



No Room At The Nativity Stable

When Fr Tom Gagie, St Thomas of Canterbury parish, St Helens, decided that the time-worn nativity figures needed updating he was left with a problem upon receipt of their replacements; they were too big for the stable surround.

He approached Jim McCooley of **St Helens Circle**, a retired lecturer in Building and a master carpenter, who was a member of the parish. As Jim says, with a bit of help from St Joseph, he was able to complete the new stable surround in time for the Christmas celebrations.



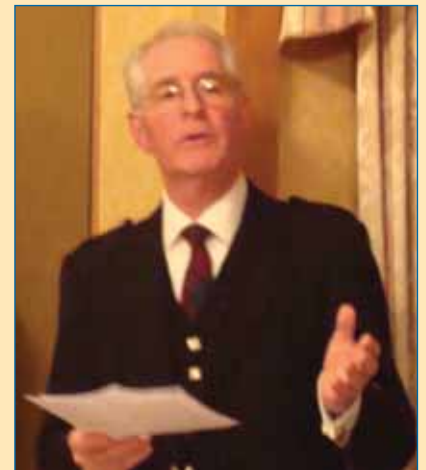
The new stable



Jim in action

Tae Scotia's Bard

Following their January meeting **Aberdeen Circle** paid tribute to Robbie Burns at an informal Scottish Supper. President Steve Stuart admirably said grace and addressed the haggis, standing in at short notice for the speaker, who could not get in for the weather. Anthony Jeffers eloquently proposed the Toast Tae the Lassies and Jane Stuart replied in word and song. Joan Vicca enhanced the evening with her recitation of two Scots poems. The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure.



'Fair art thou', Anthony Jeffers toasts the Lassies

Salford Get into Festive Party Mood

The festive season was celebrated by **City of Salford Circle** with a traditional Christmas meal for the grown-ups, enjoyed by 64 brothers and guests at Ellesmere GC on 9th December 2009. The evening was enhanced by valuable musical contributions from North Manchester and Middleton Circle's Damian and Ged Collins. Two days later, children and grandchildren were treated to a special Christmas party with all the usual and some unusual entertainments at St Edmunds Hall, Walkden, by President Eddie Paul and the circle. Party games were under the control (sic!) of entertainments director Harry Ainscough whilst the more cerebral guests were involved at the craft centre of John and Carol McLellan. Music was provided by Vice President Geoff Whittington's daughter Bernadette. Sustenance came in the form of a splendid cake-based buffet from Linda Paul and tea-lady Mary Hanrahan. The noise in the hall reached a crescendo as the boys and girls were led by parents and grandparents in urging the appearance of President Santa Claus – none was disappointed when he arrived to distribute a gift to each.



Santa takes centre stage amongst the less reticent children

Break With Tradition

City of Birmingham Circle's November 2009 meeting broke with tradition by having their Mass for deceased brothers in the Thistle Hotel immediately before the meeting, celebrated by Fr Peter Jones from Aston. They were also joined by the ladies to help make this a moving occasion. To round off a memorable evening Patro Mobsby (widow of Geoffrey) gave an illustrated talk on the 750 km pilgrimage walk she made earlier in the year from Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela. This was a truly remarkable achievement by a remarkable lady.



Patro is pictured with David Symonds, President of City of Birmingham Circle