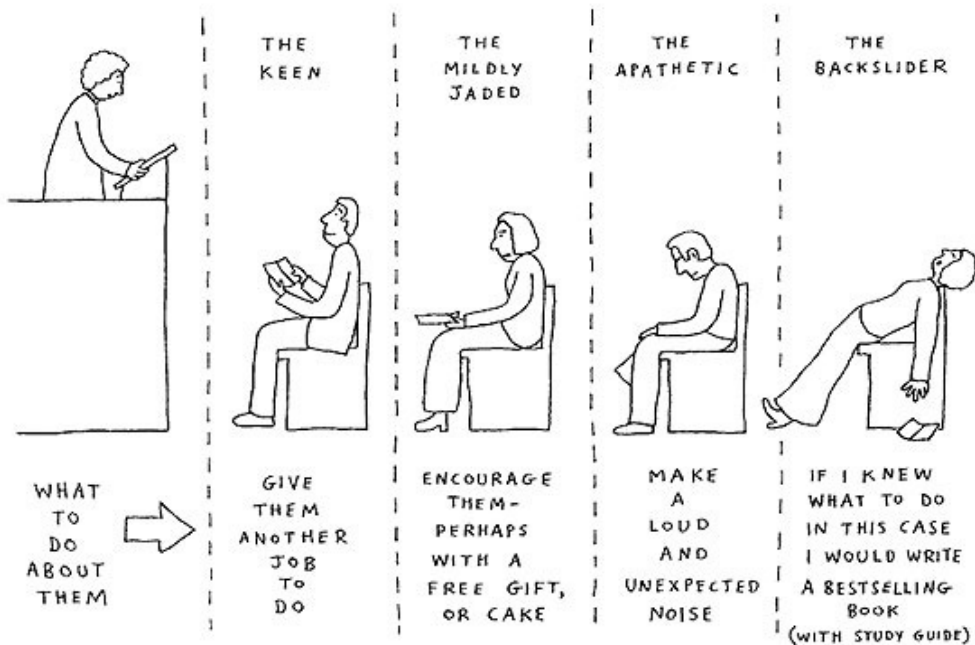


# CHURCHGOERS

THE DIFFERENT SORTS



CartoonChurch.com

**CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE JUNE—AUGUST 2012 ISSUE MUST BE WITH MAY GORDON BEFORE FRIDAY MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> 2012 PLEASE.**



# Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District



**Torbay Circuit – 24/08**

## ***NEWS FROM THE PEWS***

Circuit Plan and Newsletter of the Torbay Circuit of the Methodist Church

**March - May 2012**

### **Chair of the District**

Revd Pete Pillinger	18 Velwell Road Exeter EX4 4LE	01392 272541
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### **Circuit Ministers**

Revd Jerry Cook	133 New Road Brixham TQ5 8DB	854119
Revd Gavin Hancocks	29, Oak Park Avenue, Torquay TQ2 7DB	615480
Revd Dermot Thornberry	24, Borough Park Road, Paignton TQ3 3UA	555694
Revd Chris Haines	12 Goodrington Road Paignton TQ4 7LG	843691

### **Circuit Stewards**

Mrs Margaret Newman	22 Winsu Avenue Paignton TQ3 1QF	526857
Mrs Christine Carter	12 Louville Close, Paignton TQ4 6RB	698553
Mr Ian Edmonds	9 Greenwood Road Brixham TQ5 9HN	0757 8531734
Mrs Kathryn Trotman	12 Elliot Grove, Brixham TQ5 8RT	855659
Revd Peter Williamson	13 Longmead Road, Paignton, TQ3 1AW	392045

### **Circuit Administrator**

Mrs May Gordon	3 Underidge Road Paignton TQ3 3XS	552386
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## CIRCUIT DIARY

### March

6 <sup>th</sup>	10:00am	Ministerial Synod – Bude Circuit
7 <sup>th</sup>	2.00 pm	Southfield, Golden Oldies' Afternoon
	7.30 pm	Circuit Meeting, Southfield
15 <sup>th</sup>	7:30	Ministerial Development Review Training Goodrington
25 <sup>th</sup>	6:30	Circuit Service at Central – Olivet to Calvary
31 <sup>s</sup>	10.30 am	Southfield, Easter Fayre ('til 12 noon)

### April

3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.00 pm	Southfield, Holy Week Service
10 <sup>th</sup>	2:00pm	Southfield, Golden Oldies' Afternoon
14 <sup>th</sup>	7:30pm	City of Southampton Band at Victoria Park
15 <sup>th</sup>		Local Preachers' Sunday
18 <sup>th</sup>	7:30pm	Local Preachers' Meeting - Brixham
21 <sup>st</sup>	10:00am	District Synod, The Mint, Exeter
22 <sup>nd</sup>	6:30pm	Circuit Service at Palace Avenue – Accreditation of Ian Hills as a Local Preacher.

### May

4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>		Circuit Weekend at Sidholme – See separate note.
8 <sup>th</sup>	2.00 pm	Southfield, Golden Oldies' Afternoon



## THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

A man died and went to heaven. St. Peter meets him at the pearly gates.

St. Peter says, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in."

"Okay" the man says, "I attended church every Sunday"

That's good, said St. Peter, " that's worth two points"

"Two points?" the man queries. "Well, I gave 10% of all my earnings to the church"

"Well, let's see," answered Peter, "that's worth another 2 points. Did you do anything else?"

Two points? Golly. How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for the homeless

"Fantastic, that's certainly worth a point, " St Peter replied.

"hmmm...", the man said, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart."

That's wonderful," said St. Peter, "that's worth three points!"

"THREE POINTS!!!" the man cried, "At this rate the only way I get into heaven is by the grace of God!"

Come on in!" said St Peter

In order to achieve this, Christian staff meet on a regular basis within the different policing areas of the force and on occasions hold force-wide events and initiatives encouraging and promoting the Christian message and values.

### **OUR AIM**

OUR PURPOSE-Why we do it

To glorify Jesus Christ in the Police Service

OUR MISSION - What we do

Encourage and support Christians in the Police Service.

- Communicate in words and action, the truth, message and hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ to colleagues and the community we serve. Build bridges between the Christian community and the Police.

OUR VISION - What we want to achieve

- An active and growing branch of CPA in every Police Service in the UK and every Christian in the Police Service to fulfill their potential in Jesus Christ.
- Colleagues and those we serve to know Jesus Christ personally.
- Police and Churches working together in every community to reduce crime and improve quality of life.

OUR VALUES – How we achieve it

Through Prayerfulness, Good Organisation, Justice, Truth, Peace, Love, Hope and Compassion

Contact: [devoncornwall@pauk.net](mailto:devoncornwall@pauk.net)

## *RACING AHEAD*

The London Marathon 2012 is scheduled to start on Sunday April 22<sup>nd</sup> when I shall be out at work. When I return home at lunchtime I will be able to watch an oddly assorted collection of people varying from keen runners to people in fancy dress seeking to complete the 42.195 Kilometre course.

Why on earth do they do it? I am not, and my corporeal shape is convincing evidence of this, a runner. So I have difficulty in understanding why people want to inflict so much pain on themselves simply to cover what is, historically at least, an entirely arbitrary distance.

For the very few it is about winning a race and gaining the glory that accompanies the feat. For many more it is an opportunity to raise funds for very good causes. Others do it just for fun – dressed in funny costumes almost as if to win a competition that they can appear as the most bizarre contestant in the race. I recall, in years past, a man dressed in a traditional deep sea diver's helmet, boots and suit who took nearly 8 days to complete the course.

I believe the motivating factor in all of these is a personal challenge. The competitor wants to achieve something that they had not thought possible. Completing the course dressed as a deep sea diver or Bart Simpson is about a challenge to our own sense of self worth. If we can achieve it we are worth something, at least to ourselves.

Part of the achievement is the months of training beforehand when the body is trained to cope with standing on one's feet for 4 -5 hours. I am told that this is even harder than keeping the running going.

It reminds me of the Christian life. It is not a race or even a competition but it is about a sense of self worth in that we are loved. We are loved by a God who died on cross for us that every one of us, not just the selected few or the best Christians, might be brought into a full relationship with Him.

The training for this “race” of life is simple but does require discipline as much as training for the marathon. It involves prayer and Bible study and going to church. What? I hear you cry – “I can be a Christian without going to church”. I suspect you can, but then you miss out on a vital piece of support which every marathon runner reports as being a help – the support of the crowds encouraging them when the going gets tough, when the pain barrier suddenly appears across their path. It is the support of others cheering and encouraging which gets them through.

The writer to the Hebrews captures this:



*since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

*Jerry Cook*

## **DIRECTORY UPDATES**

### Page

- 13 Chelston, delete Girls’ Brigade
- 28 Mrs Christine Carter - amend e-mail address to chris.carter321@yahoo.com
- 29 Ian Edmonds – amend telephone number to 07837288024.
- 31 Revd Chris Haines – amend e-mail address to member@haines199.fsnet.co.uk
- 33 Mr John Jeffery – add e-mail address ijsjeffery@gmail.com
- 33 Mr Philip Kay – amend e-mail to philipkay393@btinternet.com

We feel that this is a very worthwhile service, not just for Southfield but also for Little Oldway, as the residents look forward to the second Tuesday in each month and give us a very warm welcome.

*Muriel Coombe*

## **GOLDEN OLDIES’ SOCIAL GROUP**

Following on from our successful “Golden Oldies” week last August, we are commencing a monthly meeting beginning on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012. We aim to vary the activities and hope to include some Line dancing, board games, bingo, beetle drive, etc., and of course a cup of tea.

We extend a warm welcome to all. Do come along and join us for a fun afternoon.

Margaret Sutherland

## **THIS AND THAT**

### **CHRISTIAN POLICE ASSOCIATION**

The Christian Police Association is a nationally recognised Diversity Staff Support Association (DSSA) for serving and retired police officers and police staff. CPA has branches in the vast majority of Police Forces of the United Kingdom and indeed contacts with similar organisations around the world.

The Devon and Cornwall CPA branch has members across the force area and we aim to be:

**Supporting colleagues working within the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, and encouraging staff to live out their Christian lives in the workplace**

If increased prayer is all we do in 2012 then we can shout 'hallelujah – we have heard the word and have been obedient'.

Every blessing for 2012

*Charlene Thornberry*

### **SOUTHFIELD**

On a bright fine day, 19<sup>th</sup> November, we held our Christmas Fayre here at Southfield. The stalls were kept busy most of the morning and we welcomed in many visitors, some joining us for coffees and lunches.

A few weeks later on December 15<sup>th</sup> we had the pleasure of welcoming the Singing Together Group from Palace Avenue for an enjoyable evening of Carol singing followed by a faith supper and a very warm fellowship.

We have recently purchased a radio controlled microphone so that each week our preachers are free to wander (not too far). We have also had two new gas fires fitted at the rear of the Church which should keep us warm when the snow comes.

*Margaret Sutherland*

### **LITTLE OLDWAY**

On Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December 11 members and friends from our church went to Little Oldway Residential Home for the Elderly to have, as we do each month, a service with the residents at 11.00 am.

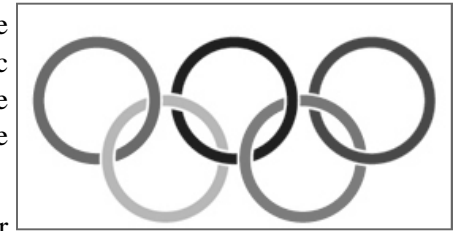
This Tuesday was slightly different, as we had a Carol Service, as we do each Christmas. Led by Deacon Jane, we sang five carols, all of which were known, with the residents joining in. Two of our members read the lessons, being the Christmas story, and Jane read a Christmas poem, which was very well received by all in the room.

Before we left Oldway we wished them all a very happy Christmas, and presented them with a tin of biscuits to be shared around.

## **CIRCUIT CONCERNS**

### **OLYMPIC PRAYER INITIATIVE**

This summer Britain will be hosting the Olympic Games. Though our nearest Olympic event will be the sailing in Weymouth, the question is, what our response to hosting the Olympics should be?



One suggestion is the Olympic prayer initiative. The intention of this is to get as many churches as possible, of every denomination, all across Torbay, praying for three or four specific competing countries in the weeks running up to and during the Olympic Games. The idea is to encourage churches to pray for countries with which they already have some links where possible, as they are more likely to continue to pray for them afterwards, but any unassigned countries can be assigned to other churches willing to take part if necessary.

I am asking that someone in each church will research some of the needs of the countries they are praying for, and the prayers should preferably include prayers for the Church in that country as well as for the general population.

Please contact Chris Haines for more details on how your church can respond: e-mail on [member@haines199.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:member@haines199.fsnet.co.uk) or by phone on 843691.

### **EASTER EGGS**

The Fairtrade Easter Eggs – with the Christian message – will again be on sale this year. Please order from Helen Barrett (tel: 859852) or Lesley Barton (tel: 845064).

### **LOST – METHODIST WORSHIP BOOK**

Has anyone picked up a lost Worship Book belonging to Dermot Thornberry? This is rather a special one as it is bound in navy leather and the pages are ended in gold. It was presented to Dermot when he first arrived in the UK and obviously is very special to him. If you come across it please contact us.

*Charlene Thornberry*

## LOCAL PREACHERS' SUNDAY

April 15th 2012 is Local Preachers' Sunday, and this year we are inviting Local Preachers from the Teignbridge Circuit to our pulpits, while some of our Local Preachers will be visiting Teignbridge to preach. Below is a list of the preachers coming to Torbay along with their contact details:

Mrs. Maria Alsop	64 Dornafield Drive East, Ipplepen, TQ12 5YN	01803 813110
Les Archer	The Lodge, Westholme, Palermo Rd. Torquay TQ1 3NW	01803 329211
Mrs. Jennie Bonner	14 Churchill Drive, Teignmouth TQ14 8QD	01626 774082
Mrs. Sheila Britton	1 Coombe Close, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9ER	01626 833928
John Jerwood	52 Sandford View, Victoria Park, Newton Abbot TQ12 2TH	01626 362942
Anthony Norman	8 Beechwood Avenue, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 FY	01626 830198
Mrs. Gwyneth Pengelly	East Cliff, Marine Parade, Shaldon TQ14 ODP	01626 872796
Andrew Rose,	26 Odlehill Grove, Abbotskerswell, Newton Abbot	01626 351886
Bill Sanders	27 Indio Road Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot. TQ13 9BT	01626 834981
Mrs. Alethe Virgin	8 Mill Lane, Teignmouth TQ14 9BA	01626 773070

As mentioned earlier there was a huge emphasis on fundraising in 2011 with the usual Bazumble and Bazaars/Fairs/Fetes/Fayres – you name it, we had it. These were very successful with new people coming on board to run stalls and generally help out. The men of the church finally allowed the ladies to join them for breakfast in September – could this be a softening of the rules and regulations in the future?

However our very big fundraising success was undoubtedly Derek Elson's musical – hard work, long hours and many prayers went into making this very moving musical an amazing evening's entertainment. With just under 200 in the audience that night we felt we were bringing God's message to the people of Paignton and if only one soul took the salvation message home that night then it was all worth the effort.

2011 brought us 6 new members and 2 transfers. It was not quite 4 weddings and funeral – more the other way around but we also celebrated with a quite a few Baptisms.

There is so much more I could write about – the coffee mornings, pastoral groups, Bible study and Disciple groups etc but I do need to say a word or two about what is envisaged for 2012.

Once again fundraising rears its necessary head and besides the usual events, outside choir and orchestra concerts we are also hoping to have a big World War 2 themed event with food and entertainment of the time. So if you are an expert on the Boogie Woogie or the Bugle Boy from company B – do let us know!

What about the church in 2012 – Dermot would like 2012 to be the year in which Palace Avenue embraces prayer as its armour. All meetings up till Easter will have an increased and heightened emphasis on prayer. The church cannot survive without its members praying – we need to do more of this – for example we need to pray for each other, we need to pray for our neighbours, we need to pray for ourselves and we need to pray for our church leaders.

a speaker from the RSPCA who spoke briefly of the plight of animals in the area. With the economic recession, animals are always the first to suffer as owners just cannot afford to keep them. Amongst the packed congregation we had the usual dogs, one cat, a stick insect, a bunny rabbit, two tortoises and a stuffed camel. We hope to hold this service again sometime in the future.

Our youth and young people continue to be actively involved when they can on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month and again this year's Nativity contribution was great. We continue to enjoy the music group leading worship most 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month – whilst we realise this is such a valued asset to the service we also take on board the time, effort and commitment which has to be present for the group to function – long may it continue!

Christmas seems to have come and gone so quickly but happily we can report that we had bumper attendances at all three major Christmas services – the Carol service was especially meaningful as we joined in with other carol singers across the globe to attempt to beat the Guinness World record for not only singing carols at the same time but also singing the same carols. This was an effort put on by Premier Radio and as far as we know we have beaten the previous world record. The church was beautifully decorated for Christmas so thank you to everyone who made this possible. Carols down the Line was held over the usual 3 nights and silent thanks were given for the mild weather – makes such a difference.

Cabbage Patch crafters continues to grow after celebrating their first birthday and our Newlink magazine is still being published on a strict and regular basis every second month. The Wednesday Women's Fellowship is undergoing a small change in that in this new year they have decided to open their doors to any men who might be interested in attending meetings. It is proposed their new name will be The Wednesday Fellowship.

## LENT GROUPS

Brixham Wednesdays, 2:00pm Commencing February 29th in Christian Community Centre

Southfield Tuesdays, 2.00 p.m. Commencing February 28<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2.00 p.m. Holy Week Service

## TORBAY CIRCUIT WEEKEND AT SIDHOLME



**4-6 May 2012**

Theme: NEW LIFE ..... Being Church in contemporary society

Everyone who shared in the circuit weekend at Treloyhan Manor last year found it an enriching experience and a time to relax together in

comfortable surroundings. 24 people will be going to Sidholme in May and we are looking forward to a similar time of growing together this year.

There are still 6 en-suite rooms in the house and 2 in the annexe, as well as several non-en suite rooms available for the circuit weekend. The cost per night is £55 en suite or £45 for standard rooms in the house with the annexe rooms slightly cheaper. The programme includes dinner and an informal evening with members' contributions on Thursday night, a walk led by Jerry on Friday followed by an evening session led by Pete Pillinger. John and Valerie Carne will be leading the day-time sessions on Saturday with Valerie Price leading a visual session in the evening. Sunday morning worship will be led by Jerry and members of the group before lunch and departure. The price includes half board and Sunday lunch with packed lunches available for an extra cost.

If you wish to join the group, for the three nights, or just two, please contact Wendy Forman as soon as possible with £15 deposit, the balance to be paid by the circuit meeting on 7 March.

## **CONFERENCE 2012**

Dates: 28<sup>th</sup> June to 5<sup>th</sup> July

Venue: Plymouth Pavilions

Volunteers needed: Stewards, Help Desk Volunteers, Collators, Drivers (Sunday). Start times vary (collators have an early start). Doesn't have to be every day. If you would like to have a chance to be at Conference, lending a hand then please contact, Mr. Edwin Dobinson Tel: 01752 695265

e-mail: edwin@dobinson.me.uk

*David Wotton*

## **CIRCUIT HISTORY**

### **UNION STREET METHODIST CHURCH** (Cont.)



An interior view of the rebuilt Church

During the 1960's the Trustees considered ways to cope with rising costs and dwindling congregations. In 1967/68 the members of the Union Street Methodist Church in Torquay, being concerned about the fabric of their church, were looking at the development of the site and the possibility of a new building which would take them into the next century. It was decided to approach a development company to acquire the site, build a shop on the ground floor, and a church on the first floor with a car park on the roof.

Refurbishment Fund - a slide show of 'Old Paignton' and a Tea Dance, both of which were popular.

The Walking Group continue to meet on the second Saturday of the month, leaving the church car park at 9.00am in shared cars. We have enjoyed walks around Berry Head and South Brent, Topsham and Staverton. The proposed walks are: March – Dunsford Bridge to see the wild daffodils ; April - Cornworthy, Tuckenhay and Bow Creek; May: a Bluebell walk.

The Events Team are currently planning an Easter Festival on the theme of 'New Life' which will run from Good Friday through the whole weekend with a flower festival, photographic competition, an Easter bonnet competition and games and activities for children and adults. More details will be published nearer the time on the church website [www.goodringtonmethodist.org.uk](http://www.goodringtonmethodist.org.uk).

*Wendy Forman*

## **PALACE AVENUE**

What a year it has been for Palace Avenue – yes 2011 was packed with productivity, success and many achievements. Fundraising has been high on the agenda this year and the congregation have worked tirelessly but also enthusiastically to not only generate the extra pounds but also to nurture a feeling of mutual team work and fellowship in the church.

One of the big efforts was of course the Bible display which Dermot designed and his church team created. This was a huge effort but it was well worth it as we had over 100 visitors to the display. Many came from outside the church and the comments left behind were most inspirational.

Special services included firstly the Wesley service which raised the rafters with traditional hymn singing and preaching and then of course my favourite the Pet service held in May. For this service we had invited

## **CHELSTON**

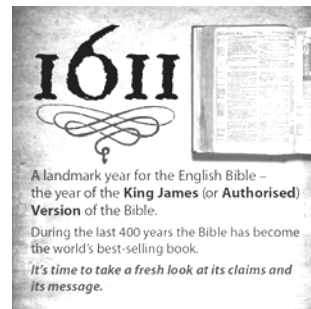
The Bible Exhibition in October was very well received by those who visited the extensive range of Bibles.

We were pleased with the range and age of the exhibits, some of which were 200 years old.

Our thanks go to the Bible-related organisations who brought their own displays which helped us to realise that a lot of good work goes on trying to spread the good news around the world, in schools and hotels, in small villages as well as great cities, even the Braille Bibles on show.

Thanks go to all those who loaned Bibles – I only hope you got them back!

*Michael Mann*



## **GOODRINGTON**

As we move into 2012, members are looking at the refurbishment of the church and members have met to brainstorm ideas. Quotations for various aspects of the work are being sought and, when received, will be discussed by the congregation.

The Events Team held a successful Remembrance Coffee Morning and also arranged for the decoration of the church with Christmas Trees donated by various groups. These, together with the Christmas Journeys labyrinth, gave people much to consider in the run-up to Christmas.

Messy Church continues to reach out into the community and many encouraging comments have been made by the families who attend on the second Friday of each month. The Brigades arranged a Barn Dance in the middle of January which was enjoyed by all who came. The Carpet Bowls group arranged two events to raise money for the

With this in mind the Steering Committee were asked to look at new churches in order to get ideas for the proposed new building. So it was that Revd Dr Cyril Powell and two of the Trustees visited St Andrews Methodist Church in Worcester. The delegates were impressed with what they saw there, especially with the Prayer Chapel. It was suggested that such a Chapel be incorporated into the plans for Union Street and an anonymous gift of the furnishings was gratefully received.

However this plan was not to be completed as the preferred development company pulled out at the last minute and the whole plan for the new church lay in ruins. The Steering Committee found this setback difficult to understand and felt that God had firmly closed the door.

Of course God had a better plan (why do we doubt it?). A chance remark to Leslie Callard by the Revd Derrick Barber that the Belgrave Congregational Church was having difficulty with their development led to the suggestion that the Methodists, including the Market Street Church and the Congregational Church should plan together and build a joint church and Belgrave congregations entered into a conversation, with a view to uniting for common worship and mission, in a new church on the Belgrave site.

In the light of the knowledge that the new church could cost in the region of £500,000, the Union Street church was put up for auction on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1973. The building gradually reached its reserve price and was finally 'knocked down' for the staggering sum of £642,500 to Mothercare. The company was to take possession the following January.

On the last Sunday of January 1974 the final service was held in Union Street Methodist Church.

The monies raised from the sale of Market Street and Union Street were invested in the Circuit Advancement Fund. From this, money was made available for building the new Central Church, and grants made to churches in the Torquay and Paignton Circuit, also to Totnes and Brixham.

*Philip Kay*

## AROUND OUR CHURCHES

### BRIXHAM

#### **“THE WORD MADE FLESH” CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**

After weeks of preparation, it nearly didn't happen; at 2.00 pm on the Wednesday the church was full of people ready to decorate their trees – but no trees! Half an hour later 20 trees were carried up Fore Street from Bolton Cross, an army of willing volunteers fitted them into stands and they were ready for decoration. By 6.00 pm the church was alight with hundreds of tiny lamps shining out from the 20 trees decorated to represent charities and businesses from across Brixham. These included hand-made decorations from Y.E.S., and the Soroptomists, toothbrushes and toothpaste from Harbour Way dentist, various hair accessories on an “ethereal tree” from Hairlines and recycled sprayed light bulbs from Bay Electrical.

During the next 4 days nearly 400 people from Brixham and other parts of Torbay, visited the Festival, many coming back a second time to bring friends and relatives, including Brixham residents who had never been in Fore Street Methodist Church before and some who hadn't been for a while. The “In Memoriam” tree from Stockman's was soon covered with cards written by people who wished to remember loved ones at this time of year.

Over the 4 days £350 was donated to Brixham Does Care.

Staying open on Saturday evening while the Carnival was due, proved very popular as people could drop in while waiting for the procession to come past.



### CENTRAL

#### **CONTACT CENTRE.**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October we had a dinner to celebrate 20 years of unbroken service! Every Saturday (except when it fell on Christmas Day) our doors have been open to offer a place where children could meet estranged parents. An amazing record. We even appeared in the Herald Express under “High Society!”

And the new building – well we've actually seen the new cladding blocks (made for us from moulds used 35 years ago when they built Central), so the start date is very, very close.

#### **BELLEPLATE GROUP.**

For those who've not met us, a belleplate is a variation on a handbell. We play for our own entertainment, but also go out and about. At Christmas we went to Walmer House, a Christian Care home, and early in the New Year we'll be at Furrough Cross for a ladies group.

#### **MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA.**

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, one of our members, Julie Smith, has arranged for a choir to come from the Girls Grammar School. They will be accompanied by a dancing troupe, and our own Minister's wife Angela will also be singing. More acts may appear after we write this. Do come along.

#### **EASTER.**

As usual there will be much going on at this time of year, and it will start on 25<sup>th</sup> March – Passion Sunday – when our augmented choir will be singing “Olivet to Calvary” at 6.30pm.



We estimate that it would then take 2-3 years before the scheme would be completed in its entirety assuming that we can actually afford to do all of it.

### **IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME?**

How can we contemplate spending significant money on the property when we are finding it difficult to support the ministry?

This is because most, although not all, the funds for this scheme will come from sources that we are unable to use to support continuation of ministry, but can only be used for “outreach and growth”.

The changes to the Church building, will, we anticipate make the premises more useable thus enabling us to generate more income (to support ministry) either from other organisations using the church building, or by enabling some of our uses of the CCC to be moved into the Church thus freeing up space that can be hired to others.

It is never “the right time” to embark on a building programme but there are a number of factors which suggest that now is perhaps appropriate.

The Property Committee consider that the decoration of the Church interior, especially the ceiling, should not be put off much longer and repairs to some areas of the ground floor carpet are becoming increasingly urgent. It would not be sensible to do this work and then undertake major works within the next 5-10 years.

In five years time, in 2016, the Church celebrates its bicentenary.

Current interest rates are the lowest they have ever been, making any loans that might be necessary relatively inexpensive and similarly the building industry is short of work thus leading to very competitive quotations.

*David Taylor*

The festival closed with a joyful service early Sunday evening, when we heard the story of the original Christmas Tree: St. Boniface designated the evergreen tree as a symbol of Christmas and Martin Luther, having seen stars shining through the branches outside, thought of adding lights inside; and we looked forward to the celebration of the Birth of Jesus on Christmas Day.

### **BICENTENARY RENOVATION SCHEME**



When Fore St Church was built in 1816 life expectancy was considerably shorter than it is now and although a few members of the congregation might live to a ripe old age, most of them would be lucky to live beyond their 3 score years and ten. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century however we need to make the premises more accessible and

safe for everyone: children in pushchairs, senior citizens with walking sticks and frames as well as people confined to wheelchairs.

This presents us with 4 separate problems: 1) The main access to the church is via eight steps from Fore St 2) Our disabled toilet facilities do not meet current basic standards 3) The Ministers vestry is a further 25 steps from the Church and 4) The church itself is built on several floor levels which provide a significant risk of falls. In addition, the interior of the Church is in need of maintenance: the building, especially the ceiling requires redecoration and some of the worn areas of carpet need to be replaced. Finally, there is a desire to improve the audiovisual equipment: all radio microphones will need to be changed in the near future because of national changes to the frequencies on which they operate and a lot of people think the projection system is beneficial, but no-one thinks it is currently in the optimal position.

During September a series of posters prepared by the Way Forward Group were displayed in the Christian Community Centre and the Church Porch explaining the situation and showing how these problems might be overcome. Subsequently, at its meeting in October, the Church Council agreed to proceed to the first stage in seeking to deal with these problems. An architect has now been commissioned to draw up plans suitable for submission both to the relevant authorities to get permission to make alterations and, more importantly to begin to estimate the costs of undertaking these changes.

No decisions have yet been taken about what we are going to do, when we are going to do it and how much can we afford to spend - all that is yet to come. In the current financial situation it is unlikely that we will be able to do everything that we would like. However, it is the intention of the Church Council that any work will be completed well in time for the Bicentenary in 2016.

### **THE PROPOSED SOLUTION**

There has been a great deal of discussion over the last few years about how to solve these problems and there are, as you might expect, considerable differences of opinion. We have consulted two firms of architects and taken advice from Methodist Property Division in Manchester, who will have to approve any scheme that is proposed.

We now present the following for consideration. The Church Council is going to discuss these proposals at their meeting in October and the Council members would like your views on what is being suggested.

### **THE CHURCH STEPS**

There is insufficient space to build a ramp at the front of the Church and there would be great difficulties in getting approval from both Torbay Planning Department and Property Division. So we propose to reduce the width of the steps on the seaward side of the Church and install a lift, capable of taking a wheelchair. The lift would be weatherproof and would take up about half the width of the existing steps.

### **THE TOILETS AND VESTRY**

The existing Ladies toilet is large enough, in area, to be converted into a unisex disabled toilet built to modern standards. The current Male toilet, although small in area, is just sufficient in size to be converted into a new Ministers vestry.

### **THE CHURCH FLOOR**

It is not possible to create a church interior with a completely level floor devoid of steps, but we can go a long way to improve the current situation. After a great deal of discussion it is proposed to create a level floor from the main doors at Fore St up to a position across the Church in line with the two front pillars that support the balcony. At this point, there would be two steps, running the full width of the church up to a second floor area that would be level with the current flower room and door to the rear passage.

There would be a new communion area and rail and an access ramp between these two floor levels, probably situated on the right hand side of the church.

### **PEWS OR CHAIRS?**

This is the most controversial part of the proposal.

In order to change the floor levels the existing pews will have to be removed. However, although neither simple nor inexpensive, it would be possible to reinstate the pews. Thus there are three alternatives to discuss a) Replace the existing pews on the new floor b) Replace the pews with high quality upholstered wooden chairs c) Replace the central block of existing pews with chairs.

### **NEXT STEP**

The next step is to commission (i.e. pay) an architect to prepare outline drawings of the proposal which can then be used to estimate the costs of the scheme and acquire the necessary permissions from the relevant authorities.