

News from the Village Churches

Last month the pictures of the January snow in *The Valley Diary* showed a variety of charming and beautiful scenes of the villages under that thick white blanket which—given its lack in recent years—came as something of a surprise.

While the children revelled in this unexpected and exciting novelty—and not only children—and sledges were dug out of garages and snow-men built, for others the icy roads were a danger. The snow was compounded by a power cut, which for some lasted nearly a week. All this highlighted the 'changes and chances of this mortal life', and showed again how dependant we are on the modern conveniences, and indeed, on others.

One of the photos showed the gang that turned

out to clear the snow and ice from Singleton School, so that the children and teachers could safely return to classes. Another gang turned out to do the same at West Dean. Curiously, parents seemed keen to enable to schools to re-open!

The photos showed beautiful pictures. But the true beauty of the communities was not apparent from merely charming scenes of snow-covered landscapes and buildings.

The power-cut and snow was a time when neighbour cared for neighbour: people who were able to cook food and hot drinks to those who could not, or took them to heated houses. Others managed to get to shops for those unable to get

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SCENES FROM THE GAMBIA

I've recently been part of a group from our Diocese visiting our Link Diocese of The Gambia in West Africa. We were the guest of the Bishop, Dr Tilewa Johnson. Such visits are always enriching and we returned informed and transformed by the glimpses of daily life we were privileged to share.

The Gambia is largely a Muslim country and relations between the Christians and the Muslims are exemplary. Others could learn much from the respect and dialogue between these two Abrahamic faiths. At the same time Gambian Christians are not timid in celebrating and proclaiming the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in this predominantly Islamic country. We have much to learn from this too! Christians, wherever we find ourselves, have a duty to proclaim Christ as our Lord and Saviour and uttering this truth is a blessing both for the speaker and the hearer.

Gambia is not a poor African country but compared to England it is indeed poor. Such things as medical care and education which

we take for granted are fairly lean to say the least. One of the sadnesses in The Gambia is the high level of infant and maternal mortality. In recent years the parish of Ardingly amazingly have provided a Maternity and Child Health Centre constantly needing financial help for medicines and equipment. There are many ways that we as a diocese could strengthen our links with the Diocese of The Gambia. I am keen to see if we can promote school twinning links. Schools are very poorly equipped with classrooms being almost bare. What Gambian Church schools need in our sister Diocese are relevant books, coloured paper, pencils and pens (We took some). Reading and writing, as with all children, is essential for their development. What is also important to develop is the knowledge and skills of how to work on the land. The Anglican Mission Institute founded some years ago is now being revived by someone from our Diocese who, with me, visited The Gambia two years ago, focusing on fostering amongst the young essential agri-

cultural skills. If more food could be grown locally the Gambian economy would become more self-sufficient, not having to import basic produce, freeing up money for the country's many other needs.

Bishop Tilewa was presenting to his Diocesan Synod (which lasts 3 days!) his Mission Action Plan for the next 10 years focusing on children and young people and their nurture in the Christian life. They are hoping to raise funds to appoint a Director of Youth. We are blessed in our Diocese with an excellent children and youth department. If we could foster a partnership with The Gambia diocese in this area I believe both dioceses could greatly prosper. Can we help? Finally we took various gifts to present to the Bishop including some boxes of incense which foxed Gatwick security who in addition thought I said: "I have boxes of insects!" The correction provided me with a good teaching opportunity and I went on my way!

Do please pray for Bishop Tilewa and our sister Diocese of The Gambia.

**In Christ,
Douglas
(Archdeacon of Chichester)**

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News from the Village Churches, cont

(Continued)

out (or even collecting coal stocks for the shop, as we read last month: how tragic that Buster Hulme's sudden death followed so closely).



*Where there is charity and
loving friendship
there is god*

These words come from an ancient hymn for Maundy Thursday. They reflect the words of Jesus' commandment to his disciples at the Last Supper, when he said **'Love one another even as I have loved you'** (John 13:34). When he was asked "What is the greatest commandment?", He quoted from the Jewish Law "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, **'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'** **There is no other commandment greater than these.**" S Paul reminds us that **"Whoever loves their neighbour has fulfilled the law...Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"** (Romans 13:8-10)

Love that does not lead to action is not truly loving. When people respond to the needs of their neighbours—whether they are next door or across the world—that is love's response, charity: not cold like ice and snow but truly warming.

And that was the true beauty that was to be seen.

Richard

From the Registers

Funeral

*At West Dean on 8th February
Laurence 'Coke' Mitchell aged 97years*

*At East Dean on 10th February
Ivy Jane Miles aged 95 years*

Sunday Worship in March

7th	3rd in Lent	(1st Sunday)
8am	Eucharist	SINGLETON
10am	Parish Eucharist & Sunday School	EAST DEAN
6pm	Evensong & Sermon	SINGLETON
14th	4th in Lent	(2nd Sunday)
	Mothering Sunday	
8am	Eucharist	EAST DEAN
10am	Parish Eucharist & Baptism for Mothering Sunday	SINGLETON
6pm	Evensong (with choir)	WEST DEAN
21st	5th in Lent	(3rd Sunday)
8am	Eucharist	SINGLETON
10am	Parish Eucharist & Sunday School	WEST DEAN
6pm	Evensong	EAST DEAN
28th	Palm Sunday	(4th Sunday)
8am	Eucharist	EAST DEAN
10am	Palm Procession & Family Eucharist for all ages	
6pm	Evening Prayer	WEST DEAN

Please ask if you need a lift to any service

Keep smiling and if you meet someone without a smile give them one of yours.

