is aimed at children around 10 – 12 yrs. The heroine of the story turns eleven and because her parents have to visit their elder daughter they will miss Lottie’s birthday and she is not amused! On the eve of her birthday Lottie opens a present from her Mum - a beautiful gold locket, a family heirloom. In no time at all, Lottie is whisked away by the magic power of the locket to a fantasy world where new friends, adventures and a mystery awaits.

On video, Jessica Williams gave us a fluent, confident and expressive reading of an extract from Lottie’s Locket, which made the book come alive. Aled posted the video on the Poynton Parish Facebook Group on 11 March, so catch it there.

Then Sarah turned to the subject of Aled and Jo’s move to Dunham Massey, where Aled is to be installed as Vicar of the Parishes of St Margaret’s and St Mark’s in mid May. Jo told us that it would be their fifth move since they were married, eleven years ago. There has been a long interregnum at Dunham Massey, so Aled and Jo have something of a blank canvas. Their priorities are to get to know people, to provide outreach to families and to establish home groups.

Sarah asked Jo to give us her prayer requests:

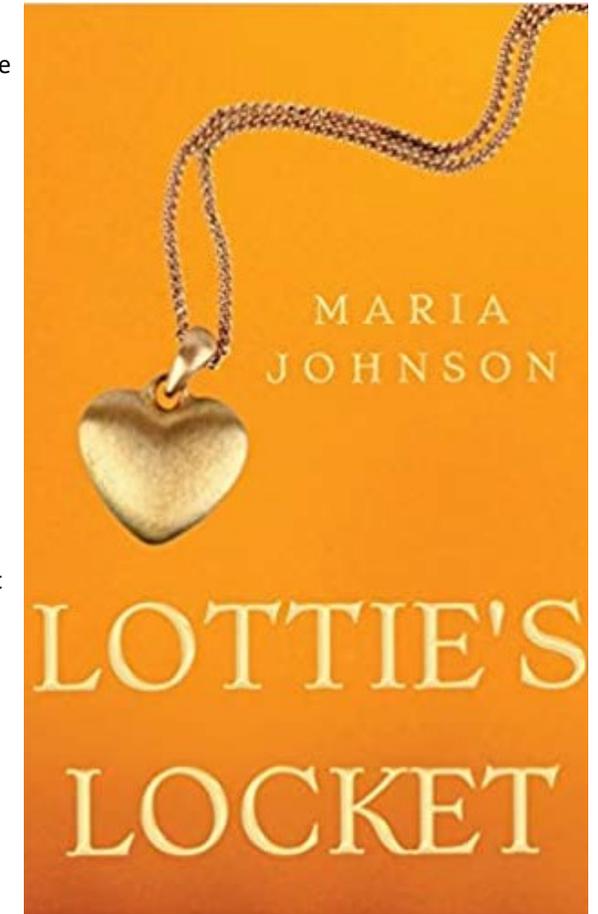
That Aled and Jo may hit the ground running at Dunham Massey and quickly form relationships

That the logistics of their house move to the vicarage at St Margaret’s will run as smoothly as possible

That they will keep in touch with us in Poynton

Aled and Jo have spent a sizeable time of their time in Poynton under Covid 19 restrictions, so we have not seen them as much as we would have liked to. We have been blessed, however, to receive the volume of online output which the parish has provided. Aled has played a major role with his Daily Dose of Joy, which has provided teaching and comfort to many of us throughout the pandemic. Aled and Jo and very many others have worked hard for the continuation of the teaching, prayer and fellowship that this parish values so highly.

We are going to miss Aled and Jo but the good news is that they will not be too far away to come back for a proper leaving party, when such events are allowed to take place. Meanwhile, we wish them every success and happiness in Dunham Massey and we await Jo’s third book in the Celtic History series.



Rosemary Aldridge

11th Poynton Brownies (St George's)

It is so hard to believe that it was a year on the 3rd March since we last had an actual Brownie meeting at Lower Park School. We then had 16 Brownies, 3 of whom had only started Brownies in the last 2 weeks. It is fantastic to report that we now have 25 girls.

We meet on Zoom every Tuesday evening, during term time, and it is very rare for a Brownie to miss a meeting. We are so fortunate to have Jenny Wren our Leader in Training, our fabulous Young Leaders, Lauren, Becky and Emily, not forgetting myself to organise and make these meetings happen.

Prior to each term we Leaders meet on Zoom and plan the following term's meetings, trying to tie up with any special calendar event, i.e. Christmas, Easter, Thinking Day, Mother's and Father's Day for our activities. Materials for the activities are put together. A programme printed for each Brownie explaining what they need out of the activity pack plus what they need to provide themselves i.e. glue, felt tips each week. A pack is delivered to each Brownie before the start of term. Each leader knows what activity they are responsible for each evening, e.g. activities apart from games, songs and news chat are, stone painting for Remembrance Day, Owls out of fir cones, origami, cards, a fan, a compass, an insect house, to name but a few.

We also have six themes to follow and complete in the Brownie Programme. Adapting these to suit Brownie meetings has proved quite a challenge, but secretly we enjoy the challenge. The main theme is for the Brownies to have fun and enjoy their meetings, as we leaders do.

There are still badges for the girls to work for and incidentally a few took part and raised money for the last Pudsey challenge. There are not as many interest badges now, but a Brownie has a choice in each theme of a relevant interest badge to work for, and they are encouraged to work for more.

Along the way they can receive Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, depending on the number of themes they complete. We have a few of our Brownies due to complete their Gold Award.

They have all been wonderful Brownies and, hopefully, they will all move on to Guides, but you never know, like our present Young Leaders, who were themselves once in 11th Brownies, they may choose to come back and train as Young Leaders.



Vivienne Metcalfe (Wise Owl)



Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a three-year-old was resisting a rest

