

# Triangle



Summer 2008

## Message from the Manse

Sometimes you just have to stop. You didn't want to, you hadn't planned to, you didn't see the need to, but something made you stop. It can be very frustrating: there was so much you were going to do! But you found yourself forced to take a different course of action; or perhaps of inaction.

Do you know what I mean? It was my experience in December when I was ill: just beginning the run-up to my first Christmas in this Circuit! I had to stay at home and recuperate. How should we react in circumstances like these?

St Paul had a similar sort of experience: you can read about it in Acts Chapter 16 from verse 6. He had made his plans, but they weren't working out. Then he had a vision in which a man stood pleading for Paul's help: and Paul knew he must go to him.

It wasn't like that for me: I had to spend time doing little or nothing. But I believe we should be positive and try to see what God might be saying to us through our experiences. (I'm still thinking about that!) He may want us to turn around and adopt different priorities. Or He may simply want us to stop and be still for while. We all need to rest and be refreshed from time to time, and God is always waiting to refresh us with His love and care and peace.

The bible reminds us that God's peace is not like ordinary peace. It isn't at all the same as "a bit of peace and quiet", not a negative thing like the absence of noise and conflict. It's an inward thing, which can be our experience even if our lives are outwardly turbulent, as God's Holy Spirit gives us confidence and calm and serenity. Let us pray for that peace in our lives: it is one of God's greatest gifts. When we share "The Peace" in our service of Holy Communion, we are asking God to bless us with that sort of peace.

So let us not feel frustrated if we cannot do whatever it was we had planned to do. The summer months can often give us the chance to relax and be refreshed. Let us try to take that opportunity as a gift from God, not fretting about what we might have done in other circumstances, but waiting for the next prompting of His Holy Spirit into whatever form of Christian discipleship God may want from us.

With Christian greetings,

Robert  
(Rev. Robert Ely)

## Springdale Vestry News

I begin the year as senior steward at my favourite time when all the blossom is blooming and the bird song is beautiful. Thank you Jackie for your hard work, help and advice through your year as senior steward. Thank you also to Lesley who comes to the end of her term as steward. We welcome Judy Staley as our new steward.

The Lent house groups discussed the Lord's Prayer - this was found to be helpful and interesting.

We continue our journey through Lent placing symbols on the cross each week. On Palm Sunday we had a parade and cradle roll service, when we welcomed back families of children who had been baptised during the year. During our Good Friday Meditation nails were hammered into the cross. This was very moving and a true reflection of Christ's suffering. Then Easter Sunday - what a transformation as we covered the cross with flowers! What joy to know that Christ is still alive for us - He is risen.

We have had some enjoyable times of fellowship. The poetry group performed for Wombourne Wives, which was very well received. We had a splendid curry evening with delicious food - thank you to the team of chefs; this was followed by an entertaining beetle drive, ably overseen by Phil Staley. The evening was to raise funds for Overseas Missions. A quiz night was also held to raise funds towards the cost of Emma and Lucy going to Rwanda.

The Junior Church Anniversary was a modern version of the Good Samaritan story, the theme being "Loving and Giving". This reminded us of Jesus' commandment "Love one another as I have loved you".

The launch day to raise funds for the next phase of the new development was very successful with a lunch and display of work by the Springdale Art Group. There was a united service on 11 May at St Michael's, when the Christian Aid collectors were commissioned. Rob Marris MP received a cheque for the Gavi Fund of over £1000 from the Ecumenical Council. This was raised by the churches in Penn.

Looking forward, Summer Fair time is almost here (21 June). Let us hope it will be a huge success with a fine sunny day.

We give thanks to God for all the love, friendship and caring we find in our church and pray that we may extend this love to the wider community.

# Gospel Ash Vestry News

Due to an unfortunate breakdown in the modern technology we use so freely the vestry news for the Spring edition of Triangle never reached the Editors and so was never published. This account in part is to try to bring the readers of Triangle up to date with the life of Gospel Ash.

Lent was not an easy time for us at Gospel Ash as we shall read later. We followed the theme set by the local Anglican Church and were ably led by the Rev. Robert Ely and Denis Beaumont. The course had not been as easy as previous years to follow, but we quickly became aware of the need to think laterally on this pilgrimage to Easter.

Christmas this year was a very sad time for us all at Gospel Ash following the death of our very dear friend Dorothy Stubbs. Dorothy and Bill have been a very real source of encouragement both spiritually and in practical ways, since joining us some years ago. Dorothy's ability as a musician soon became apparent to us all as she led the music during our times of worship. Dorothy always chose the music for the beginning and end of each time of worship with great care, reflecting on the time of year or the theme of the service. It was at times such as this that one could sit and listen to the care in which she would play her ever increasing repertoire with such dedication. Dorothy and Bill have played a great role in the success of the monthly Coffee Mornings and Sing Alongs - here it was possible to see the ministry she gave with her ability to play any hymn as the congregation called the numbers out. Dorothy, when not seated at the organ, also played a vital role in the kitchen - her baking skills as we can all testify, were legendary, as was her ability to organise. However, the greatest of all Dorothy's assets was her ability to let others share their troubles and concerns with her, which enabled their load to be lightened. Dorothy's love of her Lord was apparent to all and her ministry will not be forgotten by those who knew her. Our love and prayers go out to Bill, Paul and Gillian and all the family.

The men's group from Codsall Methodist Church paid their annual visit in February to lead our worship with their choir. This is always a source of enrichment for our worship and as the service was conducted by the Rev. Bill Stubbs we were blest in abundance. This coming week, 20 May, will be our annual "Skittles Night" with the men's group from Codsall Methodist Church. This event has taken place annually for many years and now we are alternating each year between Codsall and Gospel Ash as the venue. The skittles contest is followed by a short Communion Service and refreshments.

Our new community facilities continue to be well used by the Anglican Church and the Parish Council for their Meetings, and by Bobbington Tuesday Club, all from the local community. We are delighted that the premises are also booked by surrounding Methodist Circuits for times of quiet and spiritual reflection.

The Monday Water Colour Painting classes continue to be enjoyed by those who attend, but there is always room for those wishing to join. The Card Making class on Thursday is also popular. It has been agreed by these two groups that an Exhibition of their work will take place this summer. The Exhibition will be displayed in the Church at Gospel Ash on Saturday 12 July from 10.00am – 4.00pm. Refreshments will be available in the community room. Do come and visit the Exhibition and enjoy the skills and artistic abilities that these classes are able to cultivate in those who attend them.

We are now looking to increase our mission to the local community and we pray that the Lord will lead and support us in our endeavours to further his work in this corner of His vineyard.

We give thanks to all those who continue to support us at Gospel Ash, and we pray God's blessing will be with us all.

Tom Butler

## **Gospel Ash Open Day**

**Displaying pictures from the students of the  
Water Colour Class**

**and cards made by the  
Decorative Card-Making Class**

**Saturday 12 July  
10am - 4pm**

**Refreshments available**

## Wombourne Pastoral News (Spring)

Not long after sending in my last pastoral news report we were shocked and deeply upset to hear that Robert had been rushed into hospital. It is really good to have him back in our midst, and we pray for his continuing improvement.

In the weeks following his hospitalisation, whilst having to rest, we give our sincere thanks to Denis, other ministers and stewards, who so graciously ensured our services and mid-week events would all be covered. As Bob said at our carol service, "Our church is hurting - please pray for us all". In such a short time before Christmas we lost Dorothy Stubbs, Barbara Evans and Alastair Green. Our prayers go out to Bill, Albert, Joy and Colin and all of their families. We ask God to continue to bless them, and to give them his strength and his peace.

Also, many have had spells in hospital and some are continuing to visit for treatment. We think of Louise, Cintra, Pat, Vera, Jean and Les, Val, Walter, Pauline, David, Eve and Tom, and ask for God's blessings on them all. All in need are known to you, O God.

We pray for Ruby Rose, whose elder brother passed away recently, and for Joy and Jo Brandrick on losing Joy's brother-in-law.

Just before the New Year Rev Alan Francom had to stay in hospital for several days, and we think of him and Maureen, and wish them a speedy recovery. May God be close to them.

We rejoice with the Hickman family as a new daughter Ruby was born to Cara and John, a sister for Joe and Sophie. May God bless all the family, especially the little one.

On the 15 February we congratulated Carrie on achieving her 103rd birthday. God bless you Carrie.

At the end of February in this Leap Year we shall congratulate Betty on her 80th (or should I say 20th?) birthday! Also to Rhiannon on the same day.

It is good to hear that Ben Smith and Steven Rock have both returned safely from serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we pray for others known to us who serve in the armed forces.

To all in need of any kind at this time, may you know the healing

presence of our God.

May 2008 be a year enriched with God's blessings.

Carol Walker, Pastoral Secretary

## **Wombourne Pastoral News (Summer)**

Firstly my sincere apologies for the omission of Wombourne Pastoral News in the Spring edition of Triangle. This was due to circumstances beyond my control.

On February 24 we welcomed the family of Amelia Mae Rowsell for her baptism, and, more recently, those of Amy Jayne Haycock and Daisy May Aston. It was good to see a church "full to bursting". We pray that all three little girls and their families will receive God's blessings in abundance.

There are so many of our number who are particularly in need of prayer at this time. We think of all who have been in hospital in the last few months, and for those receiving ongoing treatment. We pray for Ivy, having had two spells in hospital; for Judy, Ron and Stan. May God continue to bless them and strengthen them in the days ahead.

In April David Hotchkiss' mother and Julie Cottis' father both passed away; and last week Heather Jones also lost her brother. We think of you all and any others who have been recently bereaved. We pray you will know the peace of God in your loss.

We rejoice with Russell Pike and all the family on the birth of Reece-Joseph, and Claire Humpherson and family on the birth of Sophie-May, and Cara Hickman and her family as Ruby (born in December) continues to blossom. Hopefully, the latter two little ones will be joining us at "Prayers and Bears". We ask God to be with all of these families and to bless them with his loving care.

Congratulations to Carole White on her art display at the Wheaton Aston Arts Festival on 17 and 18 May, and especially to the children of "Kid's Club" at Wombourne for their tree illustrations suspended from branches of a tree in the front garden of Chapel House in Wheaton Aston which immediately caught the eye on entering the village. Well done to all of you!

We remember, too, all taking exams at this time. God be with them all at this stressful time and guide them in their future lives.

Congratulations to all who have had birthdays in the past few months, especially if they were big “0’s”, and to our Leap Year ladies, Betty and Rhiannon who celebrated their 4 yearly birthdays.

Finally, to all who are housebound. As always, we remember you all in our prayers and thank God for all you mean to us.

Please accept my apologies if I have missed out anyone with a special need at this time.

Psalms 37:5 “Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.”

Carol Walker, Pastoral Secretary

## **Tribute to Alastair Green**

We will always remember Alastair with the greatest affection. It was a privilege to have him in our pastoral care. He was one of the nicest young men we have ever known and we thank God for all the times we have shared in his life. He will live on in Kendrick, his little son, born last summer.

We pray God will strengthen Joy and Colin and Lewis, Jo and Lisa in the difficult times ahead. The celebration and thanksgiving held at Wombourne Methodist Church on 25 January was a moving testimony to his young life.

Eric and Carole Walker

## **Tribute to Dorothy Stubbs**

Thank you, Dorothy, for your constant, ever loving care, concern and words of wisdom to us over the years.

It has been a real honour to have known you. We will always treasure our memories of you.

Eric and Carole Walker

## Remembering Dorothy

We are sorry that we did not get a line in the Spring issue of Triangle - we were very pressured at the time of production and distribution.

Can we now say our sincere thanks to our ministers and members of the churches and congregations. We were truly blest in the words of encouragement and practical support. Thank you, too, for the kind memorial gifts which have now been sent to the three charities. We can say that we have not only heard of "kind thoughts and prayers"; we know and have proved the power of this loving fellowship.

We rest in this - "Now abides faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Rev Bill Stubbs and family

## Springdale Pastoral News

As I am writing this report it is hard to believe that in four weeks time it will be midsummer - I only hope we haven't had all the summer yet! I am sure we haven't and, for those who are looking forward to going away, I hope it will be a time of relaxation and refreshment.

On 10 March we were shocked to hear of the sudden death of Jackie Neilson's Dad, just fourteen weeks after the sudden death of her Mum. Our love and prayers are still with Jackie, Ken and family. On a happier note we wish every blessing to Alex Neilson on the occasion of his marriage to Alison on 5 May.

Congratulations to Barbara and Ian Beynon, and Brenda and Colin Turton who have both recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversaries. Brenda was in hospital just prior to her anniversary for a knee operation, but it is good to see her up and about again. Congratulations also to Ann Humpherson on the birth of another grand-daughter, Sophie May, born on 25 April, a daughter for Stuart and Claire and a sister for Thomas and Katie.

There are many of our church fellowship who have on-going health problems, some have had short spells in hospital, some attending hospital - you are all in our prayers and we will pray that our Lord will bless you and continue to heal and strengthen you. Some also have concerns for

loved ones in their families - the Lord knows the need of each one of us and we give thanks to our Lord for His continuing love and assurance.

On Sunday 6 April we welcomed family and friends of Lauren Melissa Weir when they brought her for baptism. We pray for Lauren and her family.

We continue to remember our elderly and housebound friends - you are not forgotten and always remembered in prayer, particularly Rene Ashfield, Margaret Race and Dora Clayton who are being cared for in residential homes.

To any of our young people who are in the midst of exams, we wish you well, you'll soon be able to relax and enjoy life again.

May God bless each and everyone of us.

Gwyneth M Wade, Pastoral Secretary

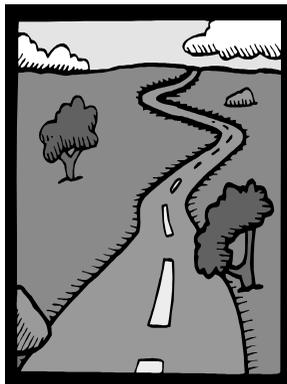
## Don't You Quit

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,  
When funds are low and debts are high  
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit;  
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns  
As every one of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about  
When they might have won had they stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow,  
You may succeed with another blow.  
Success is a failure turned inside out,  
God's hidden gift in the clouds of doubt.

You never can tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems so far.  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit.  
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.



## **Back to Church Sunday**

Do you know someone who used to go to church but hasn't been for some time? It might be a friend or a neighbour or a family member, or simply someone you occasionally speak to in the street. Sunday 28 September gives us the opportunity to invite them to come to church with us. It's an idea begun by the Church of England, and it was such a success last year that this time we're joining in. So everyone at Springdale and at Wombourne will be given one or more invitations to pass on to people we would like to invite. (We've decided that to include Gospel Ash as well this year might be a bit much!) We shall be thinking about this in our acts of worship during the summer, as well as in our personal prayers. There will be publicity to promote the day and we shall do our very best to make sure that everyone who comes is made really welcome, in the hope that they will want to come again!

Part of our calling as Christians is to make new followers of Jesus Christ: it isn't something he gave us any choice about. "Make disciples..." he said. Here is a relatively straightforward way of going about that. We're not suggesting that you ask someone who has never had a church connection! It's not too soon to ask yourself the question: "Whom shall I invite?" The success of the venture will depend on each one of us coming up with an answer to that question - and on God's Holy Spirit of course: but we know we can rely on her. Please think prayerfully about this in the coming weeks.

Robert Ely

## **Bequests to the Methodist Church**

Many people wish to remember the church in their wills and churches are very grateful for these bequests. Recently I heard of a church (not local to here) where such a bequest had been made. Sadly, because of the way the will was worded, the money was not available to the local church despite this being the wish of the donor.

The Methodist Church has some information leaflets on its website which give guidance to follow when making wills to ensure that your wishes are fulfilled. If you have made such a will, or are thinking of doing so, I have copies of the information and would be happy to make these available. Please speak to me (in confidence of course) if you think this information could be of assistance to you.

Richard Gould

## Going the Extra Mile

Fair trade is mainstream. We can find Fairtrade products in most supermarkets and some small shops, on Farmers' Markets, in many Ox-fam shops. We can buy Fairtrade coffee and tea on the train, at the station, in the local café. There are about 3,000 products with the fair trade mark. Over 70% of adults now recognise the Fairtrade Mark.

The Fairtrade Mark stands for:

- A fair price which covers the cost of sustainable production
- An extra premium to invest in community projects
- Defined standards for the health, social and economic welfare of producers
- Defined standards for the protection of the environment

**Traidcraft** has been “a Fairtrade pioneer” since 1979. Traidcraft was part of the group that set up the Fairtrade Foundation which administers the Fairtrade mark. So is Traidcraft's work done? You might think Traidcraft had outlived its usefulness! Not at all!

Traidcraft's involvement in Fairtrade goes much further and brings even greater benefit to those who struggle under unfair systems. Of course Traidcraft meets the requirements of the Fairtrade Mark in marketing its products.

But Traidcraft “goes the extra mile”, for Traidcraft also:

- Chooses to work with poor and small-scale producer groups
- Works in partnership with producers, committing to long-term relationships and engaging in regular contact
- Invests in the development of producers to help them build professional, sustainable businesses
- Offers the widest range of Fairtrade products in the UK
- Pioneers innovations in Fairtrade
- Lobbies governments to advance the cause of trade justice
- Helps tackle issues faced by people who are disadvantaged by unfair trade agreements
- Seeks to demonstrate ethical business practices and challenges others to do the same.

But Traidcraft faces a problem. “Going the extra mile” is costly. Traidcraft cannot match the supermarkets for price and “economies of

scale". It is really good news that Fairtrade is mainstream, but if that means that Traidcraft's sales drop then Traidcraft can not 'go the extra mile' for as many people.

That is why we still have Traidcraft stalls in our churches! Please do have a look at the stall, try a new line, take a catalogue, or speak to Diana Beaumont or me. If we do not have the item you want we will try to get it for you.

We can also bring a stall to your regular meeting or come and talk about some of the producers whose lives have been changed by Traidcraft.

**Wolverhampton Fair Trade**, based at Darlington Street, sells Fairtrade products from Traidcraft, Swazi Kitchen and Divine, supplies items on Sale or Return, and promotes Fairtrade across the city – and beyond.

Opening Hours:	Wednesdays	10.00am - 4.00pm
	Wednesdays & Thursdays	5.30pm - 7.30pm
	Fridays	11.30am - 2.00pm

So if you are near Darlington Street Church, why not drop in and see for yourself?

Your purchases from Traidcraft have already made a difference to the lives of many people. Please keep "going the extra mile" and shop from Traidcraft whenever you can.

Teresa Ely



## Welcome to Peanut!



Here are some pictures of Phil and Jo and their new dog Peanut, acquired from Battersea Dogs Home with the voucher given them by Springdale.

Peanut is a Staffordshire Bull Terrier, they think about 18 months old, who was abandoned after Christmas and now has a happy home with Phil, Jo and Ele.

## **All or nothing?** by Ruth Jarman

“There is no one righteous, not even one;” Romans 3:10

Is “being green” not for you? Is it too much of a commitment, too hard and complex a voyage to embark upon with the full-to-the-brim life you have already? You’re just not cut out to be a tree-hugger. It’s “all or nothing” and you can’t do it all.

For me, living gently on the earth has parallels with my journey as a Christian. I have made a commitment, but I fail dismally every hour of every day to love God and others as I should. And in our industrialised 21st century overcrowded world, living in a way that does not damage the earth is pretty near impossible. There are too many people in the world and too much carbon dioxide already up there in our atmosphere. And our modern life style depends so much on fossil fuels that however much we try to reduce our energy use we will always contribute more than our fair share of carbon dioxide to the global commons. So, in this too, I fail dismally every day. However much I try not to, I and my family are contributing to the destruction of God's creation.

So what do we do? Do we give up following Jesus because we can't be perfect Christians? Do we give up trying to live in a way that cares for creation because we can't give up our cars or dish-washers? No! I believe that Jesus accepts us as we are and is pleased with every attempt we make to love others as ourselves and to protect his creation. And every time we fail to follow him, to love others, to live gently on the earth, we can turn to him in repentance, accept his boundless forgiveness, get up and start again!

Take holidays, for example. Are you planning to fly off somewhere this summer? Well, I'm sorry to be such a kill-joy, but flying off to see the world is, I'm afraid, bad for the world. Huge quantities of climate-damaging greenhouse gases are released by planes – just look at the size of them and think about how much energy must be required to lift them off the ground! So do try to limit your far-flung holidays. But if you still feel you need that holiday in the sun, don't give up trying to do it as caringly as you can.

Climatestewards.co.uk is a great new project run by the Christian charity A Rocha where you can reduce the impact of your journey by paying towards tree-planting and other projects which off-set and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. For under £10 you can more contentedly fly your family of four to the Med, while £70 will help two of you sleep easier on the way to Australia. It's not always “all or nothing”. Sometimes it's good just to do something!

## **“Quiet Spaces - Sacred Places”**

**Annual Network Conference held at Swanwick 18 - 20 April**

Val, Penny and I thought a quiet weekend away together would be a very good idea. We arrived at the conference centre on a very windy Friday afternoon to find the boot lid had jammed on the car and we had to struggle to get our bags out via the back seat! Much hilarity ensued – not very quiet!

We settled into our rooms and had a good evening meal before gathering together to see what the weekend had to offer. 240 Methodist women together – not very quiet!

Saturday prayers in the chapel before breakfast was a good start to the day, following Morning Prayer from the Northumbria Community. The morning session was led by Judith Lampard, a Local Preacher from East London, and an excellent speaker. Her theme of “Sacred Space” enabled us to look at places which are special or sacred to us, times which are special or sacred, and how we can make space for ourselves in our own homes and lives which can become sacred and therefore nourish our spiritual lives. Her lecture was illustrated with appropriate pictures, music and poetry.

After lunch was the opportunity to experience various activity groups - I chose a session on Ignatian spirituality. This was just a taster of a form of meditative prayer and bible reading where you find the quiet space inside yourself in order to concentrate on a passage of scripture or prayer.

The series of quiet rooms for experiencing different forms of worship – Taize, Iona, Orthodox - were unfortunately not very quiet because of the number of people around. However, we found the prayer labyrinth and a display of artwork called “The Christ we Share” depicting vastly differing images of Christ from all parts of the world. This was excellent.

We opted out of the Saturday evening session on the future of Network, thinking it would be anything but quiet.

I chose a singing session on Sunday morning and then Judith Lampard’s second lecture, on “Holy Women”, including Mother Teresa, Susanna Wesley, Julian of Norwich and modern mums who juggle work, family and a job, amongst others. Her definition of holy – “Being holy is being truly human.”

Sunday afternoon's Holy Communion service brought the weekend to a close and included the presentation to each one of us (in complete silence) of a prayer scarf; 240 of them knitted in a multitude of yarns and colours by women in the Leeds District. This is a custom of the Methodist Church in Latvia, where prayer shawls are blessed and given to anyone in need of the love of God surrounding them. Quite a moving experience.

We left for home after an enjoyable weekend, feeling well fed after too many morning coffees, afternoon teas with cakes, large lunches and evening meals. It had not been an altogether quiet time, but interesting and worthwhile in various ways.

Liz Green

## **Another View of “Quiet Spaces - Sacred Places”**

A while back, in April, I decided to try the weekend course advertised in Magnet Women's Network “Sacred Places – Quiet Spaces”. Now those of you who know me will realise that I find it very hard to be quiet, let alone try it for any more than a few minutes! As I had never been to Swanwick before I thought that it would be a chance to broaden my experiences.

Having persuaded Liz and Val to come too (I wasn't brave enough to go on my own, after all, I would need someone to talk to!) we set off one cold Friday afternoon. Now my two companions had obviously been to such weekends before and knew what to expect. I just innocently went along with it! Our rooms were comfortable and the centre was quite impressive.

However, I was not prepared for the overwhelming sight of 240 “Holy” women in the hall on the first evening. However, undaunted, Saturday morning loomed. Morning prayers were at 8am. Now people who know me, know that I do not do 8am! But on this occasion I did. The rest of the day is still a blur, but I do remember that every session managed, somehow, to answer many unanswered questions that I had, especially regarding all things spiritual. The quiet groups were brilliant, and I did not feel uncomfortable in any way, or bursting to talk, or voice my opinion! I didn't realise just how much effort I was expending. Sunday was just as hectic, with food at regular intervals, so much so that I had to forgo the cake at coffee time!

The journey home on Sunday afternoon was a welcome relief from

having to concentrate (Liz was driving) but Monday morning was another story. It took me until Wednesday to fully regain any mental ability. I was totally overwhelmed, but when I did emerge, I realised that I had just experienced something truly amazing, with some lovely ladies, who were totally dedicated Christians, welcoming, friendly and “Holy” in every good sense of the word. But I shall not forget the look on Val and Liz’s faces as they asked me one mealtime if I was alright, because I was so quiet!! They are still smirking now!

Penny Baldwin



## **Good news from the Family Friendly Churches Trust**

Mike Bossingham runs Family Friendly Weekends all over the country where the aim is to explore a range of models and styles of worship that may make worship more appealing to the younger generations. The Trust has been getting some very positive feedback which you can read on the monthly newsletter displayed in the entrance hall at Springdale. Does this give you any ideas that could work in our churches?

The Methodist Church in Whitby (Wirral) now has a regular “Tots Praise” on Tuesday mornings, a “Tots Space” in church and some space for disabled people in the body of the church. They have interviewed for a full time children’s and family worker. They are having a church party and a church away day soon.

At Chesterton in Cambridge they have gone for a pick and mix approach, serving breakfast at 10.00am, the Sunday School for all ages at 10.30am, all together worship at 11.00 before the preacher takes over at 11.20am. People can come and go whenever they want. They found that within weeks the Sunday School had grown from 3 to 20 and not much later some of the children’s parents were coming along.

The tiny village chapel of Manea has adopted café style worship for every Sunday morning. The congregation has grown from around 3 or 4, to now at least 10 and sometimes up to 20. There are also a number of children who attend regularly. Without this change the chapel would now be shut.

Lesley Cook

## Guardian Angels

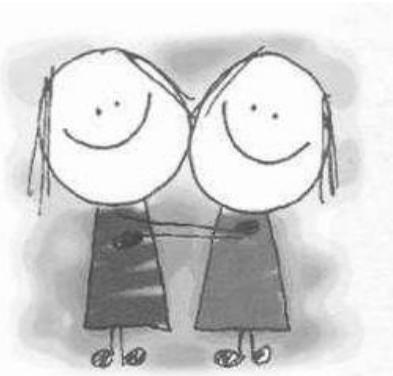
“Guardian Angels” is an email “round robin” sent to friends. There are many such articles “doing the rounds” in cyberspace. The wonderful thing about them is that even if there isn’t time to contact each and every friend and give them a personal message these emails remind our friends that we are still thinking about them and that they are special to us...

People come into your life for a reason, a season or a lifetime. When you know which one it is, you will know what to do for that person.

When someone is in your life for a reason, it is usually to meet a need you have expressed. They have come to assist you through a difficulty, to provide you with guidance and support, to aid you physically, emotionally or spiritually. They may seem like a godsend and they are. They are there for the reason you need them to be.

Then, without any wrongdoing on your part or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end. Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away. Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand. What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled, their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered and now it is time to move on.

Some people come into your life for a season, because your turn has come to share, grow or learn. They bring you an experience of peace or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it, it is real. But only for a season.



Lifetime relationships teach you lifetime lessons, things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation. Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life. It is said that love is blind but friendship is clairvoyant.

Thank you for being a part of my life, whether you were a reason, a season or a lifetime.

## Ecumenical “Stations of the Cross” – an appreciation

It was Good Friday evening at 8, a bitterly cold and miserable evening, and we felt cold, miserable and weary (a busy day, and neither of us very well, as we afterwards realised). We went, more out of a sense of duty than anything else, to St Michael's, the Roman Catholic part of Churches Together in Penn.

We were warmly welcomed – as expected; it's been taken for granted for many years that in any of the Penn churches one is among friends. But we were surprised to be comfortably warm in that vast worship space, and to be able to hear clearly, which has often been a problem there. (Has the system been modified, or does it prefer Father Stephen's voice?)

Now “Stations of the Cross” is not a service with particular attraction for Methodists, with its strong components of repeated liturgy, ritual, and focusing on visual representations of a suffering and dying Jesus. But it seems to me that Good Friday is a particularly good day for valuing and learning from the individual piety of Catholics and their use of visual images. “Stations” takes the worshipper (either in procession, or with turning to follow the priest's procession with one's eyes) around the fourteen “stations of the cross” depicted in some way around the walls of every Catholic church (and some “high” Anglican ones, also). These follow a particular pattern of Christ's journey with his cross to Calvary and his death. At each station there is an act of devotion and prayer, the worshippers sharing in the responses.

A full text was available for everyone, so we could all participate, without feeling that it was only for the initiated. The reverential attitude of the Catholics present encouraged us all to give our hearts and minds to the exercise. But what we valued most were the suggestions for intercessory prayer at each station, turning our thoughts away from ourselves and our own minor concerns towards the needs of the world, to people and places desperate for the love of Christ crucified and for new life in him.



So thank you, Father Stephen and the folk of St Michael's, for making this particularly Catholic service so meaningful for all of us.

Wendy Gould

## A Holiday Escapade

On a glorious May morning, with the forecaster's promise of more to follow, Denis and I set off for Exmoor, towing our trusty caravan. We had booked a site near Dulverton and were not disappointed. The site was beautiful, with views across a lake to Exmoor and a riverside pub just a stroll away to enjoy our fifth wedding anniversary meal.

Friday was dull and we decided on a drive across Exmoor to the Valley of the Rocks near Lynton. I drove up onto the moors and we were soon into mist so thick that I was really glad of the white lines along the middle of the road to guide us on our way. Eventually we descended safely into Lynton and on to the Valley of the Rocks for a picnic lunch and a walk. The weather had improved and we were able to enjoy the spectacular scenery of rocks and sea.

We both enjoy sketching so the next move was to find a quiet spot with a view. We drove along the toll road passed Lee Abbey, a Christian retreat and conference centre, and came to a narrow road down to the beach. We parked the car at the end of the lane and settled down to draw the costal scenery.



Around an hour passed happily and we were ready for tea. But it was not to be. At the top of the lane we were brought to a halt by an insurmountable obstacle, a locked gate with a sign that read, "this gate is to be kept locked at all times". The "lane" was the access to Lee Abbey's private beach, accessible on foot but not by car. A car park and loos were conveniently provided but we'd missed them.

What to do? The place was deserted. Denis investigated while I sat tight. Well there was no point in both of us running round! At last we decided that there was nothing for it but to walk back to Lee Abbey and seek help. Which is what Denis did, while I read my book! By this time the weather was warming up, it was much further than we'd thought and pretty steep in places, but after a couple of stops for breath, Denis made it. Eventually he

found his way in but the place seemed deserted and he wandered around until he eventually found a man in an office. Our situation was explained, minibus keys found, and eventually we were able to continue on our way.

No cream tea for us that day but it was certainly an experience to remember, not quite as bad, however as being stuck in the lift on our honeymoon, but that's another story.

Val and Denis Campion

## **Pentecost Festival '08 - "The Church has left the Building"**

Rev. Rob Frost, Methodist minister and founder of "Easter People" and "Share Jesus International", died in November last year but his vision to replace "Easter People", which had been so successful for 20 years, with something altogether new and exciting has been carried forward by his two sons Andy and Chris.

Rob had felt that God was telling him to create a festival that He would have wanted to go to. It would not just be for only white or only black Christians, and it shouldn't be all middle class, or all rich or all poor, or simply about how to change yourself, and it shouldn't be hidden away in a camp or building.

Hence the festival was not at one venue but many. Cafés, bars, theatres parks and churches dotted along London's Northern Line played host to all sorts of events, such as classical concerts, Free Running for Jesus, Music in the Park, meditation on the London Eye and children's fun sessions.

Liz Green and I took the opportunity to visit Phil, Jo and Ele (who say they really don't mind being used as a London B&B! ) and of course Peanut their new dog, and combine it with a look round the Festival. Helen, my daughter, Emma Baker (Springdale) and Ele were to perform in Methodist Central Hall with MAYC Orchestra and Singers that evening as part of the festival.

It was already very hot when we got to the green outside Westminster Abbey at 10:30am to watch a very moving Passion play performed by Revelation Ministries from Florida. No props, as they often perform in maximum security prisons and so interesting to chat to them afterwards.

After a look around the exhibitions in Central Hall, we spent most of

the afternoon in the Embankment Gardens in a deckchair listening to the likes of Dave Bilbrough and the London Gospel Community Choir! We also went to listen to some of the speakers at the Freedom for Palestine rally in Trafalgar Square.

The young people gave an excellent performance in the evening. I felt sorry for them having to travel back to a Wimbledon church floor after the concert and then getting up at 6am to return in the morning for Sunday Worship but I guess you bounce back at their age!

It was difficult to gauge the success of the Festival as we only saw a small part and there was no way of telling numbers. Perhaps we should have been given a badge! What we did see we enjoyed but it was so spread out and so hot that we were disinclined to do more. Most things were free except for the big ticketed shows in the evenings. I guess it is early days yet. Andy and Chris Frost want to see the event grow and grow but it is a giant undertaking. I wish them luck and I do love their slogan - "The Church has left the Building".

Lesley Cook

By the way, for those who rather miss "Easter People", there is a new event at Llandudno at Easter called "ECG - A Heart for the Nations", which seems to be run in a similar way to "Easter People". Lesley

Penn and Merryhill LNP Board  
invites all local residents to

**GO GREEN GO**

making your neighbourhood a greener place on

Friday 4 July, 5 - 8pm

at Penn URC church, Penn Rd.

FREE entry with light refreshments.

FREE compost bin delivered to your door (on a first come first  
served basis)

FREE entertainment and bouncy castle

Many stalls with Green themes and plants for sale.

## Journey to Justice

It is 10 years since 70,000 people gathered together in Birmingham to demand debt relief for the world's poorest people. This was the first ever mobilisation of campaigners on such an issue in Britain. Much was achieved and sustained pressure in the following years saw over \$88 billion of debt cancelled. The results were very significant to the countries affected:

- Malawi has trained nearly 4,000 new teachers each year and Mali has paid for 5,000 community teachers.
- In Mauritania and Bolivia infant mortality rates are down because of the availability of trained midwives.
- In Uganda fees for primary education have been cancelled and enrolments at schools have doubled.
- Elsewhere vaccination programmes have begun and transport infrastructure has been developed.

But there is much more to be done and so the Jubilee Debt Campaign is calling on us to “pick up the pace”. On Sunday 18 May the Campaign organised a reunion at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham and in a rolling programme of video clips, songs, theatre and interviews we saw for ourselves what had been achieved and what is still to be done. Beckminster, Springdale and Wombourne churches were represented in this gathering by Wendy Ashwood, Lesley, Helen and Andrew Cook, Liz Green and Lucy Gilbert, Brenda and Phil Shuttleworth. We were joined by MPs Andy Reed and Caroline Spelman and the Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council, Paul Tilsley, who promised us that there is all-party commitment in government to debt relief. The video message from PM Gordon Brown was “keep pestering” to enable our government to exert more pressure on world governments, the IMF and the World Bank.

Representatives from the major faith groups in Birmingham and others from aid agencies added their encouragement. Max Lawson from Oxfam was clear that the IMF listens to non-governmental organisations only because they represent so many people like us. Daleep Mukarji from Christian Aid urged us to join the agency to expose the scandal of poverty, to use our power through the government to make the IMF and the World Bank accountable. Archbishop Ndungane, the former Archbishop of Cape Town, urged us to press our government to channel money into the targets of the millennium goals, to provide better monitoring of how loans are spent and to ensure transparency in all dealings.

We learnt how so much debt is unpayable i.e. the basic human rights of health care and education cannot be met by some governments

if they repay their debt. There is at least \$500 billion of *illegitimate* debt, lent to dictatorial regimes, as in Zaire and the Philippines, to secure business projects for the lenders. Thus victims of oppression are still paying the debts of their former oppressors. Burundi and Jamaica are still struggling to meet the conditions attached to debt relief.

Stephen Rand, the co-chair of the Jubilee Justice Campaign reminded us that there is unfinished business. He likened the situation to slavery - after the antislavery bill had been passed in Parliament, it took years longer to abolish the practice.

What can we do?

- Can we explore the possibility of becoming a Jubilee Congregation?
- Do we have links into schools so that they could become Jubilee schools?
- Visit [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org) to find out more about world poverty and sign a white band.
- Watch out for news of the International Day of Protest called for 17 October when we have the opportunity to call for the eradication of world poverty.

When Jesus began his ministry, he used these words from the prophet Isaiah: “He sent me to bring good news to the poor”. We who live beyond Pentecost know that God's spirit is given to us so that we too can be sent out to be good news to the poor.

If you would like to “pick up the pace”, talk to Liz, Lesley or Brenda.

## Hymns for Workers:

Cyclists:	My chains fell off.
Dentists:	Crown him with many crowns
Contractors:	The church's one foundation.
Obstetricians:	Come labour on.
Golfers:	There is a green hill far away.
Politicians:	Standing on the promise.
Librarians:	Let all mortal flesh keep silent.
Lawyers:	In the hour of trial
Credit Card users:	A charge to keep I have.
Census takers:	All people that on earth do dwell.
Traffic engineers:	Where cross the crowded ways of life.
Tax officers:	We give thee but thine own.
Dry cleaners:	O for a faith that will not shrink.



# Methodism in Wolverhampton and Bilston

Donald H Ryan

## In The Beginning

On Sunday 31 August, 2008, we shall celebrate the union of the Darlington Street, Bilston and Trinity Methodist Circuits at a service at 5pm in Darlington Street Methodist Church when the preacher will be Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, a former minister of Low Hill and Stratton Street Methodist Churches and a former President of the Methodist Conference.

The start of the Methodist movement in the late 1730's had three main leaders, the Rev John Wesley, the Rev Charles Wesley and the Rev George Whitefield. All three were friends at Oxford University and were members of the 'Holy Club' formed by Charles Wesley. The Holy Club was led by John Wesley and was the earliest Methodist group meeting for Prayer, Bible Study, Holy Communion and outreach to the poor, widows, and the prisoners in Oxford's jails.

It is about 250 years since Wesleyan Methodism became established in Wolverhampton. At that time Wolverhampton had a Market, which had a charter that had been granted by Henry 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1258. The dominant building was St Peter's Collegiate and a Royal Peculiar Church. For the Nonconformists there were Meeting Houses for Roman Catholics, Quakers and Presbyterians. The population was 7454 housed in 1440 dwellings clustered around St Peter's Church. St John's in the Square was not opened until 1760.

On a cold February in 1745 William Allt, a London bookbinder, publisher and author, introduced Methodist preaching to Wolverhampton. In his letter dated 8 February, 1745, to Rev George Whitefield about his visit to Wolverhampton, William Allt writes about his reception at Whittington (Shropshire) and continues, "Many at Wolverhampton seem very desirous to meet, but dare not, the mob is desperate. They arose, after I was gone on Sunday last [3<sup>rd</sup>], and broke brother D-'s, windows, and beat a young man shamefully, and tore his coat all to pieces." Allt then went on to Brewood and he says that there "the friends are very zealous, in going from house to house, to tell of what the Lord has done for them". One of the first converts was George Burder who is the first recorded nonconformist preacher in Brewood and who eventually became a Congregational minister. Herbert Jenkins, one of John Wesley's assistants who attended Wesley's Conference at the New Room, Bristol on 1 August, 1745, wrote to George Whitefield on 27 October, 1753, saying "I preached once at Wolverhampton, a populous place, to a little company of sincere seeking souls". Herbert Jenkins later

became an English Calvinistic Methodist. The next record of a Methodist preaching in Wolverhampton is when Rev George Whitefield visited the town on 26 October, 1753,.

### **The Great Evangelical Preacher John Wesley visits Bilbrook**

Even though John Wesley did not come to Wolverhampton until 1760 he passed through Bilston on a dark evening on Saturday 9 November, 1745, on his way to Wednesbury. On Monday 23 October, 1745, Wesley rode on horseback through the rain from Woore near Newcastle under Lyme to Wednesbury. He arrived exhausted but when he was told that a notice had been given that he would preach at Bilbrook he journeyed back 9 miles to preach on the Village Green. Bilbrook was a tiny isolated hamlet some 2 miles from the nearest road. It had a Manor house and a few associated farms. Wesley preached there again on 23 March, 1752, and the 18 April, 1757, when he joined 20 members of the congregation into a Methodist Society. Wesley also preached in Bilbrook on 19 March, 1761, the 21 July, 1764, and 21 March, 1770. The last time Wesley preached at Bilbrook was on 17 March, 1772. Wesley was given hospitality at the home of a friend in the house next the Manor House on 4 April, 1751, 2 July, 1752, staying overnight on 25 March, 1753. As recently as 1938 the house had a plaque on the wall which was inscribed "Wesley's House".

Even though several people in the past have tried to discover the names of the friends John Wesley stayed with in Bilbrook they remain elusive. We don't know how long the Methodist society survived in Bilbrook. It is probable that it was the nucleus of the early Codsall Methodist society, which lasted until 1872 when it merged with Free Churches in the village. On 24 April, 1757, Wesley wrote to his wife saying that he will probably see John Haime and Joseph Jones "if he finds his way back from Bilbrook". On his last visit to Bilbrook on the 17 March, 1772, he wrote a letter to his brother Charles saying that he was going to meet Mr Fletcher [Rev John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley] that day at Bilbrook.

### **Methodism Attacked**

We do not know for certain the exact date that a regular Wesleyan Methodist meeting started in Wolverhampton. It has been suggested that John Bennet, one of Wesley's earliest and most significant lay preachers started a Methodist meeting in the town in the home of one of the Methodist followers sometime before he left Wesleyan Methodism in 1752 to be ordained as a Congregationalist Minister in Bolton, where he died five years later. We now know that John Bennet did not visit Wolverhampton on his travel through the Midlands. The nearest he came to Wolverhampton was Penkridge, Wednesbury and Birmingham as he journeyed to London.

We do know that a Wesleyan Methodist Society was begun in Wolverhampton before 1760 because Alexander Mather, another of Wesley's faithful itinerant ministers was stationed in the Staffordshire Circuit that year and speaks of the Wesleyan Methodist work in "Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton as well as in Wednesbury and Darlaston". Like the Methodist Society started by Wesley in Bilbrook the early Wolverhampton Methodist Society must have started in the 1750's and met in members' homes. During these early years of Methodism the faithful had to endure vicious attacks from violent mobs against their preaching houses, their own homes and themselves. To make matters worse there was division within the Methodist Societies.

In 1763 the Wolverhampton Wesleyan Methodists built a preaching-house in Rottens Row later known as Canal Street, which is now Broad Street. The room was almost opposite the Quaker Burial Ground, which is on the corner of Broad Street and Westbury Street. It was on the "town side" of the Dog and Partridge public house, which was close to the present day Fryer Street. The Wolverhampton preaching-house was the fourth to be built by the Methodists in the West Midlands. The first purpose built preaching-house was at Tipton Green in 1750, then Wednesbury, 1760, Darlaston, 1760, and Wolverhampton, 1762/3. In Birmingham the Methodists rented a disused theatre off Moor Street in 1763 and didn't build a preaching-house until 1782, which was sited in Cherry Street.

The Wolverhampton rioters not only attacked Methodists and their buildings in their own town but also went as a mob to Darlaston, Dudley and Wednesbury and pulled down the Methodist preaching-houses. So dangerous was the mob in Wolverhampton that Alexander Mather's companion borrowed a pair of pocket pistols. Mather told him to return them, as they would trust God to protect them. When Mather and his companion entered the main street in Wolverhampton they were sworn at and as the crowd grew more ugly Mather went to the justice who issued a warrant to keep the peace. Some of the rioters fled, others hid but a remnant defied the warrant. As a result three of the rioters were bound over to appear at the Stafford Court. The trial jury acquitted them. The rioters returned to Wolverhampton jubilant waving ribbons. They were welcomed back in Wolverhampton with bells ringing and bonfires in which they burnt effigies of Mather and his companion.

The Wolverhampton Methodist preaching-house was "levelled to the ground" on 20 September, 1763. The ringleader being Mr Hayes, a local attorney. He incited the mob to attack the Methodist Meeting House and he himself made the first breach of the walls. The mob then razed the building to the ground. Mather took Hayes to Lord D [Dartmouth] and threatened to take him to court over the incident. As a result of this meeting .

Hayes promised to rebuild the preaching-house (at his own expense). The Gentleman's Magazine in 1763 reports the incident under the headline Methodists attacked in Wolverhampton. It says that; "four young fellows concerned in this outrage have been secured and committed to goal."

### **John Wesley in Wolverhampton**

John Wesley first visited Wolverhampton on Saturday 8 March, 1760. He says of the visit "I was surprised at coming into Wolverhampton, which is what Dudley was [a den of lions], to find the people so still, many gaping and staring, but none speaking an uncivil word. 'Ay', said a well-meaning man, 'we shall not find them so civil by and by.'" Wesley wrote, "I wish these croakers would learn to hold their peace, I desire to hear 'no prophets' of evil". Wesley was probably thinking of the conversation in 1 Kings 22:8 when "The king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil". Wesley concludes by saying of the well-meaning man, "But this prophet of evil was a false prophet too. For neither while I was preaching, nor after I had done, did anyone offer the least rudeness whatsoever. And we rode quietly out of the town." On this occasion Wesley preached on the steps leading to a shop in High Green, now Queen's Square. A year later John Wesley returned to Wolverhampton on 17 March, 1761, and asked for a table to be set up in the inn-yard for him to stand on to preach. The inn was the Swan Inn, Dudley Street, which stood on the site now occupied by the HSBC Bank. Wesley comments, "Such a number of wild men I have seldom seen. But they gave me no disturbance, either while I preached, or when I afterwards walked through the midst of them."

John Wesley's next visit was on Wednesday 23 March, 1768, when he preached in the Wesleyan preaching-house in Rottens Row. Wesley says that only those who could not get into the service made "a little noise for a time". He also says that that "some hundreds attended me to my lodging, but it was with no other intent than to stare"

Wesley's next visit was on Wednesday 21 March, 1770, which seems to have been trouble free until he reached Wolverhampton. He preached at 10am in the half-timbered home of Samuel Ferriday on Wood Street, Bilston. He then rode on to Bilbrook where he preached at 1pm. At 5pm Wesley preached from the doorway of Denman, the printer, High Green, now Queen's Square. Wesley records in his Journal that "many here were wild and stupid enough; however, the greater part were deeply attentive."

Wesley's next visit to Wolverhampton followed his preaching on the

Green at Bilbrook on Tuesday 17 March, 1772. He again preached in Wolverhampton on Monday 12 July, 1773, and Monday 21 March, 1774, when he had "sweet counsel" with the Rev John Fletcher of Madeley. There were further visits on Friday 29 March, 1776, when he preached at 8 in the morning to "a very large congregation". During his visit on Friday 20 March, 1778, Wesley was told of the Sedgley Park School which gave free lessons to children. Wesley again preached at Wolverhampton on Wednesday 24 March, 1779, and Friday 26 March, 1784, on the text Daniel 9:24 and again the following day at 9am from the text Matthew 7:24. On the 25 March, 1783, following a bout of fever which was cured by a friend giving him electrical treatment, he went on to the home of St Philip Gibbes at Hilton Park, near Featherstone, and Shareshill, to visit his "old acquaintance" Miss Freeman and spent the afternoon and evening with her, Lady Gibbes and her two daughters. Wesley stopped in the town for a meal on Friday 6 August, 1784. After preaching on Easter Monday, 28 March, 1785, at Wednesbury, a funeral sermon on Sarah Wood, the sister of John Wood, the Wolverhampton ironmonger. He rode on to Wolverhampton and preached "at about" 11am from the text Luke 12:7. After the service he stayed again with the family of Sir Philip Gibbes and Miss Freeman at Hilton Park. The following day he rode to Stafford. On his way to see Rev John Fletcher at Madeley on Saturday 25 March, 1789, Wesley stopped at Wolverhampton and preached at 9am on the text Isaiah 55:1.

Wednesday 28 March, 1787, March was a "red letter day" for Wolverhampton Methodists. Having outgrown their preaching-house in Rottens Row they built a larger preaching-house in Wheelers Fold. The new house was named Noah's Ark because it was at the rear of the Noah's Ark Inn in Lichfield Street. John Wesley opened "the new house" in Wheeler's Fold at 5 30pm. He used as his text 1 Corinthians 1:24. [Christ the power of God, the wisdom of God]. The congregation was too large for the building. Wesley comments that he "believed that such a congregation had not been seen in Wolverhampton before". On Monday 6 August, 1787, on his way to Wolverhampton his coach broke down twice. Wesley seems to have only stopped for a meal before going on to Birmingham. When Wesley visited Wolverhampton on 27 March, 1788, he preached at 6pm on Luke 13:23. He says "that the new house [Noah's Ark chapel] was crowded" and goes on to say, "What a den of lions was this town for many years! But now it seems the last will be the first". Wesley's last visit to the town was on Tuesday 23 March, 1790, when he writes in his journal about a lady who lived next to the chapel - while she was boiling some varnish it caught fire and severely burned her. He preached at 5.45pm on 1 Kings 18:21. Wesley wrote that "The rain a little lessened our congregation, so that the house contained us tolerably well". He goes on to comment, using the text he had preached from, "And many

hearers seemed almost persuaded not to halt between two opinions.” Here Wesley was alluding to I Kings 18:21 “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord *be* God, follow him; but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”

In less than a year after this visit Wesley died in London on 2 March, 1791.

Even though Wesley talks about the mobs in Wolverhampton he does not mention about being hit in the face by a stone, which drew blood. A young apprentice lock maker called Moseley, during one of the disturbances, threw a stone at Wesley, which hit him in the face and caused an open bleeding wound. Moseley, seeing the blood, took to his heels and ran off. Some time after the event Moseley, whilst drinking with some of his workshop mates in the Four Ashes pub in Stafford Street, started to recall the incident. A friendly scuffle seems to have resulted and young Moseley ducked his head to avoid a friendly blow from one of his mates and caught his eye on the corner of a screen and became blind in that eye. Moseley took this as a warning and was converted and became a Wesleyan for the rest of his long life, dying around 1856 at almost 90 years of age.



To be continued

## How Children Think!

At a church gathering the vicar stacks a pile of apples at one end of the table with a sign saying, “Take only one please - God is watching!” On the other end of the table a small boy placed a sign above a pile of cookies saying, “Take all of the cookies you want - God is watching the fruit.”

A mother is preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys begin to argue over who gets the first pancake and their mother sees an opportunity for a moral lesson. She says, “If Jesus were here he would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.’” Kevin turns to his brother and says, “Ok Ryan, you be Jesus!”

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorise Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the Psalm, but little Charles did not find it easy to memorise much of anything. On the day that the children were scheduled to recite in front of the congregation Charles stepped up to the microphone and began proudly, “The Lord is my Shepherd...” but the rest of the Psalm suddenly deserted him. So he concluded bravely: “...and that’s all I need to know.”

## **Wombourne Methodist Wives 25th Anniversary Weekend, Bournemouth 1984 - 2008**

It was a cold, damp, dismal Friday morning, but that did not matter - everyone was happy and in good spirits when our coach left Wombourne Community Centre to begin our journey south. It was our special anniversary weekend away together. As always, our journey began with much talking to each other and catching up with all our news.

Our weekends away began when we first went to Bournemouth in 1984. At first it was just the Wives from Wombourne; the Ladies from Springdale joined us the next year, and, with some friends, and our ladies' daughters, we have continued our weekends away each year. We have become friends and we look forward to seeing each other every year. Sadly some of our ladies are no longer with us, but they are with us in spirit and we always remember them.

We have visited many seaside places, including the Isle of Wight. We have looked at royal houses, museums, many tea and coffee shops; we have been on river boats, ferry boats, steam trains, pony and traps, open top buses, and little trains that take you for a ride along the front to have a look at the sea. Only once has our coach broken down (not to worry - we were rescued by a very nice driver with his own coach!) and, of course, we always manage to find Marks and Spencer so we come home with lots of parcels! We have had snow, rain, wind (when our umbrellas have blown inside out, or just blown away!) and beautiful sunshine. We have been swimming in indoor and outdoor pools, and occasionally we have paddled in the sea! Many of the ladies go for a walk and usually buy an ice-cream. We always have a lovely time and we enjoy ourselves.

This year, on Friday evening, we played bingo, counted dots on a certain item of clothing, and played party games. On Saturday, after visiting a wet and windy Weymouth, we celebrated our anniversary in style - the ladies all wore something silver, we had cake, a silver box as an anniversary gift, drank a toast to our Wives Weekends, and everyone joined in the dancing and singing, especially "You'll Never Walk Alone", which is one of our favourites - it was a lovely evening. On Sunday morning the sun shone and we spent the morning as we pleased. After an enjoyable lunch we had a very pleasant journey and arrived home in the early evening. Next year we are hoping to go to Eastbourne.



Gill Worrall

## Birds Wordsearch

Isn't it wonderful when you can open wide the windows and doors and hear the birdsong? I know it brightens my day! Can you find the birds listed in the grid, all of which have visited my garden? Helen

*Answers on p 43 .*

M B R A M B L I N G O P H D N T W N E R W  
I U E C Z B L L R G R E E N F I N C H Q O  
F L K Z F J Y U A G F D S G H T Z H G N O  
A L C O L L A R E D D O V E D D J A D V D  
Q F E T M A R S H T I T Y S F E K F G B P  
E I P G A M U I O P I S K Y G L O F N V I  
H N D Y D U N N O C K T C H K I I I I F G  
C C O H T R E W Q A Z W X V R A Y N L J E  
T H O G E S I S K I N H A B E T P C R B O  
A H W O R R A P S E S U O H D G L H A L N  
H F X L K Y O P O C R D I N W N N K T A A  
T S A G D B M N U O Y F Y I I O M R S C E  
U C S F I E L D F A R E F B N L R D V K D  
N V F I D F V N K L J D C O G F E R P C V  
D N J N F D Z T I T T A E R G Z X I A A B  
B L A C K B I R D I L K J H G R A K L P M  
F F H H Y J O V M T B H S U R H T G N O S

Blackbird  
Blackcap  
Blue tit  
Brambling  
Bullfinch  
Chaffinch  
Coal tit

Collared dove  
Dunnock  
Fieldfare  
Goldfinch  
Great tit  
Greenfinch  
Heron

House Sparrow  
Long tailed tit  
Magpie  
Marsh tit  
Nuthatch  
Redwing  
Robin

Siskin  
Song thrush  
Sparrowhawk  
Starling  
Woodpecker  
Wood pigeon  
Wren

# Kids are Quick!



Teacher: Maria - go to the map and find North America.  
Maria: Here it is.  
Teacher: Correct. Now class - who discovered America?  
Class: Maria.

Teacher: John - why are you doing your maths multiplication on the floor?  
John: You told me to do it without using tables, miss.

Teacher: Glenn - how do you spell "crocodile"?  
Glenn: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L  
Teacher: No, that's wrong.  
Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

Teacher: Donald - what is the chemical formula for water?  
Donald: H I J K L M N O  
Teacher: What are you talking about?  
Donald: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

Teacher: Winnie - name one important thing we have to  
day that we didn't have ten years ago.  
Winnie: Me!



Teacher: Glen - why do you always get so dirty?  
Glen: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are!

Teacher: Millie - give me a sentence starting with "I".  
Millie: I is...  
Teacher: No, Millie...always say, "I am".  
Millie: All right.. I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.

Teacher: George Washington not only chopped down his father's tree,  
but also admitted it. Now, Louis, do you know why his father  
didn't punish him?  
Louis: Because George still had the axe in his hand?

Teacher: Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?  
Simon: No sir, I don't have to - my Mum is a good cook!

Teacher: Clyde - your essay on "My Dog" is exactly the  
same as your brother's. Did you copy his?  
Clyde: No, it's the same dog.



## NCH Sunday, 13 July, 2008

NCH Sunday is designated by the Methodist Church as one of its Special Sundays – a time to reflect on and celebrate the work of its Children’s Charity. Each year it falls on the second Sunday in July, the anniversary of the opening of the first Children’s Home by Rev Thomas Bowman Stephenson and a group of Methodist friends.



This year NCH Sunday falls on 13 July and we invite all Methodists to remember our work in worship that day. It is an opportunity to remember, give thanks and pray for the continuing work of NCH and recognise the support given to their children’s charity by Methodists all over the UK.

During the last eighteen months NCH has looked very seriously at revisiting its mission and core values. The agreed platform for our future work and messages to supporters is: “Always there for Children”.

**Always** - speaks of stability, our heritage and history of commitment to children and young people, and our ongoing commitment to not give up.

**there** – our involvement where children and young people are expressed through the wide variety of our work.

**for Children** – children and young people are at the centre of what we do.

“I dread to think how we would have turned out or what we would have experienced if we hadn’t gone to the home. We had a good mother, but she wouldn’t have been able to cope, we were better off in the home. It kept us on the straight and narrow, and has given us a loyalty to friends whom we keep in touch with 60 years on.” **Sadie, now in her 70’s, who was brought up with her sister Emily in NCH’s residential home in Frodsham in the 1930’s.**

“It’s like a family atmosphere. If I could stay longer, I would. My parents enjoy the break, too. Mum calls it a chance to recharge her batteries. It’s also a chance for them to do other things, like spend a bit more time with my brother and sister, so that’s cool.” **Faye, 16, who attends NCH’s Trialpha Shared Care Project in Staffordshire.**

More information about the work of NCH in this area can be found in the worship resources for NCH Sunday available from our Supporter Care Department on 08457 626579 or at [www.nch.org.uk/methodist](http://www.nch.org.uk/methodist)

## Penn Local History Fair 2008

Penn Local History Fair will be held at  
Penn United Reformed Church, Penn Road on:

Friday 20 June                      10am - 9pm  
Saturday 21 June                    9am - 4pm



This popular event will again this year have lots to interest everyone. Exhibits will include lots of photographs of old Penn, Penn Common, Wombourne, Portobello, Wolverhampton and surrounding areas, plus films about old Wolverhampton; schools, including Manor Road (Penn Secondary Modern) and the Municipal Grammar; the churches of Penn; Penn and Wolverhampton hospitals; 1960's/70's local pop groups; Sunbeam record breakers; Conway Garage; Mr Parkes and printing; metalware, steel buckles, etc.; Villiers & Atco; Guy Motors; genealogy. There will also be displays by Wolverhampton Photographic Society, Wolverhampton Archaeology Group and the Wolverhampton Archives, plus much more.

Light refreshments will be available. Admission free, although donations will be gratefully received.

### In the Wet - Nevil Shute

The following extract from the above book appeals to me because I gel with the central character Rev Roger Hargreaves. a Priest of the Church of England who was, in a way, a man of my ilk. A man who was called of God and wanted to follow that call in the most effective and fruitful way possible. Not concerned to hit the tops, just desirous to be useful to God.

There is some truth in the last paragraph of the extract, but it is not the whole truth. Heaven begins here and now and physical death is an incident in the way. There is no great distance between "Now and Then" just a thin veil and sometimes the veil does not exist at all. It is like a shadow that flees as daylight comes.

If you haven't come across this book then it is worth reading. This is a quotation from the final lines (page 353).

Bill Stubbs

"I lay in my swag for a long time before sleep came watching the brilliant Queensland stars through the fine tracery of the gum trees. I knew then that the corner of the veil had been lifted a little for me by Stevie Figgins [the other main character and a renegade] under the hand of God, and I am still puzzled to know why this thing was done. Because it means that I have been honoured in a way beyond my station in life, I am an obscure and unimportant man, a man like a million other things doing the job each day that comes to hand, and not doing it very well. Who am I that God should pick me to reveal His wonders to?"

And who was Stevie, to whom the full revelation had been made? But here I feel I am on firmer ground, because it is the way of God to deal with poor and humble men. If the scriptures teach us anything, it is that God speaks seldom to the wise or to the great statesmen. For His messages He speaks to poor and humble men, to outcasts, to the people we despise.

So there it is, and I can add no more to this account, I have written down what happened, and it has eased my mind to do so, and I shall now lock these exercise books away, put the whole thing away, and go on with my job here in this scattered parish.

All that this strange experience has taught me has gone to confirm what I think I already knew, secretly, perhaps, and deep down in my heart. If what I think I have been told is true it means that we make our own Heaven and our own Hell in our own daily lives, and the Kingdom of Heaven is here within us, now, for those who have gone before."

**SPRINGDALE CHURCH SUMMER FAIR  
SATURDAY 21 JUNE  
12 NOON - 2PM**

**CRAFTS, GAMES, BOOKS, TOYS, CAKES,  
COCONUT SHY & PLENTY MORE!**

## Complaints

The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) has published some of the more bizarre complaints received from Britons holidaying abroad:



“We had to queue outside with no air conditioning.”

“No-one told us there would be fish in the sea. The children were startled.”

“It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel.”

“I was bitten by a mosquito; no-one said they could bite.”

“We booked an excursion to a water-park but no-one told us we had to bring our swimming costumes and towels.”

“We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as yellow but it was white.”

“It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England; it only took the Americans three hours to get home.”

“My fiancé and I booked a twin-bedded room but we were placed in a double-bedded room. We now hold you responsible for the fact that I find myself pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put use in the room that we booked.”

“I compared the size of our one-bedroom apartment to our friends’ three-bedroom apartment and ours was significantly smaller.”

“The brochure states: ‘No hairdressers at the accommodation’. We’re trainee hairdressers - will we be ok staying there?”

And finally, from a holidaymaker in Spain:

“There are too many Spanish people. The receptionist speaks Spanish. The food is Spanish. Too many foreigners.”

If you are going away this summer be sure to check the brochure before you travel! Happy holidays!

Helen Cooper

## Cracks and Flaws

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house." The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.



## Our Never-Failing Friend

"They shall call His name Emmanuel - God with us..."

Matthew 1 v 23

Sometimes we long to feel a friendly touch;  
Sometimes we think life does not offer much;  
Sometimes we've no-one of our own, as such;  
*But Jesus is always there!*

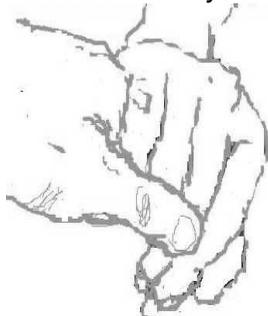
Sometimes we feel discouraged, lone and sad;  
Sometimes there's little left to make us glad;  
Sometimes others do things to make us mad;  
*But Jesus is always there!*

Sometimes our hearts are overwhelmed with fear;  
Sometimes we have to part with those so dear;  
Sometimes no other trusted friend is near;  
*But Jesus is always there!*

Sometimes the world to us seems cold and dead;  
Sometimes our heart within us sinks like lead;  
Sometimes we wish we'd others' lives instead;  
*But Jesus is always there!*

Sometimes we'd like to have a neighbour near;  
Sometimes we'd love to hear a word of cheer;  
Sometimes we long for absent ones, still dear;  
*But Jesus is always there!*

Sometimes we'd like to see a cheerful face;  
Sometimes we wish the world a different place;  
Sometimes we almost feel we've lost the race;  
*But Jesus is always there!*



Dr Leslie Greening

## **My Jesus, I Love Thee (1864)**

“We love because He first loved us.”

1 John 4 v 19

“The young people of today are utterly dissolute and disorderly,” fumed a grumpy old Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. The philosopher Plato agreed. “The youth are rebellious, pleasure-seeking, and irresponsible,” he wrote. “They have no respect for their elders.” Socrates complained, “Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders, and love chatter.”

A 6000 year old Egyptian tomb bears this inscription: “We live in a decadent age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impatient. They inhabit taverns and have no self-control.”

The next time you think the “modern generation” is going from bad to worse, remember that God always has a rich handful of teenage heroes ready to change the world. In bible times, we read of Joseph the dreamer, Daniel in Babylon, David the giant-killer, and the virgin Mary (likely still a teen).

As a teenager, Charles Spurgeon preached to great crowds, but when they referred to his youthfulness, he replied, “Never mind my age. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ and His preciousness.”

In our own day, we’ve been deeply moved by young people like 17 year old Cassie Bernall of Littleton, Colorado, who was shot for her faith during the Columbine tragedy.

Some of our greatest hymns were also written by young adults. Isaac Watts wrote most of his memorable hymns at about the age of nineteen. When poet John Milton was fifteen he wrote the well-known “Let us with a Gladsome Mind.” The hymn, “Work for the Night is Coming,” was written by an eighteen year old. And this hymn of deep devotion, “My Jesus, I Love Thee,” was written by William Ralph Featherston at age sixteen. Sixteen!

Featherston was born July 23, 1846, in Montreal. He died in the same city 26 years later. His family attended the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and it seems likely that William wrote this hymn as a poem celebrating his conversion to Church. Reportedly, he sent it to an aunt living in California, and somehow it was published as an anonymous hymn in a British Hymnal in 1864.

Robert J Morgan, USA

## **Mistakes will Happen!**

The following are alleged to be genuine extracts from church magazines!

“Don’t let worry kill you. Let the church help.”

“The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing, ‘Break forth into Joy’.”

“Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.”

“Barbara remains in hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack’s sermons.”

“Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.”

“For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.”

“The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the hall on Friday evening.”

“At tonight’s evening service, the sermon topic will be ‘What is Hell like?’ Come early and listen to our choir practice.”

“Weight Watchers will meet at 7pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.”

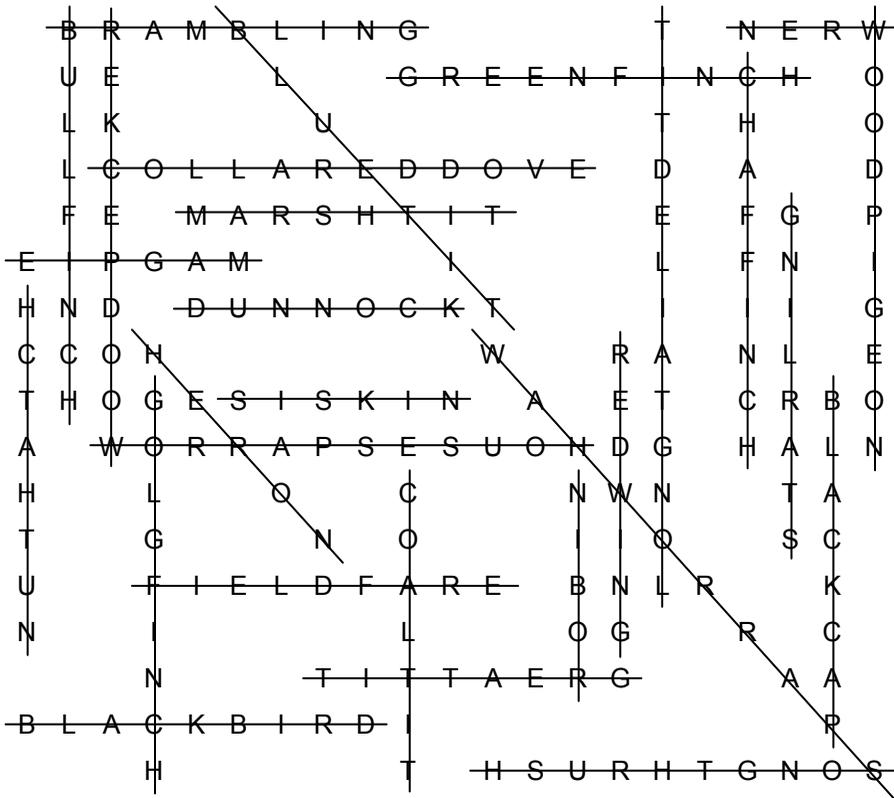
“Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Come along and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.”

“Miss Charlene Mason sang ‘I will not pass this way again’, giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.”

“Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale - it’s a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don’t forget your husbands.”

“Thursday night - Potluck Supper - prayer and medication to follow.”

“National Prayer and Fasting Conference - please note the cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.”



Deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

**Sunday 7 September.**

**Please would all stewards, pastoral secretaries, etc., etc. make a note in their diaries so as not to miss this deadline. Thank you.**

Remember! No photocopies! Please check copyright and gain permission where necessary! Email [triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk](mailto:triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk) if you can - it makes things so much easier for us! Thanks!

Please hand in your articles directly, or via your stewards, to **Helen Cooper** or **Sarah Philpott**.

## Dates for your Diaries

16 June	Wombourne Family Week		
16 June	Circuit Network Meeting	Gospel Ash	2.30pm
17 June	Prayers and Bears	Gospel Ash	
17 June	Church Council	Springdale	7.30pm
19 June	Circuit Meeting	Brewood	7.30pm
20 June	Penn Local History Fair	Penn URC	10am - 9pm
21 June	Penn Local History Fair	Penn URC	9am - 4pm
21 June	Summer Fair	Springdale	12 noon - 2pm
21 June	Visit from Vice-President Ruby Beech	Kingswinford	
21 June	Penn Praise	St Bart's Church Hall	6.30pm
22 June	Church Anniversary	Wombourne	
23 June	Circuit Choir	St John's	7.30pm
24 June	Church Council	Wombourne	7.30pm
28 June	Fresh Expressions	Shrewsbury	
1 July	Prayers and Bears	Springdale	9.45am for 10am start
2 July	District Network	St Chad's, Shrewsbury	2pm
3 July	Coffee Morning and Singalong	Gospel Ash	10am - 12noon
4 July	Penn & Merryhill "Go Green Go"	Penn URC	5 - 8pm
7 July	Circuit Choir	St John's	7.30pm
8 July	Prayers and Bears	Wombourne	
9 July	Healing, Wholeness and Peace Service	Codsall	7.30pm
12 July	Kids Club	Wombourne	10am - 12noon
12 July	Open Day	Gospel Ash	10am - 4pm
13 July	NCH Sunday		
15 July	Prayers and Bears	Gospel Ash	
15 July	Emmaus Group	Springdale	
20 July	Church Anniversary	Gospel Ash	
21 July	Circuit Choir	St John's	7.30pm
22 July	Emmaus Group	Springdale	
29 July	Emmaus Group	Springdale	
11 - 15 August	Holiday Club	Springdale	
7 September	Triangle Deadline		
31 August	Inaugural Service of the Wolverhampton Circuit	Darlington Street	5pm
21 September	Harvest Festival and Parade	Springdale	10.30am
28 September	Back to Church Sunday	Springdale/ Wombourne	10.30am