



Almost there ~ but not quite

Most of the building work is finished and it is hoped that we will be able to move in to our new Centre in the Spring. The Project Manager still seeks approximately **£100,000** to complete the project.

In a future newsletter we will let you know which organisations and companies have provided free or heavily discounted materials, and those who have generously 'given' their time as they've worked on the building.

Christmas Party

We partied at Scotsdales in their restaurant ~ over 150 of us were there.

There was plenty of food provided by everyone who came.

We raised £247.50 from the tombola & raffle.

Entertainment came from a superb jazz band and from Paul Lant, an accomplished flautist.



A

Magical

Moment ~ from Tricia

The Umbrella Big Band brought smiles to faces. Twinkling eyes met across a crowded restaurant and bodies swayed, poised on the brink of a Quickstep or Foxtrot. Horizons expanded from immediate neighbours to others on the far side of the room ~ a wonderful bringing together, lifting the spirits and creating a truly magical moment.

Not only did the band delight us with their music ~ they also gave us a £40 donation! Thank you Umbrella Big Band

The music is not in the notes

Anon

Christmas Presents for the Centre

Margot sent a letter to several of her friends, saying:

I hope you have a Happy Christmas! Please, rather than buying me a Christmas present, will you make a donation to the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre. I am enclosing a Gift Aid form for you to use if you wish to do so. Thank you.

Margot raised £383!



Jail and Bail

Annie, who runs 'Different Strokes' is involved with the Stroke Association's 'Jail and Bail' event at the Grafton Centre on 22 February, starting at 10.30am.

Various businessmen and women will be arrested, hand-cuffed and taken to a Grafton Centre 'jail', where spectators can see them phoning their friends, asking for 'bail' money to enable them to be released. Money raised will be given to the Stroke Association, who will share the takings with Annie's 'Different Strokes' group.

The managers of the Grafton Centre have very kindly offered to provide a room where the detainees can have lunch, following their release from police custody.

If you would like to support Annie and the Stroke Association, please send donations to Anne Diggins at the Centre, making your cheques payable to 'The Stroke Association'.

Hi Ann

Congrats on all the brill work with the new Centre, it's a miracle.

And here's another one for the newsletter.

love Wendy.

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc, and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On December 19 there was a terrible tempest ~ a driving rainstorm hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head height. The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do, postponed the Christmas Eve service and headed home.

On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful handmade, ivory-coloured, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colours and a Cross embroidered right in the centre. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church. By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc. to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area. Then he noticed the woman walking down the centre aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor", she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman,

and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just bought the Tablecloth. The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week but he was captured and sent to prison and she never saw her husband or her home again. The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home: that was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a house-cleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighbourhood continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war, and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike. He told the pastor how the Nazis had come, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety, and how he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again. The pastor asked the man if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.

True Story - from Pastor Rob Reid

To be or not to be

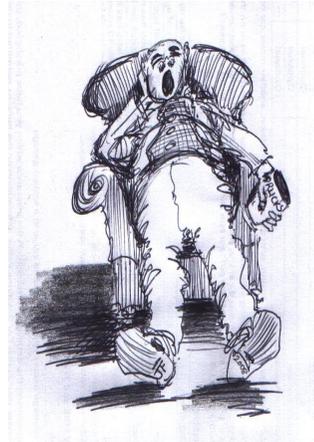


I met Hannah from school. She said,
"Granny ~ I want to be an angel in
the Nativity Play but I've got to be
a dancing chicken".

*Her Dad later consoled her by saying
that he had wanted to be a soldier in a
school play but had to be a tree.*

Tricia's 7 year old grandson went carol
singing with his class to a home for Old
People. Recounting his experience that
evening he commented ~

"They were all very old.
One of them was 61.
And there was one who was about 100.
But I think that one was dead!"



*Aren't we lucky to have John to
illustrate such gems!*

Nativity Play

Tamsin Kelly in the Daily Mail pointed out that her best-ever Nativity part was as the essential third narrator, ending other people's lengthy lines with "said Mary" and "said Joseph". She said that her children, over the past few years, had been a spider, umpteen shepherds and one of at least 10 kings. Only one of her sons bagged a big role which was being Joseph, shoving Mary around the stage and demanding a room.

She also remembers a teacher sobbing around in the front, perhaps when the baby Jesus' head fell off and rolled under the benches where the parents were sitting. In her view, the bizarre roles ~ a dancing chicken, a cactus and talking alien number three are worthy parts. She says, "who is going to remember Mary looking angelic when there's a prancing chicken on stage?" She recalls that one mother complained her daughter had not been given a good enough part in the Nativity play ~ she was Mary.

Angela, who told me about the nativity play goings-on also told me that when she looked after the 3-4 year olds in her Sunday school class they discussed the widow's mite ~ you remember, she was left without any money at all ~ and one four year old excitedly solved the problem by saying ~ "but why didn't she go to the cash point?"

From John ~

Hector sat quietly as the fortune-teller gazed deep into her crystal ball. Without warning, she began to laugh uncontrollably so he punched her on the nose. It was the first time he'd struck a happy medium!

My Christmas Present from Wendy

While my daughter in law, Jo, and I, were waiting in the jewellers for my husband to decide on which watch strap he wanted to replace his worn out Timex strap, we played our favourite game, which is what we are going to buy when we win the double rollover on the lottery. To add to my pink stretch American limousine and white deep pile carpets throughout the house, with an Aga in every room, I was debating between a David Beckham ring and a jewel encrusted belly button ring. Jo thought these rather naff, and chose a diamond tiara for herself. Then my eyes suddenly alighted on some very nice eternity rings. My best friend Susan had recently been given a beautiful one to celebrate a special wedding anniversary, and now I WANTED one.

I dragged my husband over and discussed the various merits of the green and blue ones before insisting on having my finger measured. He pretended to be totally disinterested, but when pressed said he liked the blue one.

I knew I had struck gold when a couple of weeks before Christmas he asked me which was my favourite colour again, before setting off on some errands in town.

On Christmas morning he brought me a cup of tea and I frisked him looking for a small box in his dressing gown pocket ~ nothing. So I gave him his present, the selection of Harry Potter books that I was dying to read. He suggested we went downstairs to get my present. I ran into the dining room to look under the tree, “no it’s outside”, he said. Oh.....it’s not the ring I thought. It must be a new car to replace the one I had bought from a student five years ago for £200 and which had 142,000 miles on the clock then. I had been dropping hints about replacing it for some time now.

I followed my husband through the kitchen and out of the back door and he tara da da’d a couple of times and pointed. “Where is it?” I asked. “There it is”, and he pointed again. “Where’s the car?” I said again.

“There’s your Christmas present, I knew it was just what you wanted and you told me blue was your favourite colour”, he told me with a pleased expression on his silly face.

There in all its pristine glory was a brand new rotary dryer complete with blue washing line.*

And to end our look back at Christmas here is a poem written by a peace-keeping soldier stationed overseas.

It's Christmas Day ~ All is Secure

Twas the night before Christmas
He lived all alone
In a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone
I had come down the chimney with presents to give
And to see just who in this home did live

I looked all about a strange sight I did see
No tinsel, no presents not even a tree
No stocking by the mantle just boots filled with sand
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands
With medals and badges awards of all kinds
A sober thought came through my mind

For this house was different it was dark and dreary
I found the home of a soldier once I could see clearly
The soldier lay sleeping silent alone
Curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home

The face was so gentle the room in such disorder
Not how I pictured a lone British soldier
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read
Curled up on a poncho the floor for a bed

I realised the families that I saw this night
Owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight
Soon round the world the children would play
And grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day

They all enjoy freedom each month of the year
Because of the soldiers like the one living here
I couldn't help wonder how many alone
On a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home
The very thought brought a tear to my eye
I dropped to my knees and started to cry
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice
"Santa don't cry - this life is my choice
I fight for freedom I don't ask for more
My life is my God, my country, my corps"

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep
I couldn't control it I continued to weep
I kept watch for hours so silent and still
And we both sat and shivered from the cold night's chill
I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night
This guardian of honour so willing to fight
Then the soldier rolled over with a voice soft and pure
Whispered "carry on Santa - it's Christmas day - all is secure"
One look at my watch and I knew he was right
"Merry Christmas my friend and to all a good night"

Someone who came to the Centre fairly recently said, when I asked her what she felt about being part of the Centre:

"I came to the Centre to 'give' but I 'get' everything. I got a huge welcome and lots of love and I have never met such lovely people. I first met some of you at the Foxton car boot sale and from that minute onwards I knew I wanted to come along to meet everyone. It's like a family ~ I just felt I wanted to be part of it."

Oh the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away.

George Elliot (1819-1880)

Yvonne Fordham

To everyone's shock Yvonne died just as the last newsletter went to the printers. Never seen as someone unwell but someone always cheerful, kind and compassionate, we couldn't believe that she was suddenly very seriously ill.



At her funeral Yvonne's brother said that Yvonne was a caring and loving person, good, kind, faithful, thoughtful and always ready to help. He said that as children they never 'fell out'. He mentioned how very particular Yvonne was about things like ironing ~ apparently she always made sure that she ironed a crease down the exact centre of her sheets, so that when she made the bed the sheet would always be symmetrically placed. "*I thought everyone did that*", whispered a voice to my left, whilst the comment from my right was, "*what's an iron?*" ~ no prizes for guessing who I was sitting between!

Yvonne first met her husband Tony at the Rex ballroom, where they danced together. We were reminded that Dance is a metaphor for Life.

There is no doubt that Yvonne enriched our lives. She would come to the Centre every two weeks, talk to everyone and make their drinks. She and Tony supported many charities so it wasn't surprising that around 300 people attended her funeral. Between them they donated £1268 to our Centre.

I asked Sid what he thought about Yvonne..... He said, "*she was a very nice lady to me, always kind. She always gave me a kiss. I missed her at the Mayor's outing this year because we always spent some time together on those outings*".

We still expect her to walk into the Centre. Her passing seemed an unreasonable thing to happen.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross wrote

"There is within each of us a potential for goodness beyond our imagining; for giving which seeks no reward; for listening without judgment; for loving unconditionally."

That was Yvonne Fordham

We send our love to Tony and his family

Peter's REALLY arduous Brain Tumour UK One Thousand Miles: step by step

Step 1: Who is Peter?

My name is Peter Davison. I live just outside Cambridge. I am 47. I don't smoke, I take a lot of exercise and I eat more or less the right stuff. There is no history of brain tumours in my family, and I am not exposed to noxious chemicals or radiation any more than the population at large is.

But I have a brain tumour, and it is likely to kill me. Statistics suggest it'll kill me twenty years earlier than a man of my genetic make-up, habits and environment would normally expect to die.

I was diagnosed in July 2005. I had an epileptic seizure – the first and so far the last I've had – while I was driving a car, and the first I knew of it was when I woke up in hospital, having crashed into a roundabout. The doctors told me a brain tumour had caused the seizure. A couple of weeks later half of the tumour was removed. They didn't dare try and remove any more, because when you cut out brain tumours you cut out bits of brain, too, and they didn't want to leave me unable to think, walk, speak, dress myself or any of the other bad things that happen to people with severely damaged brains.

My hair grew back after the radiotherapy. And I managed to work most of the time through the chemotherapy, though I admit there were days when I was not very productive.

So actually I have been pretty lucky. My brain isn't too badly damaged. I stumble over words a bit, as though I was suddenly 67 not 47. My legs were weakened by the steroids that they gave me after the operation, and my reaction time and balance were not as sharp as they had been, so I had to give up competitive sport.

The doctor allowed me to swim again once he'd removed the bandages round my head and the scar had healed over. And about three months later he let me run, too. That was great. My friends waited for me. I took an hour to run round the lake near home, when three months earlier it had taken me forty minutes. But I had to sell my racing bike. If you trip while you're running you tend not to do yourself much damage; but if your balance in a mass-start bike race is less than 100% you can cause mayhem. I still miss riding with my buddies.

Step 2: What is REALLY?

It's my own invented acronym. I call this the *Ride to Establish Average Lost Life Years*. I'm going to be riding from Land's End to John O'Groats, bringing what remains of my brain tumour with me. (Don't have a choice, do I?)

I said earlier that I can now expect to die 20 years early. That's what the

Average Lost Life Years is about. Yes, prostate cancers kill more men than brain tumours do. But they tend to kill them in their sixties and seventies. So you could say that many of these people have had a good innings anyway. For goodness' sake let's not be callous about it. But people dying of brain tumours **HAVE SELDOM HAD A GOOD INNINGS.**

These tumours kill kids. They kill men – yes, more men get them than women – in early adulthood and middle age, in their most productive years.

If a brain tumour doesn't kill you first time around, sooner or later it will come back and try again. I can expect mine to recur, and it will probably be operable one more time. Living with that threat can make you paranoid. Every minor headache, feeling tired too early in the evening... you worry, every time: is it back?

We focus research and treatment spending in the UK on cancers with high incidence and high mortality: breast cancer, lung, bowel and prostate.

We talk emotively of the tragedies of young lives lost to other types of cancer – cervical and ovarian cancers, brain tumours – because instinctively we know there is something terribly wrong when a disease is allowed to carry someone off too early. But these are less common than the 'big four' and inevitably attract less attention. But whereas cervical cancers are now mostly caught and dealt with early enough to do something about them, through a fantastic screening service, brain tumours continue to kill **HALF OF THEIR VICTIMS** within a year of diagnosis, and 90% within ten years. That, and the youth of the victims, the promise unfulfilled... that is what is wrong, and I'm riding to give words to that.

Step 3: what is arduous?

We'll get onto that when I come to talk about the 1,000 miles. But if you've ever ridden a bike for longer than ten miles you'll know what your legs (and other bits) feel like afterwards. Imagine doing that times ten, and then day after day for a couple of weeks, and then imagine you're middle-aged and you've been taking drugs that make you weaker not stronger.

I'm doing the ride basically on my own. My brother will meet me at a few stops in the south of England; and my wife has offered to drive from Preston north through Scotland, so I won't be lonely at meal times, just when I'm on the road.

Step 4: what is Brain Tumour UK?

It's a specialised charity that helps give support to people like me. They employ only a few people. Those people work from home and some of them use their own computers. They raise funds to give advice – through helplines, conferences, regional support groups – and support research into the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumours. It was at a Brain Tumour UK conference that I met the doctor who

told me about Average Lost Life Years, and a light went on in my head. The Brain Tumour UK people always have time to talk to me, and they clearly, somehow, always have time to talk to everyone who phones them.

Any money that I can raise I'm going to give to Brain Tumour UK so they can help cut waiting lists for scans, run helplines, conferences and train more specialists: surgeons, specialist nurses, radiologists... and so they can continue to have time to talk to people like me. <http://www.braintumouruk.org.uk>

There are local needs, too, in and around Cambridge, where I live. There are never enough scanners at Addenbrookes Hospital, never enough specialised doctors and nurses. Also the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre, which has provided support to patients and their carers for over 20 years, needs extra money for their new premises nearing completion at Scotsdales Garden Centre in Great Shelford. So Addenbrookes Hospital and the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre will be able to make great use of that proportion of the funds that Brain Tumour UK sends in their direction. By the time I ride, I'll have an idea how much money I've raised, and what they'll be able to buy with it.

Step 5: what are those 1,000 miles?

Actually if you take the shortest route from Land's End to John O'Groats, missing out the motorways, you can get there in under 900 miles. But I thought I'd go out of my way to visit some of the people in different cities who've helped me survive so far, and who daily help others. And maybe they'll introduce me to some of their patients, too – people with whom I suddenly have a lot in common.

So I'm going via Portsmouth, where they do a lot of Brain Tumour work. And two hospitals in London (including the Royal Free, where I was brought not long after my car crash). I'm going to try and get an appointment at the House of Commons, too, clad in my bright lycra. And Welwyn Garden City, where I had the crash, and by coincidence also where they make the drug – temozolomide – that I got long before it was an accepted standard treatment for my kind of tumour. Then of course I have to drop in in Cambridge, at the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre and at Addenbrookes Hospital where I go for my scans.

After that it's a bit of a slog across country. I haven't got anyone to visit yet in Stoke on Trent or Warrington. By the time I go through Preston I'll be thinking just about the scenery (and the hills!) in the Lake District. Then I'll drop in on the Brain Tumour UK lady in Edinburgh, and I expect there'll be some doctors and patients there. There are always patients: about 50 new diagnoses a day in the UK.

After Edinburgh it's head down, drop in at the Glenmorangie distillery for a fortifying draft, and a final push through the Cairngorms (ouch) for the far north. About 1,200 miles in total, I estimate. About 24,000 feet of total ascent and roughly the same in descent.

Wherever I go I'll be highly visible (which matters, if you're on a bike)

and if cyclists, tumour patients, doctors or the media want to talk to me, I'll try to muster more than just a grunt in return. If companies want to sponsor me they can have their name on my cycling shorts, cap, back, chest, panniers... you name it, just not a tattoo.

To the cycling community in particular: there is a reason I gave up racing, and it's not just weak legs. It was for your sake. I'm a bit wobblier now than I used to be. Please do come out for a cup of tea, or to drop a fiver in one of my panniers; or check out my itinerary and ride in front of or behind me en route.

Peter's cycle ride is due to take place in May. Sponsor forms are available from the table at the entrance to Scotsdales restaurant. Cheques to be made payable to Brain Tumour UK, who will be sending us a proportion of the money raised.

Pesticides ~ 5 Core Items ~ Do the Right Thing

(read this in the Observer magazine)

33% of food contains measurable levels of pesticides but feeding the children organic food is expensive. Experts say that five core items would benefit most from the switch to organic:

Milk, potatoes, peanut butter, ketchup and apples

I heard elsewhere that we should try to avoid the following colours/additives

E122, E102, E104, E124, E129, E110

and Sodium Benzoate which appears in fizzy drinks

Bananas contain three natural sugars ~ sucrose, fructose and glucose combined with fibre. **A banana gives an instant, sustained and substantial boost of energy.**

Research has shown that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90-minute workout. No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes.

But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions, making it a must to add to our daily diet.

Depression: According to a recent survey undertaken by MIND amongst people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin, known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

PMS: Forget the pills - eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which can affect your mood.

Anaemia: High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of haemoglobin in the blood and so help in cases of anaemia.

Blood Pressure: This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt, making it perfect to beat blood pressure. So much so, the US Food and Drug Administration has just allowed the banana industry to make official claims for the fruit's ability to reduce the risk of blood pressure and stroke.

Brain Power: 200 students at a Twickenham (Middlesex) school were helped through their exams this year by eating bananas at breakfast, break, and lunch in a bid to boost their brain power. Research has shown that the potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

Constipation: High in fibre, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel action, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

Hangovers: One of the quickest ways of curing a hangover is to make a banana milkshake, sweetened with honey. The banana calms the stomach and, with the help of the honey, builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and re-hydrates your system.

Heartburn: Bananas have a natural antacid effect in the body, so if you suffer from heartburn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

Morning Sickness: Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

Mosquito bites: Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

Nerves: Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

Overweight and at work? Studies at the Institute of Psychology in Austria found pressure at work leads to gorging on comfort food like chocolate and chips. Looking at 5,000 hospital patients, researchers found the most obese were more likely to be in high-pressure jobs. The report concluded that, to avoid panic-induced food cravings, we need to control our blood sugar levels by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours to keep levels steady.

Ulcers: The banana is used as the dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It is the only raw fruit that can be eaten without distress in over-chronicler cases. It also neutralizes over-acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

Temperature control: Many other cultures see bananas as a ‘cooling’ fruit that can lower both the physical and emotional temperature of expectant mothers. In Thailand , for example, pregnant women eat bananas to ensure their baby is born with a cool temperature.

Sequence Dance ~ from Ken J

It's the Sunday tea dance, and they'll all be here today
Aches and pains forgotten, dance the afternoon away
Foxtrots, quicksteps, waltzes, some are slow but some still nifty
With memories of how it was way back in 1950

Norman's in the toilet and he's struggling to pee
He's got trouble with his prostate and he'll likely miss his tea
Eddy's got a new love that he met in Thornton Heath
She does a lovely tango but she hasn't any teeth

His latest fancy footwork nearly broke his partner's neck
She mistook his outside swivel for a travelling contra check
Ida's had her hair done and she's ready for the saunter
She had a vindaloo last night and it's coming back to haunt her

Florrie's mini-skirt's revealing when she's spinning in the jive
She really shouldn't wear a thong approaching 85
They've had their tea and cake and chat and had a little laugh
And gamely rise with creaking knees to face the second half

Norman's made it back in time for rumba number one
His cucaracha's very neat but he's left his flies undone
Vera's fallen over in a massive crimplene heap
Bert's got indigestion and Mabel's fast asleep

It's last waltz time and up they get
For Humperdinck's old tune
And then "goodbye, good luck, take care
God willing see you soon".

Exercise ~ from Anne F

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side. With a 5-lb potato sack in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day, you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato sacks. Then try 50-lb potato sacks and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (*I'm at this level*)

After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each of the sacks.

Overheard in the Centre ~ from John

Lady undergoing chemotherapy looked thoroughly stunning in a long dark wig. She decided that to complete this vision of loveliness, eye lashes were required ~ not just any old eye lashes, but really classy, super-duper real hair lashes at £56 a pair.

Having wowed the assembled men-folk and engendered jealousy in the ladies, she settled down for the night, peeled them off and left them on the table beside the hotel bed.

Next morning she took breakfast early in the dining room, but alas, on returning to her bedroom, the lashes were nowhere to be seen.

Investigation revealed that the alert chamber maid had killed the nasty spider and despatched it to the bin!

The Daffodil Principle ~ from Jane McD

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, “Mother, you must come to see the daffodils before they are over”. I wanted to go, but it was a two-hour drive. “I will come next Tuesday”, I promised a little reluctantly on her third call.

Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised and reluctantly I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house I was welcomed by the joyful sounds of happy children. I delightedly hugged and greeted my grandchildren.

“Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in these clouds and fog and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see badly enough to drive another inch!”

My daughter smiled calmly and said, “We drive in this all the time, Mother.” “Well, you won't get me back on the road until it clears and then I'm heading for home!” “But first we're going to see the daffodils. It's just a few blocks away”, Carolyn said, “I'll drive. I'm used to this”.

“Carolyn”, I said sternly, “Please turn around”.

“It's all right, Mother, I promise. You will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience.”

After about twenty minutes, we turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, I saw a hand-lettered sign with an arrow that read ‘Daffodil Garden’. We got out of the car, each took a child's hand and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, as we turned a corner, I looked up and gasped. Before me lay the most glorious sight.

It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it over the mountain peak and its surrounding slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns, great ribbons and swathes of deep orange, creamy white, lemon yellow, salmon pink and saffron and butter yellow. Each different-colored variety was planted in large groups so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers.

“Who did this?” I asked Carolyn. “Just one woman”, Carolyn answered. “She lives on the property. That's her home”. Carolyn pointed to a well-kept A-frame house, small and modestly sitting in the midst of

all that glory. We walked up to the house.

On the patio, we saw a poster. ‘Answers to the Questions I Know You Are Asking’ was the headline. The first answer was a simple one. ‘50,000 bulbs’, it read. The second answer was, ‘One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet and one brain’. The third answer was, ‘Began in 1958’.

For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, more than forty years before, had begun, one bulb at a time, to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountain top. Planting one bulb at a time, year after year, this unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. One day at a time, she had created something of extraordinary magnificence, beauty, and inspiration.

The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration, that is, learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time – often just one baby-step at time – and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world.

“It makes me sad in a way,” I admitted to Carolyn. “What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at it ‘one bulb at a time’ through all those years? Just think what I might have been able to achieve!”

My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. “Start tomorrow,” she said. She was right. It's so pointless to think of the lost hours of yesterdays. The way to make learning a lesson a celebration instead of a cause for regret is to ask only, “How can I put this to use today?”

Hugh Free ~ 'The Cream'

Sadly for all of us Hugh died in November 2007. Described as a selfless brother, a great brother, a supportive brother and an amazing man. A warm, loving, compassionate man. A person who had deep mental strength, was brave and stoical with his illness, full of integrity, positive and strong willed.



His son Jeremy read this poem which he wrote with Kirstie and James:

Firm but fair, steadfast and true,
Just ask Dad, he'll know what to do,
Always had the answers, of course nothing could phase him,
Well, he was our Dad and he was amazing.

Always went that extra mile in everything he did,
Especially when it came to looking after and loving his kids,
You can't get to pick your Dad, but to us he was the best you could get,
I wish we were at the dinner table and he'd ask "can you pass the salty pep?"

Have a moan about the government and switch on Radio 4
To be brought up by this wonderful man, who could ask for more.
He spent his time worrying about others, never time for himself.
"How are you Dad" we'd ask, "oh just fine" he'd say "It's all part of life's rich tapestry" right up to the end.

We are so glad that your pain has passed and you are in that better place,
...and now it's our turn to say to you, Dad,
"Hands, face and teeth my love, it's time to go to bed".

Hugh was chair of United Nations Association, a Freeman of the City of London and a man who had a deep commitment to civil society. A former colleague of Hugh's recalled his advice that it was possible to concede a point without appearing to lose face or compromise on fundamental principles. Hugh was devoted to environmental and peace movements for much of his

life and was in the Liberal and Green parties.

Hugh's wife Dot, said she 'found' Hugh on the 14th June, 1979 as she sat down opposite him on the 6.15pm train from Liverpool Street to Cambridge. They chatted, and she remembers noticing the full force of his smile and blue eyes. At the end of the train journey Hugh asked her to join him for a quick drink before heading home ~ and she agreed. Before departing for home she invited Hugh for a meal the following weekend, but he said she must go to him for his usual 'Sunday roast'. Later he took her out, to Hartland and at the base of the cliffs he asked her to marry him. Dot said that looking at the wedding photographs, she looked like the cat that got the cream and, she told all of us, "I still feel like that".

The service ended with a recording of some wonderful music written and played by Hugh's son James.

'Tex' ~ Sidney

partner of Maureen
for our Centre, died just before Christmas. We didn't see Tex a great deal but he would sometimes call in with Maureen, and he usually came to our parties.



Charles Rainer ~

Hardingham, who does much for our Centre, died just before Christmas. We didn't see Tex a great deal but he would sometimes call in with Maureen, and he usually came to our parties.

At his funeral we learned that Tex grew up in residential homes and had a hard start in life. He had been in the Fleet Air Arm. He always looked on the optimistic side of life, which came perhaps from a time during the war when he was eating a sausage and it was blown off the fork by a bomb!

He was independent, and a "neat little mover" who loved to dance with Maureen, his best friend, partner and soul mate, with whom he enjoyed so much of his life.

Maureen was thanked by Tex's son for the happiness she had brought to his Dad, as they enjoyed the simple pleasures of life together.

The Red Hat Society ~

was started in America 10 years ago when a lady called Sue Ellen gave her friend a copy of Jennifer Joseph's poem 'Warning' which starts with the lines,

*When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat that doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.*

The poem goes on to describe how the woman would not be meek and mild as she grew older but would get out and be bolder and more fun loving. Sue Ellen also gave her friend a large red hat to go with the poem. And so the fellowship began.

In 10 years The Red Hat Society has swept across America and from there to many far flung corners of the earth, including Australia, Japan, S America and numerous European Countries.

The Cambridge chapter started nearly 5 years ago when the founding member went on holiday to America and saw groups of Red Hatters enjoying life together. These ladies, all dressed in wonderful purple outfits and stylish red hats, seemed to be having a great time despite the fact they were no longer in their prime.

On her return she encouraged other friends to join her in starting a group to affiliate with the American Red Hat Society. And so the Camberries were born. The group has 18 members, all past the magic age of 55, who meet regularly for fun and friendship. They go on outings, meet for coffee, have elaborate tea parties, indulge in a bit of foreign travel and play games. The overriding theme always seems to be laughter. They of course have wonderful wardrobes of purple clothes and red hats.

The UK now has over 100 similar groups. Each of these groups will be celebrating the Red Hats Society's 10th Birthday on the 25th April, and Cambridge will be hosting a lunch for all the chapters in the Eastern Region ~ a day which will give ladies from all over East Anglia a chance to meet each other in Fun and Friendship.

The Camberries are very keen to help raise funds for the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre and are planning to hold a tea party with delicious food and musical entertainment early in the summer. Details of this will be circulated as soon as a date has been confirmed.

Many thanks to

Sue Bonnett	Amy Ackroyd
Ilze Kadils	Katie Taylor
Sue Dorrington	Immanuel Kemp
Rosemary Jones	Nathan Cooper
Ann Dingley	Saba Hassan
David Barylko	David Jackson
Penny Olsen	Krish
Rowena Lee	Geraldine Huang
Peter & Jane Cornell	Matt Faulkner
Jane & Mike Malone	and Emily Jones
Ros Nightingale	
Fran Dawson	
Bill Brown	
Coral & Charlie Barton	
Lesley Flood	
Irene Inglis	
Banni Koviely & her daughter	
Jen Spencer from ARU	
& from Cambridge University:	
CUSU	

Thanks to you all for collecting in the City Centre
on a freezing cold 24th November
and raising £908.42 for our Centre.

Snippets from the CEN ~

Asthma

In the CEN on the Health and Wellbeing page it said that in the online edition of the journal 'Occupational and Environmental Medicine', the researchers say rising rates of childhood asthma in Western Europe could at least partly be caused by exposure to indoor pools. They call for a thorough evaluation of the long-term effects of chlorine, and proper ventilation of pools.

I also read, in another edition of the CEN, that pre-packed lettuce is washed in a chlorine solution 20 times more concentrated than in the average swimming pool, while a study of eye-shadows found that 75% contained heavy metals ~ including lead, cobalt, nickel, chromium and arsenic ~ above recommended 'safe' levels.

If you buy microwave popcorn be aware that the packing is lined with Teflon, which releases lung-damaging and carcinogenic micro particles into the air when heated.

The CEN also reported that self-testing kits for bowel cancer are being sent to men and women in their 60s throughout the country. Cancer Research UK has predicted that there will be 20,000 fewer deaths, over the next 20 years, if just 60% of those eligible for bowel screening take the simple test.

Dentist's waiting room

Read in Good Housekeeping magazine under 'good health' that: Circumin blocks a protein that helps cancer develop. Trials at the University of Texas found that combining it with Taxol helped stop the spread of breast cancer. Research, it said, shows that ginger can relieve digestive problems and fenugreek and cinnamon are good for diabetes.

Health Channel on the Saga Magazine

This website is proving to be hugely popular. It is said to be reliable, trustworthy and tailored for the over-50s. Go to saga.co.uk/magazine and click on "health".

Airmiles ~ shopping online can earn you Airmiles. Go to airmiles.co.uk and click on the direct links to retailers such as John Lewis.com etc. You could notch up as much as one Airmile for every £1 you spend. You can exchange Airmiles for all your travel requirements. eg 400 will get you to Paris, 800 will get you to Rome, 3,000 will get you to New York and 4,500 will get you to Hong Kong.

Caffeine

Read that it is a stimulant and can boost physical and mental energies. But in excess it can precipitate mood change and insomnia because after getting an initial 'high' one can experience a later energy low from caffeine withdrawal.

A two week trial without caffeine is suggested ~ the withdrawal may give a few difficult days but then one might find that mental and physical energy levels are better than ever. I also read that children may be at risk because of the consumption of caffeinated soft drinks. A half-litre bottle of cola contains about 50mg of caffeine. Red Bull has about three times this concentration of caffeine. *(Note ~ read that coca-cola makes a very good toilet cleaner!)*

Cancer/Sunshine

Two North American doctors, Cedric and Frank Garland, correlated cancer statistics and sunshine records around the world. Mortality from both breast and colon cancer was generally higher in areas of the world where there is least sunlight or the worst smog pollution.

Autumn Fayre at Scotsdales

We organised this to raise money for the Scotsdale's Charitable Foundation. We raised £1,445!

Enormous amounts of help came from:

Catherine, Lilian, John, Kath, Joyce, Anne P, Evelyn, Dorothy, Ros, Ilze, Henry (pearly king) Ken, Margot, Brenda, Annie, Ray, Claire, Ingrid, Jane (head massager) David Rayner and Charlie.

We also had help from lots of people who made cakes and chutneys and those who provided raffle prizes.

Scotsdale's staff also offered lots of assistance along the way and helped us move the heavy stuff. Bless them.



The Spring Fair will be at Scotsdales on Saturday 5 April.

Again we hope to raise money for the Scotsdales Charitable Foundation. We plan to hold a raffle, tombola & childrens' tombola, 'guess the name of the doll', and sell home-made cakes, books etc ~ and anything else you can think of.

From Dorothy ~ printed in the New Scientist

A sachet of Ichibo Hot Chocolate powder bears the warning "caution: contains a source of milk". Roger Calvert is reluctant to open it. He's worried about letting the cow out, or something.

A Very Special Kettle ~ from Fran

At the craft fair at Great Shelford Memorial Hall, we'd just about finished setting up our stall, so I decided to wander off and see what the other stall holders had to offer. Almost opposite were some people raising money for stray cats, and I noticed a kettle shaped like a cat, which looked exactly like my friend Jacqui's cat. You know, the old fashioned sort that you put on the stove and when the water has boiled it whistles (the kettle, not the cat!).

I waited until the end of the fair, hoping nobody else would buy it, and happily it was still there, so I snapped it up. When I got it home I tried it out on my cooker, and when the water boiled it didn't whistle ~ it miaowed! Brilliant, I thought, Jacqui will love that! And it looked so much like her lovely black cat with a white blaze on his face.

Sunday came and Jacqui came round for a meal and a chat. I presented her with the kettle, and she was suitably amused. Lots of chat later, it was time for her to go home. By now it was about half past midnight, so I let her out of my back garden gate, which was the nearest route to where she'd parked her car.

As I went back indoors, I realised she'd left her kettle behind, so I hurried out of my front door to intercept her as she passed the end of my street. I stood on the pavement, watching her car turn round at the dead end, and as she drew near, I stepped out into the road waving the cat kettle.

Wrong car!!!

The next car was Jacqui, and she stopped. When I told her about the other car, she laughed so hard she couldn't drive.

I can only hope that the person I leaped in front of isn't a near neighbour.

The Grumpy slot

Now I know that I am no longer the svelte 7 stone thing I was some 50 years ago, but XL I am not, but in the opinion of the stocking manufacturers I am. Is it just me that is having trouble or are there more of you out there with the same problem. I have always bought my everyday tights from a supermarket and up until last year had no problem. They sold them five to a pack in sizes Small, Medium, Large and X Large. I decided for comfort's sake that I really could no longer call myself Medium and very bravely bought Large. No problem, fitted like a dream, that is until last year when all of a sudden they didn't come any higher than below the tummy button, and before you say it, no I hadn't put weight on ~ well not a lot anyway. I discovered that the sizes were now Small/Medium Medium/Large and you've guessed it X Large. Now as far as I am concerned I am not Medium nor am I X Large. I thought I would try knee highs but found that they were either Nora Batty-like round my ankles or I was in serious danger of getting thrombosis of the leg because they were so tight. So X Large it had to be. They fit reasonably well but I am off to the shops wearing them in order to see if they will stay in place whilst walking as I do not want to appear on the golf course with my tights wrinkling round my ankles.

Will keep you informed. I blame the Far East where they are no doubt made ~ they don't have tall, svelte 70 year olds like me to base their sizes on. *M'*

History ~ Brenda sent this

When we are born, that's the beginning of our History
As we go through life we are making and changing History
When we are in our older days we sit and look back at our
own piece of History before we too are History

A Musical Evening with John Lewis ~ from Tricia

Ann and I were invited by the Robert Sayle Charities Committee for an evening at the Corn Exchange where, with representatives of other local charities we enjoyed a performance by the Grand Union Orchestra.

It was a lively evening, and a great opportunity for talented young local musicians to play with a professional orchestra. The music followed the story of the slave trade and carried us with the slaves on their hazardous and uncomfortable journey in overcrowded boats across rough seas. They were difficult times ~ often sad, but sometimes made joyous through their music. The production was very moving, with some unusual musical effects and many talented performers ~ a rare treat. Thank you John Lewis

Many thanks to ~

Robert Sayle (*just prior to becoming John Lewis*), who gave us a bookcase for the new Centre, plus a promise of help with other office furniture once we've moved. This is in addition to their donation to Scotsdales Charitable Foundation which they sent last year.

Waitrose who gave us **£2,000** for furniture and promised to stay involved with the Centre once we are up and running.

Thank you Carlton Arms
for the gift of £1000
for therapy beds for our new Centre

Quiz Night 2008 ~ from Peter

After last year's sell out Quiz Night, we decided to repeat the event this year. So on 18 January, another evening of questions, prizes and raffles (and a bar!) took place at Harston Village Hall. Over 100 people bought tickets, and their knowledge and wits were thoroughly tested by the many and varied questions thrown at them by quizmasters Keith and Dennis, ably assisted by Mary and Moira. Whilst drawing breath at the interval everybody enjoyed either fish and chips or chicken and chips from Jack's of Sawston, or a vegetarian lasagne supplied by our own Anne Fleming with Ros's coleslaw. The winning team was presented with a magnificent box case containing six bottles of wine, and the runners up were consoled with vouchers for fish and chips at Jack's. The other winner on the night was the Centre, as we raised over £820! Definitely one of the more fun ways to raise some cash!

A huge thank you to all those who helped to set up and tidy away.

LONDON MARATHON NEWS!

For the second year in a row, someone is running in the London Marathon to raise sponsorship money for the Centre. This year it is 25 year old **Scarlett Henwood**, who is a friend of Anne Fleming's daughter from their time at University in Sheffield. Scarlett decided that she would like to run for a charity of Anne's choice, and Anne chose the Centre! The London Marathon is on 13 April 2008. We wish Scarlett well and hope she has a good run and raises lots of money for us! If anyone would like sponsor forms to help get support for Scarlett in her brave endeavour, please contact Ann Dingley.

Peter

Here is Anne Fleming's recipe for Veggie Lasagne that was so popular at the Quiz Night! ~

Serves 4 ~ Ingredients

2 tbsp oil	350ml passata
1 onion sliced	basil
1 garlic clove chopped	200g ready cooked lasagne sheets
1 aubergine cubed	6 tbsp half fat crème fraiche
1 red pepper chopped	2 tbsp grated parmesan
8 tomatoes cut into quarters	

1. Heat oven to 100C/fan, 170C/gas5. Toss oil and vegetables together, season and roast in a large shallow tin for 45mins until soft and lightly charred. Spoon a layer of veg over the bottom of a dish.
2. Pour over some passata, sprinkle with fresh or dried basil and cover with a layer of lasagne sheets. Repeat layers to use up all the veg and passata finishing with a layer of lasagne. Use a spoon to spread over the crème fraiche covering the lasagne, sprinkle with the parmesan. Return to the oven for 30-40 mins until the lasagne is golden brown and heated through.

MORE MARATHON NEWS! PARIS!

Our very own Banni (one of our healers) is running in the Paris Half Marathon to raise sponsorship money for the Centre. The Paris Half Marathon will take place on 2 March 2008, and follows a 21.1 kilometre course in eastern Paris. We hope all goes well for Banni, and that her visit to Paris is enjoyable. And of course we hope that she also has a good run and raises lots of money for us! If anyone would like sponsor forms to help get support for Banni in her energetic endeavour, please contact Ann Dingley. Peter

Jack Overhill

I have known Jack and his wife Gill for about 40 years ~ Jack didn't have cancer but unhappily he died a short time ago. He had been Head of PE and a teacher of English at a Cambridge school for 20 years. He was keen on all sports particularly gymnastics and swimming, and his diving skills earned him the title of 'The Boy Wonder': a Pathe News film was made about him.



Simon spoke on behalf of Jack's four sons ~ Guy, Simon, Jeremy and Justin ~ and told us that Jack always had masses of time for his boys ~ he taught them games from chess to tiddly-winks and, said Simon, Jack never let them win! He went on to say that Jack nurtured, inspired and supported them and was never overbearing. And he had a great sense of humour, so that even when he was "telling them off" he could always see the funny side of what they had done.

We all knew that Jack enjoyed a good joke and I remember him often telling me that one of the funniest jokes he had heard was one written in the 'Heartbeat' magazine:

Mother goes to her doctor and says she is very upset because everyone keeps being rude about the appearance of her new-born baby. She said "when I was on the bus the driver said "that will be £1.20 for you, and your monkey can travel free".

"Dear, dear" said the doctor, no wonder you are upset. Let's have a look at you. I'll hold your monkey while you pop up on to the couch".

This would make Jack almost fall into his curry as he retold the joke for the umpteenth time.

Jack had strong political views. He was fond of playing bridge. Music was an important part of his life: he played in his school's brass band, the British Legion brass band and he enjoyed playing boogie woogie on the piano. In fact, when we sat in the crematorium just before the funeral service, I could have sworn it was Jack playing Scott Joplin on the piano, in the way he did for us in the past. Jack and Gill's sons paid tribute to their Mum for looking after her four little boys so well ~ and to their Dad they said "cheers, Dad and thank you for everything".

Jack Overhill was a good man.

Jack in his late teens diving into the river at Grantchester

Who would have thought that the 'Jack' we were all familiar with ~ the 'Jack' who used to sit quietly in the kitchen, patiently recycling old Christmas cards ~ would have been such a dare-devil in his youth!

And he was breaking no rules in those long-lost 'lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer', when health & safety regulations were several decades into the future.

Tricia



Jack's ashes have been scattered close to where the tree still stands.

Photo taken by CEN in 1944

The things which the child loves remain in the domain of the heart until old age. The most beautiful thing in life is that our souls remain hovering over the places where we once enjoyed ourselves.

Kahlil Gibran

Melanoma

Gillian Kenny Associates Limited, are conducting a study looking into Adjuvant Melanoma Treatment. Information they gather will be used to help develop better education and support materials for patients, nurses and physicians in the US, Europe and Canada. Specifically they are looking for Melanoma patients who have received treatment for one month or more, in the form of either:

*interferon alpha 2-b (intron - A, Roferon) (IFN) or
pegylated interferon (PEG-Intron or Pegasys, either through a
clinical trial or using prescription from Dr (PEG-IFN)*

The research would involve a 30 minute telephone interview within the next few weeks. As a thank you for their time, patients would receive £25 for taking part.

GK Associates Limited state that it is a member of the Market Research Society and they strictly adhere to their codes of conduct ensuring the anonymity of all participants. All information given will be held as totally confidential. No details will be passed to any third party for reasons outside this research project and nobody will be approached by any third party or receive any follow up calls.

*If you require further information about this study, please contact by email,
zoeb@gilliankenny.com or by phoning 01594 515100.*



Annual General Meeting ~

We're planning to hold our AGM at midday on Tuesday 18 March. The Agenda will be available at the Centre. Anyone who doesn't usually come in to the Centre but would like to attend the meeting please contact me towards the end of February for more details.

Much love from Ann

*P.S. She got the ring ~ a blue one ~ I have seen it!