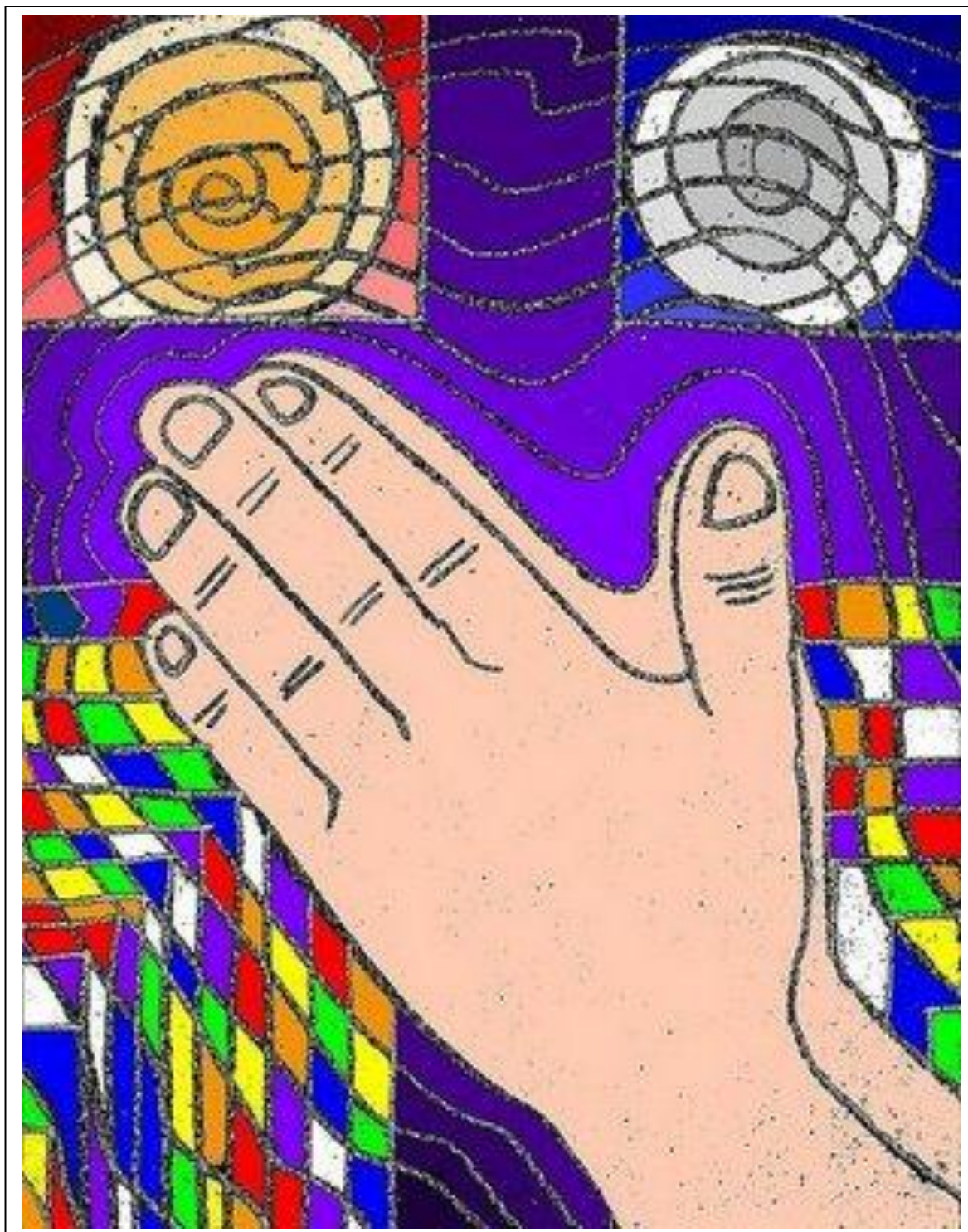


# **Journey**



**The continuing story of  
The Church at Carrs Lane  
February 2012**

## Contents

Ministers Letter.....	3
Sunday Worship during February .....	4
Notices .....	5
Carrs Lane Concerts / Workshops Schedule .....	6
Hope for the Future .....	7
Carrs Lane Players.....	8
Lent Groups 2012.....	8
House Groups .....	9
The Choir With No Name .....	9
Amnesty International Greetings Card Campaign 2011 .....	10
Tribute to Betty Hawkins.....	11
Café Advent December 18 <sup>th</sup> 2011.....	12
A Christmas Postscript.....	13
Living Flame .....	14
And another thing.....	14
Notes from the Organ Bench .....	15
Sponsored Swim for Christian Aid .....	16
Silvie's Letter .....	17
The marginalization of Christianity? .....	17
On this day .....	19
Egg-citing news .....	22
Carrs Lane Regular Activities .....	24

## Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

**A**s I write this, my diary for 2012 lies open on the desk beside me. Call me old-fashioned, but I like to stick with a page-a-day, hardbound book: it means that I can have fingers in at least three places at once if I wish and it 'absorbs' scribbles on Post-It notes in a way that no virtual device will ever be able to do!

I buy my diary at the earliest possible opportunity... usually at the beginning of September during the previous year (just after the so-called academic diaries have been taken off the shelves!). It starts to fill up remarkably quickly... and not always in ways which fill me with joy; many groups with which I am involved plan a year's worth of meetings at a time, which means that December entries start almost immediately. It is good to be organised, but depressing to see a year start to disappear so early on. I have to plan a year's worth of Sunday appointments almost before I start to think about buying a diary; requests for 2013 have been coming my way for a while, and I have to balance regular responsibilities within two Sunday congregations. Having said that... well, if I am honest, proposed holiday weeks are also blocked off immediately after purchase of the diary!

Why comment on what might appear to be mere administrative technicalities, tasks undertaken routinely by many of us? It has to do with flexibility... and the need to retain opportunities for flexibility of response in the Christian life, and certainly within Christian ministry. I don't want to be organised out of the possibility of flexibility, and yet even at this comparatively early stage of the year, there is precious little 'wiggle-room' in some weeks. The constraints of city centre ministry? Possibly, but when I turn to the Gospels, I encounter a Jesus who was apparently able to visit homes with virtually no notice, accept or initiate dinner invitations on the basis of pastoral need... and jump into a boat in an apparently unpremeditated manner when the need for 'space' was paramount.

I do worry sometimes that I am in danger of being 'organised' out of effective ministry; the demands of structures and institutions leave opportunities for Spirit-impelled spontaneity in very short supply; the curious security of meetings leaves all-too-few occasions when I am able to step outside of comfort zones. Yes, the overall pattern of time spent can be justified – and justified readily – but I am still left wondering about 'what-ifs'; what if I enjoyed a month free from meetings – in what ways would ministry be enhanced, the boundaries of the Kingdom extended, the people of God built up?

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Marie', with a long horizontal line extending to the right underneath it.

## Sunday Worship during February

### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February

10.30am Morning Worship, including the Lord's Supper led by Neil Johnson  
*This will be followed by First Sunday Lunch at church – all welcome*

2.45pm for 3.00pm Kidz Aloud – A Children's Church

*Note change of date for February* Theme: Joshua and Jericho

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February

10.30am Morning Worship, led by Neil Riches Key passage: Mark 1.40 – 45  
*This will be followed by a Church Meeting focused on the URC's Radical Welcome Campaign – Zero Intolerance. All welcome*

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February

10.30am Morning Worship, led by Neil Riches Key passage: Mark 9.2 – 9

5.00pm Service of Healing & Communion, led by Simon Rose & Neil Riches

7.30pm Concert by the Central England Ensemble *Details page 6*

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February First Sunday in Lent

10.30am Morning Worship, led by Neil Riches Key passage: Mark 1.9 – 15

6.00pm Radical Worship – Open Table Food, fellowship and continued reflection on the challenges presented by 'Global capitalism – Christian responses'



## Notices

### **Opening celebrations for the QE Hospital Faith and Community Centre.**

At these events you will be able to look around the Centre and sign the board. There will be a display of artwork produced by primary school children. As part of the UHB Arts Programme, primary schools were invited to take part in art competitions run by the Trust and the Chaplaincy Department, and funded by Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Charity.

Wed 1 Feb 11.30am-1.30pm

Dedication Event with Faith Leaders

Thurs 2 Feb 12.00-2.00pm Sweets of the World - 3.00-4.00pm Afternoon Tea

Fri 3 Feb 10.00-11.00am Morning Coffee with Kevin Bolger.

Mon 6 Feb 2.00-3.00pm Buddhist Meditation

Tues 7 Feb Midnight Slice of Pizza Party

Wed 8 Feb 12.00-1.45pm Prize-giving for the arts competition, with the Deputy Lord Mayor

The Centre will remain open daily for prayers and worship as usual. For more information contact Man Kaur ext 14574 or email [man.kaur@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:man.kaur@uhb.nhs.uk).

### **Barnes Close Programme**

Tues 21 – Wed 22 Feb Kids for Peace Sleepover (children aged 7-11). Fun, games and activities £30 (2nd child in family £20)

Thurs 23 Feb Reflection Day 10am – 4pm. £15

Tues 6 – Thurs 8 March Healing and wholeness. An opportunity to explore the nature of the healing ministry. £140 (unwaged £120).

**Equinox : A Cultural Olympiad Choral Celebration** Saturday 17th March 2012  
Symphony Hall Birmingham. Bringing together 350 choral singers and percussion groups reflecting the Chinese, Indian, Arabic, African Caribbean, Eastern and Western European communities of Birmingham and the West Midlands. The concert will open with a percussion fanfare composed by John Barber, before each of the cultural groups perform pieces reflecting the universal themes of equality, creation, family and citizenship. This 2012 Cultural Olympiad event will climax with all performers combining in the world premiere of a unique composition by Midlands composer Christopher Long, conducted by Adrian Lucas. The text in Hindi, Mandarin, Polish, Arabic, Swahili and Latin has been chosen by the performing groups. Tickets can be booked through Symphony Hall box office, 0121 780 3333. For more details see [www.citychoir.org.uk/Equinox](http://www.citychoir.org.uk/Equinox).

### **Sifa Fireside Fundraising Gala Dinner**

Friday 23 March 7pm until late. £40 per person, dress code formal. Tally-Ho Conference and Banqueting Centre, Pershore Road. Three course dinner, guest speakers Channel 4's Dr Dawn and 'Blind Dave' Heeley. Live music by 'Too Hot to Handle' jazz/swing band, DJ and disco, raffle and silent auction. More info on 0121 766 1700 [marymantom@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:marymantom@sifafireside.co.uk)

## Carrs Lane Concerts / Workshops Schedule

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 14:00-15:00**

African Drumming workshop.

Sarah Westwood (of *Drumvoice*) will lead a workshop on African drumming.

No experience necessary – just come and have some fun!

Cost: £5 per person. Limited to 20 people – please sign up on the church noticeboard, or contact the Church (details below).



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 19:30**

Concert by the Central England Ensemble. Programme:

- ▲ Tchaikovsky: Introduction to 'Mazeppa'
- ▲ Bridgewater: Piano Concerto No. 2
- ▲ Stravinsky: Firebird Suite

Tickets: £10 / £8 – available in advance by contacting [ceemusic@hotmail.com](mailto:ceemusic@hotmail.com); by calling 07734 256 268; or on the door.

**Saturday 3 March 8.00pm Choir With No Name Concert** Tickets £8 available through the website: [www.choirwithnoname.org](http://www.choirwithnoname.org), or call Bethan 07794 100938 or on the door.

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 14:00-15:00**

Concert by Lesley Knowles (Oboe / Cor Anglais) and Tim (piano). Programme includes works by Handel, Saint-Saëns, Mozart, Schumann, Britten, Poulenc.

Admission: free. Retiring collection

**Good Friday, 19:30**

Good Friday service, centred around a performance of Faure's *Requiem* and *Cantique de Jean Racine* sung by the combined choirs of The Church at Carrs Lane and Broadway URC, Walsall.

Admission: free.

**Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 14:00-15:30**

Workshop on Dance, Movement, and Psychotherapy, run by Stephanie Thomas.

Admission: free. Retiring collection.

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012, 14:00-15:00**

Concert by Richard Silk and Sue Hill: Piano Duet

Admission: free. Retiring collection



# Hope for the Future

This is the theme for the Discussion Group which meets at the Church at Carrs Lane on the first Thursday of every month at 10.15am. With a title like that how can you resist joining us?

For the most part we are focusing on a series of different theologians in a booklet entitled 'Together in Hope' and published for the St Marks Centre for Radical Christianity in Sheffield. This centre was headed by Adrian Alker who is due to lead a workshop at Carrs Lane in October 2012. You will probably be aware that this workshop – "What the Church could be .... For goodness' sake" – comes in place of a series of lectures this year. The discussion group in November will be a follow up of Adrian Alker's workshop.

In addition to the chapters in the booklet, three of our discussions on Thursday mornings are in the form of Bible studies led by Neil Johnson and Neil Riches. I repeat, 'How can you resist joining us?'

The programme in full is set out below:

050112	The Hope seen in Jesus	Marcus Borg
020212	Hoping for God's Kingdom on Earth	John Dominic Crossan
010312	Bible study	led by Neil Johnson
050412	Hope for the Church in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Jill Sandham & High Dawes
030512	Hope for the Poorest of the World	Paula Clifford
070612	Bible study	led by Neil Riches
050712	Singing in the Rain: the Hope of Inclusion	Clare Herbert
020812	Finding Hope in our Contemporary World	Jonathan Clatworthy
060912	Bible study	led by Neil Riches
041012	Renewing Hope – Transforming Prayer	Jim Cotter
011112	What the Church could be ....	Follow up of Adrian Alker's workshop
061212	Review of 2012 and future planning	

Please come and take part.

Gill Barfield



## Carrs Lane Players

**C**arrs Lane Players will be performing the thriller/comedy 'THE 39 STEPS' on 23, 24 and 25 February 2012. This was a classic novel which many of you might have read. Alfred Hitchcock was so impressed with it he made a black and white film in 1935 which is still regarded as one of his best.



Now a modern, fast moving play, it was adapted by Patrick Barlow from the movie by Alfred Hitchcock and an original concept by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon. It is by arrangement with Edward Snape for Fiery Angel Limited.

This performance uses 11 actors, including 3 new faces this year, to play more than 30 different parts which will provide a good challenge to the cast.

Many of you said that last year's play, 'Tons of Money', was excellent. We hope that this one proves to be even better.

The performances start at 7.30pm on Thursday and Friday and 5.30pm on Saturday. Tickets for the play cost £7. A reminder to reserve your tickets in advance for supper (cost £5) or afternoon teas (cost £3) to enable us to plan the catering. The food will be served 75 minutes before the play commences.

If you are able to bring some friends and neighbours along, Carrs Lane players would be delighted to be supported by larger audiences.

Alan Emson



# LENT

## Lent Groups 2012

**A**s with Lent during the last few years, we will be meeting with friends from Journey MCC for our Lent groups this year. Keep your eyes open for full details in the weekly notices, but we will be meeting for six Monday evenings starting 27<sup>th</sup> February. Refreshments from 7pm, study for an hour or so starting at 7.30pm; we will be looking at a series of encounters between Jesus and other individuals during the course of his ministry. Evenings will be 'stand alone', but we hope that folk will be able to commit to a good number of the studies in the series. Details of venues, leaders and topics available shortly.

## House Groups

**H**istorically and geographically there have been several Carrs Lane Church House Groups: Sutton Coldfield, Selly Oak, Hall Green, Harborne, Moseley, Edgbaston, Erdington..... In recent years, only two have continued, and as the Hall Green group has not met for some time, and due to various factors is not likely to meet again, today there is only one – The Harborne House Group. This House Group is growing in number, and has now reached the point where it is getting a little too large to be accommodated comfortably in some people's homes.

What should we do about this? We could continue to let new people join and get squeezed together even more, or we could start a second House Group. Andrew and Jill are willing to lead this, but there is the question about its location: there are two suggestions – it could either be at Andrew and Jill's home in Hall Green, or it could be at Church as this may help with transport and travel. Day, time and location of the House Group are open – depending on who wants to join.

What do House Groups do? Meet once a month for a couple of hours (this can be daytime or evening) and be led in a hymn or worship song, a prayer, a short Bible reading, a time of personal sharing (not compulsory), listen to an interesting visiting Speaker or have an in-house Bible study, a cup of tea and refreshments and a chat.

So, is there anyone interested in supporting a second House Group? It will be open to all - any new members of the congregation, or any long-standing members who are not presently involved with a House Group and would like to be. If you have any questions, or are interested in joining a new House Group, please talk to Phil and Ann Parkin, or Andrew and Jill Veitch.

## The Choir With No Name

**T**he Choir with no name Birmingham is for people who are, or have experienced, homelessness or social exclusion, and we provide a lovely hot meal after the practice. I'm looking for volunteers who might be able to help in the kitchen with cooking, help with serving the food and teas and coffees, and doing some washing up afterwards. If people want to do one, or a mixture, of these activities we would be grateful; the commitment doesn't have to be every week.

Volunteers and members all join in very much together and volunteers are welcome to come along and join in the singing too if they want. If you know of anyone who might be interested please pass this on, we really need help in the cooking department asap as we've had a brilliant take up and our choir numbers have ranged from 10 to 28 people, so lots of hungry singers to feed!

The main requirements are enthusiasm, empathy with our members and a willingness to help. Contact me on 07794 100938 or [bethan@choirwithnoname.org](mailto:bethan@choirwithnoname.org). My working days are Wednesday and Friday

Bethan Rand, Choir Manager

# Amnesty International Greetings Card Campaign 2011

Once again, I would like to thank everybody who contributed, in some way, to sending cards to Prisoners of Conscience and their families, during December last year. It is hard to believe that people at Carrs Lane have been writing these cards for 27 years. Everybody on the list got at least one card from somebody at Carrs Lane. As always, I am extremely grateful to Margaret Cross who, for many years now, has made the cards we send. I also want to thank those people who took home lists and wrote many cards at home.

In St Philips Cathedral, at the annual concert for Amnesty and Freedom from Torture, in December, Kate Allan, Director of Amnesty, UK gave a very moving and powerful address in which she talked about the importance of this campaign at this time of the year. She had in the past year met people who had received these cards from last year's campaign and said how it sustained them and their families when things were extremely difficult.

One of these people was Mohamed El Sharkawi from Egypt who was released on 17 March 2011 after almost 16 years in administrative detention. He had not been allowed to see the cards but when he was released they were all waiting for him. Before the end of December, several people from Carrs Lane received a reply from the family of Manoharan Ragihar who was shot dead by the Sri Lankan security forces in 2006. In it they said:

*'Thank you for standing by me and my family on the way for justice for Ragihar's case. Your concern and thoughts won't be forgotten and all your humble requests are in your way for your great support for the future. Thank you.'*

So we know that some of this year's cards have already got through and made a difference.

*Amnesty has also heard that Jabbar Salavan from Azerbaijan has been released and allowed home although his conviction still stands. So the campaign to have it quashed goes on.*

Please let me know if you do receive a reply from anybody. I will then forward the information to Amnesty in London.

For further information you can look up the website [www.amnesty.org.uk/gcc](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/gcc)

Thank you to everybody.

Christine Rowntree



## Tribute to Betty Hawkins

**B**etty was one of five children from a West Birmingham family... a family, it has to be said which had politics running through its veins; her grandfather was active in the Labour movement in its earliest days and Betty herself became a thoughtful and supportive member of the Labour Party for a while. Ever a woman of forthright and direct views, these spilled over into vigorous discussion of matters political and the like; as a strong espouser of justice, it somehow seemed fitting that after a lifetime of service in the workforce at Cadburys, she ended her time there by taking on considerable responsibility in the area of industrial relations in the factory.

Hers was a long life... and in a sense, she was a woman of her age; she didn't have all the opportunities which later generations would enjoy; her long and successful working life at Cadburys effectively started at 'at the bottom'; she cared for both her parents in their latter years. If you look at earlier photographs of Betty, you encounter a remarkably direct gaze – a very smart woman, for she dressed well – and you get more than an inkling of the fact that this was a woman who knew her own mind. She was very 'aware' about all manner of things and read widely; her directness meant that you knew where you stood; her forthright manner meant that she didn't stand for nonsense – and, unsurprisingly, she was a woman of strong likes and dislikes.

Until comparatively recently, she was very sociable... fitting comfortably into shared holidays, cheery in company, enjoying walking, pub lunches, driving and the like; a lengthy trip to see family in Tasmania after she retired was one of the highlights of her life. She shared in the life of Carrs Lane Church, preferring the dynamics of evening services and playing her part in the Harborne House Group. She didn't find it easy to accept the limitations of advancing years, but was comfortable and well cared-for at Lucton House; she did appreciate the patience of staff there – though her directness of manner continued to the end – and was happy to retain some say in a life which had been lived with vigour, effect, principle and not a little passion. We pay tribute to her consistency, to an understanding of society which continues to challenge those who 'grab' rather than give... to her sense that life is to be lived with determination, that progress depends on commitment, merit and a genuine concern for the wellbeing of others.

Neil

## Café Advent December 18<sup>th</sup> 2011

**O**ur 'order of service' was a menu, giving details of our three course meal. We –the diners – sat round tables informally, and were given time to chew over 'each course' of the meal

For starters we listened to readings from Isaiah and Luke – giving a foretaste of what was and is to come. We ate dried and fresh fruits, enjoying the various tastes on offer. The fruit never seemed to run out, however many times we helped ourselves from the dishes!

For main course we were given options of activities to 'chew and digest'. We were given time for a Bible study, a crossword, to reflect on an image, to make creative response, or colour a seasonal picture. Neil J acted as waiter to serve us with our chosen 'food'.

Once we were served, he also 'threw in' some side orders. Words to reflect on – Youth, Fear, Shame, Faith, and Impossible. At this stage of the meal we were served with hot croissants, pain au chocolat, or brioche – yummy!

The side orders were meant to stimulate thought – for ourselves and the Christmas story. Some of my thoughts....

Youth – seems to me that youth is not a barrier to being used by God. God can use everyone – young or old or in between. Mary was a youngster and look how what she did changed the world. We are never too young or too old, and we can learn from each other.

Fear – can stand in the way, and stop us from doing new and exciting things. Fear can halt progress. But fear of whom? Fear of what? Other people – what will they think of me? Of God? What will He ask of me? Will I be able to cope or come up to expectations? Of the unknown – temptation to stay with the 'norm' – the tried and tested, the familiar. Of not being able to cope alone – 'I can't do this or that'

Shame

Poor Mary and Joseph – after the initial excitement Mary would have realised that being a young unmarried mother would bring shame on her and her family, and that suspicion would fall on Joseph for breaking the accepted rules of behaviour. Her actions could even lead to death by stoning. She would become an outcast. And who would believe a story about angels? Angels? Gerraway! But the amazing Mary and Joseph listened to God and dared to trust Him for their future, and obey Him whatever the cost might be.

Faith

It needs strength to believe in the good times, and even more in the difficult times. Faith is believing the un-believable, and acting as if it is and will be true. Faith is being unsure of the future, but daring to act on God's prompting and in obedience to what we discern to be His will for us.

Impossible

A bit like 'Can't' – no such word in God's vocabulary! Humanly speaking many things are impossible, and indeed left to our own devices they probably would be. But with God leading and directing our ways, nothing is impossible. God will ask of us, but will be along side us at all times. He will not leave us on our own. How exciting is that??!

For dessert we enjoyed 'seconds' of the main course, and ate more fruit and enjoyed hot drinks.

The morning in Café Advent was different and thought provoking, and gave us time to think and react to the Message of the season.

Thanks Neils – for the message and the food for thought!

Ann Parkin

## A Christmas Postscript...

**S**ifting through all my recollections of Advent and Christmas 2011, the following observations bubble to the surface...

- I went into Selfridges a clear week before Christmas to buy a 'special' card, only to be told that all Christmas cards had been removed from the shelves because it was now too close to Christmas itself! Bizarre and annoying... As somebody who would like to see the bulk of Christmas worship take place on and after Christmas Day, this was a particularly puzzling piece of behaviour; I am sure that it did not make sense from a commercial point of view – and it played to my worst fears that the world is actually getting further and further away from any understanding of how Christmas could and should properly be observed / celebrated.
- One comment made by a member of the congregation after the evening Carol Service at Carrs Lane hit home... and provided me with an idea with which to play throughout Christmas! The comment was made that there is a world of difference between the static light, the artificial light of the lights on the Christmas tree and the 'living' light produced by the flames of the candles in church. Start to compile a list of the differences between the two different kinds of light, and the list grows very rapidly...
- A friend of mine in her late 40s 'phoned me on the afternoon of the fourth Sunday in Advent to tell me that she had just found out that she was pregnant... and that very morning she had read the story of the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth in church as one of the set readings for the day. At present, she has four children, the youngest of whom is in his late teens; she is also a grandmother to 3 year-old Ruby... so you can imagine some of the thoughts that were going through her mind as she read this particular piece of Scripture. She said to me that the story of Elizabeth's pregnancy spoke to her as never before.

Even the most familiar times of year never lose their ability to delight and surprise us.

Neil R

## Living Flame

**D**uring the carol service, the main lights were switched off, and for a few moments we sat in candlelight. The Christmas tree lights were left on.

Just a few moments to ponder, and to soak up the quiet and peace, and the feeling that is Advent – expecting God to come, expecting God to speak.

I looked at the fairy lights on the tree – bright enough, but so static – unchanging, lifeless.

I looked at the candles – the flames that flickered, and flames that were never still. Flames that were constantly changing in shape, and moving gently in the air currents. Flames that spoke of life – ever changing but yet constant. And such small flames giving such bright light. Breaking through the darkness. I sat expecting something, wishing for the time to be longer.

The Holy Spirit is likened to a flame – tongues of flame stopped over the apostles in the day of Pentecost, and they all received new life. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As I watched the flickering candles – I was reminded of God's promise – His Holy Spirit for each of us. God in each one of us – his living Spirit to enable and empower us. Ever changing, never static or lifeless. Advent is the time of expectancy – we must believe that – but do we?



Praise the God of the flame.  
Praise the God of Light  
Praise the God of Life  
Praise the God who is constant yet ever changing

What did the candlelight say to you?

Ann Parkin.

## And another thing.....

**H**ave you ever noticed that you can never completely empty the glass of communion wine, no matter how many times you place it to your lips and slurp! There's always a bit left.

A constant reminder to me that God's love and goodness will never run out.

Ann

## Notes from the Organ Bench

There are a number of exciting music events scheduled for 2012, building on the success of some trial events in 2011. The programme for February to June is given in the Notices section of Journey. We hope that there is enough variety to cater for all interests. Most events will take place after First Sunday Lunch, with a couple of exceptions. The programme is still experimental, and we'll seek your feedback via questionnaires to help future programming evolve into something fresh, innovative and educational, opening our musical resources to the wider city. Please spread the word about these events and bring some friends along!

The church choir has been privileged to welcome some new choristers in recent months. We are always delighted to hear from potential new singers, so if you are interested, you are invited to make yourself known! Normal choir rehearsals are on Fridays, 19:00-20:00, and Sunday mornings, 09:45-10:10. The choir sings at the morning service once a month; the suggested rehearsal commitment is a minimum of two Friday evenings and two Sunday mornings per month – ideally more! An informal, small-group tutoring scheme is being planned for February / March to boost confidence in music reading and choral singing: if you would like to know more about this, with a view to singing with the choir, you are invited to speak to Tim.

Following the success last Easter of the choir's collaboration with Broadway URC, Walsall, we are again joining them this year – for performances of Faure's *Requiem* and *Cantique de Jean Racine*. These will take place in service settings; at Broadway on Palm Sunday and at Carrs Lane on Good Friday. If you would like to join in these performances, you would be most welcome, provided you have some singing experience and can attend most Friday rehearsals in February / March (see above).

We are looking into starting a Junior Choir, for children aged 7+. Practices would most likely take place on Sundays – but this is open to negotiation. Please speak to Tim, or contact the church office if you (and, more importantly, your child!) are interested. Realistically, we would be looking to trial something after the Easter school holidays.

We have cause to admire the work of The Choir With No Name, which is doing great work with people who, sadly, haven't had the opportunities to make music that others may have had. They continue to rehearse every Thursday evening at Carrs Lane. Watch out for their concert on 3<sup>rd</sup> March!



We would like to hear about peoples' likes and dislikes about all things musical during morning services at Carrs Lane, and have provided questionnaires. You'll see them available as you go into the Church Room at services throughout much of 2012 – please do fill one in every so often, so that we can more closely tailor the music to your tastes.

Tim Batty

## Sponsored Swim for Christian Aid

When Pat Davies first suggested that we get a Carrs Lane team together to swim for Christian Aid, it seemed like a good idea – you know how it is when Pat asks you to help – you end up saying yes in spite of all your good intentions to say no!

So January 8<sup>th</sup> saw four of us (out of the original seven that planned to take part) going to the Munro Centre at the University late on a Sunday afternoon.

After lining up for a team photograph (do I really want this picture to appear in any publication?), we were given our instructions – things like ‘you can use these two lanes’ and ‘only one person swimming at a time’ and ‘you have 50 minutes’. Phil and I shared a lane, and Neil R and Tim the other. And we kept swimming and swimming and swimming..... Phil and I went a sedate pace (in keeping with our great age you understand!) swimming two lengths each at a time, whilst Tim swam so fast you could hardly see him! Neil also swam at a good pace – faster than Phil and me, but not quite as speedy as Tim. They swam four lengths each at a time.

After 50 minutes Phil and I had swum a total of 40 lengths (20 each) and Tim and Neil had swum 66 lengths. Phil & I have never swum that far in one session, and were grateful that after each couple of lengths there was time to get the breath back before starting the next.

As the time for the whistle approached we gave our all to get in the last few lengths, but we were very relieved when the final whistle blew!! The young chaps leapt out of the water, whilst we climbed the steps at a more sedate pace, in keeping with our lack of breathing power at that point, and also because I didn't wish to look like a beached whale trying to get out without using the steps!

We were presented with our ‘medals’ and our supporters gave us a clap and a cheer as we received them.



Our thanks to all who have given us money to swim – no doubt Pat will have the final total raised. I have never done a sponsored swim in my life, but this was a healthy way to raise money for a good cause. The team done good - even though we say so ourselves!!

Ann Parkin

## Silvie's Letter

**S**ilvie Furneaux, Pat Davies' 10 year old great-niece, lives in Edinburgh and last November her class was asked to write letters for Remembrance Day. They could write to a soldier, and Silvie chose to write to her great grandad, Reg Baker, (Pat's father), who was killed in Italy aged 27 on Feb 10th 1944, having been away from home for two years. During this time Pat's sister Jill (Silvie's granny) was born, who he never met. Reg wrote many letters and a diary and Silvie had read some of these, and seen a play which was partly based on them, so she was able to write to Reg feeling like she knew him a little. Knowing that a part of Reg lives on through her makes the letter all the more poignant.

Dear Reg,

It must have been hard for you fighting in the most terrible World War II. I'm very grateful to you for saving our country and giving up the future that you deserved. All my family were very proud of you and for being so frightened because you didn't know when anyone was going to fire their gun; you had excellent bravery.

We've all kept your letters and diary and we'll treasure them forever. My granny, who is one of your daughters that you never got to see because she was born when you were fighting, is fine and she sometimes still talks about you.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month we have two minutes' silence to remember all the soldiers that fought in the war. If it wasn't for you the Germans would have taken over and we would all be in a miserable place. We also wear poppies to remember you and how well you did.

Rest in Peace.

Love Silvie, your great granddaughter. X

## The marginalization of Christianity?

**A**mongst my reading recently has been the 'Executive Summary' of a Report on the marginalization of Christianity in British Public Life 2007 – 2011, a report which constituted evidence presented to the 'Clearing the Ground' Parliamentary Inquiry into Religious Discrimination. Sorry if all that sounds a bit of a mouthful!

To be honest, I am not quite sure what I think about the key findings of the report; I share them with you, and would welcome your comments:

- *a significant number of Christians perceive a strong bias exists against Christians, in favour of other groups i.e. other religions and those of a different*

*sexual orientation*. I am not necessarily convinced by this: I agree that Christians may be regarded as less significant, less relevant, having less to say (and, in part, that is our own fault), but speaking for myself, I am not sure that I have been on the receiving end of strong, negative bias

- *The general public also agree that a strong bias exist against Christians in British public life and that this is set to increase in the future...*but when you unpick the wording, it has to do with increased marginalization, not necessarily negative bias; respect has to be earned – influence has to be justified
- *High profile church, civic and political leaders have spoken publicly against the increasing marginalization of Christianity in British public life.* You may like to jog your memories in order to determine who these have been!
- *Both Christians and non-Christians believe religious freedom constitutes an important part of British identity...*agreed, but with freedom necessarily goes tolerance, acceptance and understanding; this is not always present in Christian faith communities
- *The media plays an important role in shaping public attitudes towards Christianity.* Inevitably, I suppose, this must be the case; perhaps naively, I would like to add that the churches and faith leaders must also have an important role in shaping public attitudes towards Christianity
- *There is an inconsistency in the way that Courts' apply and interpret equality laws in relation to Christians. When it comes to competing rights between different groups, the rights of Christians seem to be consistently 'sacrificed on the altar of political correctness'.* I am aware of a number of high profile 'cases' which are often quoted in support of this observation and, yes, I believe that there has sometimes been a marked lack of common sense when it comes to wearing Christian symbols in the workplace and the like; I am not sure that the development of anything akin to 'victim mentality' necessarily serves the cause of faith, however...
- *Christians believe the greatest challenge to Christianity in the UK is secularism.* Goodness me, where to start on this one! There is a multiplicity of understandings as to what should be understood by secularism; I have no problems with faith being challenged... repeatedly, consistently, effectively; there are times when the distinctive voices of faith are better heard in a 'secular' context, rather than one where lip service is paid to folk religion, or 'remembered' faith or whatever; if secularism is to be regarded as a 'challenge', then this must say something about the ways in which Christian faith communities have handled themselves, presented themselves during previous decades

As I say, many issues remain unclear to me. Christians need consistently and unapologetically to engage with 'public life'; I don't think that we necessarily gain anything if we bemoan what appears to be declining influence – some of what I have read does come across as petulance or moaning.

Neil

## On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Journal and [L.M.S] Missionary Chronicle February 1912

*The integration of the L.M.S. Missionary Chronicle into the publication of the Carrs Lane Journal gave our members the opportunity to read a great deal of material about the rest of the world. The following are examples very typical of the period.*

The African Peoples (by F. Deaville Walker of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society)

In popular thought the Africans are all Negroes. But in reality the Dark Continent is a museum of races. In the remote past, race after race entered Africa from Arabia and, driving the older invaders before them, swept across the country, betook themselves to a settled or a more or less nomadic life, broke up into tribes, and gradually became diverse the one from the other in custom, in manner of life, in language.

Probably the first people to enter Africa were the Bushmen, a diminutive copper-coloured race of hunters. Landing in the vicinity of Somaliland, they wandered across the Continent.

The Negro seems to have been the next important arrival. This powerful black race pushed its way across Africa until it occupied all the country from Cape Verde to the Nile Valley. The Bushmen turned their faces southward to avoid the inrush of the Negroes.

In course of time Hamitic and Semitic tribes crossed the isthmus of Suez or the Gulf of Aden into Africa, and gradually occupied the northern and north-eastern regions.

By inter-marriage of Negro and Bushman (and perhaps Hamite) the Hottentot race originated in the region north of the Equatorial lakes. At an unknown date these people, driving their horned cattle before them, emigrated southwards, pushing their way through the vast hunting-grounds of the fierce little Bushmen, until they reached the south-western coast.

After a lapse of centuries the Bushmen were again disturbed – this time by the powerful Bantu tribes. This hybrid people first appear north of the Lakes, and may have originated in the ingrafting of Hamitic and Semitic tribes upon a Negro stock. A proud imperial race they were, and, disturbed in their original home, they swept over the southern half of Africa. The conquest took centuries to accomplish, but gradually the Bantu drove Bushman and Hottentot alike into the south-west corner of the continent, and themselves occupied the mighty African peninsula. The L.M.S work is among the Bantu people.

## Problems in Colour (by L.S.)

We have heard much of late about “The Future of Africa”, and not a little about its past. A valuable contribution to the understanding of its present has been made by Mr. Maurice S. Evans’s “Black and White in South-East Africa.” This book is an illuminating study in racial sociology. It arrests attention, and stimulates thought. Mr. Evans’s qualifications for dealing with the colour question are high. He was a useful member of the Natal Native Affairs Commission in 1907. Though he writes as a colonist, and not as a missionary, he brings to his task a sympathetic mind, and he strives to treat the vexed and intricate questions of race and colour with impartial justice. The book opens with a picturesque presentation of native life and of the world-drama which is being unfolded before our eyes in the problem of the relations between the black and white races in South Africa. Mr. Evans deals with the country and its people, and explains how the evolution of tribalism and contact with the white races have caused the old socialistic ideas to give place to modern individualism. The new problems introduced by the white man’s altruism and the influence of missions on education are sympathetically discussed. The clashing between the racial ideals is vividly portrayed in two chapters entitled “Land – the need of the black man” and “Labour – the demand of the white man.” An attempt is made to get at the inside of the black man’s mind, and we are enlightened as to what he thinks and feels. One of the most valuable chapters is that which discusses the result of the contact between the races on the white man, and we are made to realise that the problems to be solved affect the white man quite as vitally as they affect the black man. The white man’s burden is truly a heavy one.

While most people will agree with Mr. Evans’s views as to the essential differences in the mental and spiritual as well as the physical characteristics of the Bantu and the European, he is not likely to command general assent to his solution to the colour problem. He advocates the separation of the races, and the allotment to the native of large areas of land in addition to the existing reserves. This proposal comes too late in the day, and public opinion will reject it as impracticable. But Mr. Evans makes other suggestions which seem eminently wise and possible, and he has placed all students of racial and colour problems under a deep obligation.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – February 1962

*The Seventy Club and the relationships it brought about are an important aspect of the story of Carrs Lane Church in the twentieth century. Its role in providing for social needs is perhaps significant for us in these times when circumstances force the Welfare State to rely more and more on voluntary assistance.*

The Seventy Club (by John T. Baker)

Even in the precincts of Carrs Lane there are people who know very little about the Seventy Club, and therefore the following is an attempt to describe what the Club stands for and what it tries to do.

A brief history is necessary, I feel. The Club was founded 28 years ago by Godfrey Pain, and took its name from a passage in St Luke 10, from which the Charter is freely adapted. Its basic ideal has always been to serve God through serving man. In the early days its social service work was very different from that of today. The Welfare State has brought into being Services that now do the work done by voluntary organisations in the past.

Many older members say that the Club is not what it used to be. This is true, but only because it is trying to tackle different jobs. It is said that the success of a youth club is directly proportional to the needs that it is satisfying, i.e. of its members. However, its success also depends on how far it is satisfying the need of the community; this is especially so in the case of the Seventy Club.

Today the type of job that the Club does best of all is the group job. Members today are less individual in their approach to social service. For example, the most regular job is that of visiting the Blind School every Monday, when twelve people go and read, or play games with the children.

Decorating is a popular job. Houses of old people are tackled enthusiastically by a nucleus of ardent decorators, with extremely satisfactory results. Another job, of a less regular nature, is entertaining groups of needy people in the Club Room, or, during the summer at some house in the country. A smaller group carries out work for the Family Service Unit. Taking classes in handicrafts for small children, baby minding, mending clothes, etc. are the practical ways in which Club members help.

Lastly, there is the Personal Service Section. This is the type of work mainly done by individuals on their own, and includes visiting old or sick people, small gardening jobs, providing transport and so on.

The Club is open to all young people between the ages of 18 – 30, and in addition to providing opportunities for social service it offers an extremely varied social programme, including evening meetings, conferences, rambles and holidays.

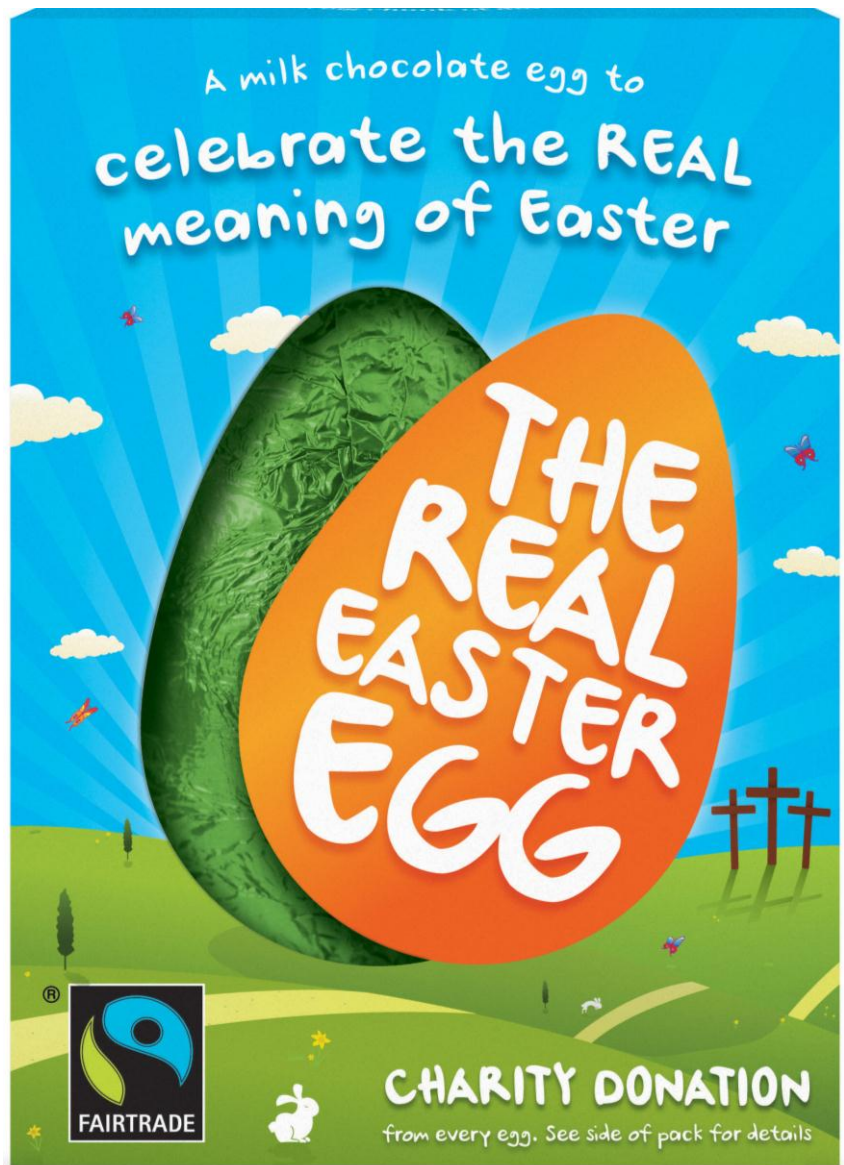
Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

## Egg-citing news

Launched last year, the Real Easter Egg – the *only* Easter Egg to mention the Easter story – proved hugely popular with churches, schools and the general public.

Despite its obvious appeal, once again supermarkets have still not placed large enough orders to meet the likely demand. So, to make the Real Easter Egg campaign a success in 2012, we need individuals, churches and schools to place direct orders in January and February.

There's a free Easter story booklet which comes in each box and when you open the lid, you will see 'Happy Easter' and, for the first time ever on an Easter Egg, there is a quote from the bible - the resurrection text from Mark.



As an added bonus, a donation from the sale of each egg goes to Traidcraft to support its vital overseas development work with small-scale farmers and artisans. Orders have already started coming in and thousands of eggs have been sold to previous customers.

With your help we can change the Easter egg market forever by making it more spiritual, more generous and more faithful.

The eggs cost £3.99 each and will be in stock from 1st February at Carrs Lane Fairtrade Shop when the new catalogue will also be available.

Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor, Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX or by email to [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk).

## Room Hire at Carrs Lane

Carrs Lane Church Centre is in Birmingham city centre and within a few minutes walk of New Street and Moor Street train Stations and the National Express Coach Station. Public car parking and bus stops are also nearby.

The Conference Rooms on offer at Carrs Lane are of several sizes and situated on three floors. We can support most types of events. Rooms can accommodate from 6 up to 350 delegates. You will find that our prices are very competitive. Our staff will be pleased to discuss ideas for your event with you and advise on the suitability of our facilities.

Hot and cold drinks can be supplied in the meeting rooms as often as required. Buffet meals can be pre-ordered. These range from a simple sandwich menu to a full buffet

Full details and prices are available on our website, [www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk), or you may call the conference team on 0121 643 6151 if you have any questions or email [booking@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:booking@carrslane.co.uk).



**Carrs Lane**  
**FAIR TRADE SHOP**

Open here in the city at  
Carrs Lane Church Centre  
Tuesday to Friday 10.30am - 2.30pm  
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays  
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs  
- *Traidcraft foods, gifts and much else* -  
0121 643 6151 [fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk)  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)



**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

## Carrs Lane Regular Activities

### SUNDAYS

<b>Morning Worship</b>	Every Sunday at 10.30am with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month
<b>Afternoon Worship and Healing Service</b>	Third Sunday at 5.00pm
<b>Children's Church</b>	Second Sunday at 2.30pm
<b>Radical Worship</b>	Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm
<b>First Sunday Lunch</b>	First Sunday each month at 12.30pm
<b>Church Meeting</b>	Second Sunday at 12 noon
<b>Singing Group</b>	Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

### WEEK DAYS

<b>Lunchtime Healing Service</b>	Every Wednesday 1.15pm
<b>Prayer Group</b>	First Wednesday at 7.00 pm
<b>Discussion Group</b>	First Thursday at 10.15 am
<b>Carrs Lane Players (drama group)</b>	Fridays at 7.45 pm
<b>Charity Knitting Circle</b>	First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
<b>Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop</b>	First and Third Sunday after morning worship and Tuesday - Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm
<b>Counselling Centre</b>	Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Contact details for Carrs Lane Church  
Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX  
Telephone 0121 643 6151  
Fax 0121 631 2118  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)