



# THE FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S, BACTON

Issue 4,  
November 2007

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## Diary Dates

*Wednesday 12th  
December, 7:30pm*  
Committee meeting,  
Cromwell House.

*Wednesday 19th  
December, 7:00pm*  
Christmas Concert,  
The Abbot Consort of  
Voices, St Mary's  
Church.

*Friday 18th and  
Saturday 19th January  
2008,*  
Aladdin, Bacton  
Middle School.

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## It's Panto Time! Oh yes it is!



Or it will be soon. Rehearsals are well advanced for the arrival of *Aladdin* on the stage at Bacton Middle School in January. The cast have been rehearsing hard under the critical eye of writer/director Mark Wilson and all the classic lines, given a unique Bacton twist, are being honed to perfection!

Wait until you see them in full costume. You will recognise them all but prepare to be surprised at their antics!

This is probably our most ambitious production yet and one which we are sharing with the The Friends of St.George's, Wyverstone.

The show will run for three performances, on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th January, with a matinee on the Saturday



afternoon. Tickets, all at £5, are expected to sell fast, so book early to avoid disappointment. Talk to any of the Friends' committee members or call Helen on 781841.



# Chairmans Message.

The pantomime will be outrageously good fun, I have no doubt, but what about the run up to Christmas? We are very fortunate in that Liz Varley has secured us a performance by the Abbot Consort on Wednesday, 19th December (for details see below). The Christmas story will be conveyed by some of the best singing voices in the county, in the beautiful surroundings of a candle-lit St Mary's church.

A mince pie and mulled wine are included in the entry price of £7.50.

I hope you'll come to both these entertainments but if you can't you can still help by letting your family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances know about them and urging them to come. The same goes for our Christmas cards (see back page). They are unique, so please buy them yourselves but tell others about them too.

My thanks to the many people who have continued to support us this year, especially those on the committee and elsewhere who make everything happen.

Finally, may I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas.

Simon Holdich

## The Abbot Consort of Voices

presents

### “Unto us a boy is born”

Christmas in words and music across four centuries

Directed by Ian Morgan

Readings by Brian Robinson

St Mary's Church, Bacton, Suffolk  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007  
7:00 for 7.30pm

Tickets £7.50

On the door or call 781054

(Includes mince pie and glass of mulled wine)

# A Volunteer's Christmas in Ghana

Rev. Liz Varley recalls a memorable Christmas as a VSO volunteer

Way back in 1975, as a newly-qualified maths teacher, I went off on VSO to teach at Kpandu Secondary School in the Ghanaian rain forest.

Christmas in Ghana was a bit different. For a start, Ghana is close to the equator, so there are no cold dark nights; all year round, the sun comes up at six every morning and sets at six every evening, and the weather is *hot*.

This has its good side – being able to decorate the table with hibiscus and frangipani was wonderful, and lolling around in the shade of a blazing Ghanaian day was a great way to recover from Christmas dinner.

It also has its downside. There are no pine trees. You can't have Christmas without a Tree, so on Christmas Eve I picked up my trusty machete and sallied forth to find something, anything, which I could cut down and decorate. I came back clutching an eight foot high palm leaf, which was solemnly wedged upright in a bucket and decorated with shiny coloured baubles made from crumpled toffee wrappers. It's a great experience to put all your presents under the Christmas Leaf.

The Christmas Midnight Eucharist was very much like the service we shall hold in St Mary's this year, except that it lasted for about two and a half hours. In Ghana you don't hurry your worship. Why be in a rush, when you're enjoying yourself?

Christmas dinner was very different. There weren't any turkeys in Kpandu, so I bought a large white chicken from Mrs. Akuampong at the local poultry farm. It was alive, of course. Meat goes off fast in the tropics, so you kill your chicken at the

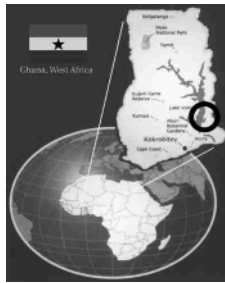
last minute. I did try to kill the chicken myself, but every time I got one hand on its neck it looked at me just like my old Headmistress... In the end Stephen, one of my sixth-formers who lived in our steward's quarters in exchange for doing some odd jobs, took over with *his* trusty machete.

While I was waiting for the loud Chop sound and trying not to be squeamish, Alan, the VSO Physics teacher who lived in the other half of the volunteers' bungalow, came charging up the hill shouting for help to rescue a python. As we rushed off on our errand of mercy, Stephen, the deceased chicken dangling in his hand, called after us 'Shall I gut it?'

The python had slithered halfway through a noose some hunter had left to catch cane rats, a delicacy at any time of the year, before the noose tightened. It was a lovely snake, fat and glossy, but the cord had cut in tightly and it took us a while to calm the poor thing down so that Alan could work the knot loose enough to free it.

We strolled back to the bungalow to get on with cooking dinner, only to find that our roast chicken was now definitely going to be a chicken casserole – what Stephen actually said was 'Shall I *cut* it?', and the chicken had been beautifully gutted, boned and cut into bite-sized pieces.

It was very tasty, served with sweet potatoes, huge sun-ripened tomatoes, and a wonderful Ghanaian spinach dish called kontomire. We followed it with a delectable Christmas pudding my mother had sent out from England. I had tried to make brandy butter using tinned Blue Band margarine. My advice is, don't.



# St Mary's Christmas Cards.

Have you bought your Christmas cards yet? This year, why not send your Christmas greetings on some truly original, unique Christmas cards, and help support the Friends of St Mary's in their mission of maintaining Bacton's wonderful Church into the bargain?

The cards have all been designed by children from Bacton Schools, as well as local adults, who took part in The Friends of St Mary's Christmas Card Competition earlier in the year. The entries were displayed and judged at the Bacton Fayre in August.

The cards may be bought from any committee member, from the Bacton Post Office or from the Friends' stall which will be selling cards outside Bacton Stores and at Finbow's Yard over the weekends leading up to Christmas.

There are four types of card, children's, modern, traditional and photographic all printed on high quality card with a simple seasonal greeting.

Packs of 10 cards cost £3.50 each or buy two packs for £6.00.

