

Around the diocese

Garden centre carol service ends with skating bishop

Taking the Church into the community took an icy turn at Mears Ashby when the church took up the invitation of the local garden centre, Beckworth's Emporium, to hold a carol service there after the shoppers had left on a Sunday evening in December.

"People came from miles around," said Duncan Beet, Priest in Charge. "The population of Mears Ashby is only about 500 but we had over 400 people at the service."



Bishop John preached during the worship and reflected on what each person in the nativity story did for Christ, and what we ourselves can do for him.

Not only did Beckworth's Emporium

provide a spacious venue, they also offered free use of their skating rink after the service - an invitation that Bishop John and about 80 others were keen to take up. Mulled wine and mince pies were also served, free of charge.

Publicity on the BBC Radio Northamptonshire Sunday programme had helped to spread the word about the event, which was a



collaboration with the Kettering Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army Youth Band accompanied the carols and children from Mears Ashby and Sywell Church schools read during the service. A collection was taken for the Daylight Centre (for the homeless) in Wellingborough.

It is the second year that the Mears Ashby group of churches have held their carol service at the garden centre. Their congregation the first year was 270, but garden centres have a way of making things grow!