

Keeping in Touch K.I.T.

Our Aim: To know Christ and make him known No 80: Winter 2014



The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means, "God with us." Matthew 1 v 23

I AM one of those people who love Christmas. I love everything about Christmas. Decorating the tree, writing cards, buying and wrapping presents, cooking a scrumptious meal on the big day, baking mince pies, even eating Brussels sprouts! And I love everything that happens at our church at Christmas - the Christmas meals, the singing of carols, the special Christmas Eve service, listening to the choirs sing, the giving and receiving of cards, and of course the sermons that remind us what it is all about - the birth of Jesus. The time when God, who loves us more than anything, showed us that love in the arrival of His Son on this earth.

This Christmas however, will probably be the first time that I am not looking forward to December 25. One of my daughters will not be spending Christmas with us. That takes away much of the joy that I usually feel at this time of the year. Whilst we will be in a cosy warm house, hopefully with snow outside, she will be on a beach in Australia. Sharna is spending one year in the land *down under*. I feel sad knowing that she will not be with us.

It will be hard wrapping presents knowing that this year we will not be placing her gifts under the tree, or hanging up the Christmas stocking which I made for her when she was little, knowing that she will not be here to tip it upside down to see what her Dad and sister Rima have placed inside it or to cook her favourite Christmas foods and know that she will not be eating them with us.

Sharna's absence reminds me of how God must feel each Christmas. He must long for us to be with him, to know that we will attend church and rejoice over the gift that He has given us in His Son. He must

eagerly look for us to sing carols with hearts full of love for Him and for Him to know that we want to spend time during the Christmas period in His presence.

And yet so many stay away. Amidst all the things to be done at Christmas, God is very often sidelined and sometimes forgotten completely.

So this Christmas why don't you make sure that you spend some time with God? After all, the God who came down to earth to be with us, would love to know that we want to be with Him, just as much as He wants to be with us!

Mary Barrett

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT Richard J B Willis MA MSc FRSPH

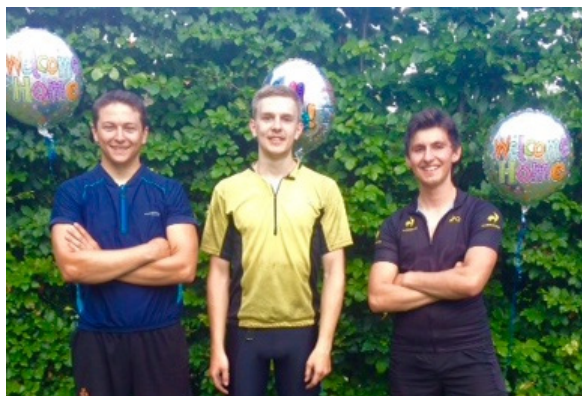
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT through one of her characters in **Little Women**, says, *Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents*. She was obviously overlooking *the* gift that is Christmas. James (1:17) is clear that, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*. Lest there be any doubt concerning the nature of the gift, Paul tells us the *...gift of God is eternal life* (Rom.6:23). We do in fact receive two gifts although at different times. There is life itself when we are born, and *the* Christmas Gift of eternal life when we are reborn. Let's unwrap these gifts a little.

The first gift is biological life. Very conscious of our life and lifestyle we modify, tweak, cajole and otherwise shape the **bios** that is ours by using all the means at our disposal in order to maintain the quality and length of life to suit our purposes. The second gift -- *the* Christmas Gift -- is the **Zoë** life. This Greek word has inherent in it a life that goes on for ever. **Bios** life will cease, but **Zoë** life is designed by God to go on for ever. That is why it is a good and perfect gift. It is eternal. The Polish-born novelist Jerzy Nicodem Kosinski sums up our present situation: *I rent everything, other than the gift of life itself, which was given to me without any predictable lease, a gift that can be withdrawn at any time*. So **bios** is limited as we presently experience it, but we can thank God for the **Zoë** life -- *the* Christmas Gift that lasts for ever. The Gift that keeps on giving!

KIT Flashback.

IN THE LAST KIT, we had interesting stories but no photos to accompany them.

Do you remember the three young men who cycled up to the Arctic Circle for the British Heart Foundation? Pictured left to right are **Miles Brown, Peter Tunwell** and **Jack Bodell**.



Also we mentioned **Alexandra Browne B.A.** a Classics Graduate from Durham University. Alex is shown receiving her degree. A close friend of Alex, **Naomi Burgess** who graduated with a B.Sc. in Sports Science is shown with her parents **Alison and David**. Of course all the parents of these young people are proud as punch.





Another flashback of a different kind is to the last Stanborough School Reunion. **Richard Holt** really wanted to be there. Instead he has written to his many friends, courtesy of KIT, and has included a photo of himself: Hello to all the students I knew from my days at Stanborough School. I was sorry to miss catching up with people at the re-union. I want to wish you all a Happy Christmas and the best for 2015.
Richard Holt.

Silent Night by Brenda G Macrow.

THE STARS are cold and distant
Yet in the silence clear
The joyous sounds of Christmas
Are there for all to hear.

The children singing carols
With voices pure and sweet,
The crunch of frosty pavements
Beneath our hurrying feet.

A sudden lilt of laughter
A festive story tells,
And from the floodlit steeple
Peal our cascading bells.

And now it seems that clearly,
Upon this silent night,
We hear the angels singing
Above the stable bright.

And all the joys of Christmas,
The blessings from above,
Are echoed in their voices
To fill our hearts with love.

First Corinthians 13. The Christmas version, submitted by Rosemary Stone.

NOW, let me tell you the most excellent thing

If I decorated my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny baubles, but do not show love, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas goodies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtimes, but do not show love, I'm just another cook.

If I work in the soup kitchen, sing carols in the nursing homes and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love, it profits me nothing.

If I decorate my Christmas tree with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to spend time with a friend.

Love is kind though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the children to get out of the way, but is thankful that they are here to be in the way.

Love doesn't only give to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. Toys will break, wrapping will be thrown away, gifts will be used and discarded-

But the gift of love will endure forever.

So at the celebration of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, my gift to you is Peace and Love.

God bless you.

NEWS, NEWS, NEWS!

AS OFTEN HAPPENS, our news column has to be a mixture of good and bad news. Starting with the sad news, **Pastor Maurice Musgrave** died on October 23 at the grand age of 95. He will be sorely missed by family and friends to whom we send our condolences.

Two days later international speakers including **John Harris**, the founder of *Creation Science UK*, **John Mackay**, the international director of *Creation Research*, **Dr Alastair Noble**, the director of the *Centre for Intelligent Design*, and others, presented a programme called *God of Science and Our Purposeful Existence*.

The following week we gained two new members - **Rachel Ntata** from Bethel SDA Church, London, and **Vanesa Pizzuto** from San Martin SDA Church, Buenos Aires.

A week later on November 8, we had a joyous occasion - the baptism of three young women. One of them was **Giovanna Gayle**. The photo shows Giovanna about to be baptised by **Pastor Steve Thomas**. During his sermonette, Pastor Thomas said he had known Giovanna for some time and knew how much she wanted to be baptized. He said, *I wouldn't have missed this occasion for anything*. He went on to draw a parallel between David's fight with Goliath and the futures of the three candidates.



On November 15, we were pleased to hear that a good friend of the church, **Norma Lewis**, has been nominated as a Local Hero in a Watford Observer competition. Apparently someone has noticed our Welfare Department and the excellent help Norma has given **Pat Walton** there and with the Soup Run for many years. Congratulations Norma and thank you.

The Christmas Book, Gift and Craft Fair on November 9 raised £520 for the Peace Hospice and small amounts for STOP and Messy Church.

On November 16, two little ones joined our church community. Congratulations to **Joanna and Carl Swain** on the birth of **Hana Rebekah**, and to **Alix and Neilson Roberts** on the birth of **Aaron Emmanuel Manasseh**. Congrats too to all the proud grandparents.

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KIT Winter 2014. KIT is published quarterly and authorized by the church board at Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bronwen Atkinson (editor) - address bet@roybron.plus.com, Audrey Wolfram (design and layout) and Mary Kapon (secretary). Others to whom we are grateful are Pastors Mary Barrett and Richard Willis; Lorna Annable who produced Junior KIT; Denver Annable; Frank Blewitt; June Coombs; Billie Dragojevic; Richard Holt; Sheila Stickland; Rosemary Stone; and Peter Walton who produced Teen Page. The Poems by Brenda G. Macrow were used with the permission of The People's Friend. Karen Hubbard, Gwen Olney and the deaconesses helped with distribution. KIT was printed by John Browne of 24 Hour Printline of Rochester, Kent.

