

Triangle

The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of Springdale,
Wombourne and Gospel Ash



Summer 2010

Welcome!

Helen Cooper

I've produced Triangle for many years and have never known it not have a "Message from the Manse" to begin with! I've spent a good few hours putting this edition together and thought I would experiment with a blank front inside cover as I would never trust myself to be able to create an adequate Christian message that would fill this space! Unfortunately for me it looks rather unwelcoming without a message and so, here I am, wondering desperately what to write!

Thankfully this edition is full of lots of articles covering many aspects of Christian life, and more, and so I do not think that I need worry too much! I am grateful indeed to those people who send in articles for inclusion - they are very varied and show the very wide perspective that we have on life. Many of the "lighter" articles are taken from "round robin type" emails that are sent to me during the course of the year - I include them because either they make me laugh out loud (and laughter is the best medicine, as they say [see page 33 for more information on that topic!]) or because they have a good moral. So thanks to those friends who send them on to me in the first place.

As ever I make the same plea for more people to send in articles to be included in Triangle. There's such a lot going on in our churches, in our district, nationally, internationally, and, of course, closer to home in our own lives, in our own back gardens. Articles can be sent in at any time so why not spend the long summer evenings penning those thoughts of yours?

Hopefully you will notice some differences in the magazine in this edition. Firstly, there is a "Contents" page - it should help you locate an interesting article that you wish to re-read that much quicker. Secondly, the headings for the articles and their authors have been condensed. I think that this layout gives more credence to the author, where there is one, and it also saves on space!

And, finally, just a thought for you, whatever your lives may hold, whatever the paths you take -

"Faith is daring the soul to go beyond what the eye can see."

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Springdale Vestry News

Judy Staley, Senior Steward



News from the Vestry is being written in May and at this lovely time of year we are especially aware of the beauty of God's earth and the changes in Nature. May is also a time for change in the Vestry. Thanks are given to Barbara Beynon, Jackie Neilson and Helen Cooper as they retire. and to Barbara Mead who finishes her valuable time as Senior Steward. A warm welcome is extended to Sheila Evans, Dorothy Clulow and Bernard Davies who join the team.

The past few months have, as usual, been very busy in the life of Springdale, often embracing new initiatives.

Our Lenten journey began in February with House Groups involving all the churches of the Penn Covenant. The theme 'Love Lent', Live Life' enabled us to discuss how our faith should be an integral part of the community and wider world. Thanks to Mark and Amy for co-ordinating the groups and Bernard as retiring co-ordinator. Simple Lenten lunches were held on four Saturdays preceded by short but moving acts of worship. Money raised was given to Water Aid.

Junior Church and their leaders made an Easter Garden in the Sanctuary. It developed through Lent leading us from a barren place to a wonderful garden on Easter morning. It was adorned with flowers telling 'He is Risen'.

At the Annual Church Meeting in April special thought was given to the progress of the Development Fund. We gave thanks for the hard work and enthusiasm of the Committee and all groups for doing their bit of fundraising. It was interesting to go outside and see the practicalities of the plans in a realistic context.

Springdale hosted the Christian Aid event in May. This was ably led by Wendy Gould and helpers.

Café@Church is a new idea that has provided an informal meeting

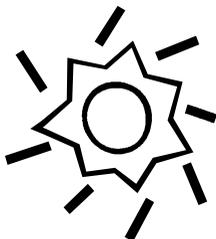
in the Church on Wednesday evenings with light refreshments, a chat, recycling and book borrowing. This will re-start in September. Thanks to Helen and Julian for the initiative.

May 23rd was our Junior Church Anniversary. The theme of Pentecost and the power of the Holy Spirit was movingly encapsulated by our young people. It was truly inspirational, especially as the first part was written completely by the Junior Church. The young people have the knack of reminding us that at the core of our being we should be an enthusiastic worshipping community taking the love of our Lord into the wider world. Thanks to the leaders whose dedication is an example to us all.

Each year the Wives' Group support a charity which involves the wider community. This year it is our local Multiple Sclerosis Group. The Wives organised a concert by the Wolverhampton Orpheus Male Voice Choir - a great success and enjoyed by everyone. Proceeds of over £400 went to the M.S. group.

We look forward to Robert returning in the Summer refreshed from his sabbatical, and Caroline returning from Belize. Let us give thanks for the fellowship we find at Springdale.

**SPRINGDALE CHURCH SUMMER FAIR
SATURDAY 19 JUNE
12 NOON - 2PM**



**CRAFTS, GAMES, BOOKS, TOYS, CAKES,
WHITE ELEPHANT, REFRESHMENTS
RAFFLE, & PLENTY MORE!**

Wombourne Vestry News

Brenda Shuttleworth



Since the last edition of Triangle Wombourne has been quite busy on several fronts. At the beginning of March we held a “church away day” at Gospel Ash led by Revd Dr Neil Richardson. The day was intended to be a follow-on session from the “Living in God's Love” weekend held 12 months previously and led by members of the Lay Witness Movement. Approximately 25 members attended the away day and all felt very blessed by the occasion. Neil mixed Bible study, using his book on the letters of St Paul, with conversation based on the need for the church to be engaged in mission now as in the times of St Paul, and helped us reflect on where we are as a church and where we want to go. As we talked together, we realised how much both as a church community and as individuals we contribute to village life and that we ought to celebrate that. That was the start of a conversation which we realise we must continue.

During morning worship in Lent we introduced symbols of Christ's Passion week by week and flowered the cross on Easter morning. This was a new venture at Wombourne and we received positive feedback from members of the congregation. It was an opportunity to use again the cross that Charles had made for our memorial service last November.

We had a variety of ecumenical Lent house groups, all following a different theme from Lectio Divina to the York course. Methodists were well represented at these groups.

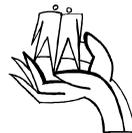
On Easter Sunday morning a small group of people rose very early to celebrate Christ's resurrection, having climbed Lite Hill at dawn. Sandra and Charles Clowes provided breakfast for them. Easter morning communion was a special service in that it was the last time we would see Robert before he started his sabbatical.

Wives group have been busy - just before Easter they celebrated their 45th anniversary and invited past ministers to join them for an evening celebration. The weekend after Easter they went on their traditional week end away to Paignton. Sadly this is the last such occasion but Wives do have different plans for next year.

At our Annual Church Meeting we said a big thank you to Pat Beddall who leaves the vestry team after four years. We will miss her both as a calming influence in the team and as someone who was unfailingly reliable. We welcomed Louise Wright as our new steward (well renewed, really -- Louise has been in the vestry before). Val Edwards retired as communion steward and Pat Stoker takes her place. We wish both Louise and Pat every blessing in their ministry. We thank Revd Steve Singleton who oversaw our meeting and led us in a beautiful quiet communion service afterwards.

Springdale Pastoral News

Jane Rawlings, Pastoral Secretary



I have taken over the role of Pastoral Secretary from Gwyneth Wade who has done a wonderful job for a number of years and I have a big pair of shoes to fill. We thank Gwyneth for her many years of dedicated service.

We have had a difficult few months since the last Triangle entry, with a number of our church family having to attend or undergo hospital treatment, but, with the knowledge that the Lord is with us, this gives us the strength to take each day at a time.

On 3rd April Joan Croydon died after a long illness. Prior to Joan's illness she was a loyal member of the Womens' Fellowship. We remember her family and friends as this time, giving thanks for her life and know that she is now at peace and free from further suffering.

Within our Church family Olive Nightingale and Audrey Grainger have both had nasty falls which have required hospital stays. I am glad to report that both are back home, but have a long road to recovery. We send them both our best wishes and love as they continue to improve.

We continue to remember those who are not well and having to receive ongoing hospital treatment. We particularly remember Sheila Thompson, Zherron Ferriday and Charles Wade.

We give thanks for the apparent success of Denis Campion's hip

operation - he has been to the service this morning and his crutches are not slowing him down - he remains is normal lively self!

We remember all those who have undergone any treatment and continue to remember all our housebound members. You all remain in our thoughts and we pray that the Lord be with you.

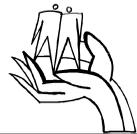
On a happier note we hear that Robert is enjoying his Sabbatical - he is currently in Iona and Teresa is home alone. We wish Robert a fulfilling time and hope he returns spiritually refreshed with many stories to tell.

Congratulations go to Wendy and Richard Gould who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary on 16th May - may there be many more years to come. Congratulations also go to anyone who has had a special celebration or "Big 0" birthday. God Bless you All

As we approach the summer months may we all have an opportunity to enjoy a holiday whether it be here in sunny Wolverhampton or slightly further afield. May the Lord be with us all on our travels.

Wombourne Pastoral News

Carole Walker, Pastoral Secretary



For almost 2 months now Rev Robert has been on his sabbatical and is now more than halfway through. I would like, on behalf of our church, to thank Denis Beaumont for his hard work and dedication in leading us during that time, and ensuring that all our groups are continuing well.

Our "Away-Day" in March, as a follow-up to our Lay Witness weekend, was extremely valuable, and very ably led by Rev Neil Richardson. I am certain that all who attended would have gained such a lot, and felt uplifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We wish for all who have had a special birthday or anniversary recently to experience God's presence in their lives and to receive many blessings. We congratulate Sandra Clowes on her 50th birthday at the end of March, and, more recently, Denis on achieving his 60th birthday. We remember

Kathy and Doug Monckton who celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary at the beginning of March.

Congratulations, too, to Jonathon and Louisa Hughes on the birth of Michael Jonathon, and to grandparents Bob and Joyce - may they all receive many blessings.

Again, many of our members and friends have been in hospital since my last report. We thank God for their continued improvement. We think of Margaret Higgs, Sarah Poultney, Val Edwards, Elaine Edwards, Ray Dickens and Pauline Hotchkiss. We ask God to bless them and any others either having ongoing treatment or waiting for further consultation.

We praise God that Olivia (Margaret and Jo Plant's granddaughter, now 5 years) was able to join us in church for the Mother's Day service with her family, and for Jack Smith who continues to enjoy time at Kid's Club each month.

As I write, Jack Cartwright has had another fall and is in hospital with pneumonia. Not long ago he celebrated his 93rd birthday. We pray that he will feel the love of God upholding him, and we ask for God's blessings on him, Ivy and all the family.

On Thursday 13 May we remembered the life of Les Knight who passed away on Sunday 9 May after suffering uncomplainingly for quite some time. We give thanks for his faithful witness at Wombourne Methodist Church, and pray for Jean, Maxine, Julian and families as they mourn his passing. We pray that God will bless them all at this sad time and that they will come to know his peace.

For those taking exams in the next few weeks we pray God's blessings on them. Finally, we remember all those who are housebound, and, with them, let us all humbly ask... "Lord God, when the road is steep and the way is hard, may your Son guide us and your Spirit strengthen us".



Guiding Centenary Year at Springdale

Gill Banks

It all started in 1909, when a group of girls gate crashed a rally of boy scouts in south London demanding that they be allowed to get involved. A century later, and the Girl Guide movement now has 10 million members in 145 countries.

The girls from Springdale have been allowed to attend many events arranged for this special centenary year which runs from September 2009 to October 2010.

In September 2009 most of the Rainbows and Brownies with a few Guides attended the Division Launch at Wombourne. We had a great day sharing in activities with others from Penn and Penn Fields and Wombourne.

In March, twenty Brownies joined others from the County at the Haven Holiday Park at Pwllheli. We left Penn on the Friday night, returning back on the Sunday night after a great weekend. It was an intense time of activities and eating! In all there were 2000 of us from West Mercia, so it was not a quiet affair!

In April a few of our Brownies and Guides managed to get places to go to the Midlands Carnival at Drayton Manor. Each county dressed up in a different colour to parade through the park. It was a most colourful sight. We wore purple and looked very striking in our tie-dyed tee shirts, ra-ra net skirts and wigs and feathers! We even made it onto the website!

At the end of May, sixteen Rainbows will attend the County event at Beaudesert; the theme is Disney Princesses so again we will be all dressed up for the parade. In the afternoon we will be in Adventureland with Peter Pan, so of course we have to wear fairy wings to be Tinkerbell!

Our Centenary celebrations end with a County event at Bescott Stadium, Walsall. On 20 October 2010 at ten past eight at night (20.10 on 20.10.2010 !) all Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Senior Section and Guiders will renew their promise. It should be a most momentous occasion so we

hope all our girls will be able to attend.

I have been in Guiding at Springdale since 1963, first as a guide then as a lieutenant and captain in the 'old days' and now as a guider. During this time I have been so fortunate to make lifelong friends and to be able to take part in so many events and learn so many things. It has been a privilege to be part of the Guide Association and I hope that the girls I have worked with will have had as much fun as I have had.



For the Physically or Mentally Challenged

Cathy Anderson

In my time I have sometimes felt

Like a mouse,

Like a hedgehog,

Or even Rudyard Kipling's elephant with the long distended nose.

I've felt different and wondered why it was.

Inferior at having to swallow tablets to bring me up to scratch,

Constantly seeking justification, explanation.

But now, at last, I feel comfortable and at peace within my leopard's skin;

I cannot change my spots, but spots are beautiful.

The Pastor and his Son

The boy bundled up in his warmest and driest clothes and said, 'OK, dad, I'm ready.' His Pastor dad asked, 'Ready for what?' 'Dad, it's time we gather our tracts together and go out.' Dad responded, 'Son, it's very cold outside and it's pouring rain.' The boy gave his dad a surprised look, asking, 'But Dad, aren't people still going to Hell, even though it's raining?' Dad answered, 'Son, I am not going out in this weather.' Despondently, the boy asked, 'Dad, can I go? Please?' His father hesitated for a moment then said, 'Son, you can go. Here are the tracts, be careful son.' 'Thanks Dad!'

And with that, he was off and out into the rain. This eleven year old boy walked the streets of the town going door to door and handing everybody he met in the street a Gospel Tract. After two hours of walking in the rain, he was soaking, bone-chilled wet and down to his very last tract. He stopped on a corner and looked for someone to hand a tract to, but the streets were totally deserted. Then he turned toward the first home he saw and started up the sidewalk to the front door and rang the door bell. He rang the bell, but nobody answered. He rang it again and again, but still no one answered. He waited but still no answer. Finally, this eleven year old trooper turned to leave, but something stopped him. Again, he turned to the door and rang the bell and knocked loudly on the door with his fist. He waited, something holding him there on the front porch! He rang again and this time the door slowly opened.

Standing in the doorway was a very sad-looking elderly lady. She softly asked, 'What can I do for you, son?' With radiant eyes and a smile that lit up her world, this little boy said, 'Ma'am, I'm sorry if I disturbed you, but I just want to tell you that Jesus really does love you and I came to give you my very last Gospel Tract which will tell you all about Jesus and His great love.' With that, he handed her his last tract and turned to leave. She called to him as he departed. 'Thank you, son! And God Bless You!'

Well, the following Sunday morning in church Pastor Dad was in the pulpit. As the service began he asked, 'Does anyone have testimony or want to say anything?' Slowly, in the back row of the church, an elderly lady stood to her feet. As she began to speak, a look of glorious radiance came from her face.

'No one in this church knows me. I've never been here before. You see, before last Sunday I was not a Christian. My husband passed on some time ago, leaving me totally alone in this world. Last Sunday, being a particularly cold and rainy day, it was even more so in my heart that I came to the end of the line where I no longer had any hope or will to live. So I took a rope and a chair and ascended the stairway into the attic of my home. I fastened the rope securely to a rafter in the roof, then stood on the chair and fastened the other end of the rope around my neck.

Standing on that chair, so lonely and broken-hearted I was about to leap off, when suddenly the loud ringing of my doorbell downstairs startled me. I thought, 'I'll wait a minute, and whoever it is will go away. I waited and waited, but the ringing doorbell seemed to get louder and more insistent, and then the person ringing also started knocking loudly. I thought to myself again, 'Who on earth could this be? Nobody ever rings my bell or comes to see me'. I loosened the rope from my neck and started for the front door, all the while the bell rang louder and louder.

When I opened the door and looked I could hardly believe my eyes, for there on my front porch was the most radiant and angelic little boy I had ever seen in my life. His smile, oh, I could never describe it to you! The words that came from his mouth caused my heart that had long been dead, to leap to life as he exclaimed with a cherub-like voice, 'Ma'am, I just came to tell you that Jesus really does love you.' Then he gave me this Gospel Tract that I now hold in my hand. As the little angel disappeared back out into the cold and rain, I closed my door and read slowly every word of this Gospel Tract. Then I went up to my attic to get my rope and chair. I wouldn't be needing them any more. You see - I am now a Happy Child of the King.

Since the address of your church was on the back of this Gospel Tract, I have come here to personally say thank you to God's little angel who came just in the nick of time and, by so doing, spared my soul from an eternity in hell.'

There was not a dry eye in the church. And as shouts of praise and honour to the King resounded off the very rafters of the building, Pastor Dad descended from the pulpit to the front pew where the little angel was seated. He took his son in his arms and sobbed uncontrollably.

Probably no church has had a more glorious moment, and probably this universe has never seen a Father that was more filled with love and honour for his son... Except for One. Matthew 10:32 says: 'Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven'.

A & D - It's no Laughing Matter, or is it?

Donald H Ryan

President Ronald Reagan, in his open letter to the American people on 5 November 1994, spoke courageously of the recent diagnosis that showed that he would be afflicted with 'Alzheimer's Disease'. He tells how he and Nancy had to decide whether to keep the diagnosis secret and private or to be open about it. In the letter he says, 'At the moment I feel just fine. I intend to live the remainder of the years God gives me on this earth doing the things I have always done. I will continue to share life's journey with my beloved Nancy and my family. I plan to enjoy the great outdoors and stay in touch with my friends and supporters'. His attitude was positive but what is our attitude? We have to ask ourselves how shall we, as friends and Christians, respond to those who have Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia and to their family and carers.

Occasionally when a person is being pushed in a wheel chair and they are met in the street by a kindly friend the friend talks to the carer as though the person in the wheel chair is not there. Instead of saying to the person in the wheelchair, 'It is good to see you. How are things?' they ask the carer how the person in the chair is. In the same way some people shy away from visiting friends with Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia which makes them and their family feel forgotten, neglected and hurt. We all should, with the greatest care and sensitivity, visit and keep in touch with the sufferer and their family.

The sufferers from Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia or any other long term difficult disease need and deserve the support that helps them to stay positive. It is the easiest thing in the world for a person with any it form of illness to withdraw into themselves. For their nearest and dearest it is exhausting and frustrating as they constantly try to stimulate the sufferer.

It is like trying to push open a door which has snagged on the carpet. You want to get inside but the sheer physical effort is exhausting. The loving carer carries the double burden of worrying about their loved one and coping with their physical and practical needs 24 hours a day. The strain on the carer can be unrelenting.

What then must we do as a caring Christian family and community? First of all we have to remember that, like us, the sufferer of any disease, but especially those with a brain disease, are both made and remain in the image of God and they are still living vibrant members of our Christian community. Through no fault of their own they find it difficult to come to Church because they are afraid that people will either overwhelm them or ignore them when they come.

What then should our response be? If the friend does not find it easy to come to church then the church should go to them. In other words you and I should go to them and bring a ray of sunshine into the lives of the sufferer and their family.

To return to the title above I am not being factious. Neither Alzheimer's or Dementia nor any other illness is a laughing matter, but laughter is a healing agent. 'A joyful heart is good medicine', Proverbs 17:22. A friendly good-hearted visit to the home lifts the spirits of both the person who is ill and their loving carer. Don't be trivial but speak about ordinary everyday things. Bring the outside world into their home and mind. May I suggest that you do not talk about your own illnesses or worries? Some years ago I visited a person in hospital. Another person came to visit the patient and spent most of their time talking about a problem they themselves were finding difficult. When the visitor left the friend in bed quietly said to me 'I wish they had not come, I feel worse now that I did when they arrived'.

We all may have busy lives but I hope not too busy to bring some joy into someone's life. None of us can do everything but we can all do something to help others to live life in the here and now. "I was sick and you looked after me". The righteous will say "When did we see you sick and visit you?" The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'. St Matthew 25:37-40.

In As Much

Sheila Barnfather

Give aid to homeless folk and very poor,
Help save some in earthquake stricken zones,
Feed others hit by famine, civil war,
Each gift is as for Him.

Don't question culture, creed or status place,
No thought of pigment colour darkened skins,
No matter what their gender, age or race,
Each gift is as for Him.

Give clothes to shield from burning midday sunlight,
Give pots and pans to meet their daily needs,
Give tools and seeds to ease their desperate plight,
Each gift is as for Him.

An anguished mother her child cannot feed,
She looks at his now wasted tiny limbs,
Hopelessness, despair, immense the need,
Each gift is as for Him.

Give medical and nursing staff to care,
Mosquito nets and sheltered tents for rest,
Give sacks of rice, nutrient protein fare,
Each gift is as for Him.

A cup of precious water by me given,
A well to ease their daily burdened load,
Help for those from homelands, cruelly driven,
Each gift is as for Him.

Forgive me when I've seen the crying need
And did not act, His commission did not heed.
Christ in every soul I daily see.
Can each soul compassion see in me?



Thank you!

John Hodgson

I have been known to complain occasionally, never without some justification. For example I have recently expressed some concern that for 4 weeks out of 5 members who regularly worship on Sunday evenings have been prevented from doing so because of changes in venues and times. Regrettably they are unable to come at any other time on Sundays. This is a problem that the Church Council of Springdale will need to resolve assuming that worship continues in its present form.

Some while ago I also complained about the sorry state of the raised gardens at the front entrance to the Church grounds and also the notice board and table in the foyer. This was because I felt that the gardens were very unkempt, it was impossible to "notice " the notices, and the table was a shambles. How pleasing, then, to applaud the efforts of those who reacted, because the gardens are now attractive not only to those who enter but also those who pass by on the other side of the fence, and it is evident that we care. In addition it is possible to actually " see " the notices on the board and also the documents on the table. Well done!!

The Daftest of Newspaper Reports

Commenting on a complaint from a Mr. Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill, a spokesman for North West Gas said, "We agree it was rather high for the time of year. It's possible Mr. Purdey has been charged for the gas used up during the explosion that destroyed his house." (*The Daily Telegraph*)

Irish police are being handicapped in a search for a stolen van, because they cannot issue a description. It's a Special Branch vehicle and they don't want the public to know what it looks like. (*The Guardian*)

At the height of the gale, the harbourmaster radioed a coastguard and asked him to estimate the wind speed. He replied he was sorry, but he didn't have a gauge. However, if it was any help, the wind had just blown his Land Rover off the cliff. (*Aberdeen Evening Express*)

Kids are Quick!

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

Class: Maria.

Teacher: John, why are you doing your maths multiplication on the floor?

John: You told me to do it without using tables.

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile'?

Glenn: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

Teacher: No, that's wrong

Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it!

Teacher: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

Donald: H I J K L M N O.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

Teacher: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

Winnie: Me!

Teacher: Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

Glen: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

Teacher: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

Louis: Because George still had the axe in his hand.

Teacher: Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?

Simon: No sir, I don't have to, my Mom is a good cook.

Teacher: Clyde, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

Clyde: No, sir. It's the same dog.

Teacher: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Harold: A teacher.

Building Up and Letting Go

Penny Baldwin

Have you been taught how to let go of something you have nurtured and cherished for years? No? Nor have I. Are we ever prepared for being parents? We think we know all about it and some of us muddle through as best we can, but emotions are so unpredictable. Heart very often wins over mind. Let me explain....

Primarily we are carers, we may have careers and jobs of our own, but our families come first. You love them, feed them, clothe them, advise them (if you are brave enough) fight for them, and are always there for them when things go wrong - we pick up the pieces and restore self confidence. Then comes the time for them to 'go it alone' either at university or college or in a job that takes them away from home, or even to get married. You no longer have complete control over their comings and goings, you do not know what they are doing from hour to hour. You no longer know what they are thinking and feeling. It is this sharing aspect that we miss. We feel cut off and isolated even rejected. Our minds tell us that it is a normal progression through life, after all we do not want our children being completely reliant on us for ever. We have lives of our own to develop and expand. But our hearts tell us something else. We tend to concentrate on our children's feelings when leaving home, making new friends, doing their own washing and cooking etc.. But we as parents can go through real trauma which is very often ignored.

We have to learn to let them go. This is all part of parenthood. God gives us free choice to live our lives as we choose. Surely we must want the same for our children. Give them freedom and they will come back, maybe not tomorrow, but when they are ready. They need to spread their wings and fly. They need to become whole people in their own right.

So to all those embarking on a life away from home, enjoy yourselves, but remember who loves you unconditionally.



The Staffordshire Hoard

Jackie Neilson (written February 2010)

It's in the news again. Valued at 3 million pounds. At the moment it can be seen in Stoke-on-Trent. I saw it last October at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery before it was moved to The British Museum in London for display and valuation. I queued for over three hours to see it, but it was worth it. I reckon I've done everyone a big favour! If I hadn't queued and viewed this dazzling display my chance would have been lost. But, because of the mere fact I did I'm sure it will return to the area (its rightful home) to be seen by many.

If an American can pop on a plane, and queue to view, I thought I should go and see it, even queuing. What with street entertainment, info offered by Museum staff on eats and toilet facilities, and the bonhomie of people waiting in line time passed quickly. It did have an added advantage - my queuing pal was quite an expert on Anglo-Saxon studies.

The wait was worthwhile. The ooh's and aah's uttered, the excitement and the thrill of seeing these pieces, about a hundred, in glass cabinets. Stunning, dazzling. Some items were cleaned a lot, some were not- still covered in good old Mercian soil. Pommels and hilts off swords, and daggers made of gold and garnets. The detail on the gold and small pieces of garnet inlaid in various patterns, so delicately done. Designs of animals, interlaced patterns in Celtic scroll and mosaic patterns. The cleaned pieces dazzled and sparkled under the lights in the glass cases. Imagine how they shone in sunlight all those centuries ago. A crumpled cross, and two gold snakes (in curved arched shape as if ready to pounce at you, with wonderfully carved eyes) and a gold strip inscribed with a verse from the bible in Latin - "Rise up, Lord, and may thy enemies be dispersed and those that hate thee be driven from thy face" - Numbers 10:35.

All this hoard has been made in fine delicate design, not roughly hewn. Goldsmiths and jewellers today must be astounded at the quality of this hoard bearing in mind the limited amount of tools available.



Feeling a bit stupid? Worry no more...!

Question: If you could live forever, would you and why?

Answer: I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever. *Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA contest.*

Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life. *Brooke Shields, in an interview for spokesperson for anti-smoking campaign.*

I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body. *Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky, basketball forward.*

Half this game is 90% mental. *Danny Ozark, Philadelphia Phillies manager.*

It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it. *Al Gore, former USA Vice President.*

We've got to pause and ask ourselves: How much clean air do we need? *Lee Lacocca, American businessman, reviver of the Chrysler Corporation.*

The word "genius" isn't applicable in football. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein. *Joe Theisman, National Football League football quarterback & sports analyst.*

Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances. *DSS, Greenville, South Carolina.*

Traditionally, most of Australia 's imports come from overseas. *Keppel Enderbery, former Australian cabinet minister.*

If somebody has a bad heart, they can plug this jack in at night as they go to bed and it will monitor their heart throughout the night. And the next morning, when they wake up dead, there'll be a record. *Mark S. Fowler, FCC Chairman, communications attorney.*

George Alagiah OBE visits The Wolverhampton City Fair Trade Partnership (WCFTP)

Brenda Shuttleworth

George Alagiah was the guest of the WCFTP and Wolverhampton University on Friday 30 April, 2010. The city has celebrated its sixth year as a Fair Trade City and this visit was timed to mark that occasion. Organising the visit had not been without its problems as the BBC was clear that George was not allowed to be part of anything which compromised its neutrality. Since he was therefore not able to take part in a debate, we decided to ask him to chair a panel discussion on the relationship between fair trade and sustainability. The discussion was held at the Arena Theatre where the panel included Dr Brian Shiplee, senior lecturer in environmental management at the University, along with David Fulljames, one of the directors of the Wolverhampton Fairtrade shop, and Charles Jackson-Houlston, former head of the Environmental Sustainability Unit of the City Council.

Mr Alagiah proved to be a masterly chair, keeping his panel focused on the question in hand, developing points as necessary and always ensuring that the debate was accessible to all the audience. He was particularly gracious in the way he dealt with the schoolchildren from Pool Hayes Secondary School.

The discussion ranged from buying local versus fair trade, via fair trade premiums and the role of supermarkets, to the influence of governments in trade.

Following the discussion George was guest of honour at a reception in the Mayor's parlour where pupils from Bantock and Bilston C of E schools gave a presentation. He responded by telling us how much he valued being with people working at grassroots level. He had learned his lessons in fair trade when, as a foreign correspondent, he had listened to the stories of people living in poverty. He suggested that economic empowerment is more important to people living in poverty than political empowerment as money brings the freedom to say no.

This was an important milestone in the work of WCFTP, thanks particularly to the efforts of Dr Barbara Gwinnett (secretary of WCFTP) and the cooperation of the Fairtrade Foundation.

The Ride of your Life George Carlin (age 102)

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. 'How old are you?' 'I'm four **and a half!**' You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. 'How old are you?' 'I'm **gonna be 16!**' You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16!

And then the greatest day of your life! You **become 21**. Even the words sound like a ceremony. **YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!!**

But then you **turn 30**. Ooooh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He **TURNED**; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're Just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You **BECOME 21**, you **TURN 30**, then you're **PUSHING 40**. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you **REACH 50** and your dreams are gone..

But wait!!! You **MAKE it** to 60. You didn't think you would! So you **BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50** and **MAKE it** to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you **HIT 70!** After that it's a day-by-day thing; you **HIT Wednesday!** You **get into** your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you **HIT lunch**; you **TURN 4:30**; you **REACH** bedtime.

And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; 'I **Was JUST 92.**'

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. 'I'm 100 and a half!' May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

Seven Reasons not to Mess with Children

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, 'When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah'. The teacher asked, 'What if Jonah went to hell?' The little girl replied, 'Then you ask him'.

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, 'I'm drawing God.' The teacher paused and said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.' Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, 'They will in a minute.'

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to 'honour' thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?' Immediately one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, 'Thou shall not kill.'

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture. 'Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer, she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, he's a doctor.' A small voice at the back of the room rang out, 'And there's the teacher, she's dead.'

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, 'Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face.' 'Yes,' the class said. 'Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?' A little fellow shouted, 'Cause your feet ain't empty.'

A little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, 'Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?' Her mother replied, 'Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white.' The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, 'Mummy, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?'

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted it on the apple tray: 'Take only ONE. God is watching.' Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, 'Take all you want. God is watching the apples.'

Bible Quiz (answers at bottom of page)

Jackie Neilson

1. How many people (are we told) did Jesus raise from the dead?
2. Many lepers were cured by Jesus on one occasion. How many?
3. In what garden did Jesus pray?
4. Where did Moses die?
5. Who mistook Jesus for a gardener?

Septuagesima is the 3rd Sunday before Lent (hence the 9th before Easter) with purple vestments worn from this day until Holy Week.

Sexagesima is the 2nd Sunday before Lent (hence the 8th before Easter)

1. Three (Mark 5:5-42; Luke 7:15; John 11:44)
2. Ten (Luke 17:11-14)
3. Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36)
4. Mount Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1 and 5)
5. Mary Magdalene (John 20:15)

Answers

Saint's Days (continued from previous issue)

Jackie Neilson

- 6 January Epiphany. Day in honour of Christ's baptism (and blessing of Baptismal water)
- 25 January Conversion of St. Paul. Born in Tarsus, original name Saul, and son of a Jew. Came in contact with followers of Jesus but opposed them and their beliefs. His conversion happened on the road to Damascus. He saw a great light and heard Jesus. Baptized in Damascus. He completed many journeys spreading the Gospel. Died AD65.
- 2 February Commemorates the Blessing of the Candles; also the Purification of Mary, and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, forty days after his birth.
- 3 February St. Blaise. Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, martyred 4c. Legend says he saved a child's life , choking on a fish-bone.
- 14 February Refers to two Valentines. 1. a Roman priest martyred in Rome on the Flaminian Way c.269. 2.Bishop of Terni taken to Rome and martyred. (Traditionally St. Valentine Day linked with courtship, but is connected to pagan festival of Lupercalia (mid February).
- 24 February St. Matthias. Greek form of Matthew. Disciple chosen after the treachery of Judas to make up the 12.
- 1 March St. David. Patron of Wales. From a noble family, he founded 12 monasteries, settled at St. David's, and established an abbey with a life of extreme self discipline.
- 21 March St. Benedict (c480-c550) of Nursia, patriarch of West. Monasticism. He composed Benedictine rule of Christian monastic life.

- 25 March Annunciation, Lady Day commemorates the announcement of the Incarnation by the angel Gabriel to Mary, and the conception of Christ.
- 23 April St. George. Name of some early saints. St. George Patron of England, if existed perhaps martyred in Palestine.
- 25 April St. Mark. Author of 2nd Gospel, a cousin of Barnabas.
- 1 May SS Philip/James. Philip one of the Apostles. Another James-elder brother of St. John (both present at the Transfiguration)
- 26 May St. Augustine. 1st Archbishop of Canterbury, died 604/5.
- 27 May Venerable Bede. Biblical scholar. Father of English Church History, c673-735. When 7 sent to Wearmouth Monastery, transferred to Jarrow c.682. After his death St. Bede was honoured with the title Venerable.

Venerable - RC Bestowed on departed person in process of Beautification.
C of E proper address of an Archdeacon.

What is a Patron Saint?

A saint who has been chosen as a special intercessor or advocate in heaven of a particular place, person or organization. The custom of having a patron saint of churches arose from the practice of building churches over the tombs of martyrs.



The Road to Damascus

What is a Mother? A few questions answered!

Why did God make mothers?

She's the only one who knows where the Sellotape is.

Mostly to clean the house.

To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

He used dirt, just like the rest of us did.

Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.

God made my Mum just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean.

They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?

We're related.

God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's mum like me

What kind of a little girl was your mom?

My mum has always been my mum and none of that other stuff.

I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.

They say she used to be nice.

What did mom need to know about dad before she married him?

His last name.

She had to know his background. Like is he a crook? Does he get drunk on beer?

Does he make at least £800 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores?

Why did your mom marry your dad?

My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mum eats a lot. She got too old to do anything else with him.

My grandma says that mum didn't have her thinking cap on.

Who's the boss at your house?

Mum doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because dad's such a goof ball.

Mum. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.

I guess mom is, but only because she has a lot more to do than dad.

What's the difference between mums and dads?

Mums work at work and work at home and dads just go to work at work.

Mums know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.

Dads are taller and stronger, but mums have all the real power 'cause that's who you got to ask if you want to sleep over at your friends.

Mums have magic, they make you feel better without medicine.

What does your mum do in her spare time?

Mothers don't do spare time.

To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.

What would it take to make your mum perfect?

On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.

Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.

If you could change one thing about your mum, what would it be?

She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.

I'd make my mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it not me.

I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes on the back of her head.

The Good Old Days

Someone (young) asked the other day, 'What was your favourite 'fast food' when you were growing up?' 'We didn't have fast food when I was growing up,' I informed him, 'All the food was slow.' 'C'mon, seriously... where did you eat?' 'It was a place called 'home,' I explained. 'Mum cooked every day and when Dad got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate, I was allowed to sit there until I did like it.'

By this time, the lad was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table. But here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I'd thought his system could have handled it:

Some parents *never* owned their own house, wore jeans, set foot on a golf course, travelled out of the country or had a credit card.

My parents never drove me to school. I had a bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds, and only had one speed, (slow).

We didn't have a television in our house until I was 10. It was, of course, black and white, and the station went off the air at 10pm, after playing the national anthem and epilogue; it came back on the air at about 6am and there was usually a locally produced news and farm show on, featuring local people.

I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home but milk was.

All newspapers were delivered by boys and all boys delivered newspapers. My brother delivered a newspaper, seven days a week. He had to get up at 6am every morning.

Film stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the films. There were no movie ratings because all movies were responsibly produced for everyone to enjoy viewing, without profanity or violence or almost anything offensive.

If you grew up in a generation before there was fast food, you may want to share some of these memories with your children or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they bust a gut laughing. Growing up isn't what it used to be, is it?

Memories

My Dad was cleaning out my grandmother's house after she passed away and he brought me an old Royal Crown Cola bottle. In the bottle top was a stopper with a bunch of holes in it. I knew immediately what it was, but my daughter had no idea. She thought they had tried to make it a salt shaker or something. I knew it as the bottle that sat on the end of the ironing board to 'sprinkle' clothes with because we didn't have steam irons. Man, I am old!

How many of these do you remember?

Headlight dip-switches on the floor of the car.

Ignition switches on the dashboard.

Trouser leg clips for bicycles without chain guards.

Soldering irons you heated on a gas burner.

Using hand signals for cars without turn indicators.

Turn over to see how old you actually are!



The Older than Dirt Quiz

Count all the ones that you remember, not the ones you were told about. Ratings are at the bottom of the page.

- 1 Sweet cigarettes
- 2 Coffee shops with juke boxes
- 3 Home milk delivery in glass bottles
- 4 Party lines on the telephone
- 5 Newsreels before the main film. And at the end of the show the National Anthem was played and everyone stood still until it had finished - unless they managed to dart out quickly before it started!
- 6 TV test patterns that came on at night after the last show and were there until TV shows started again in the morning. (There were only 2 channels [if you were fortunate enough to have ITV otherwise only 1 - BBC])
- 7 Metal ice trays with levers
- 8 Mangles/wringers
- 9 33 rpm records
- 10 45 RPM records
- 11 Peashooters
- 12 Blue flashbulb
- 13 Cork popguns
- 14 Hi-fi's



Oh no! I'm almost positively ancient! (my Grandma had a wonderful mangle in her garage!) Helen C

Ratings
 If you remembered 0-3 = You're still young
 If you remembered 3-6 = You are getting older
 If you remembered 7-10 = Don't tell your age
 If you remembered 11-14 = You're positively ancient!

How to Stay Young

Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them.

Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever, even ham radio. Never let the brain idle.

The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person, who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.

Surround yourself with what you love , whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. **Your home is your refuge.**

Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the shops, to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.

Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

Enjoy the simple things.



AND ALWAYS REMEMBER: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, **but** by the moments that take our breath away.

Greetings from Belize!

Caroline Ely

It seems a long time ago that I was with you all in Wolverhampton in the snow and ice. I arrived here in the middle of what Belizeans call a 'cold front', which equates to high temperatures of around 20C. Now that I barely enjoy a day cooler than 30C I wish I had appreciated it more. I'm enjoying the thunderstorms, the 'rice and beans' and 'beans and rice' (two different dishes, but both seemingly very fattening, alas), the fruit, and, having just had a week's holiday, the sun, sea and sand! It really is a beautiful country, although Belize City in particular is facing many challenges, most notably heavy gang violence. I am grateful to live in a safe area but it is an ever worrying environment to be in.

I'm not doing what I expected, but am busy all the same. Three mornings a week I teach English as a Second Language to Haitians (adults) living in the city, and discover how poor my understanding of grammar is! English usage here is more akin to US English too, which is an added confusion. I've not been able to teach in the schools, but I'm helping with maths assessments in Wesley College, the high school. I'm involved with the church Children and Youth Commission, which organises events such as camp, fundraisers, and 'Youth Week' (a week of activities). I'm also planning for vacation bible schools and trying to help get twenty young people and chaperones to the Youth Encuentro, a connexional conference happening in Trinidad and Tobago in August.

I'm living with Maggie Patchett, a mission partner from the British Methodist church, who is wonderful and, having been here for three years, exceptionally busy! By virtue of this I have been privileged to tag along to some working groups for compiling information on Sexual and Reproductive Health and violence against women for a UN report. I am rather 'acronymed out' as a result but feeling well educated.

Church services are generally about two hours long, starting at 8am on a Sunday morning. I sing with the 'Praise Singers', who serve as the choir at Wesley Methodist Church on a Sunday morning, complete with robes (this is very hot!), but are also asked to do items at various

a vibrant time of “Singspiration” or praise choruses. Some are the same as, or similar to, those sung in UK churches, but many differ. The same is true of hymns, since the Methodist Hymnbook is still used. I was also particularly delighted to sing ‘The Lord’s my Shepherd’ to the tune of ‘The Happy Wanderer’.



The church here is part of the MCCA, the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and Americas (mainly meaning Central America.) Everything is celebrated very formally and at great length- church anniversaries, group anniversaries, Aldersgate, and coming up soon, the 250th anniversary of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean. And everything needs planning in long meetings!

It takes time to settle into any new place but I’ve been very welcomed, and now more appreciated as myself, I think, rather than ‘The English Volunteer’ or ‘Maggie’s lackey’. I occasionally miss out on the humour due to my still limited understanding of Kriol, but I’m getting there, and the blank look on my face when everyone else is creased up with laughter is becoming rarer!

I must thank you all for your generosity before I left. I was not quite sure how I would raise the amount needed, but I managed a little more than my target. Both in the fundraising and in my time here, I’ve learnt that generally, if one has doubts or issues, God will answer them; but almost certainly not in the way you expect, or even want him to!

My blog at cazbelize.blogspot.com is still going, complete with pictures, although greatly in need of an update; do check it out.

Male v Female at the ATM Machine



A new sign in the Bank Lobby reads: "Please note that this Bank is installing new Drive-through ATM machines enabling customers to withdraw cash without leaving their vehicles. Customers using this new facility are requested to use the procedures outlined below when accessing their accounts."

After months of careful research, male and female procedures have been developed. Please follow the appropriate steps for your gender.

MALE PROCEDURE:

Drive up to the cash machine. Put down your car window. Insert card into machine and enter PIN. Enter amount of cash required and withdraw. Retrieve card, cash and receipt. Put window up. Drive off.

FEMALE PROCEDURE:

Drive up to cash machine. Reverse and back up the required amount to align car window with the machine. Set hand brake, put the window down. Find handbag, remove all contents on to passenger seat to locate card. Tell person on mobile phone you will call them back and hang up. Attempt to insert card into machine. Open car door to allow easier access to machine due to its excessive distance from the car. Insert card. Re-insert card the right way. Dig through handbag to find diary with your PIN written on the inside back page. Enter PIN. Press cancel and re-enter correct PIN. Enter amount of cash required. Check makeup in rear view mirror. Retrieve cash and receipt. Empty handbag again to locate purse and place cash inside. Write debit amount in cheque register and place receipt in back of cheque book. Re-check makeup. Drive forward 2 feet. Reverse back to cash machine. Retrieve card. Re-empty hand bag, locate card holder, and place card into the slot provided! Give dirty look to irate male driver waiting behind you. Restart stalled engine and pull off. Redial person on mobile phone. Drive for 2 to 3 miles. Release hand brake.



The Penn Local History Fair

The Penn Local History Fair will be held at
Penn United Reformed Church, Penn Road, Wolverhampton,
on Friday 11 June (10am - 8pm)
and Saturday 12 June (9am - 4pm)

There will be displays to interest everyone, including:
old photos of Penn, Wolverhampton, Wombourne and Tettenhall;
old vehicles; hospitals; churches; schools; rag rug making; letterpress
printing; genealogy; archaeology; football; local pubs; canals;
Guy Motors; buses; police history; Lady Wulfruna organ (Friday only);
and much more!

Everyone is welcome. Light refreshments available.
Plentiful free car parking.

Admission free. Donations gratefully received.

Not-So-Bright People - They Walk Among Us!

The traffic light on the corner buzzes when it's on red and safe to cross the road. I was crossing with an intellectually challenged friend of mine. She asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, 'What on earth are blind people doing driving?!' She is a Local County Council employee in Harrow, Middlesex.

When my husband and I arrived at our local Ford dealer to pick up our car we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the Service Department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. 'Hey,' I announced to the mechanic, 'Its open!' His reply: 'I know. I already did that side.' This was at the Ford dealership in St Albans, Hertfordshire.

One Sound at Ely Cathedral

Lesley Cook

You cannot miss Ely Cathedral, except if you are coming at it through a blizzard then fog, which we did in the February half-term break recently. On a clear day you can see this unusually shaped building from miles away as it is situated on one of the few slight hills in the Fens.

Bryan and I have become MAYC Orchestra and Singers “groupies” (or “One Sound” as they are now known as). We have visited many different venues and Methodist church halls over the nine years Helen and Andrew have been involved in order to watch their fantastic concerts. We have also done some wonderful walks and visited many historic properties, all over the country, while Helen and Andrew have had a wonderful time sleeping on church floors, strengthening their faith and making wonderful music with this, their “other” church family.

As One Sound would be singing in the atmospheric but very cold Cathedral on Saturday night, we decided that it would be fun to have the complete guided tour of the Cathedral, including going up into the famous Octagon tower. (Octagons are apparently a symbol of eternal life).

I realised that this was a rather foolish decision as I climbed out on to the leaded roof of the North Transept and realised there was nothing between me and the ground but a rather low hand-rail. How would I get across to the Octagon Tower? Well, I sort of crouched down with eyes fixed ahead, clutching the hand-rail and shuffled crab-like across. Boy, did I feel a fool! Then, of course, there was the return trip!

The following day we visited Wicken Fen, one of the few remaining areas of un-drained sedge fen left in the Fens. Then we returned to a freezing Cathedral to be uplifted by the wonderful music of One Sound.

Robert, Teresa and all three girls were there, too, as Caroline was playing oboe in the orchestra before setting off to Belize. Just about everyone seemed to know and want to speak to the Ely’s of Ely after the concert, so it was not surprising when all the lights were turned off for a few seconds

an old church steward trick!

More snow followed on Sunday morning but Ely Methodist Church was packed with folk as One Sound and their chaplain Rev James Pritchard led worship.

These are difficult times for One Sound as they now have to make their own way as a registered charity with no funding from The Methodist Church. They rely on people like Churches Together in Ely to act as hosts to this lovely bunch of young people. (They provided food and a floor to sleep on and also did all the publicity.)

Please pray for One Sound and its young Trustees. If you know of a young person aged 13-26 who loves to sing or plays an instrument to Grade 8 standard, who might benefit from joining One Sound please phone Helen Cook (Trustee) for more information.

By the way their next concert is at the end of October half-term in Leicester.



May Your Day be a Shay Day

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: 'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does, is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. *Where is the natural order of things in my son?*' The audience was stilled by the query. The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who is mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'

Then he told the following story: Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.' Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball. However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher. The game would now be over. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game. Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!'

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!' Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base. By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball, the smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay'. Shay reached third base because the opposing short-stop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third! Shay, run to third!' As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!' Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!

A Footnote to the story -

We all have thousands of opportunities every single day to help realize the 'natural order of things. So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with a choice: Do we pass along a little spark of love and humanity or do we pass up those opportunities and leave the world a little bit colder in the process?

A wise man once said every society is judged by how it treats it's least fortunate amongst them. May your day, be a Shay Day.

More Not-So-Bright People!

My daughter and I went through the McDonald's take-out window and I gave the clerk a £5 note. Our total was £4.20, so I also handed her a 20 pence piece. She said, 'You gave me too much money.' I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me £1 back.' She sighed and went to get the Manager who asked me to repeat my request. I did so, and he handed me back the 20 pence and said, 'We're sorry but we do not do that kind of thing.' The clerk then proceeded to give me back 80 pence in change. Do not confuse the clerks at MacDonald's!

My daughter went to a local Kentucky Fried Chicken and ordered a Taco. She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce.' He said he was sorry, but they only had Iceberg lettuce. From South Oxhey, Hertfordshire. Do not confuse the clerks at KFC either!

Dust if You Must

Remember...a layer of dust protects the wood beneath it and a house becomes a home when you can write 'I love you' on the furniture!

I used to spend at least 8 hours every weekend making sure things were just perfect - 'in case someone came over'. Finally I realised one day that no-one came over; they were all out living life and having fun! Now, when people visit, I don't have to explain the 'condition' of my home. They are more interested in hearing about the things I've been doing while I was away living life and having fun.

If you haven't figured this out yet, please heed this advice -
Life is short. Enjoy it!

Dust if you must,
But wouldn't it be better to paint a picture or write a letter,
Bake cookies or a cake and lick the spoon or plant a seed,
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must,
But there's not much time with wine to drink,
Rivers to swim and mountains to climb,
Music to hear and books to read, friends to cherish and life to lead.

Dust if you must,
But the world's out there with the sun in your eyes,
The wind in your hair, a flutter of snow, a shower of rain.
This day will not come around, again.

Dust if you must,
But bear in mind, old age will come and it's not kind.
And when you go - and go you must -
You, yourself will make more dust!

It's not what you *gather*, but what you *scatter* that tells what kind of life you have lived.

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon: with great expression, he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." And then finally he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down.

The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn 365: "Shall We Gather at the River."



1. Shall we ga - ther at the ri - ver, Where bright an - gel feet have trod ;
2. On the mar - gin of the ri - ver, Wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
3. Ere we reach the shin - ing ri - ver, Lay we eve - ry bur - den down ;

Deadline for the next edition of Triangle is
Sunday 5 September.

**Please would all stewards, pastoral secretaries,
etc., etc. make a note in their diaries so as not to
miss this deadline. Thank you.**

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Please hand in your articles directly, or via your stewards, to **Helen Cooper**. Alternatively, follow the link on the Springdale website in the "contacts" section (www.springdalechurch.org.uk) or just email to [triangle\[at\]springdalechurch.org.uk](mailto:triangle[at]springdalechurch.org.uk)