

# SPOTLIGHT



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The Hat



The Newsletter of the Hastings, Bexhill & Rye  
Circuit of the Methodist Church, UK  
[www.hbrmethodists.org.uk](http://www.hbrmethodists.org.uk)

## *In This Issue*

Welcome to the Summer issue of Spotlight Magazine. When the Editorial group met to plan the content of this issue, the country was gripped by wedding fever, the media awash with speculation about every detail of the forthcoming nuptials.

A few weeks later, it is almost as if nothing ever happened. The news pundits have returned to the familiar territory of Brexit, the economy, and the “will they, won’t they?” saga that is the relationship between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un.

But just now and again, something quite extra-ordinary happens. Lee Ridley, a sufferer from cerebral palsy who can’t speak, refuses to be restrained by his condition, and wins “Britain’s Got Talent.” Calling himself the “No Voice Guy”, and wearing a T-shirt that proclaims “I’m only in it for the parking”, he makes people laugh with his ready, intelligent wit, and his quirky take on life. Far from being an object of ridicule, he owned the stage and he absolutely won on merit.

His mother thought he was crazy when he said he wanted to be a stand-up comedian.

Does it sound familiar?

In first century Galilee, nobody thought that a humble carpenter could ever come to much. And yet the original “No Voice Guy”, a Jew, a tradesman from an unheard of backwater called Nazareth, went on to change the world.

Despite his apparent weakness, despite the ridicule and the suffering, he went on to win the greatest victory. And he won because of who he is, and not of what he appeared to be.

In this issue as always, besides some fascinating articles, we report on the “ordinary” goings on from around the Circuit.

But don’t be fooled - life in Galilee, under the oppression of Roman rule, probably seemed ordinary, even something of a treadmill - but that is exactly when God decided to spring his greatest surprise.

*Keith*

### **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.

# How will you be remembered?

Dear Friends,

My favourite subject at school was, by a long way, history. To relax I love reading about people whose lives were very different to ours yet have a place in the story of life that happened before us. I find it fascinating to think about people who have been here before us, living out their faith. I love, as most of you know, visiting holy places like cathedrals and thinking about worship offered there prior to my visit, for centuries. What did the people who sat in the choir stall where I am sitting tonight for an evensong look like, what were their problems, what was God like for them, what were the things that took up their time?

The other Thursday, on Wesley Day, 24<sup>th</sup> May, Lis and I were able to join in the commemorative events marking the 280<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Wesley's conversion. Prior to going unwillingly to a meeting in Aldersgate Street, and having his heart warming experience, he was led to go to evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, and part of the worship



that evening was the choir singing an anthem based on the words of Psalm 130, "Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord, hear my voice." I sat under the dome 280 years after that visit by Wesley and found it very powerful to listen to a choir sing the same anthem to a different world but sharing the same message. God's message is timeless and relevant for every generation. Perhaps the social problems of 1738 were not that different from those we get involved in in 2018. It's fun to imagine.

Remembering the stories of the past is vital as history can explain why things are as they are today. My first appointment was to a mill town north of Manchester. I arrived in the small town called Mossley and wondered why it was close knit. Everyone knew everyone else; the older generation felt no need to leave the town. Manchester City Centre was ten miles away and many of them had never been into Manchester! Someone set the Co-op alight. Elderly ladies sat in deck chairs watching it, numb with shock. The shock of having to shop in the next town was real. Why did they have this strange behaviour? Because all of them had worked in a mill in the town, they'd met their husbands there, their children worked there, their social life was round the mill, their chapel life was with their workmates, and

their world was small. Had I not done some reading and talking with some of my lovely first congregation about their past, I would not have understood their present.

The past can be a very different world to ours today. My Mum and Dad bought their house in Harpenden in 1959, on a very quiet country lane. Today, 59 years later, it is on the busiest road in the town. We're trying to sell it, but so far people don't want to consider living in it because the road is too busy. Sometimes also letting the past go is hard. I'm finding it very hard seeing my Mum's house on the internet on an estate agent's website and also seeing some of my Mum's stuff on stalls at church events having donated a box full of her delights to Dave Williams!

The leaflet they gave to us at evensong at St Paul's reminded us that evening we were joining in a conversation between God and humanity that has gone on since the beginning of time, long before we were born, and which will continue long after we have gone.

Today we can make our contribution to history. What will people say about us, the people of God in the Hastings, Bexhill and Rye Methodist Circuit when they do research about life in 2018? What's our bit of the story?

I would hope that we are

remembered as a people who were faithful to the call of God and did their best to keep the church alive and active, so it could be handed to the next generation. We have a responsibility to pass on the story as others passed it on to us.

Ask yourself, who passed the story of God's love for you onto you? Often, they are not people who think they are very special at all. For me, it was my great Auntie Ede, who was my Sunday School teacher at the chapel I grew up in, and a minister who left me spellbound with his enthusiasm for the Gospel as a teenager, the Rev Geoffrey Hawkridge. Geoff intervened in history for me some years later by writing me a very direct letter on the night of my accreditation as a local preacher in 1990 (which I thought was all God was calling me to) to insist I consider candidating for the ministry. I still have that letter in my Bible to remind me of that intervention every day, how God spoke through him to get me to, as Geoff put it, "ponder the matter seriously."

We make history every day. What will be our mark on the world? I write this after a busy weekend, full of things in the Circuit that people perhaps will remember as things that were important for them, a church family taking time out to pray, share in food and conversation about direction for them; another church having a

positive annual meeting reflecting on an excellent two years after leaving their church building and sharing life in a community centre (come and see us at St Helens on July 1<sup>st</sup> for Circuit Praise where we shall share our story with you) and another church having a Flower Festival full of people who come back to enjoy it year after year, a youth club in Fairlight celebrating 20 years of helping young people grow and develop. We only walk this way once, we are called to make a difference, and I thank God that our eleven churches are doing this every day

for people. We will hopefully be part of a story told in the years to come that this period of our Circuit story was a good one.

I encourage you over the summer to do two things. Have some fun walking about where you happen to be and discover some things about the past. Who walked down the street you are walking down? Who sat in the pews you are sitting in now if you visit a church? What's the story of where you are? Then ponder your story. How will you be remembered?

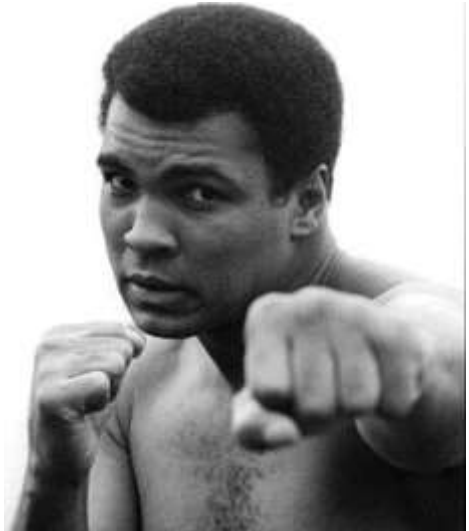
*With love, Ian*

"I'll tell you how I'd like to be remembered: as a black man who won the heavyweight title and who was humorous and who treated everyone right. As a man who never looked down on those who looked up to him and who helped as many people as he could, financial and also in their fight for freedom, justice and equality ....

And if all that's asking too much, then I guess I'd settle for being remembered only as a great boxing champion who became a preacher and champion of his people.

And I wouldn't even mind if folks forgot how pretty I was."

**Muhammad Ali, 1942 - 2016**



*Steve and Sonia Wise, from St. Leonards-on-Sea, were among the privileged 1,000 "ordinary" people invited to attend the wedding of Harry and Meghan in May. Apparently, when interviewed on the local radio, Steve was asked what he was most looking forward to. His response ... "Seeing my wife in a hat."*

*We asked Steve to share his memories of this momentous day. Sadly, he failed to provide a selfie with Meghan, but Sonia in "the hat" is a most acceptable substitute.*

*These are Steve's words ...*

The jaunt to Windsor went strangely smoothly. We left Hastings on Friday after speaking about slavery at Halton Baptist church and taking our dogs to their holiday home. We stayed overnight in Slough at Ye Olde George Inn.

Saturday dawned, and we got up and dressed in our suitable attire, including "The Hat". We were given a sticker for the car and a specific route to follow. Within half an hour we parked in the allocated car park. We were then ushered into the castle and through security checks. It was all very precise and probably run by the military. An hour or so later we found a good place to stop, unfolded our chairs and sat.

Being surrounded by so many people who had helped others was humbling. In our section was an



Imam, a man who worked as a community leader in the Midlands trying to stop gang culture and racism. Also, there was a 14-year-old girl who was the main carer for her disabled sister, several people in uniform who had limbs missing, and many other volunteers doing amazing work. Sonia and I felt we were representing the hundreds of volunteers who do such a fantastic amount of work in our corner of East Sussex.

Our seats gave us a close up view of all who attended the service; they had to walk past us to get to the chapel. So very close to A-listers made me think, I wondered what they had done. Stuff not publicised I suspect.



We all had an order of service so that we could join in.....and we did. The crowd cheered with every vow, which is why the couple giggled. After the service the whole congregation had to come past us to many cheers and calling out, especially to Messrs Clooney, Beckham, Elba and Cordon.

Bishop Michael Curry.....Wow. I managed to get a few moments to talk to him; sadly he was unable to come to Hastings. He can be seen on Thy Kingdom Come.

The spectacle that is a Royal Occasion did not disappoint, the troops, the Royal family and security services were all on top form. The young couple came past in the open top carriage and were greeted with even more cheers.

All in all, we had a great day; we saw such spectacle and pomp it was hard not to be moved. The love in that crowd was tangible.

*Steve Wise*

## Jonah got ate by a whale . . . . .

Yes, we all know that! What else is to know?



*The theme for this year's Bible Month, which runs throughout June, is the story of Jonah.*

*Jean Wells shares a few thoughts on this story in her own, inimitable, style.*

Well, Jonah is one of my favourite characters in the Old Testament (my most loved is Balaam's ass!) And why, you might ask? Well, he's the best example of sheer human contrariness that I know, and he shows a good example of what we're all like. How?

Well, first his reaction to God's urgent request to go to Nineveh – real Sin City – and tell them of the errors of their ways. What happens? “No, I've got other plans,” he thinks. And he legs it as fast as he can. Down, down, down South to the coast, the opposite direction from Nineveh. Have you

ever disobeyed the Lord? I have.

He turns up at Joppa and caught the first boat out there. But God's on the case. A terrible storm blows up, and it looks like the ship will founder. The crew pray to their gods to no avail – and then find out that Jonah's not praying to his God. Shamed, our hero asks to be thrown overboard. They oblige, pray to Jahweh, down, down, down goes Jonah, and the storm disappears.

End of hero?

No, God is good, and he gets one of his big fish to swallow Jonah whole. Well, he wasn't that keen on being in the fish's stomach – dark, smelly and slimy. So – change of tactics, our friend prays

fervently to God to be let out there. And His forgiving God gets the fish to sick up Jonah on dry land. Down on the sand lands Jonah Have you ever had to go through a lot before you finally ask the Lord for help? I have.

Jonah does a quick rethink and zips off to Nineveh. There he preaches of the hellfire and damnation to come if they don't mend their ways. Wow! Within days, even the King of Assyria is

in sackcloth and ashes praying for forgiveness. And God – being the God we know – lets them off.

Jonah is miffed! The Lord's too soft – Jonah wants punishment, not forgiveness. Have you ever been tempted to seek retribution when you're hurt, rather than God's grace? I have.

So, he stomps off to sulk! Ring a bell? – it does with me.



As he sulks in the sun, God provides a shady plant for him, but Jonah doesn't even thank Him. Along comes a caterpillar and munches away the plant – Jonah's hot and cross. The Lord questions Jonah as to whether he has a right to be angry with the unfortunate plant. "Sure I have!"

And how does God respond? Why not read the full story in the Bible.

*Jean Wells*



## Thy Kingdom Come

It was a great delight during May to join in the Thy Kingdom Come initiative. Thy Kingdom Come is a global wave of prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost, when the Disciples of Christ waited for the Holy Spirit to come, and they devoted themselves to prayer. Part of our call as Christians is to pray fervently for God's Kingdom to come. We are meant to do this every day, that's what the Lord's Prayer is for! The initiative was set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury two years ago, and this year the Methodist Church became a full partner.



We organised some events throughout the Circuit and were encouraged that some of you joined in with them.

On Ascension Day, we launched the time with a Circuit Celebration at the Emmanuel Centre. The service included some excellent films from church leaders which can still be found on the Thy Kingdom Come website. I included one

from a man called Michael Curry, Bishop of the American Episcopal Church. Not many of you had heard of him then!

John Troughton opened Little Common church every morning for morning prayer. These were special occasions of peace and reflection, using the helpful booklets given to us prepared by next year's President of

Conference, Micky Youngson. We were encouraged each morning to pray for five people to know Jesus, tying five knots in string. We also had an evening service at Little Common on the Sunday evening exploring prayer together. I moved chairs into a square!

Tricia prepared some really helpful prayer stations on the Saturday at Christchurch. We had two hours to do some different kinds of praying. I spent ages with Polydoh making cradles and hearts and guns and crosses. I hope Tricia will repeat this next year – the event will fall after she's back from sabbatical!

On the Monday, we gathered in

Rye for a prayer meeting sharing with the other churches of the town. 17 people from five denominations gathered together. We made a commitment that next year we will have a prayer pilgrimage between three church buildings. Exciting! A similar ecumenical gathering took place at Little Common on the Wednesday. Little Common have an excellent ecumenical prayer meeting once a month.

Peggy led a session on the Lord's Prayer at St Leonards on Sea Church on the Tuesday which was appreciated. Sadly, I had a meeting on data protection that morning – I'd rather have been there!

On the Thursday, I preached at a United Service at St Mary's Rye about dreaming of a better world and praying for it. Then in the evening, I led a session on praying in silence at Pett. This was an amazing time of shared quiet using Scripture to help us and some ancient prayers of the church. We had two silences, one for 5 minutes and another for 45 minutes, during which I went for a lovely prayer walk through the village, and into the open Parish Church and into a field

of sheep behind it.

Some churches prepared prayer stations, which were helpful, and a candle began its journey round the Circuit on Pentecost Sunday. If your church hasn't had it yet, it will come sometime up to Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August. On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September, we will be having another Circuit prayer day – watch out for information.

Thy Kingdom Come will now be an annual event – watch out for it next year between Ascension Day, May 30<sup>th</sup> and Pentecost, June 9<sup>th</sup>. Have you ideas how we might do it better? Let us know!

In the meantime, I encourage you to try praying together. St Helens have started a monthly prayer meeting and are finding it to be a great encouragement. A church that prays together finds its problems sorted. It's true! I am offering churches a day on prayer if anyone would like that, just ask. Sometime next church year we will have a workshop on prayer led by Canon Jean Kerr, a member of the Thy Kingdom Come team. She's inspirational. Watch this space for a date.

*Ian*



*David and Christine Freeland have a son living in America, and consequently have some experience of US style worship. They were asked to share their thoughts on the subject for Battle's in-house magazine, but I think it is a story which deserves a wider audience.*

Where does one start! In all we have worshipped in at least 14 different US Churches – all of them very different - from informal worship around a simple cross on the very edge of The Grand Canyon to the very historic Old Otterbein United Methodist Church which is the site of the oldest Church building in Baltimore dating back to 4 years before George Washington was elected as the first President. It was here that the Methodist Church consisting of numerous small groups of early Settlers began to be formally organised by Francis Asbury who was sent by John Wesley to “establish” American Methodism.

In the city of Baltimore are countless Churches, often in close proximity to each other but there is little evidence of ecumenical working or worshipping together; each seems to have its own programme.

The Church we have grown to love and feel most at home in over 18 years is St Bartholomew's (or St B's) Episcopal (Anglican) Church in Baltimore. On first impressions it seemed rather formal and “High Church” but within a beautiful liturgical framework we discovered an amazing informality and simplicity. The sheer presence of God in that place often brought tears to my eyes even before worship began!

The congregation represents every imaginable part of that city's culture and it has a passion for those who struggle with life. (That has been our experience in most of the Churches we have attended.) St B's is situated on one side of a busy highroad where there is obvious affluence. Over on the other side of this major dual carriage way folk that are much less fortunate live. Over the years we have been privileged to “eavesdrop” on the discussions relating to the Mission of St B's and to marvel at folk who have deliberately sold homes on one side of Route 40 in order to go and live on the other side in a much poorer community. We learned a lot from the discussions that took place as to whether their community work was to be “Christian Based” or “Christ Centred”! We have been enriched by all these Brothers and Sisters in Christ who have shaped some of our thinking for The Emmanuel Centre.

*Christine Freeland*

## Wesley House, Cambridge

During March I was lucky enough to again be able to attend the Wesley House Easter School, this year entitled 'Power, Politics and the Passion'.

This is the third year that I have attended the Easter School at Wesley House and have found the discipline of morning and evening prayers to be one that somehow invigorates me, and this also inspired the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayers which I led at Little Common recently.

One of the speakers this year was Revd Mike Long who is the Minister of the Methodist church closest to Grenfell Tower. He spoke movingly of his own anguish when faced with a disaster of this nature and talked about feeling helpless when faced with so many people looking to the church for help in those first days. His simple mantra for supporting was to acknowledge what had happened, to empathise with people and to pray with them. The church became a centre for the distribution of aid and Sadiq Khan and many other politicians looked in during those dark times. He informed us that, whilst Grenfell Tower has gone from the headlines, their work of support



continues though it has changed in nature from disaster relief to ongoing and continuing support for those who have been affected by this disaster.

Whilst this talk was given to us before Easter, my guess is that Mike will be supporting those people who are giving evidence to the recently convened enquiry and I would hope that he will be permitted to give evidence himself.

For me the Wesley House experience has opened up a whole new line of thinking. I have never been particularly academic, and the Easter School has encouraged me to think further and deeper about my faith, my experience and my calling. I hope that, in attending the Easter Schools I have become a more competent leader of public worship.

I would like to thank the circuit for supporting me in this way.

*John Troughton*



## Battle

On Maundy Thursday a group of us at Emmanuel shared together in a Passover Sedar. We followed some of the ritual by eating unleavened bread dipped in bitter herbs, and harosets (apples, nuts, dates and honey). The sacrament of Holy Communion has its origin in this Jewish Feast and our meal culminated by sharing bread and wine.

A united walk of witness took place in Battle on Good Friday and we gathered at Emmanuel for prayer before walking to other Churches in the town. We



The Maundy Thursday spread at Emmanuel Church

celebrated Easter Day with a Church breakfast and Communion Service, symbolically decorating the empty cross with early spring flowers.

Members from our Church took part in the Women's World Day of Prayer held at the Catholic Church in Battle. The theme this year was 'All God's Creation is Very Good'. Although the numbers attending locally were relatively few, we were part of an estimated 3 million people around the world on that day who participated in a service which was written this year by the women of Suriname in South America.

We were pleased to host the circuit service on Ascension Day that marked the beginning of the nine-day prayer focus on 'Thy Kingdom Come', leading up to Pentecost when we joined 'Churches Together in Battle' for open air praise held in the Market Square.

Our most recent Messy Church was held on Palm Sunday with craft activities downstairs taking place at the same time as the morning service, and a time of shared worship at the end. Apple Tree toddlers club is now in its fourth year and thriving with the numbers attending increasing. We value our links with

young children and their families made through these groups.

It is always good to see friends from around the circuit for various events at Emmanuel. We very much enjoyed the workshop and performance of 'The Armed Man' by Karl Jenkins. We were also pleased to welcome teams at our annual quiz which raised over £400 for our Church.

We are looking forward to another visit from the Big Choir led by Roger Wilcock on Saturday 7 July, and a one-man play 'The Cocktail Pianist' by Mike Hatchard on Saturday 28 July (both start at 7pm). Further ahead we have an Auction of Promises with Fish and Chip Supper on Saturday 15 September, and Songs and Dances from students of the Pestalozzi International Village Trust on Saturday 6 October.

*Mary Collins*

## Calvert

In February we were fortunate to have Stephen Page and Joyful Noise perform at Calvert. They put on a great afternoon of organ recitals and singing (with much audience participation), and it struck me that afternoon how fortunate we are at Calvert to have our organ, when so many churches no longer have them. A month later, on Good Friday, when we

performed the Crucifixion and Stephen started playing the processional to Calvary, I thought again...WOW... this performance would never make the same impact without it. Yet it is so easy to take for granted the familiar and not give any thought or credit to all the work that goes into the music at our services each Sunday. So, I asked Heather White, our organist and choir mistress, if she could tell me a little of the history of our organ.

It is 111 years old, coming into use on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1907. Six months earlier the congregation were forced to the conclusion that it was impossible to get any music out of the old one and a replacement was needed. The cost was the huge sum of £430, but they were not dismayed and raised £200 in 6 months. An appeal was then made to a Mr Carnegie and he matched it with another £200, leaving only £30 to find for the raised choir stalls. A service was held to mark the building of the organ and recitals were given in the afternoon and evening.

Heather's great Aunt Annie White was the first organist to play it. Then Annie's brother, Bert White (Heather's grandfather), played it for many years with Annie's husband, Robert Pattenden, conducting. They were known as Mr Bob and Mr Bert. Mr Harold Thompson was organist until his death aged 86 and then Mr Ralph



Hatch, known to many of us, played it from the late 1980s until his passing in December 2014. Another organist died at the organ while playing for a service! The organ used to be pumped on a Sunday, and some of the boys that did it have left their graffiti.

Now it has come full circle with a member of the White family once again sitting on the organ stool each Sunday. The Calvert family owe a huge "thank you" to Heather for her talent and dedication that adds so much to our worship each Sunday, ably

assisted by our pianist Karen Woods.

In May we held our Church anniversary services lead by Rev. Tricia Williams. Calvert was inaugurated 30 years before the organ was built and we celebrated this year with a roast lunch after the service, which was enjoyed by 46 people.

During March we held an 'Awayday at Home', and from this it was brought to the general church meeting that, after the success of the Wednesday "open

house" drop in, our future focus should be Evangelism, so watch this space...

Forthcoming events;

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>  
June 7pm

Beetle Drive

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July  
7.30pm

Performance of  
Barnabas by  
Calvert Choir &  
friends

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>  
August 2.30pm  
Garden Party at 3  
The Dene

*Adela Binns*



The magnificent organ at Calvert

## Christ Church

As you read this article we will have held our 30<sup>th</sup> Festival of Flowers and we are grateful for the support that we receive from the circuit. In addition, the Christchurch Singers will have presented their 'Music for a Summer's Evening' concert, and we are fortunate that there is usually a very full church of folk who come along. We are pleased that we still have a Junior Church and on June 24<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the Junior Church Anniversary.

There will be Open Air Hymn Singing at the Colonnade at 8pm on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, launching the Bexhill Carnival Week. There is nothing quite like singing hymns in the open air and looking at the sea.

We do wonder if we have some kind of record in respect of our monthly magazine, 'The Messenger'. The joint editors are both teenagers and they do a wonderful job (*Don't let them go ... even I plan to retire eventually – Ed*). Around 175 copies are produced, and we feel that this is a wonderful way to communicate both inside and outside of our church: Thank you Harvey and Charys for all your hard work.

Every blessing to all folk who are involved in our circuit.

*Barry Turnwell*

## Little Common

During the build up to Easter this year, it was decided that, for the first time, we would have a Lenten Cross. Tricia prepared a weekly Lent Cross Liturgy and the cross was constructed by a member of the church. Each week a symbol was placed on or near the cross to remind us of the journey Jesus took and on Easter day the cross was decorated by the congregation with lots of spring flowers in celebration of the risen Lord.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May we celebrated our 181<sup>st</sup> church anniversary with Rev David Freeland. This was followed by a very tasty bring and share lunch. During the same weekend, we held our annual gift day, and David and Gale Hobson organised an arts and crafts exhibition. Members and family and friends were encouraged to send in examples of their work – this turned out to be many and varied from painting to photography and modelling to needlework. There are certainly many talented people within our church family.

In other anniversary news, we were delighted to congratulate Pat and Ray Jeffery who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 22<sup>nd</sup> March and Isabella Mann who had her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 20<sup>th</sup> March (see

*Of all the wonders of the world, there's no doubt that a human being is the greatest (Anon)*

box below).

Also, March saw the return of the East Sussex Music Festival with their Spring Concert. It was lovely to welcome the young people again and a very pleasant musical afternoon was enjoyed by all.

The basic premise of “Thy Kingdom Come”, an ecumenical prayer initiative between Ascension and Pentecost, was that each person involved would have a piece of string on to which they tied five knots, each representing a person, place or event which was important to them and for whom they wanted to pray.

At Little Common, John Troughton decided that, in response to the request for prayer, we should hold a series of morning prayers

throughout this period. John followed a set format for prayer time which included the tying of knots, reading of scripture, saying of prayers both ancient and modern, singing a hymn and plenty of quiet time for reflection. The session was ended by the passing of the peace. On the final Saturday, Revd Tricia Williams led an informal communion service. Other events took place throughout the circuit and every day during Thy Kingdom Come, prayers were said somewhere within this circuit. That, I feel, is an achievement in itself. We pray that this movement will continue to grow and be a meaningful experience for all who those involved.

*Mandy Troughton*

Congratulations to Isabella Mann who celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Isabella has been a valued member of Little Common Methodist Church for 30 years. It was a joy to join in the celebrations at a party on her birthday with other church members, friends and relatives. Some of her family had come from Ireland. Surprise guests included two of her sisters and her great grandson, just two weeks old. Isabella had another party on 23<sup>rd</sup> March for the residents at Hillborough House where she now lives.

We wish Isabella many more happy years.



*Margaret Rowland*

## Ninfield

It is now officially summer-time and Easter Sunday seems a long time ago! I want, however, to tell you about the special celebrations we enjoyed at Easter-time. We shared in a lovely Easter breakfast before the service on the Sunday morning, with families and young people. We took part in an Easter egg Hunt around Paul and Betty's garden at Sea View. Derek Brice led a memorable Communion service. He talked about one of his experiences as a young person when he caught a butterfly and put it into a matchbox. When he showed his 'catch' to his grand-mother she commented that 'the butterfly was far too beautiful to be held captive and must be allowed to be free in the world.'



You will then realise how he likened this story to the life of Jesus. The communion that followed was equally memorable – with simple sharing of bread and wine. All amazing! Thank you, Derek and Topsy.

Messy Church continues to be a special time of witness into the village. Our Easter theme was 'Second Chances' .... and since then we have reflected on 'Thy Kingdom Come', and 'Who is my Neighbour?' In June it will be 'A whale of a time!!'

Way back on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 we wrote down our thoughts, prayers and wishes for the year ahead and sealed these in a time capsule. At our café worship in May we 'opened the box' with Deacon Jean to see what had happened. Some prayer-thoughts were answered, and other hopes were being worked out .... Wonderful!

We had a lovely time of music and reflection with Christian Voices when they shared their latest play 'A Leap of Faith' in May. 2018 is a special year for this group as they are celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary having performed 25 productions to date and visited over 20 Churches.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June we are celebrating our Church Anniversary with a united service at our Church. The Parish Church congregation will join us. The service of praise will be led by Reverend Ian Pruden and Reverend Paul Frostick.

Later this year we plan to change our chairs in the Church for a more modern and vibrant version! If anyone would like a wooden Church chair suitable for a kitchen etc. please give me a ring to reserve. We have 50 so don't delay in placing your order!! (Tel: 01424 892192). We would welcome a small donation for any chairs reserved. The old chairs will look good if they are sanded and possibly painted for all you creative experts!!

Best wishes to you all for a happy summer.

*Paul Burson*

## Pett

As I write, the 'Blackthorn Winter' is wreaking havoc with the garden; hopefully it won't be too long before the real spring weather reappears (*Laura submitted this article some weeks before the deadline before jetting off to somewhere exotic – Ed*).

Our Easter celebrations began on Palm Sunday, when we held a donkey procession through Pett village. The two lovely donkeys that were kindly provided by Ann and Tim Jury were very well behaved for the whole journey; they even joined us inside the church for a short while.

The procession on Good Friday was of a more sombre nature as we walked with the large wooden cross from the Chapel up to the Anglican Church, where we held the second part of the service.

On Easter Day we had a wonderful cooked breakfast followed by a short communion service led by Ian. After a chaotic children's Easter egg hunt, we held a family service.

Our Messy church continues to thrive with more new faces appearing each time. The April Messy church was based on the Easter theme and the Crème egg chicks were very popular to make and devour! The next one is planned for Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup>.

The first of our monthly house groups was held at the home of Carol and David Shortman. It was led by Pen Wilcock and we began to explore the first of a number of short stories written by Pen. It was a lively and enjoyable evening and we look forward to the next one.



This year the Chapel is 170 years old and so we are celebrating with an anniversary service on June 24<sup>th</sup> at 10-45am led by the Chairman of District, Rev John Hellyer.

We are also holding a Barn Dance on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June at Pett Village Hall. James Clephane-Cameron will be showing us a less well-known side of his character as our caller for the evening, while the scratch band will include some familiar faces, perhaps in quite surprising roles. Don't miss it.

*Laura Busby.*

## Rye

Greetings from Rye!

The Rye Methodist church choir continues at present to offer an introit and an anthem for morning worship for the first and third Sundays of the month.

Some of you will know that one of its members, Mrs. Shirley Gibson, has been in hospital for several weeks. I am happy to report that she returned home from hospital recently. We are thankful and pleased for her and her family and I am sure that Shirley is thankful for all the good wishes and prayers that have been offered for her.

During the Easter period, Rye Methodist Church again opened its doors on three Thursdays, offering visitors a mug of coffee or tea (and a biscuit or two!). On each occasion, we had a guest organist

(Canon David Frost, Clifford Foster and Robert Searcy), enabling folk to choose their favourite Passiontide hymn. Due to the success of this venture, we will open the church again on Thursdays in August, when we hope to have our guest organists again. We will send confirmation around the circuit in due course.

We held our latest Messy Church session on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> April to coincide with the school holidays. The theme on this occasion was New Life and Healing. This was another lively, enjoyable and popular time with a pleasing attendance, although we would like to reach out more to families in the local area. I should like to thank all those volunteers who help and who have given their time and gifts to this venture. Also, much appreciated is their commitment shown to this expression of outreach and for the time given up to complete Safeguarding training, so that we can continue to offer a welcoming, safe environment for all who attend. This is of the utmost importance in protecting all who may be vulnerable and also ourselves – well done indeed!

The monthly Rye Guild meetings have included a talk on New Zealand given by Lillian O'Connor, a Lenten Lunch, a presentation from the Pestalozzi International Village and a Musical Afternoon with the



Peasmarsh Ladies Choir.

Highlights for the remainder of the Methodist year include an outing next month, and a fish and chip lunch, followed by the Annual General Meeting.

Our sixth united morning service was held at the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, when we celebrated the birthday of the church at Pentecost. This service drew a congregation of approximately 100 from the different town churches. After the service, which included a joint celebration of Holy Communion, administered by the three church leaders, a number of us met in churchyard near the war memorial for a barbecue to celebrate the birthday of the church, and to raise funds for Christian Aid. As well as Christian Aid, the previous week had also included the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, nine “days of wonder” with the activities related to the “Thy Kingdom Come” initiative, and a royal wedding! In Sussex, the mission entitled “The Turning” follows in just over a week – a time of activity and looking outward, as well as a time of reflection.

We were very pleased to welcome the Chair of the South East District, Revd. John Hellyer, to lead our morning worship on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> March. We are glad to say that the weather did not prove

an obstruction to his visit on this occasion! In this circuit, we are again involved in the stationing process, as one of our presbyters, Revd. Peggy Heim prepares to “sit down” in August next year. The process of looking for a replacement to try to maintain a staff of three full time ministers is already under way! We will have a chance, no doubt, to say thank you in the coming Methodist year, but I should like to record my thanks to Peggy for all that she has contributed to the life of this circuit during her time with us.

To conclude this time, a reminder that the Revd. John Pyke, who served as minister at Rye and the eastern end of the circuit from September 1978, is due to be with us on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July, to help us celebrate our church anniversary. If you would like to hear John preach again, you would be warmly welcomed to join us on that morning at 10.30 am.

Don't forget that all our friends from the circuit are always welcome at Rye.

*Paul Martin*

John Wesley was once asked how he managed to attract the crowds when he was preaching. He replied, “I set myself on fire with the Gospel and the people come to see me burn.”

## Sackville Road

There are not many occasions when the church is full, so it was a great delight to host the Churches Together in Bexhill united service on Good Friday. After the united Walk of Witness through the town centre around 200 people from the various churches in the town gathered for this act of worship.

Various ministers and church leaders led readings and prayers as we remembered the love of God shown in Jesus who died on the cross for us all and was raised to life. The service was followed by an opportunity to share in fellowship with others over tea, coffee and hot cross buns.

Our Spring Fair in April raised around £220 for church funds and £80 from the Fairtrade stall. It was good to see friends from around the circuit who came to support us.

As part of the Bexhill Festival of Music held in June we hosted a musical concert on 26 May entitled "Bach to the Future 2" presented by our organist Andrew McGregor and his musical friends. This was their second such concert at Sackville Road and the wide variety of classical favourites and popular music from the present day was enjoyed by all.

We are looking forward to a musical afternoon when Andrew McGregor and Stephen Page will be giving us an organ concert at

3.00pm on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July as part of our Church Anniversary weekend. The anniversary service on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July will be led by Revd Neville Barnett and will be followed by a bring and share lunch. Do come and join us for our anniversary celebrations.

Once again, we will be having our 'Open Door' fortnight in the summer from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August when the church will be open during the mornings for people to call in and look at the displays or buy goods from the Fairtrade stall or simply pop in for a cuppa and a chat. It is such a good opportunity to meet with folk from the local community as well as people who are visiting the town. If you are in Bexhill during this time do call in and see us, the 99 bus is just outside.



We are continuing to reflect on what God is calling us to be and to do as we look to the future. We would value your prayers as we explore the way forward for the future of Sackville Road.

*Revd Tricia Williams*

## St. Helens

Hello from all at St Helens.

Since the last Spotlight, the Ore Village Library has closed, but there have been talks with the County Council with a view to opening a Community Library in the same building. The Council decision is expected by the end of May. This is not church business as such, but 4 people have volunteered to serve on the management committee and / or volunteer to run it.

Similarly, St Helens as a church has been invited to get involved in supporting a new project to provide free meals during the school holidays to families who are entitled to free school meals. We will be giving financial support as well as volunteering.

There's a lot going on at Ore Centre and it is good that the church is getting more and more involved with these community projects.

One regular joint activity is jumble sales which are managed by the church with Ore Centre support. It works very well for the Centre as well as St Helens.

Thankfully summer is almost here and there's much to look forward to, not least our Church Anniversary (188 years) and Gift Day on 10<sup>th</sup> June when Rev Neville Barnett will take the

service. This will be followed by an Anniversary Lunch and 'Entertainment'.

We shall host the Circuit Praise service on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 6pm. The service will be led by Ian but will be preceded by an MWiB Strawberry Tea which is available from 4pm. Do come if you can. The service will be in the main hall at Ore Centre.

A couple more dates for the diary for this year: our Summer and Christmas Fayres: are on 21<sup>st</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> November respectively. If you can come to either (or both) of these, we will be delighted to see you.

We usually have a Summer Garden Party supporting the work of one of the aid charities. That isn't in the diary as yet, but it could happen, so keep an eye out for news of that if you are interested.

Thank you again for your continued prayers and support for the St Helens church community.

*Mike Lambourne*

The church rambling group were hopelessly lost, in spite of having a leader who claimed to know the area very well. Some people started mumbling and one said, with a touch of sarcasm, "I thought you said you were the best guide in Cheshire!" He replied, "I am quite sure I am, but I think we are in Staffordshire now."

## St Leonards-on-Sea

A Right Royal Wedding came to St Leonards on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, a procession of highly polished cars, chauffeuring a host of properly dressed personages dressed in finery, fascinators and top hats, for a regal repast where Robin Hood is honoured. We were members and friends of the Friday Club. All this was made possible by Harry and Meghan, and a Trust which made a donation to the club's funds. There were speeches by the Prince Philip (Rod Sinden), best man (Michael Foster) the groom (Ian Pruden), the bride (Christine Ward). The Cake was made by Sheila, of which we all brought a piece home.

Steve and Sonya Wise received an invitation to the other wedding, the one at Windsor, because of their work for homeless people and challenging modern-day slavery. While they didn't have a chance to chat with the couple, Steve did have a word with the Bishop from America.

The Friday club also recently had a trip to Hastings Museum.

Early in Lent there was a discussion during our

Tuesday Coffee Morning. The Mums and Toddlers, which meets in the hall, had changed the time of its meeting and had suddenly blossomed from about 5 mums and little ones to up to 30. If one went in to the hall the noise and vibrancy was staggering. Rosemary suggested that we gave them Easter eggs, then it was suggested that Stef might be willing to knit little chickens. In the week of the end of term several of us trooped in and took our Easter greetings Eggs, Chickens and a little book of the Easter story, to the mums and little ones.

The church now has two new boilers which work by computer!

They were fitted over the Easter break. Not an easy job to lower such a large piece of equipment into the old coal hole!

The next job is the big window which we hope will be started on in September. Since we started working on it prices have gone up frighteningly; the cost of the stone and scaffolding in particular.



*Michael Ward*

# Trinity

Greetings from Trinity!

The repairs to the roof of the church have now been ‘signed off’, and Stephen is now in the process of claiming the last of the grant.

Without the generous grant from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, this work might well not have happened! We are all very grateful. Now that the roof is intact, and doing its job of protecting the building, we are able to turn our thoughts to possibilities for the interior.



**FRIDAY JULY 13<sup>th</sup>** sees the ‘grand opening’ of the grounds. The primary school next door are due to visit from 2.45pm. Plans are under discussion, to make this a happy occasion for all ages. The pond has been planted up, and is already welcoming pond-skaters and dragonflies – maybe one day we will also have frogs and newts! 50 primroses, 50 bluebells and 50 miniature daffodils have been planted and wild flower seed sown.

Knitter and Natters re-starts in June, after a sequence of illness /



hospital stays! One of the current projects is to knit red hats for premature babies, at the request of the Conquest Hospital. Every baby identified as requiring extra support receives a red hat straightaway after birth, to make them clearly identifiable. The use of these bobble hats has reduced the number of unnecessary admissions into the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU). Another is T-shirts for ‘fish and chip’ babies in parts of Africa – so called as all too often their first clothing was to be wrapped in newspaper.

‘Open Door’ continues, with fluctuating attendance. Recent meetings have had themes to do with Spring, with board games, anything to do with ‘18’ – and the latest, a few days before the wedding of Meghan and Harry, on the theme of weddings. All there enjoyed sharing a range of photographs, from quite old to more recent. There was also a quiz on traditional anniversary gifts, and appropriate music before the regular teatime treats. One will be

a games afternoon, and July will see our customary outing – this year possibly to Michelham Priory at Upper Dicker.

This seems to be all about the fabric, but it is all in preparation for service to the community. As Neville (Barnett) said in his sermon

to us on Pentecost Sunday, it doesn't matter how old we are – God has surprises still in store for us, work for us to do. The wind of God's Spirit never stops blowing - may we turn our faces to that wind, and so find new life and direction!

*Drina Hampson*

## Winchelsea (Wesley's Chapel)

Thank you to those who support the work of our Heritage centre. We recently had excellent coverage in the local paper –and a large picture! –



when Alison Butler visited us to present a special tamper made from wood from the old Wesley Tree. On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July we celebrate the 233<sup>rd</sup> birthday of the Chapel. We start at 2.30pm with hymn singing under the 'Wesley Tree' and then adjourn for the 3pm service in the Chapel and this will be led by the Rev Miriam Moule.

The Management of the Chapel is very pleased to welcome another member - James Clephane-Cameron - to the committee that meets quite regularly to discuss the upkeep and outreach of the chapel. A good number of folk become a 'Friend' of the Chapel and this support is greatly appreciated. We try to arrange an event each month and these are well advertised in our churches. If it is some time since you joined with us, please try to come along and support.

*Barry Turnwell (Publicity Officer.)*



## Methodist Conference – 2018

John Troughton and I will be attending this year's Methodist Conference as representatives for the South East District. The Conference will be held from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 5<sup>th</sup> July in Nottingham. We will meet at the Nottingham University Park Campus which has extensive and well laid-out grounds including a lake and an arts centre offering plenty of opportunity to get away from Conference during business breaks.

The Methodist Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church; it sets the rules, the direction and the attitude of the Church. It is a place for worship and celebration and some serious business as members of the Conference seek to discern the presence and activity of God in the church, our nation and the world, to see what God requires of us and how we should respond.

To enable all this to happen a range of reports are prepared and published in two bound volumes which representatives need to read carefully and reflect upon prior to the Conference itself. The reports are also published on the Methodist Church website for anyone to read. As well as the usual reports from the different Methodist committees and organisations such as Action for Children, Methodist Homes, All We Can, reports to be considered at

Conference this year include Ministry in the Methodist Church, Mission and Ministry within our Covenant relationship with the Church of England, and Marriage and Relationships.

Some of the Conference reports and discussions will be lively and engaging whilst others will be less interesting, but all are important as we share in the various matters of business. For those wishing to follow the debates as they happen there will be a live podcast on the Methodist Church website.

But the Conference is not all business. One of the first events is the induction of the new President, Revd Michaela Youngson, and Vice President, Mr Balachandren Gnanapragasam. After they have each made their promises, and



Revd Michaela Youngson

prayers have been offered, their appointments are symbolised by the giving of gifts. The President receives a cross and is handed John Wesley's Bible, and the Vice President also receives a cross and a first edition copy of John and Charles Wesley's 'Hymns and Sacred Songs'. These books are so precious that they are only allowed to hold them for a short time and then they are given back.

We share in Holy Communion together at a special Conference Service on Sunday morning and receive new ministers and deacons into full connexion. Those newly received are then ordained at services across the hosting district

on Sunday afternoon in the company of family and friends from their own churches who have come along to support them. There are also daily times of worship and various fringe events taking place alongside the main conference as well as time to relax with other representatives.

It looks like being an interesting and rewarding week. I shall keep a journal of my experiences and reflections to share with you on my return so that the conversations that are begun at Conference can be shared with the wider church as together we continue on the journey of discipleship.

*Revd Tricia Williams*



Our small Pett chapel community enjoyed an away-day together at beautiful Penhurst Christian Centre. It could not have been a lovelier day. The fields and hedgerows were in full leaf and glorious with elderflower, hawthorn blossom and Queen Anne's Lace. As always, the

welcome at Penhurst was hospitable and loving. Ian, our own minister, led the day, giving us space to relax and reflect, to mull things over together, and feel our way to where the Spirit is calling us now.

We thought about our areas of strength and weakness; how to build

on our already inclusive friendliness; how to deepen our spirituality; where and how God is prompting us to bear witness to the Gospel in the specific locations of our lives.

This was not part of a restructuring programme or a desperate attempt to shore up something failing — not something we were forced to undertake because circumstances imposed it on us — it was just a chance to do as Jesus said: take

time out quietly together to take stock of the way we are travelling, to rest and refresh our spirits.

We had such a thoughtful and happy day, got to know one another better, explored possibilities for the future, and tucked into a delicious lunch. If you are ever wondering whether such a day might be of benefit to your chapel community, I wholeheartedly recommend it.

*Pen Wilcock*

## MWiB



Ten from the Circuit attended the Daffodil Rally at Westminster Central Hall on the first Monday in March and had a good time.

This year's Easter Offering service was held at Calvert on 29<sup>th</sup> April. It was well attended and every church in the Circuit sent a donation for World Mission work. Including the collection, a total of £1,275.40 was raised. Thank you all for this excellent amount, over £100.00 more than last year.

The next event for the District Project, Cardiac Risk in the Young, will be a Strawberry Tea at the Ore Centre, home of St Helens Methodist Church, prior to the

Circuit Service on 1<sup>st</sup> July, from 4.00pm. We hope to have a good attendance at both. On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August we will have a bring & buy stall and raffle at Rye as part of their Summer Praise programme.

The Annual General Meeting, to which all churches were invited, was held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April at Centenary House but very few attended. Lillian O'Connor was re-elected President, Dawn Novis as Secretary and Pearl Page as Treasurer. In the following weeks Pearl Newman from Calvert was approached to become Vice President. She has agreed, and the appointment was ratified at an Executive meeting.

*Dawn Novis.*

## **“Don’t Panic”, it’s only GDPR**

You can’t avoid it - it’s been all over the news and, to a greater or lesser degree, it affects every one of us. But has it been over-hyped, and has the whole world over-reacted?

Depending on who you listen to, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is either absolutely terrifying or a load of hot air. As is so often the case, the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes. GDPR certainly deserves to be taken very seriously but, in essence, it enshrines in law the sort of principles that most decent people would regard as common sense and courtesy.

The previous legislation covering personal data was the Data Protection Act 1998, devised 6 years before Facebook was born, when twitter was something that birds did. Since then, the world of social media has resulted in an explosion of sharing of personal information, which unscrupulous people have sought to use to their own advantage. The concepts of identity theft, SPAM and cyber-bullying have all arisen in just one generation.

GDPR seeks to restore the

ownership of personal data to the individual to whom it relates. It won’t stop bad people from trying to do bad things, but it should make it just a little bit harder for them, and a little easier for individuals to protect themselves.

It places new duties on all types of organizations, whether a commercial company, a non-profit organization, statutory sector etc., and gives new rights to individuals concerning their “personal data”.

### **Can I have your consent please?**

The perception that no personal information may be kept or used without explicit consent is just plain wrong. There are six standard legal bases for holding personal data, and consent is only one of them.

For instance, if you employ somebody, you are legally obliged to keep records of what and when you pay them, and must share that information with HMRC.

If you are a membership organization (including a church) you cannot operate without keeping records of who your members are, and how to contact them.

Many of the requests that you will have received to refresh your consent will have been completely unnecessary, although it has, for many people, been a golden opportunity to cut down on a whole load of pestering e-mails.

I think a part of the problem is that,

although this legislation has been at least 2 years in the planning, it didn't hit the headlines until just weeks before its implementation, so people panicked and opted for a belt-and-braces approach, just to make sure.

This has led to some fairly bizarre situations, including (from my own experience) the undertaker who asked the bereaved family for permission to divulge their address to the driver, so that he would know where to pick them up.

- This information will still be available in the Circuit Directory, the distribution of which will be more tightly controlled than hitherto
- Our policies and procedures concerning the collection, use and storage of personal data have been updated to match the new law
- Consent will be sought in the few instances that it is needed (i.e. for inclusion of non-members on a mailing list.).

**Do you know a good  
GPDR consultant?**

**Yes.**

**Can you tell me his  
name?**

**No.**

So what have we been doing in the Circuit to ensure that we comply with the new legislation?

I asked James Clephane-Cameron, who has been helping to put together our Circuit GDPR Action Plan, and his answer was something along the lines of ... "Not a lot".

- The Plan will no longer show addresses or other contact details

If my treatment of this subject leads you to conclude that I consider it unimportant, let me correct that misconception straight away. The protection of personal data is, in my view, a hugely important matter, and I fully support both the aims and the methods of GDPR.

The fact is that criminals will continue to try to get their hands on your personal data and no legislation will be entirely effective in preventing that. However, the vast majority of data loss occurs as a result of mistakes, carelessness or poor security. If this Act results in people taking greater care with other people's data, and treating it with the respect that it deserves, then it will have served its purpose.

*Keith Miller*

# **Snowflake**

## **Night Shelter**

### **Season 2017-18**

Snowflake Night Shelter was open for 110 days over the last winter period. We welcomed a total of 63 guests in to the Shelter which is one of the highest numbers we have ever catered for - 55 of those guests were male and 8 female. The reports inform me that the age of the guests is falling. There were more people under the age of 30 using us than in the last four years – in fact the under 30's age group was the largest group catered for in this season.

On the up-side, we assisted or enabled 24 people to “move on” to suitable accommodation. Whilst this is not the highest figure we have ever “moved on”, it indicates that the closer working relationship we have with partner organisations is bearing fruit, and I can honestly say that, provided government funding remains in place, then our strong relationship with the council will hopefully continue to grow.

It has been emphasised this year that the simple necessities of life are what our guests are looking for, not just through the provision of bed and food, but also through human contact with people who are prepared to sit and listen and support people initially where they are and encourage them to be able to think that they may be able to move on into a better place. For me there is something about this simple interaction between people that expresses and fulfils the human need to be loved and respected and for the love of Jesus Christ to be shown to them. I trust that when you see an event organised on behalf of Snowflake, you will give it your support. And if you feel called to, please attend a volunteers' meeting in the months ahead.

Many thanks

*John Troughton*

**Seeing the moon in the sky during daytime for the first time, a little girl said in her prayers that evening, “Dear God, I think you made a big mistake today.”**



## District Festival to Homegrown Concert

Who remembers the District Festival which took place every year with local heats at Calvert and the finals at Union Street, Maidstone?

What a wonderful tool it was to display everyone's talents and get together with others from different churches all around the South-East District in friendly rivalry.

There were classes in painting, drawing, photography, needlework, knitting, crochet, all types of cookery and jam making, Bible reading, singing, (solo, duet, and groups) instrumental (a very young Stephen Page took part every year in the piano classes!), limericks,

essays, poetry, handwriting, and there are sure to be some I've forgotten. All classes had different age groups from the very youngest to the oldest, so that all who wanted to could take part.

Memories have come flooding back as we've just had our twelfth Homegrown concert at Christchurch. This is a spinoff from the District Festival when the District reshaped itself and the Festival ceased to be. It left a hole in the life of our congregation which was soon filled in this slightly different format.

There were thirty-seven acts this



Pictured are The Christchurch Singers, winners at Maidstone in 1998. Those of us who are still members look so young!! Look! Brown hair!!!

*I'm sure it was a lustrous brown colour before the photo faded - Ed.*



year, and interest doesn't seem to be on the wane. Two of our teenagers played their ukuleles, a 73-year-old tap dancer impeccably dressed in top hat, white tie and tails, various groups of the congregation singing together, a family act, the choir, various recitations, a piano solo, several solo songs and instrumental solos.

There would not have been a Christchurch Singers had it not been for the District Festival, where year by year it was Calvert versus Christchurch in the choir class. We seemed to take it in turns to win!

The bulk of the organisation of the Hastings event was undertaken by Wendy Hatch and Heather White, with much help from a dedicated team of helpers on the day. The final concert at Calvert showcased all the winners, and certificates were handed out. Every entrant had a certificate, which I understand was a huge marathon of a job!

At the end of the Maidstone final, the Doxology was always sung, and this we now do at the end of our Homegrown Concert, thus linking the two together. The singing of it is always heartfelt.

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Him all creatures here below**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,**

**Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost**

*Chris Cox, Christchurch*

## **FAIR TRADE**

In the middle of May we had our Fair Trade spring sale. We are now concentrating mainly on the foods, but we still have jewellery and bamboo socks and we still have some crafts left, but we only take special orders for crafts now. A good number of people came, especially on Sunday afternoon. We have never done as well in the spring as the autumn, but we did do well and hope to see you next November. The need for you to choose fairly traded products is as urgent as ever, so look for the logo. The Ward's shop in Bexhill has a lot of fairly traded items.

## **LUNCH CLUB**

Another season, with a variety of speakers, concluded with the Annual Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

The Committee for next year is:  
President – Cecile Wright,  
Vice President – Christine Thacker,  
Secretary – Dawn Novis,  
Membership Secretary – Lillian O'Connor,  
Treasurer – Keith Thacker,  
Past President - Dave Williams.

The new season will start on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Current members will be contacted in late July. Anyone wishing to join us should speak to Lillian. Annual membership is £6 and next year's meals will be £14.75 (except Christmas Lunch).

*Dawn Novis.*

# Dates

For your diary

Date	Event	Where
30 June	Barn Dance	Pett Village Hall
1 July	Strawberry Tea & Circuit Service	St. Helens
7 July	Big Choir (Roger Wilcock)	Emmanuel Centre
13 July	Official opening of new garden	Trinity
15 July	233rd Church Anniversary	Winchelsea
20 July	Open Air Hymn Singing	De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
21 July	Summer Fayre	St. Helens
21 July	Barnabas—Calvert Choir	Calvert
28 July	Mike Hatchard	Emmanuel Centre
30 July-10 Aug	Open Door	Sackville Road
12 Aug	Calvert Garden Party	3 The Dene, Hastings

See individual reports or the Circuit website for more details and more dates.

Please note - the next issue of Spotlight is due to be published on 30th September 2018  
Contributions for inclusion in this issue must be received  
by **2nd September**

Where possible, please send articles to the Editor,  
Keith Miller by e-mail at [contact@pettchapel.org.uk](mailto:contact@pettchapel.org.uk)  
Handwritten or typed items should be posted to  
Pearl Page, 226 Battle Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 7BA

And don't forget to send us your pictures.

They do such a lot to brighten up the pages of the magazine.

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*And finally . . .*



We started with a wedding, so let's end with a wedding. Members from Calvert and elsewhere in the Circuit were out in force to celebrate with the Binns family on 1<sup>st</sup> June as Katie married Stuart at St. Clement's Church in Hastings Old Town.

Bubbles the Bullnose Morris came out of retirement to provide the transport and, after a misty start, the sun came out to shine on the happy couple. We wish them both every happiness for their future together.

