



AS many readers will know, the Mystery Worshipper feature - including the above logo and the wording of the standard questionnaire filled in by mystery worshippers - originated on a satirical Christian website (www.ship-of-fools.com).

The *Pompey Chimes* consulted with the creators of the website and believed it had permission to use the format in its pages. Sadly, this has turned out not to be the case, and the *Pompey Chimes* has now been asked to discontinue its use of this feature.

However, Mystery Worshippers are still at large around the diocese and will continue to report incognito on church services. You will find those reports (and hundreds of others) on www.ship-of-fools.com. We have also received the following two letters:

Dear Sir,
I can contain myself no longer over the criticism offered by recent correspondents on the *Mystery Worshipper*. To use the Rev Redvers Harris's own words - wise up and get real!

The idea that it doesn't matter whether our churches are not welcoming, that people are physically uncomfortable - can't hear or see what's going on, are freezing in the winter - the music poor, sermons uninspiring, and nobody comes, all as long as we are faithful, is breathtakingly complacent. It is also a recipe for decline and an increasing irrelevance of our presentation of the love and saving power that Jesus has for us all.

Why are some so scared of receiving an objective view by visiting Christians as to their first impressions? This is, after all, our shop window as to what the Christian life is about. Surely what we stand for is not inward-looking, shoddy and second rate. And if that is how some view what we do, we need to examine closely both our infrastructure and the make-up of the service.

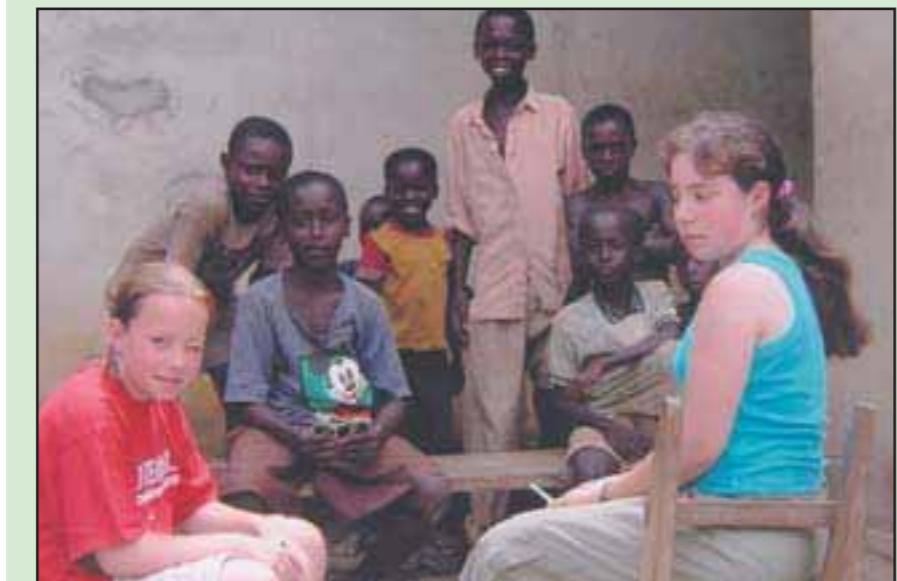
What I find disappointing about the *Mystery Worshipper* is some of the defensive parish views as to why they have not been assessed as they would wish.

I write as someone whose own church received some criticism from the *Mystery Worshipper* recently. However we see ourselves, this was what someone thought of us. Instead of being defensive, we reviewed some of our procedures and hope that we have improved. All in all, a positive and helpful experience.

That the *Mystery Worshipper* is also entertaining and informative means that, for many, it is one of the first articles to which they turn. It is a jewel among many in the excellent *Pompey Chimes*.

Yours sincerely,
Mervyn Cowdrey,
4 Nettlecombe Avenue,
Southsea

Yours sincerely,
Mick Walters (by e-mail)



Nicola Dempsey (right) and her sister Rosie play cards in Jameso, Nkwanta

Appreciating what we take for granted

I HAD an amazing time, especially when our family visited the village of Jameso in Nkwanta - the village that our parish is linked with.

They were really kind to us - when we got there it was dark, but they rang the school bell and got the whole village together to welcome us.

Someone moved out of their own house so we could stay there, because it was the best house in the village.

It was a brick house where electricity was installed just last year, but most of the other houses were

mud huts. We have technology, but they had no communication in the village and no transport.

They even carried a sofa and armchairs from the priest's house so our family could be comfortable during the church service! It was three-and-a-half hours long, with lots of dancing and singing.

They get you to join in the dancing, so you do feel part of it. In this country, you'd be very embarrassed about it, but there you would look silly if you didn't join in.

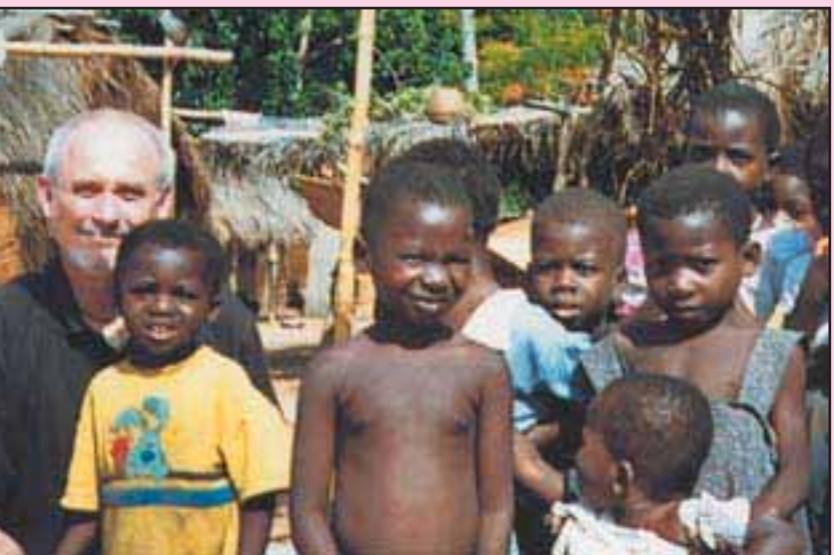
The church was still being built.

And now I'm home, I don't use half as much water as I did because I know how precious it is to them.

I learnt to appreciate everything we have in this country, because their lives are so basic compared to ours.

I loved the fact that everyone in the village was part of the church, they relied on their faith for everything, and they pray through the whole day. I think everyone has a lot to learn from them.

Nicola Dempsey, aged 13,
All Saints Church, East Meon, and St John the Evangelist Church, Langrish



Steven Threadgill in the town of Kpandu

Among mud huts

MOST of the others from the Havant deanery went to link parishes in Koforidura, but I went to a small town called Kpandu in the Volta region. It was part of the Koforidura diocese, but is now becoming a separate diocese - the Diocese of Ho.

I went to St Patrick's Church in Kpandu as the rep for St James, Clanfield, and All Saints, Catherington. We already had links

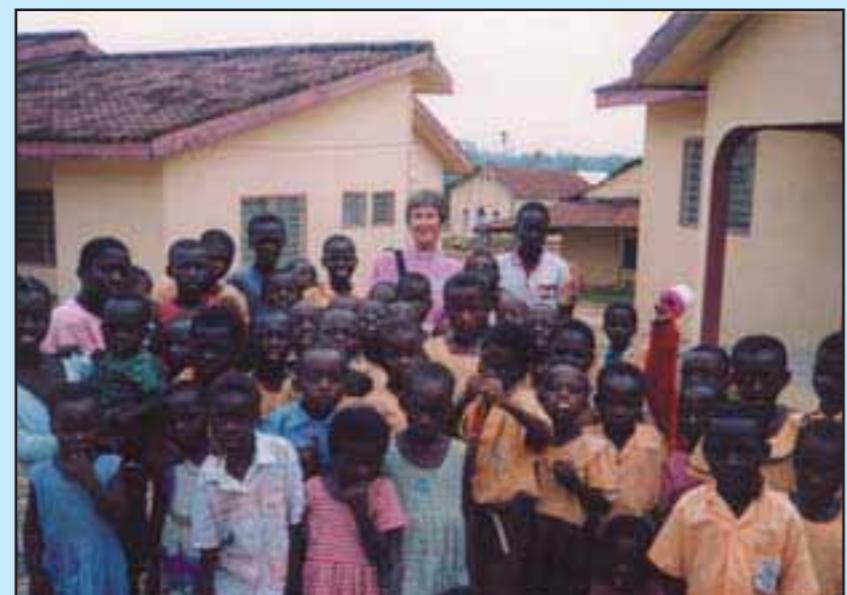
there because our parish raised £250 for their parish and £250 for their school, but no one had been before.

I spent most of my time in the secondary school and visiting some of the out-stations or sub-churches there. Many of them are very small, and are basically mud huts with corrugated roofs.

Steven Threadgill
All Saints' Church, Catherington

Inspiration of Ghana trips lingers as student visits

Joyful worship and generosity helped us forget cockroaches



The Rev Di Townsend with children from Dominaise

IT was with some excitement - but also trepidation - that Mary Kelsey and I set off for Dominase, the link village with Buriton.

The excitement was due to the fact that two members of our congregation had been writing to the parish priest there, Father Nicholas, for seven years and praying regularly for them. The trepidation was that we didn't know how primitive it was going to be!

The village of Dominase seemed to be all mud huts, but we stayed in one of three small houses built of concrete blocks.

He ends by asking that we plumb the depths and ascend the heights of true worship, teaching and presentation of the faith. The reality is that such talk would be meaningless to the average person in the street.

On the first night, two enormous cockroaches scuttled across the bedroom floor, but Mary chased them with the beam of her torch.

Probably the most difficult thing, though,

I told you of some of the hardships first because when you hear about how wonderful and welcoming the people were; how generous those who have so little were to us all; how joyfully they can sing; how uplifting and glorious their worship can be; how loving and kind everyone we met

was to us; how stunningly beautiful the coastline and scenery is, and how much we enjoyed ourselves, you might have thought that we never wanted to come back!

We had an amazing time, and we both felt it was worth every penny. The spin-offs since we have been back have been amazing. Mary has given a talk about her experiences at a meeting of the village of Buriton.

His visit will reciprocate the three-month stay in Ghana by Cowplain curate the Rev Barry Dugmore earlier this year. Both visits have been arranged by our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL) representatives.

The father-of-three will find plenty of people who can talk to him about their own experiences in Ghana. A total of 41 parishioners



Joseph Agyemang

from the Petersfield, Fareham and Gosport deaneries visited the West African country in June, and 15 others from the Havant deanery were there in May.

Each parish grouping spent some time in the specific localities that their own parish is linked to. Some of their stories are reproduced here.

And Joseph will also link up again with Barry Dugmore, who spent some time with Joseph and his

family when he was in Cape Coast in the spring.

Joseph lives in Sunyani, which is about 150 miles north of Cape Coast, said Barry. He was involved in horticulture before beginning training to be a priest, and his wife Felicia is an infant teacher at Bishop La Maire Anglican School in Sunyani, next to the cathedral.

Joseph, a third-year student at St Nicolas Seminary in Cape Coast, Ghana, will be hosted by Canon Stephen Palmer, vicar of St John's and St Thomas's Churches in Newport, but will speak and visit churches around the whole diocese.

His visit will reciprocate the three-month stay in Ghana by Cowplain curate the Rev Barry Dugmore earlier this year. Both visits have been arranged by our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL) representatives.

The visits undertaken by Barry and Joseph are the first in what IDWAL representatives hope will be an annual exchange.

Any parish that would like Joseph to visit them should contact either the Rev Andrew Ashdown on 023-9225 5490 or Canon Stephen Palmer on 01983-821961.



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



The Rowans Hospice
(formerly Portsmouth Area Hospice)
Purbrook Heath Road
Waterlooville, Hants PO7 5RU
Tel: (023) 9225 0001
Web-site: www.rowanshospice.co.uk
Reg Charity No: 299731

Between us, our two hospices provide specialist palliative care for some 800 adults with life-limiting illness throughout the Diocese every year. We also help to care for their families and friends.

Both hospices are heavily dependent upon voluntary giving in order to provide their services entirely free of charge. Our combined expenditure this year will be over £4 million. The largest single source of fundraising income for each of us is from legacies.

Please would you remember us in your Will?

Further advice on making a bequest to your local hospice is available from the Legacies Officer at either of the above addresses, or you can ask your solicitor to help you.

Their passion re-lit my faith

RECENTLY I was lucky enough to be among fifteen people from Fareham deanery who went to Ghana to forge links with parishes in the Diocese of Sekondi.

Looking back on my trip, I am constantly asking myself what I have learnt and how it has affected my life. God has used a unique experience to show me that He is alive and works through the most extraordinary situations.

The biggest thing that stood out for me is their passion and enthusiasm, not only for God but life itself. The people of Sekondi are a warm and welcoming people. Walking down the street I was

warmly greeted by people talking about everything from family to God and what they believed - can you see that happening in Portsmouth?

The Ghanaians' faith and love for God is far deeper than ours in the UK. We can learn so much from them, especially about how we worship and carry out God's commandment of "love thy neighbour".

I found my stay both encouraging and fruitful to the extent that God has relit that flame within me and has given me a passion for His people.

Adam Hiscock,
St Mary's Church, Portchester