

# Editors' joy as reborn mag wins



**IT was a chance to remember the importance of parish magazines – and to celebrate making them better!**

Dozens of parish magazine editors from around our diocese packed into Bishop Kenneth's drawing room to hear who had won the 'Most Improved Parish Magazine 2003' competition. As he

opened the envelopes to reveal the prizewinners' names, the tension was palpable.

And there were gasps of joy from the team that produces the *Carisbrooke Parish News* when the bishop announced that it had won first prize. Editor Valerie Pedley and her team won £200 to develop their magazine, and a certificate.

Her team has resurrected a magazine that ceased to exist in October

2002, creating a new design, collating both church and community news, persuading a new set of advertisers to take space in it, and ensuring that it was delivered to all 3,000 homes in their parish.

Yvonne Scarborough, who edits the *Farlington Parish Magazine*, won second prize, which included £100 to develop her magazine. Her skills as a professional graphic designer had resulted in an entirely new look for the magazine, which now features colour photos, spiritual reflection and profiles of worshippers.

And Jenny Moth, who edits *Contact* for St John's Church, Newport, won £50 as third prize. It had been re-designed to include photos and a consistent layout. She

Editor Valerie Pedley (right) and Rachael Rosewell with Bishop Kenneth

had also overseen the publication of a separate magazine - *Magnet* - written by children in the congregation for other children.

The winners were announced at a reception hosted by Bishop Kenneth and his wife Sarah at their home, Bishops Grove, at which he expressed his appreciation for all that they do. Around 70 editors and their guests were told that the combined circulation of 50 parish magazines in our diocese is 25,000 – double the number of worshippers in our churches each Sunday.

"For many people, the parish magazine might be the only contact they have with any kind of spiritual issue, or the only contact they have with their local church," he said.

"Thank you so much for being a

vital cog in the communication of God's work and God's truth in your own community. Please continue your good work with the assurance of my own thoughts and prayers and, I'm sure, the goodwill and appreciation of hundreds or thousands of others."

A panel of judges had chosen a shortlist of seven to be in the running for the prizes – the three winners plus *Meon Matters*, which covers East Meon and Langrish; *The Hambledonian*, published for the whole village of Hambledon; *Shanklin Old Parish Church Magazine*, published by St Blasius, Shanklin; and *The Bridge*, which covers the four parishes of Droxford, Exton, Meonstoke and Corhampton.

Earl Mountbatten Hospice  
Halberry Lane  
Newport  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 2ER  
Tel: (01983) 529511  
Email: [chiefexec@iw-hospice.demon.co.uk](mailto:chiefexec@iw-hospice.demon.co.uk)  
Reg Charity No: 1039086



The Rowans Hospice  
Purbrook Heath Road  
Waterlooville, Hants PO7 5RU  
Tel: (023) 9225 0001  
E: [info@rowanshospice.co.uk](mailto:info@rowanshospice.co.uk)  
Web-site: [www.rowanshospice.co.uk](http://www.rowanshospice.co.uk)  
Reg Charity No: 299731

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## Perils of churchgoing

GOING to church is a tricky business as a bishop's wife!

When we moved here eight years ago, I tended to go with our three youngest children to the cathedral.

This suited us well. They would not have minded travelling round with their father but it was hanging around after the service in a different church hall every Sunday which they found difficult.

However I missed being in church with Kenneth and now the children have mostly fled the nest I like to accompany him on his parish visits. I am really enjoying myself but it has its moments!

If I do not actually enter the building at the same time as

*the last word*

by Sarah Stevenson, the bishop's wife



Kenneth, do I announce myself to the churchwardens? If I do, it can make me seem as if I am demanding attention or - worse - I get put on my own in the front pew.

If I go and sit in a pew incognito, it can make for some embarrassing moments.

Once during Evensong, someone, who had no idea who I was, lent over to me during a hymn and whispered in a loud

voice: "Isn't the bishop enormous?" I declared an interest before I agreed!

However once when I was safely seated next to the churchwarden's wife and I had been introduced to those around me, someone said: "You do not look at all like a bishop's wife." (I took that to be a compliment, but I am not sure it was meant as one!) So it is swings and roundabouts.

Then there's the

bunfight afterwards.

I can remember from my days as a rector's wife that after a service is prime time for networking, and the last thing one needs is to be tied up with the bishop's wife.

Not, I hasten to add, that I have ever experienced it from this side. However, next time you see me looking lost, or monopolising the clergy spouse, please come up and talk to me!