

## Finnish students visit our diocese

EIGHT ordinands from Finland visited our diocese as part of its links with churches in Scandinavia.

The group from the Diocese of Porvoo saw Portsmouth Cathedral and the Royal Garrison Church during a week in the UK. They all study theology in Turku, a Swedish-speaking part of Finland.

Mia Back, president of the theological students' association, said: "Your cathedral is very light and bright, which I liked. It's a beautiful place and people are open and relaxed."

"If you meet a bishop or a dean in Finland, it can be quite formal, but I liked the fact that your dean was quite relaxed."

## Pompey Chimes

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Pete Langdon

# Worshippers toast launch of new titles

## A PLETHORA of books written by parishioners from around our diocese are being published this month.

Among the new titles is the latest by Lucy Moore, from St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain, who works as a performer and schools worker with the Barnabas Ministry team for Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF).

Her latest work, *Topsy Turvy Christmas*, is designed to help teachers and children's workers put on a Nativity play to reflect the real meaning of Christmas.

The hour-long play was trialled before publication at two schools, one of which was Padnell Junior in Cowplain.

Two year groups combined, meaning their Christmas production involved 200 children. But the play can be performed by as few as 15.

The book includes the scores and lyrics for 13 original songs, which can be performed live by musicians or which children can sing to a backing track. A separate CD is on sale that includes both vocal and backing tracks.

*Topsy Turvy Christmas*, published by BRF, costs £8.99 and is available from Christian bookshops or via the BRF website (www.brf.org.uk). The CD also costs £8.99.

The Rev Barbara Mosse, from Emsworth, who has led retreats, talks and workshops on prayer within the diocese and works as a hospital chaplain and theological tutor, has written *The Treasures of Darkness*.

Starting from Isaiah 45:3, which refers to "the treasures of darkness", she explores the ways in which the Bible depicts darkness as the seed-bed of a new order waiting to break open - from the Holy Spirit brooding over the uncreated world to the heavenly city lit up by the glory of God.

It aims to bring hope to those for whom life seems painful, bewildering or empty, particularly in the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Published by Canterbury Press, it costs £7.99, and will be reviewed in the next edition of the *Pompey Chimes*.

The former Catherington House retreat warden, Rubie Richards, has written an account of her life, parts of which have already been broadcast on the radio.

## REVIEW

### PATCHWORK OF A LIFE by Rubie Richards

MANY remember Rubie Richards as an imaginative warden of the retreat house and later as an enthusiastic secretary of the Friends of Portsmouth Cathedral.

Others know her as an excellent cook with a fund of vivid stories. In retirement, she has collected some reminiscences in *Patchwork of a Life*.



Sarah Stancliffe has written a justifiably enthusiastic foreword. Some pieces have been broadcast on Women's Hour. Some have not been published before.

With amusement, compassion, honesty, gratitude and a sense of a life lived before God, she communicates in an animated style what it was like being an awkward teenager, a wartime land girl, in social work with the Children's Society and working with the elderly and homeless for the Church Army.

Throughout her life, she has

responded with determination and faith to the challenges which change and loss bring. Recently she has had to give up her car.

Not only is she enjoying public transport after the horror and strain of modern traffic, but she realises that it is a parable.

It means "allowing others to do the steering so that I can concentrate better on other things." She adds, characteristically: "I can hardly wait to discover what on earth may happen next."

CANON ALAN WILKINSON,  
Former diocesan theologian



Lucy Moore

*Patchwork of a Life* can be obtained from the Friends of Portsmouth Cathedral, Cathedral Office, St Thomas's Street, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2HH at £5 (plus 80p postage and packing) or from the Cathedral Bookshop.

Profits from the sale will go to the Friends of Portsmouth Cathedral.

And Jeannine Davies, churchwarden at St Mary

Magdalen Church, Sheet, has written her first book. Originally called *In The Call of the Day*, it is being published under the title *Touching The Hem: Encounters with Jesus by those who knew him* by Kevin Mayhew later this month.

It is a series of Bible stories and devotions from different points of view to help the reader reflect on spiritual truths. She started writing them after a meditation course led by former vicar the Rev Sarah Chapman.

She will be signing copies of the book at the Unity Bookshop, Folly Lane, Petersfield, on November 15.

●WHERE TO FIND CHRISTIAN BOOKSHOPS: pages 6-7.

## REVIEW

### A TOPSY TURVY CHRISTMAS by Lucy Moore

EVER been desperate for a script for the annual Nativity play that doesn't involve Santa Claus and hoards of reindeer?

Looking for something simple enough for a school production, but with enough spiritual input to communicate something of the mystery of the incarnation?

*Topsy Turvy Christmas* might be what you're looking for. With enough parts for a whole class, easy-to-follow staging details, and the music score for 13 original songs or raps, this should make the teacher or Sunday School leader's job much easier.

It tells the Christmas story from the point of view of two angels in heaven who can't understand why God would want his son to be born on earth. It's only once the baby has been born in the cow-shed that they realise Christmas is "so upside



down, it's the right way up!"

It's designed for the seven to 11-year-old age group, though it's possible - and may even work better - if some of the major parts are taken by slightly older children.

One of the best features is the mixture of the traditional Nativity story with more contemporary ideas, such as the angels watching the story unfold on TV and the creative use of umbrellas as props. The references in the *Topsy Turvy World* song to social injustice will also appeal to a child's sense of unfairness.

If no musicians are available, the cast can sing along to an accompanying CD that includes backing tracks for all the new songs as well as the traditional carols suggested in the script. This is something to put on the curriculum in all schools this Christmas.

NEIL PUGMIRE,  
Artistic director  
Top Cat Theatre Company

## Ex-asylum seekers in new play



John Bosco Nyombi

A NEW play written with the help of former asylum seekers and starring some of them in key roles will be premiered this month.

*Exile*, by diocesan communications adviser Neil Pugmire, examines how it feels to be forced to leave your own country because of political repression.

It is set in a "parallel universe" where Britain is

ruled by a dictatorial regime and opposition parties are banned. It aims to show what it might feel like to have to seek asylum yourself.

Among the cast is former asylum seeker John Bosco Nyombi, from St Jude's, Southsea, whose story was featured in June's *Pompey Chimes*. It is being staged as

part of a one-act festival of new writing - entitled *Supernova 2* - run by the Havant-based Bench Theatre Company. Fourteen brand new plays will be staged at Havant Arts Centre from September 30-October 4.

*Exile* is staged on October 2. Tickets, priced at £6 (£3 concs) are available on 023-9247 2700.