

SPOTLIGHT

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2011



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Items for the next issue of Spotlight
to be with Betty Snow

NO LATER THAN

12th February

For Publication on the
4th March

*The picture on our Front Cover was sent in by
Alan Malpass of Centenary Artists and is entitled
'Light of the World'
(See article in this issue)*

Our Circuit Statement

Our mission is to offer signs of the
Kingdom of God and to encourage our
people to develop and use their gifts
and exercise their own ministry.

As you will know, Rev. Malcolm Hope will be moving on at the end of the current Methodist year, and with a Sabbatical to fit in during that time, we won't actually see a great deal more of him. So, if he is planned to come to a church near you, get along to hear him while you still can.

This means, of course, that the stationing process has once again kicked into gear, and I am delighted to be able to tell you that we have found a successful match in a very short space of time, and Rev. Ian Pruden has accepted an invitation* to join the Circuit with effect from September 2012 (another Ian ... that's going to be confusing, isn't it?).

No doubt, we will persuade the new Ian to introduce himself to you when the time comes, but a very quick "taster" appears on page 10 for those of you who can't wait.

However, before we get too excited about what will happen next year, let us not forget our 2011 arrivals. Rev. Ian Wales introduced himself to you in the last issue, and this time it is the turn of Rev. Peggy Heim, and also Rev. Clive Redknapp, recently

appointed as Chaplain at MHA Richmond. I was fascinated to see that Peggy, like me, is an ex-banker (and we are not the only ones in the Circuit!). Isn't it wonderful to know that God can use even ex-bankers to do his work?

We also thought that we ought to make the most of Malcolm's talents while we still have him, and on pages 6-7 you will find a few of his thoughts on the subject of "The *Hope* of being like Jesus". As I read Malcolm's thought-provoking words, I was reminded of the song "My Jesus" by Todd Agnew ... if you have access to the internet, look it up on Youtube. It is one of those songs that hits you right between the eyes with some very uncomfortable truths.

In it, he asks ...

*"Which Jesus do you follow?
Which Jesus do you serve?
If Ephesians says to imitate Christ,
Why do you look so much like the world?"*

And then, later,
*"... my Jesus would never be
accepted in my church –
the blood and dirt on his feet
might stain the carpet".*

* subject to the approval of the Methodist Conference, when it meets next June

By the time that you read this, we will be well into another season of Advent.

Perhaps this year, as we read the familiar stories, we will see that this is more than a story about a child born in a stable – it is the beginning of a remarkable journey in which God himself lived among us, and despite of everything that we did to him - the lashings, the torture, the denial, the betrayal – he still loves us. To reject that love and the blessings that it brings with it is just plain crazy ... isn't it?

Of course, after Christmas is over, there is the annual ritual of making, and then breaking, our New Year's Resolutions.

Now, here's an idea ...what if we were to do what Ephesians says and commit ourselves to imitate Christ?

How long could we keep it up?

What would the effect be if we even managed a poor imitation?

Dare we give it a go?

Keith

My dear friends,

It's a privilege and pleasure to be able to greet you at the beginning of another quarter. When I last wrote, I was preparing to move and the future was unknown. Now I am down to the last few cardboard boxes and it feels as if I have been here for a very long time. That is due in no small measure to the warm and loving welcome that I have received. It is a privilege to be here and I am most grateful. Thank you.

A number of significant things have happened in the last few months. The new Methodist Hymn Book 'Singing the Faith' has appeared and this is already in use at Christchurch. A number of folk have asked 'Do we need a new hymnbook?' We are seeking to make our worship relevant and accessible to people who are far beyond the walls of our Church and there is some excellent new material available to us from many quarters including the Iona Community and some of our finest 21st century hymn writers. We have a responsibility to make our worship and indeed the whole life of our Church such that enables people to hear and respond to the claims of Christ. On the same

note, Martyn Atkins the General Secretary of the Methodist Church has asked us to reflect on what it means for the Methodist Church to be a 'Discipleship Movement'. The Circuit Leadership Team are beginning that discussion and you will be invited at some stage to respond!

Now to the season as I am writing as Advent approaches. Already the shops are heaving with people, the cash registers are singing, carols are playing and already (on 19th November) I have had two Christmas Cards. It seems to me with all our frenetic preparation, that we don't take time to stop and gaze of the wonder of it all, that here in a manger out of sheer love for us all, is God made human for us. His coming in a tiny helpless baby, totally dependant on those around him, declares that there is no human situation he cannot enter. If the world was made flesh and dwelt among us then out of sheer love, he is right alongside me, in all of my joy and in all of my sorrow and often in all of the mess and confusion of our lives. Such a God is worthy of our trust and that should carry us on into the New Year in confidence and hope.

As I write the people of Battle are preparing to vacate their building. This will be a sad time for many

but challenging too as they look to a hopeful new future and the love and prayers of all of us in the Circuit are with them.

As Christmas dawns people will face mixed emotions as for some it is a time of joyful re-union and others a reminder of the pain of loss. But as you come face to face with the new born King and Saviour, may you all be richly blessed by the wonder of his presence and the peace and joy that comes from knowing him.

Thank you for the joy and privilege of serving with you,

With love and blessings

Ian



THE HOPE OF BEING LIKE JESUS

I wonder how gripped we are by the hope of some day being just like Jesus. And how much like Jesus are we as a consequence?

If you want to find out what Jesus was like and what the possibilities are for the Christian, then read the gospels. Look at his reaction to the Pharisees. Do you think Jesus was bothered by the Pharisees? What did Jesus do when he heard that they didn't like it when he healed on the Sabbath? Did he say, "We don't want to offend these people"? "We mustn't do any more any more healing on the Sabbath"? Can you imagine Jesus reacting like that? He just healed whether it was the Sabbath or any other day. They called him a glutton and a drunkard (Matt. 11:19) because he was a friend of tax collectors and "sinners". Did he say, "Oh well, we've got to be careful now"? If he saw somebody coming down the road who was not a very respectable person would Jesus say, "Excuse me, don't let that person see me"? Can you imagine Jesus being like that? He was the same with everybody. Whatever the Pharisees said he didn't let it bother him and put him off course. What was Jesus' reaction to the

poor? He loved them. The gospel of Jesus is the first enterprise in the history of the world that has something to offer to the poor. God is going to bless any ministry that encourages the poor. If you reach out to the poor then you are going to have God taking notice of you. The trouble with Christianity today is that it is selective in its converts. We want a certain 'kind' of person, a certain 'class'. No wonder the Spirit is grieved. The common people, we are told, heard Jesus gladly. He called tax collector Matthew to be one of his disciples – a person hated by his own people; a move not designed to win friends and influence people! But it didn't bother Jesus. He just felt led to call Matthew! And Matthew came!

He accepted Mary Magdalene out of whom was cast seven devils. He affirmed her and she wanted to be with Him as much as possible. It didn't embarrass Him; He just let her come with Him. There was that woman who wiped His feet with her hair and everybody else was horrified. It didn't trouble Jesus what they thought. When Jesus was raised from the dead he dignified Mary Magdalene by allowing her to be the first to see Him.

His reaction to Herod was to say nothing (Luke 23:9). That really

galled Herod! Jesus just didn't say a word. It didn't bother Him. What was His reaction to Pilate? Pilate said (John 19:10,11), "Do you refuse to speak to me? Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me, if it were not given to you from above."

What was His reaction to bearing the cross? He said (Luke 23:28), "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children." There were those who were scoffing, spitting on Him, jeering at Him. He took it all and prayed for their forgiveness (Luke 23:34)

The Christian faith was designed not only to broaden God's family and to bring us to heaven, but to make us fit for heaven. The writer to the Ephesians (1:4) tells us that we are chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. That's what God wants for us – in love. What was the secret of the courage of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? They were like Jesus. That was the secret. What was the secret of Daniel? He carried on praying though he was threatened. He was like Jesus. What was the secret of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet? He was like Jesus. What was the secret of Joseph who

could say to his brothers (Gen. 50:20), "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...the saving of many lives? He was like Jesus. How did Moses in the wilderness tolerate a rebellion? He interceded for them. He was like Jesus. What was the secret of the Apostle Paul? He was like Jesus. The world was turned upside down by people who were just like Jesus.

If we know Jesus, life might seem wonderful now. When He comes again, we will really understand what 'wonderful' means.

If the thought that some day we are going to be just like him grips us, it will have an effect upon us right now. There will be that inward cleansing and we will know now that when He does come we will not be ashamed. Fired with this prospect, the Early Church shouted with delight and with longing, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)

Rev. Malcolm Hope



Three Introductions.....

1st—Rev. Peggy Heim

First of all I would like to thank each and every one of you for the warm welcome I received on my arrival in the Hastings, Bexhill and Rye Circuit. Just today I received some photographs taken after the welcome service at Sackville Road. It was truly a happy and Spirit filled occasion!

I have met many of you already and look forward to meeting the rest of you. Some of you know a bit about me already but I would like to tell you some of my story in these pages.

I was born in Chicago and grew up in Northwest Indiana. I have one sister, Pamela. She has visited me many times since I lived in England and has just enjoyed her first visit to East Sussex. She was quite impressed! My daughter, Caroline, has travelled with me on my journey through theological college and ministry. She has lived in London since 2000 and graduated from University College London in 2006.



I am a life long Methodist crediting my mother with teaching me that church is much more than a place to go on Sunday morning. I entered ministerial training in 1993 after working in banking and finance. I earned a Master of Divinity degree at The Methodist Theological School In Ohio in 1996 and headed off to England as an ‘American Intern’ for one year.

During that year in Wolverhampton it became clear that God was calling me to ministry in England. I returned to my home state of Michigan for a year of full time hospital chaplaincy training and moved to England permanently in 1998. I have served in the East Anglia District (Norwich and Ipswich) for thirteen years.

Some of you may also know I am a devoted Methodist Homes chaplain and I am delighted to continue my association with MHA in the Bexhill, Hastings and Rye Circuit. I have been blessed in many wonderful ways working with MHA staff, residents and families. I am also passionate about dialoguing with people of other faiths.

I am settling in well. I do not need to use my Satnav to get about

every day anymore. (Having said that I did make a few mistakes earlier today!) I still smile every time I catch a glimpse of the sea. Believe me this is a big deal for someone who grew up in Americas Midwest! I still have ‘a few’ boxes to unpack and all the pictures aren’t on the walls yet, but I am confident I will get it all done eventually. Many thanks to those of you who have helped already. (I promise I won’t buy anymore flat pack furniture.) As for hobbies, I am an avid reader and needle worker, enjoy studying history and languages and like travelling both near and far.

Peggy

2nd—Rev. Clive Redknap

Hello! My name is Clive Redknap and I am the (relatively) new chaplain at MHA Richmond. I have been in post since the end of March, taking over from Mervyn Weeks who was chaplain for over two years. I am part - time at Richmond, ministering there for 10 hours a week, roughly for a day and a half. What does a chaplain do? I believe my main role is to be there for the residents. The largest chunk of my time is spent visiting the residents in their rooms or talking in the day room, or even when they are having their hair

done! The conversations we have can be light hearted or deeper and more spiritual. I work on the premise that if our residents get to know and trust me, it is more likely they will turn to me if they have a need. I am blessed to be a chaplain to these folks, they often minister to me.

What else do I do? I take services, particularly the midweek service at 11am on Wednesdays. I am available to the staff and make contact with relatives when I can. There is so much that can be done, but so little time! Lastly I must stress that being the chaplain doesn't mean I'm a one man band, many other people are involved with the spiritual work at MHA. Margaret Bickerdike is a valued colleague and I believe that the Revd. Peggy Heim will be joining us soon. We have wonderful volunteers like Owen and Audrey from Little Common, and those who take the Sunday afternoon service at 4.30 pm. each week. No two days are the same at Richmond and the work has it's challenges, but there are great opportunities to minister here.

Clive.

3rd—Rev. Ian Pruden

As I mentioned in the editorial, subject to the approval of the Methodist Conference, Rev. Ian Pruden has agreed to join our Circuit with effect from September 2012 as a replacement for Rev. Malcolm Hope, who has decided to move on to pastures-new. Your editor was one of those who met Ian briefly during his tour of inspection. In fact, “brief” is an understatement – due to a mix up over times, I arrived at the chapel just as he was leaving and managed only a sixty second conversation with him through the car window as his driver (somewhat pointedly, I thought) revved the engine – no, that isn’t a pun on “rev” – how low do you think I would stoop? Consequently this brief introduction is based, not so much on our conversation as on what I have managed to glean from the internet.

Ian is currently the minister of the “North of the Down” Churches in the Worthing Circuit. This, if my research is reliable, appears to include the churches at Storrington and Steyning. Before that, he served in Circuits in Ashton under Lyne in Greater Manchester, in Oakham in Rutland, followed by Shildon in County Durham.

I understand that Ian is married, with no children of his own, but a keen interest in working with young people and families. He is also very interested in Ecumenical matters, being listed on the website of the Methodist Church, South East District, as the Methodist Ecumenical Officer for Sussex. Isn’t it wonderful what you can pick up from the internet?

I am sure that Ian will introduce himself properly to us all through these pages in due course, so make sure that you pick up your copy regularly. In the meantime, I think that we should express our gratitude to the Stationing Committee, and to our own Circuit Invitations Group, for their efficiency in filling the vacant post so promptly.

Keith



NEWS FROM AROUND THE CIRCUIT

Centenary Artists

Centenary Artists are a self-help group of local amateur artists. We meet at Centenary House adjacent to Christchurch, on a Wednesday afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00pm. The accent is on informality and enjoyment. I am not a trained artist but will help, advise and encourage, we are also keen to share ideas with each other.

Attendees are encouraged to work in any media, and currently we have those who are using watercolour, pastels, coloured pencils, pen and wash, acrylics etc. We make a small charge to cover hiring the facilities. If you would like further details and would like to join if only for a taster please contact me, Alan Malpass on 01424 224785 or oncaxk@tiscali.co.uk.

Alan Malpass

Editor's note—See Alan's lovely picture "The Light of the World" on the front cover of this issue.



Centenary House Church and Community Centre

It has recently been necessary to have some damp treatment work done at the House and this has been completed, together with redecoration, and all has been paid for out of income. During the summer the house was buzzing with German students having their English lessons! Various other groups use the facilities as well as the Circuit Office being there.

The facilities are free to any group from within the circuit and you only have to ask and, assuming it is free, the booking is yours! It is just over 4 years ago that we had the formal opening of 'Centenary House' (27th October 2007) and it is lovely to see quite a lot of activity. But there is space for more if you feel that we can help.

It is also encouraging that the Management Committee at a recent meeting agreed a donation of £3,000 be given to the circuit. If you would like to have a look around or make a booking do not hesitate to call the hotline....01424 216456!

Every blessing,

Barry Turnwell (Bookings Officer)



Remembrance Sunday at Park Road Methodist Church

Over the years I have attended many services of Remembrance – some good, some indifferent, but I must say how memorable Margaret Bickerdike’s was at Park Road in 2010.

First her little chat to the children about the significance of the poppy. Then just before 11 am to stop the hymn ‘Oh God our help in ages past’ leaving the last two verses to sing after the Act of Remembrance and letting us sit quietly in our seats.

Then, suddenly echoing through the church the chimes of Big Ben and the rattle of the gun marking the moment. My mind immediately went to Whitehall and the Cenotaph. This was just not Park Road’s Act of Remembrance, but we had, through the use of a pocket radio, been made part of the national act

and so I found it far more moving than normal. I wonder how many more in the congregation felt as moved as I did.

Vic Chalcraft – Park Road

*We received this article last year, but unfortunately it was too late to be included in the appropriate issue. We’ve been saving it all year ... you see, you never know what treats we might have for you up our metaphorical sleeves..
Editors.*

MWiB

(Previously Network)

On Saturday the 8th October, six members of Hastings, Bexhill and Rye Circuit travelled to Haywards Heath Methodist Church for the MWiB District Day.

Unfortunately there were only 28 members who attended, but those of who were there had an excellent insight of our two year project – MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship).

The morning started off with coffee and biscuits and then we all went into the church for our opening worship led by Rev. Dr. David Chapman (Superintendent Minister). This was followed by an excellent overall presentation of the work involved in MAF, by their Regional Coordinator for Kent and East Sussex) Mr Barry J. Langford – he got several of us involved in this presentation

firstly he asked for an engineer who ‘constructed the aeroplane’. A pilot and other people who would be picked up and landed at different venues were ‘roped’ in as we ‘travelled’ around the country, each being given a ‘prop’ to carry out their duties. Alongside the ‘aeroplane’ a PowerPoint presentation was being run showing the various places and people we met on our journey. His presentation was entitled ‘Before you go’ and it was the story of the journey each member takes from the UK to the Mission Field, and we looked at being called and raising support, leaving home and the preparations one has to make for entry into Mission Country.

Many of the landing strips for the aeroplanes were just mud with many puddles, and also they were not very long, certainly no jumbo jet could land there! These planes with their pilots do a fantastic job as many of the roads are impassable and it would take many weeks to get from A to B. For those wishing to become pilots and fly to these outlying places training is given and there is a strict rule that there is no flying after dark. For the

purpose of Barry Langford’s presentation I was ‘trained’ as the pilot of our make believe plane and it appears that we arrived safely at our destination, which is pretty good as I can easily get lost driving my car in East Sussex!!

We then broke up into groups – “Living and Working There” led by Emma Steward (Public Relations Officer) - this involved looking at the daily challenges of living in another country and also working in a foreign community.

“Raising Prayer and Financial Support” led by Hilary Brown (Executive Assistant to the CEO) - looking at new and successful ways to raise support through MwiB. The last of these groups was entitled “Disaster Relief” and was led by Kevin Cook (Head of MAF in the Community) and looked at how we respond to disasters and how can we improve our response.

Members of the District joined in some lively discussions in these groups, and it appears that we gave the representatives from MAF quite a lot to think about.

This is our second year of the Project raising money for MAF and we will be commencing a



different project later on in 2012. So when our Gift Day comes around on June 25th 2012 please give as generously as you can for this very worthwhile cause. Also, on July 9th (12.30 for 1pm) there will be a two course meal followed by coffee and mints at a pre-booked ticket price of £8.00 per person – this will be held in Sackville Road Methodist Church Hall.

Tickets will be limited in number so if you are interested in attending please contact Betty Snow and she will reserve a ticket for you.

Betty Snow – Secretary HBR Circuit

A Little Bit of History.

In 2010 with the thoughts about moving to a new Methodist Centre in Battle becoming more concrete thoughts turned to history. So about a year ago someone said, ‘We must have a history of the Battle Chapel to celebrate all the years we have been in it!’ Well I held my hand up and said I would give it a go....some weeks later I had started to track down the data and became a bit carried away. So I wrote a book, not just about the Battle Methodist Chapel, which was started in 1826, but about

ALL the churches of Battle.

The first church in Battle was started in 1070 – this of course was the Abbey Church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the blessed Virgin and St Martin. Since then new churches have been founded in Battle from time to time....and most have a significant history to tell.

The Abbey Church was followed by St. Mary’s Parish Church sometime after 1102, after which there was a big gap. The next church was Presbyterian started in 1698. This faded and was replaced by Baptist Calvinists in the late 1700s followed by an intense schism into Particular Baptists and Universalists who would become Unitarians. The Unitarians in turn faded away in the late 1800s, but the Baptists have survived to this day...although they have had a bumpy path losing members to Strict Baptist and Congregational Churches, neither of which has survived. Battle Methodists were created in 1804 and their first minister came from the Baptists! At first they met in houses or in the open air, but built the Chapel in 1826 which was extended some 50 years later. At about the same time as the Chapel was extended a Catholic Church was built, funded by the earl of Ashburnham and a new C of E Chapel was

constructed at Telham (The Church of the Ascension).

The book, which eventually ran to over 200 illustrated pages is now available for sale. It is a non-commercial publication and every penny of profit that it makes will go to the Battle Methodist Church Re-location.

Keith Foord

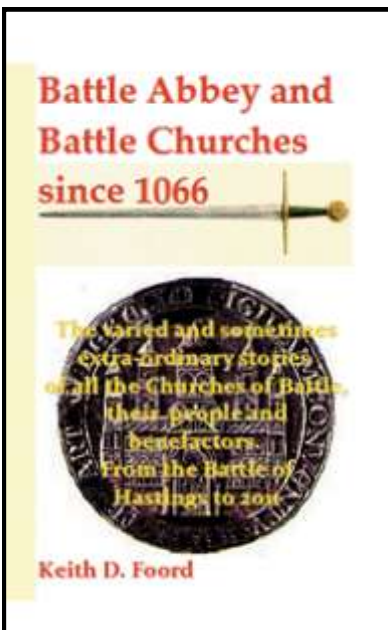
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Church**



**A letter from Ann Rudy who
runs the Acorn Project in
Zambia**

Greetings from us all at The Acorn Project.

The temperature is 38c and the Rainy Season seems to have started so it should get a few degrees cooler very soon.

I can hear the sound of distant thunder and the sky is full of a mixture of purple and grey clouds.

The rain will fall heavily very soon. Then the electricity will go off and little charcoal burners come into use for boiling water and cooking simple meals.

I will do a check of all rooms to ensure that the rain is not penetrating my rusty roof sheets and soaking into the ceiling board !! So far so good!!

Today is Saturday so the children are all with their families and I am checking the year end test papers they wrote this week. On Thursday and Friday 54 children read to me. The ones in Pre School do simple word recognition with their teachers and some manage to read short sentences.

It is always hugely gratifying

when a child who joined us earlier in the year, sometimes sullen and despairing at ever being able to read, comes to me, shoulders back, a huge grin on her face, and reads me her Peter and Jane book from beginning to end.

From January 2012 we are going to concentrate on younger children and those with learning difficulties from pre school to Grade 3.

This will mean that they can then go into main stream education with a high level of literacy and we can offer more children a chance to learn English at an early age.

Next week the children will be reviewing their test papers and thereafter begin to prepare for Open Day, Prize Giving and The Nativity Play, all on December 17th. We close from that day and open on January 9th.

We have an urgent need to raise cash to dig and build and roof 4 pit latrines. With so many children coming to the Project those within the house are not enough. They will cost between £500 and £700 to build and we would be very grateful for any fund raising that our friends in the UK could organise to help us achieve this really important necessity.

2 of the little girls coming to the Project lost their mother a few weeks ago. Dorothy was a very nice woman and an excellent mother. I had known her for many years. The medicine she had been taking for AIDS was no longer working and she grew steadily weaker over the last 8 months of her life.

The little boy who's mother and father had AIDS and TB has reached his 4th birthday. He is a little undersized but healthy and all his AIDS tests are coming back negative. We helped with milk powder and other essentials from when he was a very, very weak 10 months old baby. His parents consider his survival a miracle and recently organised a thanksgiving party attended by members of their Church. I was invited to attend and really enjoyed the singing and dancing.

Rosa, the little girl with hydrocephalus and epilepsy has not improved much since her hospitalisation a year ago. She is very frail and her mother has the full time job of looking after her as well as several other children and her husband. Rosa cannot eat solid food so we send her custards and milk from my cows. So sad that such a brave child has had so much

suffering in her short life.

I find that running The Project is a big responsibility, a huge privilege, a sometime sadness but mostly an immeasurably joyful experience.

It is almost nine years since I watched the first children come through my front door and wondered if we would be capable of helping them to grow in mind body and spirit. I now believe that God 's plan for the little ones who come to us includes giving all the adults here the strength and commitment to help them develop into happy healthy confident children.

Thank you for your continued support and loving kindness to us. We wish you a Warm and Happy Christmas and Good Health and Contentment in 2012.

Ann Rudy. Project coordinator

PS

My Jackal, Rusty of whom I wrote previously is now 14 months old and grown into a very handsome animal who sits with me and the cats in the evening, plays with a ball, "fleas my hair", or licks my ear.

He likes to have his back scratched with a stick and nips my ankle to let me know if he thinks I have stopped too soon !

He will never be able to be permanently released into the wild as he has been with me since he was a few days old and bottle fed. He was found by my gate and it was difficult to know if he was a puppy or a kitten. He fitted into the palm of my hand.

He has never hunted or scavenged and likes a diet of cooked chicken, dog biscuits, lettuce, bread and milk and the occasional jelly baby!

He cannot go out in the daytime as the dogs would probably kill him. When the sun goes down I open the window in the room where he sleeps in the hope that he will eventually go out for a walk and have enough sense to come home again . So far he just puts his head out the window and sniffs the night air !!

I had no idea 14 months ago that this little fellow would play such a big part in my life !!

Rusty obviously knows which side his bread is buttered..

RAM GIDOOMAL BECOMES CHAIR OF TRAIDRAFT BOARD

For international entrepreneur and philanthropist Ram Gidoomal, being confronted with the poverty in a Mumbai slum was a life changing experience. Born in 1950 into a Kenyan Asian family, raised in the Hindu and Sikh faiths and educated at a Muslim school Ram came to Britain as a 16-year old refugee.

With the £2000 maximum they were allowed to bring with them, the family bought its first shop in Shepherds Bush, London.

From there Ram read physics at Imperial College – partly because it was a 5p bus ride away so he could do his shift behind the counter. It was also where he became a Christian.

After university, he joined Lloyds Bank International and two years later his wife’s uncle invited him to join his multi-million commodity business. Not yet 40 Ram was at the helm of this business when he flew to Mumbai.

“Being taken to Dharavi, then the largest slum in Asia was just too much. The poverty was stark and in your face. It was awful”.

Although the business had



established its own charitable foundation to provide scholarships for needy students, it was he says boardroom benevolence, always at a distance. Mumbai shocked him into doing more.

“It challenged me as to what my faith really meant. We give, we have Bible studies where we talk about these things, we pray for the poor but this really got to me at a very deep level. It made me ask: What is causing all this? What am I doing about what is going on here?”

What I did was to return to the UK and, with a few Christian friends, set up Christmas Cracker which in the 1990s galvanised 50,000 teenagers to raise £5m for development projects, by running such things as “eat less pay more” restaurants, “tune in, pay out” radio stations, and “really useful gift shops” sourcing

goods from Traidcraft, among others.

The experience and the response set the pattern for his future. Leaving the family business, he has since devoted his considerable energies to a range of social enterprises and charitable activities, founding and serving on numerous bodies, trusts and taskforces.

He has also twice stood as a candidate for Mayor of London where, although not successful, his rich cultural and faith background has drawn wide ranging support.

“What drives me to seek justice for the poor is my faith, while my commercial experience has convinced me that what I call transformational business has a vital role to play.

So when the opportunity arose to apply for the role of Chair of Tradecraft I was obviously very interested and excited. I thought: this will be very, very interesting to get involved at a more formal level rather than just a consumer or a partner as in the days gone by. “Traidcraft has a very important role, even though one can argue the mainstream stores are beginning to take this onto their agenda.

“Even though it may look as if Traidcraft has succeeded, there is

still a great deal more to be done. It is great to see the impact so far but it is just a beginning. It is something that needs to be integrated into the DNA of every major multiple and their supply chain.”

It’s quite a challenge but one which he feels both he and the organisation is ready for.

“I believe you should never let what you can’t do stop you from doing what you can do.” I am looking forward to it. I really am.”

Sent in by Rev. Michael Ward



Safeguarding in the Methodist Church

The whole circuit has been safeguarded!!!!
Hopefully!!!

We have attended safeguarding training with the district safeguarding officer.

We have approved our new policies, appointed safeguarding officers in all our churches and finally we can sit back and relax!!!

Sorry BUT, although we have set these things up and are adhering to practice guidelines, we as churches should be consistent in our thinking, bold in our prayers and relevant in our teachings regarding this, perhaps setting up a charter that underlines all we believe in Christ.

Les Gilchrist

NEWS FROM THE CHAPELS

Battle

The move has begun – but not yet to the new building!

On Saturday 19th November we held an informal time of praise for the 185 years in which people have worshipped in the Chapel. How pleased we were that so many came to be with us from other churches in the Circuit as well as from other churches in Battle! It was a time of thanksgiving as we remembered people who have met here, encouraged one another, and served God in this place. Barry Turnwell spoke of his memories as one who has worked in Battle and got to know the town, and also as a Local Preacher who has led many services in the Chapel. And our minister Peggy led some reflections on journeying – both in

the past during the life-time of this church building, and as we move on to the next building.

The next day we had our last, very special service in the Chapel that was built in 1826, led by both Ian Wales and Peggy. Ann Mendes spoke of the countless people and families for whom the Chapel has held very dear memories, and there were tears in many eyes! One of our younger and then one of the older members of the church read Bible lessons. Ian brought a message that was both challenging and encouraging, focussing especially on God's purposes and promises of provision and our need to "Wait" as we move into what is still largely unknown. We shared Holy Communion. As Peggy declared that the time has come for this congregation to take leave of Battle Methodist Chapel we continued the thanksgiving for how it has served our faith well: for worship, for bringing people to faith, for building up families in marriages, baptisms, funerals, and sending people out to serve God in the world. And we prayed for the ongoing church's journey of faith.

For now we have moved across the road to the Senlac Inn. This is our temporary home until the new building is finished, and we expect that to be up and running late in

the Autumn of 2012. We have agreed the main design with our architect, and are tweaking the outside appearance of it, to submit to the local Planning Committee for approval. We have agreed that the name of the building will be ‘Emmanuel Centre – the home of Battle Methodist Church’.

What a change is worshipping in a pub from what we have been used to! It is far too early to be able to describe our Sunday mornings. And we have yet to discover what will be good practice here, or what will be most helpful to enable people to worship in such a totally different environment. We wonder – is this what it was like for the Israelites taken into exile? Yet at the same time we recognise that many Christians are deliberately moving into new situations in order to reach people they have not been in touch with before. And at its heart that is what our move is about. We feel so inadequate and unprepared for such a venture. But if God has prompted us to take this bold step then we are trusting that he knows his plans, and we have to seek his guidance at every turn.

This has been in our minds throughout this year. In our house groups we have had sessions checking what it is we believe, and have found these most affirming.



The Senlac Inn—temporary home of Battle Methodist Church

Then we moved on to how we may talk personally about our faith within a safe and friendly atmosphere, with the aim of being prepared to talk more readily outside our Christian circles of friends. This autumn we have been discussing Frequently Asked Questions – the kind of things people ask, sometimes cynically, about life in the world around us. Again the aim has been to build up our confidence by sharing thoughts in a group where we know everyone accepts us as we are, so that we may be able to talk more freely when in a wider context. We have seen that although we differ in some of our views we can respect one another. One of the most significant discoveries is that we do not, as Christians, have set answers to tell people about particular questions they are facing, but if we can love one another in spite of our

differences then others can feel safe when they are with us. What we can share is hope. And in a cynical and broken world that is the greatest gift we can offer!

David Freeland

Calvert

As I write this, the sun is setting on a most beautiful Remembrance Sunday. The warmth of the sun has been remarkable and the autumn light has shown us yet again the true wonders of our Lord's creation. We've had an enjoyable social autumn season at Calvert with two main events: our Harvest weekend started with a fun evening of Dominoes following a bring & share supper. It was lovely to see Lynda Johnson again who led our Harvest morning service. For our Missions Sunday we had a Soup lunch after the morning service, a good time of fellowship while promoting and raising money for mission work. Our children are avid collectors for JMA, rattling their pots or collecting regular donations from those of us listed in their book each week and this year they raised £510.71. Our top collector Rebecca Counsell collected an amazing £145.00, a

big well done to them all. But now we look forward to the season of advent and at Calvert the rehearsing has already begun. This year our annual nativity service on the morning of Sunday 11th December is a joint venture of the Sunday club and choir performing the Roger Jones musical *Stargazers*. Our young people love to sing and are also joining some adult members of our congregation to put on the first pantomime at Calvert for some years: *Babes in St Helen's Woods*, written by our own Mick Pegram. We'd love to see you there. Oh yes we would !!

Dates for your diary:

Sat 4th December	
<i>Christmas Fayre</i>	10.30 – 1.00pm
Fri 16th December	
<i>Choir Concert</i>	7.30pm
Sun 18th December	
<i>Carol Service</i>	4.00pm
Fri 6th January 2012	
<i>Babes in St Helen's Wood</i>	7.30pm

Two members of our congregation, Don and Mary Bridger, are celebrating 60 years of marriage on Thursday 17th November and we send our love and congratulations to them.

Adele Binns

Christchurch

Our publication date just allows time to remind readers of the Christchurch Singers 'Christmas Praise' evening on Sunday 11th December at 6pm. Very few of our churches will have an evening service that day so please try to come along. It should once again be a lovely evening of music and song and the collection will be taken to support the newly developing 'Bexhill Street Pastors' programme.

Advent and Christmas does make a wonderful opportunity to reach out to the neighbourhood and Candlelight and Candle of Hope services are quite popular. We also intend to do some carol singing around the streets and at two local Homes – finishing with the obligatory supper to follow!

Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on a Sunday - it will be interesting to see how many folk manage to get to worship. It may be encouraging as people seek to have a little respite from the celebrations at their homes!

It is also most encouraging to see that the Royal Mail has honoured the birth of our Saviour on its Christmas stamps this year. The first and second class stamps show Jesus in the arms of Mary, and the

angel appearing to Joseph. The reference to St Matthew's Gospel is clearly seen. Hallelujah!

As the year comes to an end perhaps we can thank all those who help with communications within our churches and circuit. It can sometimes be a thankless task (we all like spotting the one error don't we?) but how will they know if they are not told – to misquote the Bible! Thank you to you all.

We at Christchurch wish the readers a very blessed and meaningful Christmas And may peace, joy and hope be yours in 2012. As the slogan says – 'Christmas starts with Christ...'.
Barry Turnwell.

Hollington

Greetings from Hollington. So much has happened since I last wrote. We said farewell to Stephen and Angela and welcomed Peggy, our first female minister at Hollington. Having had our minister as Superintendent since 1995, when Gordon Lemmon took charge of us, we have had to revise some of our procedures. I didn't realise how much we took for granted the amount of correspondence that didn't need sending as the Super

was at our meetings and did what was needed automatically.

A month after Peggy's arrival we were invited to the induction of the new vicar at St John's, Hollington. Luke Dean has moved from the Ramsgate area and is married to Jane, from Colorado, USA. She has only been in England just over a year and was very pleased to be introduced to Peggy.

In view of these new ministerial appointments we are not having a combined fair for Christmas this year so we have a 'Come for Coffee, stay for Lunch' time of fellowship with shopping opportunities and a chance to chat to Father Christmas. This is Saturday 10th December from 10.00am to 1.00pm. I don't know if you will have seen this Spotlight before then, but you will hopefully have seen posters or the web site and will have supported us.

Fellowship on a Thursday continues to bring 18 - 25 of us together each week. Recently we have had visits from Servants with Jesus, the Royal British Legion, Beachy Head Chaplains, and a retired Policeman which have all been very interesting.

Stephen Page's lunchtime piano recitals have not done so well

recently so have stopped but we have had 2 lunches on Thursday's in October and November. The latter was changed by a week to coincide with American Thanksgiving Day - 24th -, and Jane Dean has been invited, and replied that she would attend. Our next lunch should be 16th February 2012, weather permitting.



Having had to cancel our Christian Aid sing last year, we have put on hold until the Spring another venture of similar style. Methodist Relief & Development have asked if they can send us a speaker, so we plan to tie in that event and a sing, with tea, on a Saturday afternoon. We will keep you informed and hope you will be able to join us.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas, and peaceful, healthy New Year.

Dawn Novis.

Little Common

It is hard to believe that Ian Wales has only been in the Circuit for just a few weeks! So quickly has he settled in (despite a few boxes in the Manse still unpacked) and taken up the reigns that to many of us it seems that he has been here for a much longer time. We look forward to working under his leadership.

The autumn has begun with some sadness, for we had to announce the deaths of Ruby Bentley and Ann Faires. Also no longer with us is the Rev. Keith Trice who died on 18th September. Keith will be very sadly missed at Little Common, both as a fine preacher, as a good friend and a very willing helper.

Most recently has been the loss of Laurie Pullen. Laurie was one of our small team of organists and was playing up to the beginning of October, having played at Little Common for very many years.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of all these folk.

Now, as our thoughts begin to turn towards Advent, we send greetings to all in the Circuit for a very healthy and blessed Christmas.

Roger M. Stepney – Senior Steward

Ninfield

“Sing we the King who is coming to reign:

Glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain.”

Christmas is coming once more and we look forward to our Carol Service (weather permitting!) Last year, all preparations were in place when down came the snow and the service was cancelled.

We had a very happy Harvest Festival, led by our new Minister, Rev. Ian Wales, and attended by the local Scouts. Our little church was packed. The following Sunday, twenty-five people gathered for a faith tea after the service.

Our membership is now nine, but we are pleased that most Sunday, the congregation counts well into double figures.

Having lost our regular organist, John Saunders, who moved to be nearer his family, we are grateful to Ian who comes to play the piano for us when he can, and also to Sylvia from Christchurch, who comes on other Sundays.

We are looking forward to the future under Ian’s leadership. He is positive and enthusiastic, and we look forward to

expanding the outreach in the village.

A notable date will be December 23rd. On that day Ann Winborn celebrates her 99th Birthday. She was our organist for many years and still worships with us regularly.

Christmas greetings from Ninfield to all our friends around the Circuit.

Topsy Brice

Park Road

Our Autumn Bazaar had a Harry Potter Theme with prizes for the best fancy dress. We raised over £900.

We have had work done on the church roof and discovered more work needing doing – as always! We are excited to have new leadership in All Age Sunday School. They are introducing music, new crafts, drama and fun themed games, occasionally singing to the congregation. We are looking forward to what they are preparing for the Nativity.

Like other Churches we have sent boxes to Rumania, nearly 40 of them.

We are looking forward to going as a group to the pantomime at The Stables Theatre on December

17th. What fun!

Watch this space in the new year for a Quiz, March 17 and a Barn Dance, May 12.

Michael Ward

Pett

There are promising signs of new life at Pett. As we approach Advent, we look forward to a very special Christmas Day service, to be led by Malcolm, during which we will welcome no less than three new members into our church family.

David, Carol and Amy Shortman are well known to us already, and perhaps we will tell you a little more about them after the event. However, I should probably admit that Amy is a former mistress of mine (on the stage, I hasten to add) while Carol is a former mistress of many (a school mistress ... what did you think I meant?).

Meanwhile, our Sunday Club (Junior Church) has four very boisterous members who keep visiting preachers on their toes.

As most of you will know, we make much use of audio/visual technology in our worship, and we have become aware that the images from our projector have been deteriorating badly in quality

over recent months. At first, we didn't notice the gradual decline, but when some people could no longer read the words of hymns on the screen, we knew that action had to be taken. It is a measure of the progress in technology that the replacement was less than half the price of the first projector, and yet now we have brighter and sharper pictures and text than ever. It really can make a big difference to the worship experience when it works properly.

Finally, let me remind you of one of the highlights of our calendar, which is "Carols In The Barn", as always hosted by our friends Tim and Anne at Pickham Farm. No screen, no fancy gadgets—just real animals, straw bails, great fellowship and mulled wine.

The event raises money for Farm Africa, a marvellous charity, and no doubt Tim will tell us about his recent fund-raising effort, a half-marathon across the Massai Mara.

It is on Saturday 17th December, starting at 6.30pm. Join us if you can, and remember to bring warm clothes, wellies, a torch and your best singing voice.

Happy Christmas.

Keith

Rye

I am writing these thoughts, reports and comments at a time when Remembrance is very much part of our experience. A couple of days ago, we commemorated the anniversary of Armistice Day and, in common with many companies, institutions and organisations, at my workplace we observed two minutes silence at 11.00 am. This, at one and the same time, commemorates the moment when, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the guns fell silent to bring to an end the Great War in 1918 and also affords us the opportunity to respectfully honour the memory of all those brave men and women, who gave their lives to protect this country and preserve its freedom. The fact that today we live in a democracy, where we have freedom of speech and expression, where we can worship openly and freely and go about our business without fear of intervention or persecution, provided that we act within the law, is due in no small part to their sacrifice. This freedom brings with it responsibility and part of that responsibility is to make sure that we remember. Remembrance means that we must do what we can to ensure that we continue to

honour with respect and gratitude those sacrifices that have been made throughout many years and continue to be made, so that we can flourish in the freedom that has been afforded to us and continues to be upheld and maintained on our behalf.

As we did in the previous edition, we ask you, please, to continue to pray for Pat Foster, who is in the Laurels Nursing Home following a stroke and who has still not regained her speech. One of our members at Rye, Mrs Joyce Purrington, has spent the last two and a half months in hospital following a fall, when she broke her hip. She is due to come home a couple of days after I write this, having been well cared for in the Conquest Hospital in Hastings to begin with, and more recently at the Irvine Unit in Bexhill.

The Guild programme has begun another year. After having had to cancel the first meeting in September, the meeting in October was treated to a demonstration of cake decoration by one of our own members, Mrs Shirley Gibson. In November, an outing is planned to Tenterden Garden centre for a Christmas themed lunch.

The choir, having sung for Harvest, which this year in Rye was celebrated on October 2nd, when we were pleased to welcome as our

preacher Rev. Richard Dengate, is busy preparing and rehearsing music for the Christmas and Advent season. As a church choir, we are affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music. This affords us several benefits. If we need to purchase new music, we can, as members, obtain a discounted price, which is very helpful, because music copies nowadays are expensive. This organisation also runs courses up and down the country and in October (8th) in our area a choral workshop on music for Advent was held at St. Mary's (the parish church) in Rye. We decided that this would be a good way to find music for the advent season. It was an afternoon of learning and practising new music and gave us the opportunity to sing as part of a much larger group and the afternoon culminated in an act of worship which included pieces of music that we had learnt earlier in the workshop. In the last two or three months of the year, as we prepare music for Advent and Christmas, we are joined by friends from across the area and often from across the denominational divide. Because for that time our numbers are swelled, we are able to be more adventurous in the music that we choose to perform. As we look to the future, we pray

that we are able to continue our witness through music, in spite of the fact that decreasing numbers threaten our existence. It's in times such as these, that our commitment is crucial and essential. If you know of people who have a love of music and who might like to join the choir, please mention us and, in the meantime, please hold us in your prayers. Don't forget that all our friends from the circuit are always welcome here in Rye.

Paul Martin

Sackville Road

Sackville Road continues to survive despite the inevitable decline in membership (due to age, I hasten to add, not to any fault of the church or the congregation). Sadly the incoming new members are insufficient to balance the situation. No doubt we are not alone with this dilemma, but it saddens me in as much that we have this lovely building which deserves to serve the generations to come, having survived the past one hundred and fifteen years! I fear it may go the way of other churches in Bexhill and fall into the greedy hands of the developers, which due to its prime position in the town centre increases its vulnerability.

One only has to look further along Sackville Road to assess the approaching danger. We must put our trust in the Lord; collections and donations will not be enough to fight this invidious enemy.

Paul Kapp

St. Helens

As I write, we have just received news that our oldest member, Lou Lloyd, or Nan, as we all knew her, has just passed away. When Lou was born, St. Helens was a comparatively young church, as she was 102 years old. In that time, church going and churches have changed tremendously. Like so many other churches, our numbers have diminished greatly, and the age of the worshippers has increased, but we are still here!

102 years ago, when Lou was born, who would have contemplated events such as 'Messy Church'? Our last effort was extremely well supported, with over 60 participants, who all had a wonderful afternoon, which was based on the theme of 'Jesus the Light of the World'. New time, new ways of 'being church'. Sundays are so different from Sundays of years ago, so it is good to see the hall filled to overflowing on a weekday. Nowadays the shops are open on Sunday, and divided families mean that children

often spend weekends with Dad, or Mum, as the case may be, because of the increase in separation or divorce. As Christmas communities we need to use weekdays as well as Sundays to spread the new of God's love.

We rejoice in Lou's long life, as we rejoice in 'Messy Church'. The long life of St. Helens may well be coming to an end, or is it a new beginning? We are contemplating our future seriously. There may be many options, or only a few – we don't know. The future is in God's hands. The old hymn *I am not skilled to understand, what God has wrought, what God has planned I only know at His right hand sits one who is my Saviour*. So we will serve Him wherever he leads us.

We were sorry to lose Marion in September, but have been very happy to welcome Malcolm as our new Minister, and we are grateful to him for taking us on in addition to all his other work in the circuit. Before Marion left, we had our annual, delightful garden party at Daisy's home, which we all enjoy, and which raises money for St. Helens. We thank her for her yearly hospitality.

On a lighter note, we are now rehearsing for our next pantomime. This year is a production of "Jack and the Beanstalk". Again our

collections will be in aid of St. Michael's Hospice. Our rehearsals are a laugh a minute, so do come and join us if you can in January. Some of our cast have joined us through first coming to our Toddler group and are now very much part of St. Helens.

We send our greetings to all in the circuit and we wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas.

June Turner

Trinity

Hello everyone! Greetings once again from Trinity.

Casting my mind back, does not seem to bring inspiration, but maybe things will hopefully improve. It seems to have been a rather quiet time for us. Although we have welcomed our new minister Rev Peggy Heim and new super Rev Ian Wales and we are getting to know each other. The sun shone on us for our coffee morning in September and the sum of £313.29 was raised for our refurbishment fund, thanks to all who came and supported us, we had a lovely time together. Christmas will be the next occasion and will soon be here, as it was brought home to me today when the first Christmas card arrived, all the way from Australia (must get my overseas ones sorted)! Our Carol Service this year will be on

Sunday 11th December at 3.00 followed by seasonal refreshments. It would be lovely if you could join with us.

To finish....

Q: Why did the scarecrow receive the Nobel Peace Prize?

A: Because he was outstanding in his field.....

That's all folks.

With love from

Joy and all at Trinity.

Winchelsea

A big 'thank you' to all who supported the Quiz Night in October when we had 17 tables and the Parkhurst Hall was packed! Roy Pepper was our genial question Master ably assisted by Keith Miller who supplied an amazing range of illustrations as well as a computerised score card! Congratulations to the team from Battle who won – and if you ever want to decipher a hymn tune played backwards they are the people to ask!! Why would you want to play a tune backwards I ask myself?? The evening raised £500 for the Chapel and we are most grateful.

One week later our Harvest Celebration was in full swing led by our Superintendent Minister – who took the opportunity to preach

from the 'Wesley' pulpit. A challenging and inspiring service and our thanks to the Rev Ian Wales and all who helped in any way.

Now to the future! Our last 2011 event is the customary Carol Service on Wednesday 14th December at 7pm and we do hope for a good crowd. It is usually a lovely time of celebration as we reflect upon Advent and Christmas. Seasonal light refreshments will follow.

As usual, the New Year opens with a service to link with the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity and this will be on Sunday 22nd January at 3pm in our Chapel. Whilst the Methodists will lead the service the Rector of Winchelsea and Vicar of Icklesham, the Rev. Canon Howards Cocks will preach (usually again from the 'Wesley' pulpit!). One final date – Saturday February 18th at 10am for 10.30am we are delighted that our morning will be led by the Rev Peggy Heim.

The Chapel appreciates the grants that have been received from the Circuit and the District and further renovations and decoration will be put in hand over the winter months (but will not affect our events). Thank you to all who support the Chapel (the oldest active Methodist Chapel in the South East District).

*Barry Turnwell
Publicity Officer.*



*Above - An illustration from Keith Foord's new book "**Battle Abbey and Battle Churches Since 1066**" (see article on pages 14-15). Taken in the early 1900s, the Methodist (Wesleyan) Chapel can be clearly seen on the right and, just left of centre, the Railway Inn, now the Senlac Inn, which will be home for the next few months to Battle Methodist Church.*

***Q.** What was the full name of the original church within the grounds of Battle Abbey?*

***A.** The Abbey Church of the Holy Trinity, the blessed Mary, forever virgin, also the blessed Martin, confessor of Christ.*

Try to remember that - you never know, it might come up in a future Circuit Quiz.

P.S. I have read the book and recommend that you buy copies for all of your friends for Christmas.

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