

Fun with Candles

Big Ted and Little Ted

One of the problems with being a Roving Ambassador (with splendid fur) is that sometimes I have to be in two places at once. That happened to me in February. It was a cold night, but I was lured out of church by the promise of hot chocolate and honey! I left Little Ted (or "Grumpy Ted" as I think he should really be called) to hold the fort in the Children's Corner and make sure all the grown-ups behaved at their concert.

Uncle Paul had got everything ready to make our candles by the time we arrived at the Burnside Hall. There were pots and pans, candleholders, bits of string and all sorts of stuff. I got a bit distracted 'cos I could smell honey and I could see CAKES! To warm up, I did some gymnastics with Oliver: this involved him throwing me right up to the roof and then catching me again (mostly... actually he only caught me once, but I bounce quite well!). Then fortunately everyone else arrived - there were five children, a dozen adults and me.

Uncle Paul showed us the two types of wax he was going to use: tallow (which had a funny waxy smell) and beeswax (which was much nicer and smelled of honey). He explained that the adults had to do most of the work as melted wax was very hot and could be very dangerous (there was no way I was getting THAT near my splendid fur!).

While the wax was melting we had a quiz about bees. I learned that a group of beehives is called an apiary and that each hive has a special lady bee called the queen. Also, honey made from ivy could give you a terrible tummy ache but that honey has antiseptic properties [*I think you mean "antiseptic", Big Ted*].

Then we all watched intently as the melted wax was carefully spooned into little cases. Uncle Paul then put wicks into the wax (the bits of string he'd prepared earlier) and we left the candles to cool down.

While the candles were cooling we all had hot chocolate, biscuits and CAKES. Uncle Paul read out an extract from a letter by Parson Burnside that mentioned secret snowdrops in the churchyard and buried treasure protected by an angel - it was all very mysterious ('specially as Parson Burnside seemed to have typed his letter and he lived before typewriters were invented - as a published author I know all about these things, you see!).

We all got wrapped up in our hats and gloves (look - I took a wonky selfie wearing my hat!). We lit the candles we'd made, put them in lanterns and went out into the cold and dark. I was very glad to be wearing my cosy cardigan. We walked across the road and into the churchyard (it's a bit scary in the dark, but the candles helped). Uncle Paul led us down the path to a wonderful drift of snowdrops, all gleaming white in the candlelight (I've come over all poetic, must be the hot chocolate!). Then we went to find the angels - it turned out they were funny pictures on two headstones [*they're stylised angels called Belvoir Angels and are particular to this area of the country - the Vale of Belvoir, Big Ted*]. Beside one of the angels was a pile of stones and a box full of hidden treasure!



Then, as our candles were going out, and it was a bit cold and spooky, we went back to the Hall where Uncle Paul gave us presents to take away; I got a little jar of honey. But we all had a lovely time and it was great fun, thank you to Uncle Paul for arranging it.

Meanwhile, back in church...

Little Ted here: I had a lovely time at the concert - especially as the excessively large bear who always squashes me wasn't there. The choir, who were called Schola Cantorum, sat with me in the Children's Corner to have their tea and get ready for their concert; they were all very friendly. The church looked beautiful with the candles lit in the candelabra and in glass holders on the windowsills.

The concert was really good; the singing and playing were superb and we all really enjoyed it. The choir is really incredibly talented and we are very lucky to have them visit us.

At the end of the concert, the audience and choir had a little something to eat and drink, and there was a collection in aid of church funds. Thank you to Schola Cantorum, John Keys, and of course, Neil Page for all your hard work.

Back to ME: It was a very busy and exciting evening for everyone. And for **bears** as well.

Love, **Big Ted and Little Ted**

A "Souper" Lenten Lunch

Big Ted

On four Saturdays in March, St Mary's Church held Lenten Lunches in the Burnside Memorial Hall. Visitors were invited to have soup and bread, followed by tea and coffee, and make a donation to charity. I was asked along to help out, greet the diners and to taste the soup.

Lots of lovely people turned up and we raised lots of money for **The Friary Drop-in Centre** in West Bridgford, and had a tasty lunch as well. The first Saturday we had peppery mushroom soup, leek & potato and three different vegetable soups, all made and served by the flower ladies (with assistance from Uncle Ian). On the second Saturday the Bellringers provided the soup; the third Saturday was the Highlight group and finally, the Choir had a go. The soups were all very tasty and I helped to stir them. I had to be careful stirring 'cos if I "Lent" too far I would "drop-in" [massive sniggers!].

As I write this (in the "will have happened by the time you read it" tense) I'm getting ready for the third Lenten Lunch. Auntie Fiona says it will involve something called "Scotch Broth" which is soup with lots of bits in. I'm not so sure about that; I'm worried the bits will get stuck in my splendid fur and make me look messy. (Just one of the trials of being a Roving Ambassador with splendid fur).

Thank you everyone for all your hard work, your soup making and your donations to The Friary, and 'special thanks to Uncle Tony for organising it all.

Love, **Big Ted**