

THE Beckoner

The Magazine
For Beckminster
Methodist Church

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2017

PRICELESS!



*With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed.*

William Wordsworth

Photo by John Holt

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Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

I write to you as your new Minister, stepping into the line of many colleagues who have ministered to and with you over many years. When I first came to visit in February and saw the list of those men and women who have had pastoral responsibilities of looking after your congregation, I felt so privileged and humbled that I should be counted as one of them.

First, let me tell you about myself. My name is Paul Nzacahayo. I was born in Rwanda but the UK has been my home for the last 24 years. I studied Theology both in Rwanda and Edinburgh, Scotland, and also Business Administration in the same city as well. I am also interested in Psychology. My ministry started in Rwanda where I was ordained into the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda but then, once in the UK, I was called to minister in Edinburgh, Scotland, North Wales and the Black Country. Throughout my ministry in these different circuits and churches, I experienced God's unfailing love and care, people's generous hospitality and a very rich and blessed ministry.

I also sat on various Connexional committees such as the Faith and Order Committee, Racial Justice Committee, Candidates Selection Committee and the Chairs Nomination Panels. For a period of five years I was one of those representing the Connexion on the World Methodist Council, a position in which I got to sit on the Social and International Affairs Committee.

For the past two years I have been teaching at The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham where we train Anglican, Methodist and Pentecostal clergy. We also teach independent students who come because they have a passion for theological studies. The model of my ministry is that I will spend 50% of my working time at Queen's and the other 50% at Beckminster. I know the challenges that come with trying to hold two halves; but there is something about holding the academic/theoretical knowledge and its practical application into real life that attracts me about this arrangement. Whether I will be able to make it work is another matter.



My plans, at least for the immediate future, are twofold: to listen to the congregation's stories and see where people are. Opening my eyes and my ears requires that I restrain myself in how much I do the talking, and a deliberate desire to take time to notice things, see things and ask questions about why they are the way they are? As somebody who ministered in the Black Country (Cradley Heath, Brierley Hill, Stourbridge and Kinver) I sometimes drove through Wolverhampton but, apart from keeping my eye on the road, I can't say that I noted much else. I plan to devote the coming months to get to a deeper level of seeing; to sometimes stop and ask myself how I might see it differently.

Experience has taught me that it is not good enough to ask our friends "How are you?"; we must have time to listen to what they say in reply. It is not good enough to have just been in a place; we must show that we have been able to take a mental note of what is there and that we tried to make sense of it. It is when we slow down a bit to do these two things that we are able to glimpse God's glory and God's love in action.

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your generous welcome. If my first week was anything to go by, I must echo John Wesley's words that the best is still to come; not because of my ministry, but because the One who is calling us ahead is with us.

God bless you all!

Your friend and Minister

Paul

Steward's Musings

I write this at the beginning of September. The sun is shining, the sky is blue and school term begins next week. Looking back on those years when returning to school was part of my life, I recall that the wet, dismal days of late August were often replaced by warm sunny days of September. It didn't seem fair.

Looking around me in the fields, the harvest is well underway. Our plums had one of their best ever years. The Bramley apples are looking good and blackberries in the hedgerows are waiting to be picked. What a shame so many of them are ignored! The farmers are less hopeful of cereal crops this year (not enough rain in Spring and early Summer). However, compared with storms that have devastated parts of India, Pakistan and Nepal, not to mention floods in Houston and mudslides in Sierra Leone, we really must be careful about suggesting we are unfortunate.

Some parts of the world are well used to excessive rainfall at this time of the year, but it is hard to avoid thinking that climate change is at work and that it is the poorer parts of the world which are suffering its effects more than we are. Christian Aid has been telling us that for some time and it has been pointing out our part in the process.

I have been studying the third stage of Christian Aid's *The Big Shift* campaign. Having conducted careful research, Christian Aid has discovered how much of our four largest banks are still investing in fossil fuels and how little in financing the de-carbonisation of our economy. Christian Aid is also encouraging us in several ways to protest against this, both as individuals and churches. Please have a look at their publications and try to do your bit!

Despite this, I look forward as always to our Church Harvest Festival, when the church not only looks good but smells good. Thanks in advance to all who have a share in the decoration. After the Sunday services, our flowers will be taken out to the housebound by members and our food will be donated to the Good Shepherd Ministry. Come and join us both in our thanksgiving and our concern for others.

When I was a child in South Yorkshire, I was always fascinated by the two items at the centre of the harvest display – the harvest loaf, of course, but also a big, black shiny lump of coal. We have already ordered our harvest loaf. Can anyone let us have a miniature solar panel or wind turbine before 1 October please?

John Ashwood



Harvest FESTIVAL

A few weeks ago, I enjoyed watching the film of Thomas Hardy's novel *Far from the madding crowd*. I enjoyed Hardy's novels very much and the film revived in me the deep connection they all have to rural life in 'Wessex' at the end of the nineteenth century. In the film I particularly enjoyed the scene of the harvest home. The harvest is gathered in. There will hopefully be enough food for the next year. There is a relief that it is all done and feasting as farmer and workers join together in celebration.

We don't live in that sort of society any longer but harvest is still a popular service and celebration. It is an instinct that goes back to early times when life was totally dependent on a good harvest. It meant there was food to last through the winter and spring until there were crops to harvest again. For a short time, there was plenty to eat, some animals could be kept through the winter, others would be slaughtered, and some preserved to eat through winter. There was thankfulness for another year's survival.

We are removed from that immediacy now. Our harvest is our earnings or pensions, our possessions and treasures. Some of us have

gardens or allotments where we do grow produce, which brings us closer to the idea of harvest festival. However, there are principals in the idea of harvest festival which are of supreme importance. They are – that we do not own the earth but we have a duty to care for it. Its resources are to be used wisely for the benefit of all and are not the possession of the few. The earth's harvest is to be shared. Our misuse of the earth over the years has caused drought and famine. We are also faced with the problem of climate change and the need to change the way we live. We find that the balance between wealth and poverty has changed. There are some with wealth beyond imagining and many all over the world starving and struggling.

We are called to bring our first fruits to God as a symbol of our stewardship of all that we possess. Our first fruits will be of all that we are and possess. We bring them in thankfulness to God for all his gifts, and we go with the commission to use all that we have and are in the service of the world.

Rev Glennys Bamford



Who Guards the Guardians?

June 2017 was a terrible month for a number of ordinary people in the United Kingdom.

If you, or your family and friends, lived in Grenfell Tower in North Kensington you endured the indescribable torture of the events of June 14. If you were a relative or friend of one of the Hillsborough football stadium victims, you learned, after 28 years, that criminal charges were to be brought for misconduct in public office and perverting the course of justice.

In both cases, the system or, more correctly, the people running the system, failed abysmally and totally. For whatever reason – capability, competence, carelessness, complacency, cost cutting, or reasons yet to be determined - the safety, well being and value of ordinary people were not paramount.

Regrettably, these are not isolated cases. In spite of numerous external reports and reorganisations, Birmingham Social Services have been failing vulnerable children for years: Rochdale police and social services simply dismissed complaints and reports of grooming and sexual exploitation of teenage girls; the Catholic and Anglican churches response to allegations of sexual abuse by priests was a combination of silence, denial and moving the problem around. In Britain we imprison a far higher proportion of offenders than any of our continental neighbours e.g. France Germany and Holland.

In Plato's political treatise, *The Republic* (380BC), those charged with governing society for the good of everybody else were called **The Guardians**. Two hundred year later, in a somewhat different context, the Roman poet Juvenal coined the phrase **Qui custodiet ispo custodies?** or who **Guards the Guardians?**

How do we ensure that those in positions of responsibility are capable, competent and conscientious before any disaster occurs? To whom do we turn when those charged with running the system simply fail?

If you are very rich, you can try to obtain a judicial review. If you are eloquent and persuasive, you can speak to your local councillor. If you are literate and can marshal your evidence and thoughts, you can write to your MP or the newspapers. If you are media savvy, you can try Facebook or Twitter.

In reality, many, but not all, of those in positions of responsibility within the system, are members of the same loose knit group, share the same assumptions and have the same vested interests. So what is to be done? The process of achieving change, righting wrong, obtaining justice requires more than one approach and the skills and commitment of more than one person.

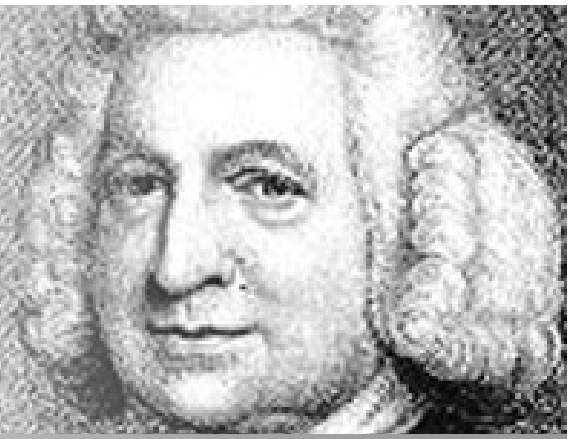
Towards the end of most services at Beckminster we share in prayers of intercession. And then? Edmund Burke wrote: **'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.'**

Acknowledging that we are called to be doers of the Word as well as hearers, John Kennedy's challenging words, **'If not us, who?'**, mean that we alone guard the guardians.

Glyn Powell

Charles Wesley

(1707-1788)



Poet and Hymn Writer (2)

In the preface to his 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the use of People called Methodists* John Wesley wrote:-

“1. In these hymns there is no doggerel; no botches; nothing put in to patch up the rhyme; no feeble expletives. 2. Here is nothing turgid or bombast, or low and creeping on the other. 3. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning.”

All this was certainly true of the hymns in the *Collection*, the majority of which were written by Charles. Rupert Davies, in his history of Methodism, contends that the hymns were more effective in spreading the Christian gospel than John's preaching. For verse has one great advantage over prose in that due to its rhyme and rhythm it is more easily remembered. This memorability is further enhanced if the words are allied to a stirring or attractive tune.

Charles had an urgent message to proclaim and sought to put it across by the use of language understandable by all, knowing that most of those singing his hymns had little, if any, education. He therefore tended to use short words and phrases in common use, though, as we shall see, he could on occasions use longer words to achieve a desired effect. He also employed virtually every known poetic metre, unlike most of his contemporaries who kept to the well known common forms.

It has been said that his artistry concealed his art for in his hymns each word is chosen for its precision, the accent always falling on the right syllable and the meaning never being in doubt. He wrote with a passion and urgency often missing from the hymns and metrical psalms

then in common use in the established church, and causing his hymns to be described as “vulgar” by the authorities of the day. They were, however, always sound theologically and based on biblical teaching. It has been said that if we lost the bible most of it could be found in the hymns of Charles Wesley. They are literally sermons in song, his verses reinforcing John's constant message that God's grace was for everyone, without distinction. One can only imagine the effect of this revolutionary thinking on the miners, mill workers and peasants of the time, living their short, brutish lives in squalid conditions. The universality of God's love is constantly emphasised, as in the hymn “Father, whose everlasting love” where the phrase “for all” is repeated in every verse and, in another example, “For all, for all my Saviour died”. The same sentiment is expressed differently in the line of another hymn in Wesley's phrase “Thy undistinguishing regard”.

There is nothing negative in Charles' writings. Almost every hymn is a positive affirmation of God's love for His people. Frequently his verses build up to a triumphant assertion of His power. Was there ever a better example of a verbal climax in all hymnology than the second verse of “See how great a flame aspires”?

When he first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His day;
Now the work doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way;
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.

If you read this aloud you almost feel like

shouting out the last line. Note also the effective use of alliteration on the letter “w” in the first half of the verse.

Unlike other writers like Isaac Watts, who frequently allowed only two of the four lines in a verse to rhyme, Wesley almost always ensured that every line rhymed, another aid to memorability, though sometimes it is an “eye rhyme” rather than an “ear rhyme”; for example “Lord/word”. On other occasions one can appear to catch him out, only to learn that in the 18th century it was perfectly valid to rhyme such words as join/mine and oil/smile. (I recall old Black Country residents still using these pronunciations)

The constant use of short words can, though, become monotonous, as Charles well knew, so he would sometimes throw in a much longer word to alter the rhythm and emphasise the meaning. Probably his two best examples of this are:-

“There let it for thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze;”

and

“Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man.”

The latter is another fine example of ending a hymn on a triumphant note, and surely only Charles Wesley could encapsulate the Christian gospel in nine words!

Social attitudes and word meanings change and many of Charles' hymns now sound incongruous to our ears. He sometimes had an unfortunate tendency of referring to the human race as “worms” and making use of the word “bowels”, neither being expressions we would currently choose in trying to understand our relationship with God. Also, many of his hymns were written for the events and attitudes of that time which now have no relevance to our situation. Nevertheless the number of his hymns still sung by all denominations is a tribute to the greatest hymn writer of them all. Long may Charles' verses be sung by Christians everywhere.

Finally, as we sing, let us remember John's invocations to the people of his time.....

Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can.

Sing *lustily*.

Sing *modestly*

Sing *in time*.

Above all, sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself.

As we do so we will truly come to appreciate the great contribution that the hymns of Charles Wesley has made to the worship of God.

Alan Causer



Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

(Charles Wesley)

A STROLL AROUND



Often on a Saturday when the weather forecast is not too promising, my wife and I drive across to Telford as they have a very good indoor shopping complex – the Telford Centre. Leaving Wolverhampton on the A41 (which leads to the fast M54 motorway), we usually choose the quieter and perhaps prettier route (A464) which skirts Albrighton and leads to Shifnal.

Shifnal's history goes back to at least Norman times and the parish church of St. Andrews has a Norman doorway. The small town originally developed as a staging post on the main London to Holyhead trading route and has a scattering of black and white buildings in the main street. It was also visited a few times by Charles Dickens, whose grandmother was housekeeper at nearby Tong Castle. He is thought to have based some aspects of *The Old Curiosity Shop* on the town and the former Unicorn public house claims associations with the writer. We then head for Telford for the last part of our journey along the M54 and into the New Town area and shopping centre.

Telford has expanded rapidly over the past few years and I've been very impressed at modern development and some imaginative buildings which have sprung up (it could teach Wolverhampton a thing or two when one thinks

of that ugly complex of student residences by the Canal Basin as one approaches Heath Town. I've always thought it looks like a pile of boxes that had suddenly been dumped there. Most unsightly when approaching the city centre by road or rail!)

Prior to the building of the new town known as Telford, the area was once part of the North East Shropshire coalfield. Of course, we are well aware of Ironbridge and the nearby Severn Gorge being known as the 'cradle of the Industrial Revolution'. Industrial development spread northwards but prior to that the area was occupied by forests. It was way back in Saxon times that early settlers cleared areas within the forest to create land that would be suitable for farming. These became the starting points for places like Dawley, Stirchley and Malinslee. In the 13th century much of the land around Stirchley was given to Cistercian monks of nearby Buildwas Abbey. They farmed the surrounding land until the 1530s and it was a peaceful place to be until the dramatic changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

Valuable raw materials such as coal and ironstone were mined. In turn, this produced large amounts of waste which created many pit mounds in the area. The Shropshire Canal

passed through and new industries grew up alongside – iron furnaces, foundries and forges. For many years the area was prosperous through its industrial output. During that time Methodism began to spread in the area and other forms of Nonconformism – especially Quakerism. On a visit to the area in 1779, John Wesley admired the iron bridge prior to it being hauled into position and he was a great friend of Rev John Fletcher, vicar of St. Michael's parish church in Madeley. (He is buried in the graveyard just to the left of the church! With him is his wife, the former Mary Bosanquet and one of Methodism's first woman preachers).

The many natural resources of the area led to other industries being set up in the district, such as the china works at Caughley and Coalport, and tile works at Jackfield. Today it is difficult to believe the area was once a thriving industrial centre during the 18th and 19th centuries. Instead, the visitor now finds a tranquil area of great natural beauty.

So how did the town of Telford come about? The thriving industries of the area gradually declined with lack of manpower caused by two World Wars, a general slump in trade and increasing foreign competition. Governments of the day were promoting and developing the idea of 'new towns' to house many of the people from big cities and towns who maybe had lost their homes in the blitz and with a rising population plus slum clearances. Places such as Milton Keynes, Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, High Wycombe, Crawley and Telford all sprang up, each with their own development corporation. It was their responsibility to oversee the development of new housing, shopping, town centres and leisure amenities being introduced.

In the former East Shropshire coalfield area there were already a number of small towns and villages such as Ironbridge, Dawley, Madeley, Stirchley, Malinslee and others which, in turn, were each swallowed up into the new town of Telford, a name chosen to honour the great engineer and builder of canals, bridges and other achievements, Thomas Telford, evidence of whose work can be seen in many parts of the United Kingdom. However, most of these original places have done much to protect their local traditions, churches, buildings and folklore (such as with local history groups and other community activities) and integrated with their

newer neighbours now living in more recent housing developments.

Telford now has many new tech industries, notably Japanese and other Far Eastern influences, all of which have provided employment for a growing population. On a par with these are a number of new hotels which have shot up across the area as well as a number of commercial and industrial organisations which chose to have their offices there with its close proximity to the motorway network. Major developments such as the Telford International Centre (which houses large sporting events as well as major conferences), an Ice Rink, numerous larger supermarkets, Cineplex, new restaurants, many sporting activities, car parking and civic buildings now abound.

On my last visit I left the shopping centre for a short walk into the nearby Telford Town Park, again reclaimed from derelict industrial sites and land. I was quite astonished with what had taken place. There were lots of activities for all ages including children's playgrounds. In one there were a couple of imaginative stainless steel slides (had there been nobody about I would have been very tempted to clamber up the steps of one and have a go myself - though I thought better of it!). There was so much to see ranging from roundabouts, boats, carousels and swings, a high rope course (not for me, thanks!), water play, a stage, bandstand and, for quieter tastes, the Maxell Cherry Gardens in which many different types of ornamental flowering cherries can be found. To round off my visit to the Town Park there is a nice café and an informative visitor centre about the complex, where two attractive young ladies took pleasure in telling me all about the area. There was, however, something I found quite surprising at the centre of one of the children's play areas – it was a Norman chapel! On researching this later I found it to be a building which had been preserved and probably once used as a Chapel of Ease by the monks of Buildwas Abbey mentioned earlier - a nice link between past and present in this forward-looking place. Why not take a look around Telford yourself if you have the opportunity?

Keith Cheetham

CORNY JOKES AND AMAZING TECHNOLOGY!!

The world of being a carer can, all too often, be a lonely one but not, it would seem, for Lynne Hawkins!

As many of you may know, Lynne is a full time carer for her husband of 36 years, Pete, who has Motor Neurone Disease but, after an hour or so in their company, you can see that the love and humour that first drew them together, is still very much in evidence.

MND affects the spinal cord and brain and attacks the nerves that control movement so muscles no longer work. Pete was diagnosed in 2003 and four years later was forced to retire from teaching PE at Aldersley High School, due to the effect the disease had taken on his speech. After losing the ability to use his hands to tap out what he wanted to say on a screen, he can now communicate through a special computer which he demonstrated to me.

Lynne places a silver spot on the bridge of

Pete's glasses which controls a cursor on the screen and he is able, by moving his head, to spell out what he wants to say and reproduce corny jokes, I might add!! It also speaks if commanded to do so and, thankfully, it has been programmed to use a well-rounded English voice and not a robotic American one. It will also be linked to his mobile phone so he is able to text and access social media. It opens up a whole new world to him. He also spells out letters with his foot.

The couple have a lot of support from friends, family and their GP, regular visits from the Hospital Multi-Disciplinary Teams as well as the local MND support group. It was through the latter that they were given the computer. A stair lift has been offered but, for now, they feel they can manage without. However, Lynne is very delighted with the power pack provided for the wheelchair and eschews the advice that it isn't always needed on the flat!



Their children, Gareth, Claire and Matthew, who all attended the Junior Church here at Beckminster, visit regularly and seemingly take the situation in their stride. Both Pete and Lynne have recently celebrated special birthdays and for Lynne's, a busy weekend with a steady stream of visitors was organised by the younger Hawkins. A trip on the Severn Valley Railway with a lunch stop, a present for Pete's birthday, was enjoyed too and Pete says that everyone was very helpful by providing ramps on and off the train, amongst other things.

As said at the beginning of this article, the role of a carer can be very lonely. Other people can be very insensitive or do and say silly things. I read a book, when I was a carer, called *The Selfish Pig's Guide to Caring* by Hugh Marriott. The title is explained in the book as is the Piglet acronym given to the person being cared for – Person I Give Love & Endless Therapy to. It is well worth a read whether you are a carer or not. He had given up his job to care for his wife who had Huntingdon's disease. As he was zooming around the supermarket, trying to do the shopping quickly as his wife complained if she was left too long at the entrance, he bumped into a friend who enquired, "Are you enjoying your life of leisure now you have retired?" He wrote that the said friend will never know how close they were into being knocked in to next year!!

There also is a tendency to ignore the person being cared for ("Does he take sugar?") or shouting at them as if their condition renders them deaf or stupid. As Lynne says there is nothing wrong with Pete's hearing or mind - it's just that he can't get the words out!

Sometimes, depending on the situation, a carer's social life grinds to a shuddering halt and they can feel cut off from the rest of the world. Thankfully this isn't the case for Lynne. She and Pete do many things together but also individually as Lynne has outside interests, including regularly attending Church, and Pete is taken to the pub regularly by his friends. Although he doesn't drink he listens to the chat and banter and puts his two penneth worth in!

We all at Beckminster wish them well for what the future holds.

Hazel Graham

Prayer for farmers

Loving God, we give you thanks for all those who work so hard, in all kinds of weather and, sometimes in very difficult circumstances, to produce food for our tables. May we never take those who work on the land for granted, but always be mindful of the struggles they face. We pray for all those who live in small villages where amenities are dwindling. May our rural churches and chapels support them in the fight for justice in daily living. We pray for young farmers groups, for chaplains in the auction markets and for the work of the Farming Community Network. And may we trust you for all that is to come as we give thanks for all that is past. Amen.

*Jane Gibson, deacon,
North Lancashire Circuit*



Don't forget!
copy deadline for
Dec - Jan Issue
Nov 5th 2017

BECKMINSTERAMA

Open Way



Dates and venues to be advised in Church Notices.
Contact Hilda Evans Tel: 421777

Monday Focus

Everyone is welcome to join us at Monday Focus at 8pm on Mondays in the Beckminster Coffee Bar.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Oct 2 | Alternative Real Marigold Adventure - The Pearsons |
| Oct 16 | Help Flush away Poverty
Jane Fuell |
| Oct 30 | Red Flowers and a Bag of Bones
Barry Picken |
| Nov 13 | Craft Evening
Mary Harris |
| Nov 27 | Dudley's Own Dambuster
Rob Broadbent |

Contacts: Ann Holt Tel: 650812
Margaret Nicklin Tel: 742537

Emmaus Group

Meet Thursdays at 7.45 pm. All welcome
Contact: Janet Anderson Tel: 337404

- | | |
|--------|------------------|
| Oct 26 | 9 Alderdale |
| Nov 23 | 4 Highlands Road |
| Dec 14 | 32 Church Hill |

MESSY CHURCH (I)

Monthly — Fridays
3.30 - 5.45 pm. Fun for all the family

- | | |
|--------|-----------|
| Nov 10 | Recycling |
| Dec 8 | Stars |

Contact Wendy Ashwood Tel: 831637

Crèche and Sunday Club

Whilst the crèche allows parents of very young children to worship together, Sunday Club explore the Christian faith in exciting ways.

This is a typical week in the life of Beckminster Methodist Church.

- All groups meet at the church unless otherwise stated
- New members are always welcome at any group

Sunday

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 10.30am | Crèche and Junior Church |
| 10.30am | Morning Worship |
| 6.30pm | Evening Worship |

Monday

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9.30 - 12.30pm | Art Group |
| 10.30am | Prayer Meeting |
| 1.00 pm | Blissful Dragon Therapeutic Sound |
| 2.00 - 4.00pm | Art Group |
| 6.15pm | Brownies |
| 8.00pm | Monday Focus |

Tuesday

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------|
| 9.45am | The Toddler Group |
| 1.30pm | Art Group |
| 4.15pm | Dinky Divas 'N' Dudes |
| 6.15pm | Brownies |
| 8.00pm | Open Way |

Wednesday

- | | |
|---------|------------------------|
| 12 noon | Luncheon Club |
| 5.45pm | Rainbows |
| 6.30pm | 'Soaring Spirits' |
| 7.30pm | Horticultural Society |
| 7.30pm | Happy Feet Dance Group |

Thursday

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 9.45am | The Toddler Group |
| 2.00 - 4.00pm | Take a Break |
| 5.00 - 6.00pm | Tai Chi |
| 7.45pm | Emmaus Group |
| 7.00 - 9.00pm | St. John's Ambulance |

Friday

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10.30 am | Blissful Dragon Therapeutic Sound |
| 10.30 am | LWTC Diabetes Prevention Group |
| 3.30pm | Monthly Messy Church |
| 7.00-9.00pm | Gateway Group (weekly) |

Saturday

Communion Services

The sharing of bread and wine takes place on four Sundays a month, either during the morning or evening worship or as an early Sunday morning service at 9.00am on first and third Sundays. Everyone is welcome.

BECKMINSTERAMA

Girls Uniformed Organisations

Rainbows 5 – 7 yrs

Wednesdays 5.45pm

Brownies 7-10 yrs

Mondays & Tuesdays 6.15pm

Various activities according to age – include crafts, cooking, badge work, swimming, service to others, pack holidays, hikes and camps.

Contact: Julie Tonks

Tel: 01952 461006



Luncheon Club

Wednesdays 11.00am – 3.00pm

25 housebound people and helpers meet for coffee, lunch and tea. A short entertainment and epilogue. An opportunity to meet people, chat etc to relieve loneliness. A caring service provided by volunteers (who are always needed)

Contact: Tess Davies Tel: 07789 260953

Boys Uniformed Organisations

Beavers 6 – 8 years Thursday 6.15 – 7.15 pm

Cubs 8 – 10 years Monday 6.30 – 8.00 pm

Scouts 10 – 14 years Wednesday 7.00 – 9.00 pm

All groups meet at Scout HQ in Skidmore Avenue, for badge work, crafts, games, various activities and service. Camps.

Contact: Sheila White Tel: 332134

Take a Break

Thursdays weekly during term times

2.00 – 4.00pm

Indoor bowling. For people wanting to meet new friends and try something different. All welcome.

Contact: David Jones

Tel: 762408



Please hand articles, news and views to:

Keith Cheetham (Editor)(762894)

Email: jkeithcheetham@gmail.com

Alan Causer (753679)

Jean Gilbride (338944)

Hazel Graham (764036)

Toddlers

Tuesdays and Thursdays,

9.45 – 11.15 am.

Approx. 40 Toddlers with Mums, Dads, carers or grandparents meet for mutual support whilst toddlers play.

Contacts:

Barbara Bennett Tel: 341877 (Tuesdays)

Camilla Clarke Tel: 07391 718084



HARVEST FESTIVAL

SUNDAY 1 OCTOBER

9.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Harvest & Parade Service

6.30pm Harvest Service

GOSPEL CONCERT

21 October 2017

This will be held at 6.30pm and priced at £5.00 with children free and proceeds to Christian Aid. "Gospel Praise" with the Harvest Temple Gospel Choir and Dancers from the Wesleyan. This is a Christian Aid event and if you need anything further, please contact Wendy and John Bate.

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Beckminster Beach

More than one set of eyebrows were raised in surprise when picking up our copies of the previous issue of the Beckoner. The headlines on the front page read 'I do like to be beside the Seaside' but then the Editorial Team would not have known when going to print that plans were under way to bring the beach to Beckminster.

This was the creative idea of Camilla, our Children and Families Worker, with an invitation to children of all ages to come to a Fun Day at Beckminster under a 'Beach Party' theme. Between us we began to gather resources together.

I read recently that August has now become the second wettest month of the calendar year in this country and so we were a little in trepidation as we had planned to hold the event out on the Church lawn with volleyball and paddling pools involved. There was a forecast of heavy rain for 8th August so sadly on the day before the event we had to make the decision to utilise the main hall instead. Within a couple of hours of



preparation it was transformed decorated with bunting, balloons and fishing nets. Around the room were beach balls, deckchairs, sandpits and an improvised paddling pool (not feasible to be filled with water indoors). There were areas set aside for sea related games and crafts, and a photo booth put in place so that parents could photograph or have pictures taken for them of their children against a blue backdrop of the sea.



All of this prepared and we weren't sure if anyone was coming as despite extensive advertising there had been insufficient support for the intended Holiday Club for 6 -10 year olds and that had to be cancelled. We were now reliant on the power of Facebook and emails since schools were already into the third week of the summer holidays.

The big day dawned and yes the rain did pour down. Families began to arrive and soon the hall filled up with children enjoying the many activities provided. Some were having their faces painted, some were putting on props which Camilla had brought in and having their photographs taken. Some were playing games, some doing crafts or playing in the sand. There were close on 60 people having fun surpassing our wildest estimates. After a hour or so ice lollies and cocktail looking summer drinks (it was lemonade!!) were brought in and shared amongst the guests.

What is the traditional English seaside resort like without a puppet show? Not to disappoint our morning was concluded with our own legendary Christine Pearson entralling all in her inimitable way.

Feedback suggested that it was a highly successful event and we are blessed and indebted to our helpers Sue Reed, Janet, Loraine, Kelly for face painting and Christine for



conducting the Puppet Show. All ensured that the morning went smoothly.

Brian Timmis

**God of forgiveness,
cover the sky with clouds,
regulate the rain
and the climate,
to make the crops grow,
and reduce poverty and famine.
Amen.**

Martine Kakinda, programme co-ordinator
of All We Can's partner SOEDC in Burundi.



SHADES OF DR. FINLAY

A short while ago I came across a DVD of the very first ten episodes of the long-running television series *Dr. Finlay's Casebook*. It was first aired by the BBC in 1962 and continued until 1971. It ran to 191 episodes and at the time of its origin, was only obtainable in black and white television, transferring to colour in later years.

It was based on A.J. Cronin's novel entitled *Country Doctor* and in its time turned out to be one of the most-watched series on Sunday evenings. Storylines centred on a general medical practice between the two World Wars in the fictional Scottish town of Tannochbrae. The main characters were Dr. Finlay, the junior doctor in the practice as a young medical student (played by actor Bill Simpson) under the tutelage of the experienced Dr. Cameron (Andrew Cruickshank), the craggy senior partner. In addition was Janet, their unflappable housekeeper and receptionist at their home in Arden House played by that fine actress Barbara Mullen. Other characters included Dr. Snoddie (Eric Woodburn), Finlay's crusty detractor and Janet's admirer and gossipy Mistress Niven (Effie Morrison) who took on the dual role of district nurse and midwife.

Much of the location filming took place in and around Callander (Perthshire), which acted as Tannochbrae. The town is situated on the River Teith and opening titles always included a shot of the local Red Bridge into the town over this river. Even today devotees of the nostalgic series still look for some of the original locations. For instance, Arden House, was based on a large residence reached by a short walk up Bracklin Road. It's original name was Auchengower Guest House but the name was changed to Arden House by two later enterprising owners who no doubt cashed in on the programme's popularity. A close friend of ours' (also a former GP) often stayed there and I understood from her that some of the main rooms are each named after the main characters in *Dr. Finlay's Casebook*.

Continuing up the Bracklin Road leads to the spectacular Bracklin Falls. Other sites around the small attractive town include the Falls of



Leny (where Dr. Finlay used to fish to get away from it all). This river and Callander are overlooked by Ben Ledi which towers over the area at 879 metres. I also remember one episode when the ageing Dr. Cameron had to scramble up another nearby mountain, Ben Vorlich, to both attend and rescue a patient.

There is no doubt the drama became a cult sensation by 1965. A *Bill Simpson Fan Club* was set up and singer/comedian Andy Stewart's version of *Dr. Finlay* was in the hit parade for five weeks. Equally as interesting is that Andrew Cruickshank was invited to address the British Medical Association's annual dinner to speak on medical matters as if he were a real GP!

The show's success was due mostly to the compelling storylines, excellent casting and very good acting. Sadly all the actors who played the main roles have now passed on. They have left behind happy memories for many people who remember them. A few years later, two more series of *Dr. Finlay's Casebook* were made using other actors and a different location. It never really caught on and was quietly dropped.

Keith Cheetham

POST SCRIPT

I also recently watched a DVD of *All Creatures Great and Small*. In the credits at the end it stated the theme music had been written by Johnny Pearson. However, it wasn't our 'Johnny Pearson' as otherwise he would by now be quite a rich man through receiving royalties!

Neighbours

When I was in class at secondary school the head teacher came in with a shy girl in tow. She told us that she had come from India to live in England as she and her family had had to leave Hyderabad, their home and all they had. They were now to live here in our town. I remember little else about her. I don't know how long she stayed at school with us. She certainly wasn't there all the rest of my time in school but I do remember the fascination we felt about her and what had happened to her. We did know that her family had left because of the partition of India into India and Pakistan and that she came from a Muslim family living in India and that her father was a doctor. It all sounded very strange and romantic at the time. We didn't know about all the killings and misery that partition had caused. We did know the story of India seeking independence and a 'peaceful' transition due to 'benign' British rule and Ghandi's programme of passive resistance. We did learn that the Muslims had separated to form Pakistan.

It is now, as the world celebrates seventy years of partition, that so much more is being understood about the horror of that time. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Parsee had lived together seemingly in harmony and as good neighbours. However, as independence grew close, violence and hatred grew. Hindus attacked Muslims, Muslims attacked Sikhs, different groups attacked each other. There were stories of heroism and kindness as some sheltered their neighbours but horrific experiences as groups destroyed homes and the lives of those they had lived side by side with for many years.

Sadly, it is a story that has been repeated over and over again at different times in our world. People are attacked for their religion, their nationality, their ethnicity, their policies. In our lifetime it has happened in the holocaust, in

India, in Bosnia, in Rwanda, in Palestine. In recent years we have seen intolerance grow in our own country and in America. In a time of recession we feel threatened and want to blame someone, so we choose to blame immigrants or whatever. We see the signs of a narrow nationalism that wants to separate us from others. Racism and intolerance are just beneath the surface. We live in a multicultural area where we pride ourselves on how well we live together. But we all know that intolerance lurks around. We have watched with horror the violence in Virginia, where a peaceful demonstration turned to brutality and murder. We see terrorist attacks here and it leads to anti-Muslim feeling.

We must build bridges – not walls! We must learn and understand. We need to turn our backs on sectarianism and isolation. The Gospel is about a God who loves all people, regardless of what they believe or what group they belong to. In the Bible there is a struggle between those who want to separate themselves as a superior people and those who want to be more open and welcoming to others. Isaiah struggled to make Israel aware of their God as God of all nations. Peter and Paul worked hard to make Christianity wider than Judaism. In our time we have to be clear that the message of the Gospel is not divisive but be open to other faiths and none about God's love for all. Love is about the building of community. We have to bring our treasures to the world and be open and ready to receive what they have to give to us. We need to see all as brothers and sisters in one common humanity. We remember that it was a Samaritan, a despised alien to the Jews, who came to the aid of the man attacked by robbers. The priest and levite, pious Jews, passed by on the other side!

Rev Glennys Bamford

When Britannia ruled the waves

To the general public one of the saddest moments in Her Majesty The Queen's life was when the Royal Yacht *Britannia* was decommissioned on 11 December 1997 in Portsmouth. Her Majesty was seen to be visibly weeping, something almost unknown for her, as the Band of H.M. Royal Marines played The Last Post. The previous Conservative government had committed itself to replace the vessel if re-elected while Labour refused to disclose its plans. After the Blair government came to power in May 1997, it announced the vessel was to be retired and no replacement would be built.

According to the Overseas Trade Board events on board the yacht had helped raise £3 billion for the treasury between 1991 and 1995 alone. However the new government said the expenditure could not be justified given other pressures on the defence budget (this was prior to the Iraq war!).

Britannia was the 83rd such vessel since King Charles II acceded to the throne in 1660 and is the second royal yacht to bear the name (the first being the racing cutter built for the Prince of Wales -later King Edward VII - in 1893). During her 43-year career, the yacht travelled more than a million nautical miles around the globe. Now retired from royal service, *Britannia* is permanently berthed at Ocean Terminal, Leith, in Edinburgh on the River Forth.

The vessel had originally been built at the famous shipyard of John Brown & Co. Ltd, in Clydebank near Glasgow, and officially launched by Queen Elizabeth II on 16 April 1953, a couple of months prior to her coronation in Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953 (This also happened to be my 16th birthday when I was in the middle of my GCE` exams!). Work was completed on the yacht in time for it to be officially commissioned for service on 11 January 1954.

The idea was that *Britannia* was designed to be converted into a hospital ship in time of war,



although this capability was never used. Crew of the royal yacht were volunteers from the general service of the Royal Navy. Officers were appointed for up to two years, while 'yachtsmen' were volunteers and, after one year's service, could be admitted to 'The Permanent Royal Yacht Service' and carry on until they chose to leave. Some served 20 years or more. On Royal visits to other countries a troop of the Royal Marines band also went along to provide ceremonial and musical accompaniment, as required.

Her maiden voyage from Portsmouth was to Malta, an eight-day journey. It carried Prince Charles and Princess Anne to Malta in order to meet the Queen and Prince Philip in Tobruk at the end of the royal couples` Commonwealth Tour. Her Majesty first embarked on the vessel on 1 May 1954, Five years later *Britannia* sailed the newly opened Saint Lawrence Seaway en route to Chicago, where she docked. The royal couple were joined by President Dwight D. Eisenhower for part of the cruise. Later Presidents welcomed aboard were Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Some part of Royal honeymoons spent on the vessel included those of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones plus Charles and Diana. In 1986, while on a passage for the Queen's State visit to New Zealand and Australia, the ship was diverted to assist in the evacuation of over one thousand refugees from the civil war in Aden.

Princes William and Harry both spent part of their summer holidays aboard. Other world

leaders and celebrities who were entertained included President Nelson Mandela, Frank Sinatra and Elizabeth Taylor.

The yacht was a regular sight at Cowes Week in early August and for the remainder of the month was home to the Queen and her family for their annual cruise around the islands off the west coast of Scotland (this always included a 'courtesy call' on H.M. The Queen Mother at her Castle of Mey on the northern coast, not far from John o'Groats).

The Royal Yacht saw 44 years of active service during which time it steamed a total of 1,087,623 nautical miles conducting 696 Royal Visits overseas and 272 in home waters. At home she was the focus of national events such as the Queen's 1977 Silver Jubilee Fleet Review and in 1994 embarked on a journey when an unprecedented number of Heads of State were met at the 50th commemoration of the D-Day landings.

Britannia's final official foreign mission was to convey the last governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, and the Prince of Wales back from Hong Kong after its handover to the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997. Five months later the Royal Yacht was decommissioned.

It was then shipped to Edinburgh to the port of Leith, where it was temporarily moored until a new harbour redevelopment scheme got under way. The vessel is now in the care of the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, a registered charity. At the time there was some controversy over its siting with some arguing she would be better moored on the River Clyde, where she was built. Undoubtedly politics came into play and Edinburgh was decided for the siting of the vessel to coincide with the new developments in Leith and advent of Scottish devolution. Once these changes had been completed *Britannia* was moved to the Ocean Terminal development and over 300,000 people now visit the Royal Yacht *Britannia* every year.

It has become one of the UK's top tourist attractions, evening event venue and conference centre but, in the main, is open to the public during the day. A retired Rolls-Royce Phantom state car, owned by the royal family in the 1960s is on display in a purpose-built garage aboard *Britannia*. Other highlights of the tour of the five decks open to the public include

the Bridge, the Queen's Bedroom (seen behind a glass wall), Grand Staircase and State Dining and Drawing Rooms, which once hosted grand receptions for kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers throughout the world. The Royal Deck Tearoom was added in 2009 (this is where the royal family usually relaxed and used as a sun lounge).

Britannia is easily accessible even for the disabled and an adjacent quayside structure includes lifts with inter-connecting bridges to the various levels on the ship, thus avoiding any steps or staircases for those less-abled. My wife and I have twice visited this excellent tourist attraction. The first time was only a few months after the Royal yacht was first opened to the public and in its original docking.

The second visit was a few years later after the vessel had been moved to Ocean Terminal. It is one of the best visits we have ever made and can thoroughly recommend anyone visiting the area to take time to have a look. Yet, apart from the Royal quarters, we found other parts of the ship were equally as interesting such as the engine room, catering areas, a hospital wing (sometimes used as a dental hospital for crew members) but noticeably, with rather cramped living quarters and sleeping berths for lower ranks but better more spacious accommodation for officer classes.

Even though Her Majesty had last put foot on the vessel at its decommissioning in December 1997, she was to make another visit on 29 July 2011 to attend a drinks reception on board. This was to celebrate the forthcoming marriage of her granddaughter Zara Phillips to Mike Tindall, the international Rugby player, who were to be married the following day at a church on Edinburgh's Royal Mile. It must have brought back many memories of times both happy and sad. I'm sure she would have found it all a very moving and nostalgic occasion. Truly *Britannia* was a majestic symbol and trade ambassador for the Commonwealth.

Keith Cheetham

Fancy a Flutter?

“How would you like to go to the Glastonbury of Bird Fairs at Rutland Water?” I was asked one day in August.

Double take. Bird fair? Glastonbury? Would they have budgerigars singing?

Although dubious, I agreed to go. I like birds, although I’m not a ‘twitcher’, but I was uncertain that I would want to devote a whole day to the little critters, even if they were singing!

A bit of investigation revealed that the Bird Fair was started by a man called Tim Appleton who was the manager of Rutland Water Nature Reserve until his retirement in January of this year.

Tim arrived in Rutland in 1975 when the Rutland Water Reserve was just a plan on paper and it was his responsibility to bring the reserve into being. The dam was still under construction, and the landscape apparently looked like a massive 3,000 acre prairie when he began the undertaking.

Creating a wetland on this scale had never been attempted in the UK, so Tim was learning on the hoof, planting trees, miles of hedgerows and reedbeds, creating lagoons, seeding wildflower meadows and laying out nature trails. Fortunately Tim didn’t have to do all this work alone as he was able to recruit an army of willing volunteers, many of whom formed the core of the future Rutland Water volunteer team, a team which today totals more than 450



people.

Pumping from the two main water sources began in 1977 and the reservoir filled to maximum in 1979. Wildfowl quickly found the reserve: numbers surged and before long the site was declared a Site of Special Scientific interest, later to become a RAMSAR Site (Ramsar Convention or Wetlands Convention was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in February 1971 and came into force in December 1975) and European Special Protection Area.

They held a Wildfowl ‘Bonanza’ in 1987, and a year later Tim went to the Game Fair, where he realised that there was nothing similar for the wildlife enthusiast and so the idea of a Bonanza was turned into a ‘Birdfair’.

Convincing the birding world that a ‘fair’ would attract enough visitors to make it commercially attractive was the next challenge, but thanks to In Focus and Swarovski Optik the first Birdfair took place in 1989. Now Birdfair has become the world leader in fairs held across the globe. It has donated more than £4.3 million to international conservation, and this money has helped secure further funds in excess of £30 million.

I was impressed to find that Birdfair has a packed programme over the three days it takes place. There are six marquees where the lectures are held, so there are a wide variety of



subjects to choose from, and not all exclusively bird related either. The first talk we attended was Mark Carwardine's Guide to Whale Watching in North America, which had me longing to be on one of the whale watching tours Mark organises.

Next, we chose 'The politics of wildlife protection in Britain' which had a panel of speakers including Dominic Dyer, Mike Dilger and Mark Avery. The MP Chris Williamson should have been there too, but unfortunately he was suffering from sciatica and had to send his apologies! The message of this particular talk was that if you have any conservation concern, don't bother signing a petition (unless it's an official one), but write or email your local MP instead – And keep writing as it's the constant pressure that spurs them into action!

On a slightly lighter note was the talk, 'Hares in Life and Legend' by Marianne Taylor based on her book of the same title. I learned that only the mountain hare is native to Britain and is pretty elusive – more so than brown hares. The brown hares were introduced into this country by the Romans, so have been around for quite a long time! Hares have acquired mystical aura partly based on their habit of 'moon gazing' and partly because they live out in the open having no den or burrow.

The last talk we attended was called



Conserving Critical critters which was illustrated with slides from the book 'Critical Critters' by Ceri Levy and the artist Ralph Steadman. A panel of conservationists that included Ceri Levy and Mark Carwardine talked about species that are close to extinction.

Most of us are aware of polar bears being under threat, and the plight of the bumble bee is causing great consternation, but are you aware that the world's smallest porpoise, the vaquita, will probably have disappeared by the end of this year? The numbers of many others are dwindling rapidly: cheetahs, Savanna elephants, black rhino, Bornean orangutan, Sumatran Tiger... the list goes on. Just think of the diversity we are losing.



If you are a serious birdwatcher, you will find much to interest you at the Birdfair. Not only talks by people such as Bill Oddie and Chris Packham (both of whom were spotted wandering around among the marquees), but also specialist equipment (the Swarovski Optik equipment is amazing!), and birding holidays which you can take in far flung locations around the world. We particularly enjoyed the marquees with the holiday reps in as many of them provided food and drink samples!

All in all it was a most enjoyable day, and if I'm asked to go next year I won't have to think twice about it!

Jean Gilbride

me.you.us.

THE COMMON GOOD × GREENBELT 2017



A Bank Holiday August with wall to wall sunshine made Greenbelt 2017 an extra special occasion.

This is the fourth year it has taken place in the beautiful landscaped grounds of Boughton Estate, close to Kettering. Packed with music, workshops, performances, debates, talks, activism, faith and worship, Greenbelt was a great place to be. Its mission is to create a space where arts, faith and justice collide.

Greenbelt is firmly rooted within a Christian tradition and expresses a belief that embraces instead of excludes. And, as such, the festival is an inter-generational celebration, inclusive and accepting of all.

The programme is huge and varied with events in many venues throughout each day and late into the night in some. The planning must be an enormous task, selecting inspiring speakers and activities as well as giving new artists a platform. There's plenty of green space for relaxing, discussions in small groups, playing games and just over the lake, a quiet area for reflection and meditation

One of the highlights for me was listening to Malcolm Guite, poet and priest, exploring

poems he has written on the parables of Jesus; we were looking at familiar stories in a fresh light. The poet himself reading or reciting brought the lines to life as if coming straight from the heart.

John Bell from the Iona community spoke on "Trumping and Brexiting" for Jesus. Many will know of his clear thinking in Thought for the Day on Radio 4.

Jack Monroe, campaigner for those so poor that they are voiceless in our society, shared with us her real life story. The talk was entitled "I was hungry and thirsty were you there?" Fortunately for Jack and her son, the food bank and a very caring team she found when she finally plucked up courage to go, were there for her. As she said, we do not know what is behind closed doors but we can be there for people in times of need.

In contrast, the Playhouse venue seemed to light up with joy and energy when we were treated to a performance by Circus Abyssinia. This was an amazingly colourful and vibrant display of juggling and acrobatics. There was a feeling of great energy and happiness from each of the many acrobats and amazement

from the audience at the way the human body can bend! This group developed from the dreams of two Ethiopian brothers for a circus in a country without circus tradition. The brothers are now internationally renowned jugglers and have made a better life for themselves and other acrobats.

The Big Top - a huge tent with open sides - housed popular music and we enjoyed the folk music of Kate Rusby, a young woman from Barnsley with a beautiful voice, who we have heard in more formal settings before. The Canopy, a smaller open sided tent was home to smaller music events and very atmospheric as the fairy lights decorating it twinkled in the evenings.

Greenbelt also gives the opportunity for meeting new folks, if only in a queue for food, as there is an amazingly friendly, helpful and relaxing atmosphere. It's also an occasion to see friends and I was pleased to meet up with Teresa Ely who many of you will remember was the Lay Worker with the Elderly, when she and Robert were in Wolverhampton. We sat in shade by the lake for some time comparing notes on what we had found inspiring during the day. It was good to hear how life is for them now and to reflect on her work at Beckminster. She wanted to be updated on happenings and news of folks she knew. She sends her greetings to you all.

We also had the opportunity to see Nina Carter-Brown, Barbara Moxham's granddaughter, who runs Fair Grounds, a trading business selling beautiful handmade, recycled ethical products from around the world (www.fair-grounds.co.uk). Many of you will know Judy and Ian who visit Beckminster regularly. They are very involved in Nina's work and now well practiced at packing, unpacking and transporting the goods to different venues.

Environmental issues are tackled in many ways at Greenbelt in talks, games, stalls and challenges. It was refreshing that despite there being 11,000 people on the site over the weekend, there was no litter at all, much recycling and a simplicity of lifestyle.

Although relative newcomers to the Greenbelt weekends, we find each year that we come home refreshed from our experiences there. At this time of so many troubles around the world, Greenbelt provides an inspiring vision of what can be. We need to be reminded that the way we live our lives affects others near and far. If we try to live for the common good in this world, then we are trying to live out the core of the Christian gospel, to love God's creation and love our neighbours as ourselves.

Sue Reed



The Lighter Side of.....Ageing

The first in a series intended to add a little light relief to the magazine!

If I'd known I was going to live this long I would have taken better care of myself.

Eubie Blake (on reaching 100).

You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake.

Bob Hope.

I don't feel eighty. In fact I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap.

Bob Hope.

She was unable blow out the candles on her cake because the heat drove her back.

Anon.

I'm at that age now where just putting my cigar in its holder is a thrill.

George Burns.

I have my eighty seventh birthday coming up and people ask what I would appreciate getting. I'll tell you: a paternity suit.

George Burns.

When tying my shoelaces I always wonder if there is anything else I can do while I am down there.

George Burns.

Years ago we discovered the exact point, the dead centre of middle age. It occurs when you are too young to take up golf and too old to rush up to the net.

Franklin P Adams.



Old age is always fifteen years older than I am.

Bernard Baruch.

In England, you see, age wipes the slate clean..... if you live to be ninety and can still eat a boiled egg they think you deserve the Nobel Prize.

Alan Bennett.

Forty is the old age of youth. Fifty is the youth of old age.

Victor Hugo.

The older I grow the more I distrust the familiar doctrine that age brings wisdom.

H L Mencken.

If a man, you can boast of the girls you have won, how you looked like a million dollars; Unaware of the fact that your flies are undone, and your socks are of different colours.

A Causer.

Any views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the editorial team, Beckminster or the Methodist Church. All details published in this newsletter were accurate at the time of going to press.