









I hate the long dark nights of winter, but by the time Christmas arrives I am celebrating that the shortest day has passed and the days are beginning to lengthen at last.

The prospect of longer days for me are a good reason to rejoice, but as a Christian, I take more delight in our celebration of Jesus's birth.

This rounds off the old year and sets me up for the new year to come.

I wish the readers of LINK the very best for your celebrations and for the new year.



The editor is happy to include letters and comments that you would like published, after all it is your magazine. Remember the editor will not necessarily agree with any article letter or comment that is printed in the Link.

**150 years ago**

December 2nd 1859, American abolitionist John Brown is hanged in Charleston, West Virginia, for treason.

**90 years ago**

January 15th 1919, An unknown Austrian forms the 'National Socialist German Workers Party' - the man is Adolf Hitler, the party becomes known as the Nazi party.

**30 years ago**

December 10th 1979, Mother Teresa is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the destitute in Calcutta.

**20 years ago**

November 10th 1989, The Berlin Wall is breached. It was built in 1961 to keep East Germans from leaving Berlin.

December 25th 1989, Romanian president Ceausescu and his wife are executed by the Romanian army for crimes against the state.

**10 years ago**

November 29th 1999, Northern Ireland power sharing executive set up.



## Church project 2009 — Martlets

The first few months of our fund-raising have not only been very successful but also gave a lot of enjoyment to those taking part, and those who came forward with ideas and then worked them through are to be congratulated (some of us have got fitter and some (me) have got fatter with their efforts!). These have included a sponsored cycle ride, afternoon tea, an Italian evening, table top sale and a concert. At the concert on the 5th December we were able to hand over a cheque for a substantial amount to Clem Hunnisett, a fund-raiser from The Martlets, - everyone has been very generous.



Each month leading up to Christmas we have had an event to look forward to and, after a breather, we have three main events to finish our year in support of the hospice. The first, organised by Michael Hill and Ken Hopkins, is a SUP(P)ERAUCTION(!), on March 20th. Then there is a Concert in May organised by Janet Bowles and a Skittles Evening organised by me in the Upper Hall in June. Like the successful Italian Evening, each event is a chance to invite friends unconnected with our church to join us.

If anyone is yearning to add to this list do let me know as there is continual pressure on the hospice for funds and an increasing awareness amongst the community of the importance of its work.

*Sheila Hinton*



*Before the start of the bike ride*

## ***Resources Group - developing our building for service***

At the Church Council on 12 November the Resources Group reported on the responses to the letter to the church family, defining our needs for possible building developments, which had been widely distributed. Having reviewed the responses, and after further discussions with the architect and a professional heating engineer, a revised outline drawing of proposed alterations to the sanctuary was presented and agreed as a basis for proceeding further.

### **The key features are:**

1. The pulpit, organ and choir stalls, and the gallery are not affected
2. The downstairs pews will be removed and replaced by chairs, and a new, more efficient heating system (possibly under floor heating) will be installed, with thermostatic controls
3. The whole area will be carpeted
4. The screen between the sanctuary and the narthex will be modified to facilitate easier movement between the two areas, and the serving of refreshments in the narthex after services
5. The upstairs kitchen will be modified to ensure satisfactory provision of refreshments on that scale

The next step will be to work with the architect to produce detailed drawings to be submitted to the church council for approval, which would then have to be submitted to the appropriate external authorities for consent.

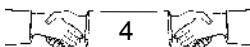
During this period samples of chairs would be obtained for the church family to experience in order to obtain the widest feedback on what is felt to be most suitable.

The Council also agreed in principle with the formation of a project group, with appropriate terms of reference, to carry the project forward. We are particularly keen that this group should include people who can provide an informed input, not just on building matters, but on such matters as fund raising, and how detailed designs will impact on particular groups, for example young people. Please do let me or any other member of the Resources Group know if you think you can contribute in any way to the project group, or believe there is someone else who should be considered.

It is essential to the success of the project that detailed designs are NOT subject to second thoughts and revisions once contracts are out to tender, and there will be every opportunity to see and comment on the drawings so that any potential issues are taken on board before drawings are finalized.

Finally, it is estimated that the timescale for contractors should be of the order of 6 weeks, and the projected cost is of the order of £126,000 (including adaptations to the heating system, chairs and carpets).

***Roger Straker , Resources Group***



# Christmas Lunch

## Can you help at Christmas?

For over thirty years, our church has invited anyone, who might otherwise be on their own, to share in a free Christmas day celebration, including lunch and entertainment, and we also provide transport for most of the guests.

Last year over 100 people were fed, including guests and helpers. It all requires a lot of helpers, mainly on the day but also before hand, and on Christmas Eve. Volunteers are needed from our own church who know the layout.

Please do, therefore, give prayerful thought to lending a hand, whether for setting tables, welcoming, waiting at tables, serving, taking coats, entertaining, washing-up or clearing the hall afterwards.

If you are able to help with transporting some of our guests either to or from the church, we would really like to hear from you. Please speak to Jonathan Gravestock, who is Transport Co-ordinator, about any help you may be able to offer.

Even one hour could make a big difference, if enough join in, it will make it easier for everyone else. Some folk have already offered to help, for which we are very grateful. If you could help please contact the church office on (01273) 324600



This should be a great day for the whole church family and those who have helped before have said how much they have enjoyed it. We will be very glad to have you alongside and believe you will enjoy it too.

## **"One more step along the road I go..." : confessions of a candidate**

As many of you know, after a lot of soul-searching over the last few years, I have decided to offer myself as a candidate for full-time ministry in the Methodist Church. In the last edition of *Link*, Bob Hinton was kind enough to write a few words about my decision and I have greatly appreciated the expressions of support that I have received since then from so many members of the Church family. As the process is not entirely straightforward (shock horror for the Methodist Church!), I thought it might be useful to let you know exactly what happens next.

### *Accreditation as a local preacher*

Anyone who wishes to be considered as a candidate for the ministry in 2010 must be an accredited local preacher by 14th January of that year. For three years, I have been studying the 'Faith and Worship' course with my tutor Bob Hinton, which all local preachers must complete and that seeks to give preachers at least an introduction to a wide range of theological issues and the skills required for leading worship. These studies are almost complete and I am just waiting to hearing back about how I did in the final assignments. This just leaves the last stages to complete, namely:

- a final trial service, where I am assessed by a steward, a local preacher and a minister (this will take place on 30th November at Stanford Avenue);
- a final interview with the Local Preachers' Meeting, where these assessors will report back on me and I will be tested on my understanding of Wesley's sermons and questioned about the nature of my call - this meeting will then be asked to decide whether or not I am worthy to be accredited as a local preacher (the Circuit meeting has already been asked this question); and
- a service of accreditation, where I shall be asked to make certain promises in front of the members of the Circuit (this is provisionally scheduled for Sunday, 10th January, at 3.00pm at Hove and everyone will be very welcome, if I pass!).

### *The candidating process*

If I am accredited as a local preacher, I shall then be able to submit my formal application for consideration by the Church on 15th January (yes, it is a tight deadline!). In this application I must include various things:

- personal details;
- an indication of which type of ministry I wish to be considered for (deacon or presbyter - what we usually call a minister);
- two personal references;
- a certificate from the vocational course I have been attending (for the last 18 months, I have been going to a monthly retreat at a Methodist centre in north London that aims to help people like me reflect on where God is calling them);
- four reflections, totaling 5,000 words, that sum up why I feel I am being called to the ministry, why I am a Methodist and what sort of things I have been doing over the last few years as I have tried to discern my vocation;

- reviews of two selected books; and
- any supporting documents, which I feel to be relevant.

This document is considered by the Church and assessed, and at the same time I will be asked to have a short interview with a specially-appointed psychologist.

In February, I will be assessed by the District Candidates Committee, who will have seen all my papers and assessments. We are in the Southern District of the Methodist Church, which stretches from Kent up to the Thames Valley. No one who knows me personally will interview me, for obvious reasons.

If this committee believes that I have discerned my calling correctly, I will then be interviewed by the Connexional Candidates Committee (the 'Connexion' means the whole Methodist Church). This interview will take place over a 24 hour period in March (you are given some time off to sleep, I believe!), and I will be asked about all aspects of my calling. It will be for this Committee to make the final decision as to whether I truly am being called to this kind of ministry.

If I survive this most methodical process (and yes, that's how we got the name!) and the Committee believe that I am being called to study full-time for the ministry, I will be sent to one of three universities for two years - Cambridge, Birmingham or Durham. And then the next adventure begins!

*Evil sufficient for the day thereof*

As you can see, there are many 'ifs' on this road with which I still need to contend. At any stage, people with a better insight than me - in the local Circuit, in the District or in the Connexion - may discern that God is not calling me to full-time presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church and I shall have to accept that judgement.

I would ask for your continued prayers at this time, as I seek to follow this process faithfully and honestly. At this stage, I am still not completely sure what I am being called to do, nor where I am supposed to go. However, in the words of one of Michael Taylor's favourite quotes from scripture, I shall try to trust in the Lord and not become overwhelmed by the process: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Very true.

*Geoffrey Farrar*

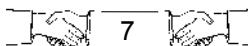
***I say...***

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream another dream"

*C S Lewis*

"if you treat an individual as if they were what they ought to be and could be, they will become what they ought to be and could be".

*Goethe*



## News in brief

### Hospital Expands Services in Gaza

*(this hospital is associated with our previous Circuit Project)*

Thanks to the many donations received from the Anglican community, the AN Arab Hospital of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has been able to increase health, medical and social support for the residents of Gaza.

Funds donated to the hospital and the diocesan Gaza Medical Emergency Fund are used to run the vital programs provided by the Ahli Arab Hospital to address the hardships faced by patients and their families. Among other services, the hospital also runs a mobile clinic for first aid and basic medical care, which travels to areas where limited services and transportation make it difficult or impossible for patients to reach the hospital.

With a holistic healing model in mind, the Diocese recognizes that medical services alone are not enough to heal a patient. Emotional support and nutrition are also key elements in the healing process. AN Arab Hospital operates an important free meal program for patients and their families to assist them in focusing on patient recovery.

The hospital has just launched a new program with recently trained staff to provide psychosocial services in the aftermath of the January crisis and the continuing restrictions on mobility. This important service is directed to women, in an effort to help women assist their families in dealing with the severe stress felt by the many Gazans who lost loved ones, homes, and sometimes entire families during the war. The emphasis on women is based on the observation that women are most likely to carry the psychosocial healing methods home to their husbands and children, benefiting the entire family. Local community service agencies provide referrals for women who would benefit from the program, and it covers all of Gaza without regard to residence, economic status, or faith.

Your support and donations continue to play an important role in our ability to alleviate some of the pain and suffering in Gaza, and demonstrate the true meaning of Christ's love and compassion."

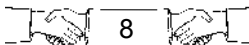
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### He will raise me up

The Revd Ken Chalmers, a Methodist minister from Castle Cary in Somerset, led worship from Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth in July.

Ken was one of 2,400 people appearing on the Fourth Plinth between 6 July and 14 October 2009, picked from over 28,000 for sculptor Anthony Gormley's One and Other project. Anthony asked the people of the UK to occupy the empty plinth so that every hour, 24 hours a day, for 100 days without a break, a different person makes the plinth their own.

Explaining why he chose to use his hour in this way Ken said, "Art and symbolism have always been used to express the Christian faith and I want my hour on the plinth to focus on spiritual reflection. Many people have come to Trafalgar square to feed the pigeons, but perhaps we can offer our human visitors a bit of spiritual food for an hour."



## ***A 360° View from the pew***

At the end of each year I like to take some time to sit back and reflect on the past year, the things I have done and the things I have not done, what pleased me and what didn't etc. I like to reflect on the achievements of those around me, also thinking of those I know who have needed help in one way or another, knowing that for the greater part the only thing I have been able to do is to pray for them.

This is usually as far as I get with my reflections, but this year I have begun the process early which has made me think about how others think of me, it has been quite challenging.

What about us, as a church in Portland road, do we take the time to reflect on our year?, will we assess our achievements in 2009?, What could we have done but did not get around to it? Did we rejoice in the achievements of others, and did we help those who were in need in an appropriate way?. Finally how is Hove Methodist Church in Portland Road thought of by those in our neighbourhood?.

The City of Brighton and Hove of which we are a part, has recently been described as the most godless City in Britain. Looking at the situation another way round, there has never been a greater need of Christian witness in our community than there is today.

An advert currently running on the radio for social work says that; playing pool is one of the most important tools they use, this is because it is relevant to those who need their help.

We have the Greatest news to share with our City but do we have the best ways of communicating it? Christmas is perhaps the best time for us to take stock what we are doing and decide upon what we should do to create dynamism and enthusiasm that will attract those outside our church community who are looking for something in their lives, but do not know that they are looking for us and need to be challenged in ways other than the more traditional methods.

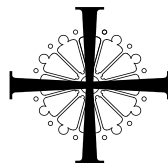
My Christmas message is that every one of us can do something, and if it is done for the right reason it will surely be blessed. A happy Christmas to each and every one of you.

*Terry Pomfrey*

**Malcolm Mc Sorley**, who died on 28th November aged 82, was a former member of Hove Methodist Church who served as Church council secretary and communion steward. His contributions to the Link magazine as '*Nimrod*' and as himself, continued after he and his wife Joyce moved to Eastbourne.

Mac was a '*Character*' and some of his articles were controversial. His illness prevented the appearance of his article in this edition, although it would not have proved argumental. He had intended it to be a love story - how he and Joyce, widower and widow, first met on platform 3 of London's Liverpool street station. Mac and Joyce would have celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary on December 8th. We extend our love and sympathy to Joyce.

# CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



Since the last issue of Link we have the following to report.

**Birth** : Congratulations to **Tom and Jo Gravestock** on the safe arrival of their twins, **Arthur Jonathan** (5lb) and **Florence Janet** (7lb), born 21/09/2009. Two more grandchildren for Charlotte and Jonathan Gravestock.

## **Called to Glory** :

It is with sadness that we report the deaths of the members and friends of the Church. **Peter Beal, Margaret East, Malcolm McSorley, Joyce Parsons, Rev. Dr John Tudor**, supernumerary minister of the Brighton and Hove Circuit and **Eric Witherden**. We extend our love and sympathy to the families and friends of the aforementioned.

## **Thank you** :

Wendy and Andy Crowhurst who organised a sponsored cycle ride and to all the children who took part, raising a magnificent £419.00 for the **Martlets**  
Nick and Stella Goddard who organised an Italian meal and to all who attended, raising funds for the **Martlets**.  
Sheila Hinton who organised afternoon tea and to all who attended, raising funds for the **Martlets**.  
To all who contributed to the table top sale raising funds for the **Martlets**.  
**Liz Richards** for organising the concert and all who took part in it, raising funds for the **Martlets**.

**Sue Sawyer** who recently stood down as a communion steward for all her service.

## **Congratulations** :

**Joan Williamson** who recently celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.



## **Send a smile**

Children from our youth club got involved with Blue Peter's latest appeal.

Blue Peter have teamed up with Operation Smile, who are currently working in India, giving children life transforming operations, by repairing their cleft palates and lips.

Blue Peter viewers were asked to transform unwanted t-shirts with their own designs, into hospital gowns, saving the charity from buying hospital gowns at £3.00 each.

For every 50 t-shirt gowns provided, the charity can pay for one life transforming operation.

A big thank you to our children who are helping children in India, by providing 14 decorated t-shirt gowns.

*Sandie Pomfrey*

## **Obituary's**

**Eric Witherden**, was the son of Andrew and Connie, growing up in the church and joining its activities, including the Boys' Brigade. In more mature years he took on the chair of the newly constituted Property Committee following the demise of the Trust system of governance. Eric was limited in recent years to attending the early morning communion service, which he found helpful. We do not always know of the contribution people make in the wider community and in Eric's case this was quite considerable. He was a life long member of his school Old Boys' Association, where he served as Chairman and Trustee of its Benevolent Fund, for which he helped raise much of the original capital. His work for the young people of the town was reflected in the Sea Cadets and the Brighton & Hove Football League. We extend our love and sympathy to his wife, Norma and their son, Malcolm and also Eric's sister, Yvonne, a former member of HMC now in membership in Rustington.

*Alan Pratt*

**Margaret East**, spent her last days in the Martlets, experiencing at first hand the care of the hospice, the subject of our churches fundraising project. She joined us from the Dome Mission, Brighton, and her death was closely followed by that of her friend, the Rev Dr R John Tudor, a former Superintendent Minister there. Margaret was a cheerful, uncomplaining lady, she regularly attended morning services and particularly enjoyed traditional Methodist worship.

**Peter Beal**, was a well know figure in the area as a long serving, ever helpful taxi driver; he was still working into his eighties. Peter was a former church steward and a stalwart of the men's club, he delighted in singing and was a member of the church choir until it was disbanded and he continued choral work with a local male voice choir. Peter was married to Barbara, 'Babs' and they celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in July this year. Our love goes out to Babs.

*Church Stewards*

**Rev Dr Richard John Tudor**, was born on February 8, 1930, in Northampton and spent 55 years as a minister. Known as John, he trained for the ministry at Hartley Victoria College, Manchester, after leaving the RAF.

John was minister in Thornton Cleveleys, Derby, Coventry Central Hall, Brighton Dome Mission, London's Westminster Central Hall before retiring to Brighton.

He was known for making the church more relevant and less stuffy than people might have thought it to be and preached about the importance of building strong communities. He died after a short illness on October 29.

We extend our love and sympathy to his wife Cynthia and children Peter and Helen.

*Also, for Malcolm McSorley, please see page 9*

## Oliver Cromwell a Tyrant?

At a recent Sunday morning service we were asked to call out the names of tyrants past and present and among those added to the list was Oliver Cromwell.

I protested, but my protest went unheeded until a kind friend put a line through his name after the service! This article is written to justify my protest by arguing why it is unjust to label Cromwell a tyrant.

Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon on April 25th 1599. It is certainly true that since his death as Lord Protector in 1658 his life, ambitions, motives and actions have been the subject of scholarly investigation and intense, often vitriolic, debate. Nevertheless it must be a neat comment upon his true status in English history that for over 100 years a statue of him, which was refurbished in time for the 350th anniversary of his death last year, has stood in Parliament Square in London and that in 2002 he was named one of the top ten Britons of all time in a BBC poll. We do not do that for tyrants.

Cromwell's main motivation, throughout the time when he was deeply influencing historically important events in British history, came from the Christian conversion he experienced in the 1630's. Until 1640 when he became the MP for Cambridge he was a landowner of modest means and a farmer. He played no part in the conflicts between parliament and King Charles 1 in the 1630's which led to the Civil War and ultimately to the king's execution. Cromwell came to prominence first as a successful officer in the parliamentary army once the conflict began in 1642.

Initially a captain in charge of a small body of mounted troops, in 1643 he was promoted to colonel and given command of his own cavalry regiment. He was successful in a series of sieges and small battles which helped to secure the east of England against the royalists. At the end of the year he was appointed second in command of the Eastern Association army, parliament's largest and most effective regional army, with the rank of lieutenant-general. During 1644 he contributed to the victory at Marston Moor, which helped secure the north for parliament. By 1645-6 he was second in command of the newly formed main parliamentary army, the New Model Army a highly effective fighting force for which the royalist forces were no match. Victory at the battle of Naseby in 1645 virtually sealed the victory for parliament. In evaluating the success of the New Model Army historians attribute much of it to Cromwell's personal courage and skill, to his care in training and equipping his men and to the tight discipline he imposed both on and off the battlefield.

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Cromwell's position as a Member of Parliament combined with his military standing gave him enhanced political power. Thus he became one of the power-brokers in parliament and he played a decisive role in the 'revolution' of winter 1648-9 which saw the trial and execution of the King and the abolition of monarchy and the House of Lords. Eventually, at the end of 1653, he became head of state as Lord Protector. He held office under a written constitution by which he shared political power with parliament and a council. The removal of the king (who had been an autocrat, believing in "the divine right of kings") and the written constitution that created the republic were the origins of our Parliamentary democracy and unique in the world at that time.

It is true that as Lord Protector Cromwell had his own troubles in his relationship with parliament and eventually dissolved the "rump" of it that remained and in his last years ruled without it. This is not surprising as every revolution tends to produce extremists whose antics have to be curbed if anarchy is to be kept at bay. This was a problem Cromwell faced and in fact dealt with albeit at the expense of what we would now call normal democratic processes. When the monarchy was restored in 1660 it was not to the position that Charles I had sought; government was by the king in parliament and from that time on the supremacy of parliament as we know it now was steadily established. We owe this to Cromwell and his "republican" colleagues.

If some historians think of Cromwell as a tyrant, they generally base it upon his actions when he was in Ireland for 9 months in 1649-50. He was not then Lord Protector and it was in his capacity as commander in chief of the army that he went and his actions were those of a general leading an army and not as a politician. Violent opposition to the victory won by the parliamentary forces in England had been rife in Ireland from the start of the civil war. The division was on sectarian lines and there had been great loss of life among the minority Protestant community. It was deemed necessary to "pacify" Ireland and as other army leaders had no stomach for continuing military exertions Cromwell decided to take on the leadership and direction of the campaign himself.

The rules of war (and there were such rules in England in those days) required that opponents should be offered "quarter" (the chance to lay down their arms and undertake to fight no more) before being attacked. Most towns accepted these terms which Cromwell always offered and suffered no military action. But the commanders of the royalist forces in Drogheda and Wexford responded in terms which are still familiar "No Surrender". The consequences in both towns when they were attacked have been categorised by some historians as acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing. But we need to remember that this was an army at work in a war situation, not the implementation of a policy directed from a safe location away from the battlefield. Cromwell was a man of his time and whilst in Ireland he was a general operating by the normal rules of war who readily granted quarter to those who were prepared to lay down their arms and end their rebellion.

Continued on back page

# *In conversation with - John Draper*

## **“Preparing for Christmas”**

In recent years many shops appear to tempt us into preparing for Christmas very soon after their “Summer” sales are over. To me this seems to destroy a lot of the magic and excitement of preparing much closer to the event.

Many years ago I remember helping to make preparations for Christmas. I was to spend it far away from home in a Royal Air Force camp in Khartoum. It was my first Christmas when there was no possibility of being with any of my relatives or friends in England. Within our billets we had made some friends but generally we were just a group of relative strangers on Her Majesty’s Service. Our normal working hours were from 6.00 am through to 13.00 hrs. The rest of the day, when not on “guard” or “base electrician” duties, was ours to spend more or less as we wished.

As most will appreciate, Khartoum has a very uncomfortable climate with temperatures well over 40 deg C in the shade and, from time to time, fierce sand storms. However, the month of December is relatively pleasant, Our Wing Commander in charge of “RAF Khartoum” decided to offer a prize of “Christmas Goodies” to the billet with the best decorated bar. The bar was a place from which drinks could be obtained within each billet but only for the Christmas period in accordance with strict “Station Orders”. (There were, of course, very vigilant RAF Regiment Police on duty during that period.) The prize for decoration was quite new and probably offered because the Station had only recently began to relax a little after a period of extra long hours of duty maintaining large aircraft carrying military personnel to and from other parts of Africa day and night and using Khartoum as a staging and refuelling stop.

A couple of friends I had made decided to join me in helping with our billet’s bar decoration. The whole billet took on different responsibilities and ours was to see if we could find and gather some “green” foliage. As a member of the “British Services Sailing Club” I was able to take a boat on to the Blue Nile and we thought that would take us to areas where it was more likely we could find some green foliage.

We set sail as soon as we could in a strong wind that was normal for daytime and made good progress up river. On the way we disturbed huge lizards and other startled creatures. It was likely we also startled workers from their normal rest periods in the shade of any buildings or trees they could find. Our search for suitable foliage took longer than we had expected and we eventually beached our boat on an island known as “Croc Island” to Servicemen. It was a large sand bank mid river and had a mix of different plant life including some small trees. Just before we reached there, another boat, sailed by chaps from a rival billet, passed us sailing downstream. There was the normal exchange of jibes that did not deter us from our objective. Some time later and satisfied with what we had collected we set sail back to base. We made very good progress as there was still a good wind and the strong flowing river assisted us.

Unfortunately we had not made sufficient progress before the wind dropped to almost nothing and we realised the sun would soon set. When it did, the temperature dropped dramatically, and we were only clothed in our swimming trunks. I struggled to keep the boat on course with what little wisps of wind I could use and the occasional use of a paddle. My friends huddled together as much as practicable to keep warm. Suddenly, something made everything darker and we felt a swell of river water rocking the boat hull. Startled and looking behind us we saw a large Felucca (a traditional Nile boat, see back page) almost upon us. Frantic paddling and movements of the tiller were successful in moving our boat just far enough to avoid collision. The Arab helmsman of the heavily loaded Felucca was quite relaxed and just looked at us in quiet disgust. We would have loved a tow at this point but that was out of the question and the Felucca was quite quickly out of sight apart from its lateen sail catching a little light for a bit longer.

Our next surprise was just after we had moored our boat. Loaded with our greenery we walked down the gangplank of the club boat-house (an ex Nile paddle steamer) to hear an RAF Ambulance, an Officer's car and a jeep with some chaps in it, screaming to a halt on the main road. Feeling rather sheepish and not properly clothed – although we had been able to get slightly warmer with our uniform shorts and shirts on – we wondered what it was all about, never dreaming it was about us. It was! The crew of the other boat, hopefully with the best of motives, had reported us missing! Whoever was in charge, finding us safe and sound, ordered the ambulance etc back to camp and we were left to walk. At least it warmed us up. The incident warmed up quite a few people and next morning my friends and I were told to report to the Officer of the Day on a charge. We were given a stiff grilling and were told we were guilty of being out of bounds on “Croc Island”. (We thought about the other boat crew who had almost certainly been there too.) For the next few hours were left to contemplate our Christmas in the “Freezer” (jail). Fortunately, the Officer of the Day who considered our case was a Flight Lieutenant who had won some sailing races for the first time with me as his crew. I am sure that this influenced his decision. When we were called back for our “Sentence”. It was more than one sentence. He recalled the distress and inconvenience we had caused and reiterated the Services Sailing Club Rules, including some we had never before heard. Finally we were deprived of “privileges” for two days. Hardly a punishment, other than not being able to leave camp! On the third day there was a sailing race and he wanted me to crew for him. (I did and we won.)

The decoration of the billet bar was quite successful and the rest of the chaps in the billet were pleased. I think it won a prize. My friends and I found our enjoyment of Christmas outside the camp. We went to join the worship and fellowship, and the partying, of the Sudan Interior Mission with their missionaries and other people from Khartoum. Hoping you too will enjoy your Christmas.

*John Draper.*

## ***Sponta-Nativity?!***

What are you doing on Christmas Eve? A mad dash round the shops for those last minute Christmas presents? Making a few more mince pies? Trying to escape the in-laws? Well, how about doing something a little spontaneous, in a fact a sponta-Nativity!

The idea is that we are going to put on a Nativity play for all ages with only minimal rehearsal ("what's new", I hear you cry!). There'll be a script of sorts, and some of our children will have rehearsed some of the lines and the biggest parts, However, we'er going to invite everyone who turns up on the day, if they would like to tacke part, to come and just join in the fun. They can pick up a tea towel on their way out of the door and be a shepherd, or perhaps come a bit early and make a paper crown to be a wise man. It'll be a bit chaotic but somehow, I am sure, the Messiah will be born once again in the stable.

Watch out for the flyers and posters that will soon be appearing for more details. The fun will start from 2.00 when we will be serving refreshments and doing a bit of rehearsing and costume-making, with the aim of starting the service at 3.00.

If you think you might be able to help, please let me know. We will need people to help welcome guests and make refreshments, and supervise some of the preparations. We are also hoping to have a 'scratch choir' to help bolster the singing, which again will have minimal rehearsal.

This will be a great opportunity to spread the good news that God is with us this Christmas, so please support this event in any way you can.

*Geoffrey Farrar*

## ***Heard at Hove***

"Perhaps it is time for us to follow Jesus and get a bad name, by keeping undesirable company"

*Re John Pritchard 31/08/2008.*

"Every day Christ comes to some one, so every day is an Advent day"

*Geoff Harrington (Local preacher from Brighton and Hove Circuit) 14/11/2008.*

"So let your light shine before you that they will glorify not you but your Father who is in Heaven",

*Rev. Dr. John Tudor (Brighton & Hove Circuit) Third Sunday in Advent 12.12.2004*

## Aquabox - update

Our final 7 Aquaboxes were packed up with household essentials, hardware and hygiene items and the all important water-filter and water-treatment tablets. They have now been sent to be stored at the charity's depot in this country, awaiting dispatch to a community in need. We have also just purchased for the Aquabox charity 7 AQUA30 boxes. These are supplied filled with 30 filter cartridges and the required water- treatment tablets. Typically this AQUA30 box is used under supervision in hospitals, clinics, schools and emergency field treatment centres.

In recent weeks the charity has been able to send Aquaboxes to help communities in Malawi, Andreh Pradesh in India, Philippines, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia and Pakistan.

It is a very sobering and humbling thought that the next time the contents of the boxes are handled it will be by families in communities whose lives are so different to our own. I hope that the everyday items we at Hove Methodist Church have given, will provide some comfort and assistance to those whose need is so great.

Many thanks to everyone who supported this very practical and worthy cause.

*Maggie Symes*



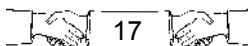
## Guide Dogs For The Blind S.O.S



Guide dogs has been collecting stamps since the 1970s and each year more than 20,000 kilos of stamps are donated to the charity and turned into cash. Each kilo that Guide Dogs collects is sold to a firm in Denmark for up to £1.50. They are then divided into smaller packs and sold on to collectors throughout Europe.

No need to soak them off the envelope or sort them but if they can be trimmed to about 1/4" all round that helps. Stamps must be complete with no tears or creases. Please give your stamps to me or the Church office.

*Thank you Rotha Gill*



## **Behind the Hymn**

### **Cradled in a manger meanly**

Words: George Stringer Rowe (1830-1913).

*Cradled in a manger, meanly,  
Laid the Son of Man His head;  
Sleeping His first earthly slumber  
Where the oxen had been fed.  
Happy were those shepherds listening  
To the holy angel's word;  
Happy they within that stable  
Worshipping their infant Lord.*

*Evil things are there before Thee;  
In the heart, where they have fed,  
Wilt Thou pitifully enter,  
Son of Man, and lay Thy head?  
Enter, then, O Christ most holy;  
Make a Christmas in my heart;  
Make a heaven of my manger:  
It is heaven where Thou art.*

*Happy all who hear the message  
Of His coming from above;  
Happier still who hail His coming,  
And with praises greet His love.  
Blessed Saviour, Christ most holy,  
In a manger Thou didst rest;  
Canst Thou stoop again, yet lower,  
And abide within my breast?*

*And to those who, never listened  
To the message of Thy birth,  
Who have winter, but no Christmas  
Bringing them Thy peace on earth,  
Send to these the joyful tidings;  
By all people, in each home,  
Be there heard the Christmas anthem;  
Praise to God, the Christ has come!*

There are few biographical notes on the author of what is in my opinion (when sung to the tune Winifred) is of the best and least sung Christmas hymns. George Stringer Rowe, was Born in Margate on 15th February 1830, and Died in Bromley, Kent on 18th August 1913.

Rowe trained for the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry at Didsbury Collage Manchester. and became a Wesleyan minister in 1853. Rowe held a number of pastoral appointments before being appointed, both professor of pastoral theology (1888-1898) and governor at Headingley College, Leeds in (1888-1904). Most of his hymns were written for Sunday school anniversaries.

This Hymn was written for a childrens periodical, which Rowe edited for over twelve years. In 1879 the hymn was placed in the Methodist Sunday School Hymn Book. Cradled in a Manger, Meanly is Rowe's only entry in Hymns and Psalms (number 98). The words evoke a serene vision of the first Christmas which serves to highlight the hustle and bustle of todays world where there is little time to contemplate the christmas story. The repeated use of 'happy' our invite to find peace, contentment and a new beginning in the infant Christ, acknowledging that the world is not perfect, but with Jesus in our hearts our lives may be fuller and radiate Gods message to all people.

# REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Here are some of the regular activities occurring at Hove Methodist Church:

## Monday:

- 2.30pm Monday Guild  
Fellowship and friendship. Contact Kathlyn Taylor through the Church Office for details.
- 6.15pm Junior Youth Club (ages 5-11)  
Children's activities. Contact Terry Pomfrey or Maggie Symes through the Church Office for details.

## Tuesday:

- 8.00pm Wives Club fortnightly Speakers and demonstrations, chat and friendship

## Thursday:

- 10.00am Holy Communion  
10.30am Coffee and Chat at the Church

## Friday:

- 2.00pm Polka Tots (ages 0-5)  
Parent and Toddlers' Group
- 7.30-10.30pm Mens' Social Club.

## Saturday:

- 08:30-11am Community breakfast is normally on the last Saturday of every month. Full English Breakfast/newspapers/free refills.

## Sunday:

- 10.30am Morning service  
For details of special and evening services see the weekly newsnotes

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*Up-to-date information about other activities is detailed in the Sunday **NEWSNOTES** and the names and telephone numbers of people to contact can be found in the "Guide to Church Activities" leaflet available at church*

## ***Final thought...***

# " Gold Wrapping Paper."

I was told the following story, that some time ago just before Christmas, a mother scolded her five year old daughter for wasting a complete roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight in the family and the mother became even more upset when she found that the child had used the gold paper to decorate a box just to place it under the Christmas tree.

On Christmas morning, the little girl brought the gift box to her mother and then said, "This is for you, Mummy."

The mother was embarrassed by her reaction the day before, but her anger flared again when she opened the box and found it was empty.

She spoke to her daughter in a harsh manner, "Don't you know that when you give someone a present there's supposed to be something inside the package?"

The Daughter had tears in her eyes and said; "Oh, Mummy, its not empty! I blew kisses into it until it was full."

The mother was crushed. She fell to her knees and put her arms around her little girl, and she begged her forgiveness for her thoughtlessness and anger.

A short time later an accident took the life of the child, and it is told that her mother kept that gold box by her bed for all the years of her life. Whenever she was discouraged or faced difficult problems she would open the box and take out one of the kisses and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us, as human beings, have been given a Golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and GOD. This is the most precious gift that anyone could be given.

## **COMING UP** *Some key events in the next three months*

### **December**

#### **Sundays**

6th	10.30 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Holy Communion
13th	8.00 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Holy Communion
	10.30 am	David Bircham
	5.30 pm	Revd. Keith Edwards - Carol Service
20th	10.30 am	Revd. Keith Edwards
24th	2.30 pm	Geoffery Farrar - Sponta-nativity (see page 16)
	10.30 pm	Festive Fare
	11.15 pm	Holy Communion
25th	11.00 am	Family Worship
27th	10.30 am	Robert Hinton

15th & 18th Carol singing for Action for Children. 6.30 at Hove station  
12th 7.00 pm Concert at Stamford Avenue for Action for Children

### **January**

#### **Sundays**

3rd	10.30 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Covenant Service including Holy Communion
10th	10.30 am	Ken Smith
	<b>3.00 pm</b>	<b>Revd. Lin Francis - Accreditation Service of Geoffrey Farrar</b>
17th	8.00 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Holy Communion
	10.30 am	Revd. Trevor Gerhardt
24th	10.30 am	Revd. Keith Edwards
31st	10.30 am	Stella Goddard - Worship Together
Sat. 30th	8.30 am	Community Breakfast

### **February**

#### **Sundays**

7th	10.30 am	Alan Saunders
14th	10.30 pm	To Be Advised
21st	8.00 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Holy Communion
	10.30 am	Geoffrey Farrar
28rd	10.30 am	Revd. Keith Edwards - Worship Together
	6.30 pm	Sector Service (Patcham)
Wed.17th	7.30 pm	Circuit Ash Wednesday Service (Hove)
Sat. 30th	8.30 am	Community Breakfast

#### **Other dates**

March 20th SUP(P)ERAUCTION in aid of the martlets  
May 8th Variety concert in aid of the martlets  
June 20th Skittle evening in aid of the martlets

*The next edition of Link will be the first week in March 2010.*

*Please contact the editor or church office with articles and events that you wish to be included. All dates were correct when going to print but are shown only as a guide to church activities and may be subject to change.*

*Please refer to the weekly NEWSNOTES for up-to-date information.*



*Falucca on the Nile*

Cromwell continued (from page 13)

I said earlier that Cromwell's motivation in all he did sprang from his Christian faith. This strongly influenced many of his political policies as Lord Protector. He sought to reform the most inhumane elements of the legal, judicial and social systems and clamped down on drunkenness, immorality and other damaging activities. He also believed passionately in what he called 'liberty of conscience', that is freedom for a range of Protestant groups and faiths to practise their beliefs undisturbed and without disturbing others. Methodists did not appear for another 90 years or so, but if we had been there we would have been glad of this! Several times he referred to this religious liberty as the principal achievement of the wars, to be strengthened and cherished now that peace had returned.

In writing this defence of one of my great heroes, I am much indebted to the information on the website of the Cromwell Association. If you would like more detail about Cromwell and his life if you search in Google on "Oliver Cromwell" excellent sources of information are displayed including that of the Association. A fine modern biography is Antonia Fraser's *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*.

I can also supply to anyone who is particularly interested in Cromwell in Ireland a copy of an essay from the BBC History Magazine *Was Cromwell a War Criminal?* This gives a very balanced analysis of the events in Drogheda and Wexford.

*Bob Hinton*

**No charge is made for LINK but donations are invited**

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