

# Triangle

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



Summer 2013

# From One Editor...

Helen Cooper

---

I've lost track of the number of years I've been editing Triangle, though I do know that this was my second stint at it starting in Autumn 2007! I feel that it's now time for me to try different things in my life. To this end I've also resigned from my school music teaching job as of this summer - a bit scary in that I've never been 'out' of education! However, I am planning to expand my private piano teaching business and also see what else might present as an opportunity. Our eldest has a sandwich year at university next year where she has managed to secure a well paid post and won't need parental financial support so it's a case of now or never for me!

I would like to thank all those who have been supportive over the years - those who sent in articles, those who typed up and emailed articles on behalf of someone who is unable, and 'Penny the Printer' - though no thanks go to the unreliable long-arm stapler that she uses and I've had occasion to use! Thanks, especially, to my ever-tolerant family ;-)

God bless you all.

# To Another...

David Hotchkiss

---

I am a member at Wombourne and have volunteered to take over the editorship of Triangle. Articles can still be sent to the usual Triangle email address, or to [dphotchkiss@btinternet.com](mailto:dphotchkiss@btinternet.com) or ordinary mail to 9 Penstone Lane, Lower Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 4XE.

Hopefully I will produce the first edition to coincide with the arrival of our new minister, the Rev Chris Collins, in September, and will include information about him and his family. The deadline for this edition will be Monday 16 September.

With the closure of Gospel Ash the title 'Triangle' may no longer be appropriate - any suggestions for a new title?

# Contents (alphabetical order)

---

<b>News &amp; Views</b>	An Interview With Our New Minister	10-11
	Editorial Handover	2
	No Longer 'Triangle'?	9
	Opwall Indonesia Expedition	19
	Speaking Out	12-13
	Springdale Vestry News	4-5
	The Lies We Tell Ourselves	15-16
	Truth And Lies About Poverty	13-15
	Wombourne Pastoral News	7-8
Wombourne Vestry News	6	
<b>Poems</b>	The Little Sharp Vexations	5
<b>What's On</b>	Ecumenical Summer Bible Study	17
	Just Fayre	16
	Musical Evening	19
	Penn Christmas Tree Festival	18
	Quiz	20
	Springdale Summer Fair	5



# Springdale Vestry News

Sheila Sanders, Senior Steward

---



My last two 'training years' have flown by and I am now writing this as Senior Steward. I am very grateful to Sheila Evans for working hard as Senior Steward during a difficult few months without a Minister and leading a solid and happy team. I will do my best to follow in her footsteps. We are very grateful to Judy Staley for agreeing to stay on for another year as we have not as yet been able to appoint a new steward.

The joys of spring and new life are all around us and I think that at last we can look forward to summer after such a cold winter and early spring. The Lent liturgy organised by Val and Dennis was very meaningful, culminating with Easter weekend with the solemnity of Good Friday and the glorious realisation on Easter Sunday that 'He is risen'. Thanks to all who took part, our friend, Rev. Ken Collins for leading our worship on Easter morning, and Helen Cook for preparing us a delicious breakfast to follow.

We eagerly await the arrival of Christopher and Jenny Collins in September and although we are without a Minister at the moment, we are, with support and love from all members of the church, managing to keep our heads above water. We are grateful to Rev. David Lavender for keeping his eye on us and being present when needed. Also our own Rev. Donald Ryan who has always been available even though Alma is unwell. God's spirit is amongst us.

Lucy and Andrew Cook, members of our church family, brought Emily Louise for baptism on 28th April. This was a very happy occasion for all their family and friends at Springdale.

A new initiative is starting at Springdale - SPICE - organised by Springdale Food Bank group. This will be a twice monthly drop in centre where Springdale folk can ask friends and neighbours to come along for a chat, company, coffee and cake. Do join us. All welcome. Alternate Saturdays 10am - 11.30am.

Our Summer Fair will be on Saturday 15 June 12 noon - 2 pm when hopefully the sun will shine on us and we will have a successful day.

As the editorship of Triangle passes to David Hotchkiss at Wombourne I wish to thank Helen Cooper for her diligence and hard work over the years. Thank you, Helen.

With every blessing.

## **SPRINGDALE CHURCH SUMMER FAIR**

**SATURDAY 15 JUNE 12 NOON - 2PM**

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

## **The Little Sharp Vexations**

Found in an autograph book passed on from my Father and signed M.M.M. 1911. Sheila Sanders

---

The little sharp vexations,  
And the briars that catch and fret,  
Why not take all to the Helper  
Who has never failed us yet?

Tell Him about the heartache,  
And tell Him the longings, too,  
Tell Him the baffled purpose,  
When we scarce know what to do.

Then leaving all our weakness  
With the One divinely strong,  
Forget that we bore the burden  
And carry away the song.



# Wombourne Vestry News

Louise Wright, Senior Steward



Well, here I am again as senior steward, for the third time in twenty years! First of all I would like to thank Jane Meddings for all her hard work, her love and the commitment she has given to the church and especially to the various stewards she has worked with in the vestry. Thank you Jane! Also, a big thank you to our Worship Assistants, who are such a big help to the stewards. We have not managed to get a new Steward to replace Jane so there are just three of us now: Brenda, Diana and me. If anyone is willing to join the team, please have a word with any of us or Denis Beaumont.

We are looking forward to September when we get our new minister, Christopher Collins, although we have been fortunate to have the Revd Lawrence Wallace, who has been looking after us very well.

As most of you know, we have a coffee/hymn singing morning here in Wombourne, every first Thursday of the month. Coffee is from 10 am – 11am and singing your favourite hymns from 11am – 12 noon. It has taken off quite well and is enjoyed by all who come. So if you feel like having a good sing, please come and join us.

Our choir is taking part in the Wombourne Music Festival again which is on 16th June at 6:30pm at St Benedicts Biscop Church. On 22nd June we are having a Skittles evening at church as part of our Church Family Week and the Church Anniversary is on 30<sup>th</sup> June when the Revd Mark Haynes will be preaching. Many of you know Mark as he used to live in Wombourne but now lives in Scarborough with Ros and his family.

I wish you all a good summer and may God be with you wherever you are.



# Wombourne Pastoral News

Pauline Hotchkiss, Pastoral Secretary

---



This will be the final pastoral report for what we fondly know as Triangle. It seems we have not had any special good news during the last few months but I am sure there have been birthdays and anniversaries and special things happening in the life of our church congregation and I wholeheartedly send my congratulations to all those who have had reason to celebrate.

Sue and Pete Moyle were delighted when their first grandchild was born in January 2013. Iorie is a delightful little boy and he has visited us several times with his mum Ellie and dad Richard. Nain and Taid (nan and grandad in Welsh) are on hand to help when they visit.

Our prayers are with those who are in hospital, or who have been in hospital. We remember especially Peter Moyle, David and Amanda Slater, and Tom Wood. We pray that God will continue to care for them.

At the May meeting of the prayer circle we prayed for the families of those who had lost loved ones. We also remembered all those who are sick and in need of God's healing hand. We always remember our older loved ones who are no longer able to care for themselves and are in residential care. Cintra Beaumont, who has recently moved from home, is enjoying where she is and loving every moment. God bless them all.

Since the last Triangle we have lost four of our older members: Ivy Cartwright, who was our oldest member, Frank Lloyd, Betty Foster and Colin Price. We pray for their families, that they may receive God's Holy Spirit in their lives and bring them peace at this time.

We continue each month with our ministry to The Maltings sheltered accommodation in Wombourne. It is always a delight to share with this wonderful group of people. On 23rd May we celebrated the birthday of one of the ladies at our meeting. She brought a cake for everyone and she always helps with the tea. Happy birthday, Jean. We

also visit Himley Mill Nursing home each month and minister to the residents in two of the units there. They always appreciate us being there and join in with the singing.

Probably, no, definitely, the most memorable and happy occasion in church this quarter were the baptisms of Charlotte Elizabeth and her younger sister Olivia Veronica. Suzanne brings the children to church every Sunday and Olivia is one of the little ones who comes to Prayers and Bears once a month. Charlotte is a member of the Good News for Kids Club. Her nan, Janet Fenny, and Auntie Rosy are two of the leaders. Rev Kenneth Collins and Mr Denis Beaumont officiated and it was wonderful to see so many of our friends from the other churches in Wombourne celebrating with us. The singing was delightful and it was encouraging to see the church so full. Well done Charlotte and Olivia - may Jesus always be with you and bless you.

As I am writing the time is approaching for exams and for leaving or moving to school/college and taking the next step. For all those in our families who are at this stage in their lives I pray for God's blessings.

If I have failed to mention anyone with a need or with good news then I apologise. Hopefully by the next publication I will have caught up!

Finally, I would like to share these few words which I think sum up what pastoral care is all about. The key to being the best friend possible is this: 'A friend never gets in your way - unless you happen to be going down.'

Friends are those rare people who ask how you are and then wait to hear the answer.

People don't always need advice. Sometimes all they really need is a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to understand them.

Sometimes when I say "I'm OK" I want someone to look me in the eyes, hug me tight and say, "I know you're not".

# No Longer 'Triangle'?

Wendy Gould

---

The editor's note in the Spring edition of Triangle will have caused many of us to stop and think! For how long has it been going? (Quite a long time, and someone will know the precise answer). Is it still valued and would we miss it? Do we take it for granted and only miss it if it isn't there? How long is it since we (that is you, or I) contributed anything to it?

Well, I know from my pastoral contacts over the years just how much it has been valued. When I did regular visiting, I was never without a copy or two in my bag. It was a wonderful way of keeping those who couldn't attend church regularly in touch with what was going on, and I'm sure that still applies. It's also a very good tool for maintaining contact between the churches in a "section" of the circuit, and helping the minister in his care of them. He (sorry; I know I should say "or she"! ) can do this through a pastoral letter, and sometimes as a means of communicating information from the wider church, Circuit or Connexion. I know technology has moved on considerably during the life-time of Triangle, and many now receive church information through websites, blogs and so on, but I believe a magazine still has an important role.

The good news is that I understand an offer has been received to take on the role of Editor. But we all know it can no longer be "Triangle" as we are no longer a three church section. Gospel Ash provided spiritual inspiration for this section and for the old Trinity Circuit over many years, and the thoughtful Triangle articles produced by two or three of their hard-pressed members were an important part of that. We shall need a new title, hopefully expressing the aim and ethos of our new-style churches' magazine.

Finally (and I really should have begun with this most important point!) our sincere thanks to all (how many? Not many!) who have edited Triangle during its lifetime, and Helen in particular, battling with deadlines, indifference and hand-written scripts (amongst many other editorial nightmares, I'm sure). Not forgetting thanks to those who have copied, collated and distributed.

# An Interview With Our New Minister

Liz Green & Penny Baldwin

---

In September we welcome our new minister, Christopher Collins. Liz Green met with Chris to find out more about him...

*So Chris, you were brought up quite near here?*

Yes, I was born in Wordsley, not all that far from Penn and Wombourne, and lived there until I was 18 and I moved away to university. I was baptised at Wordsley Methodist Church and attended the Sunday School there from the age of three. For the past eleven years we have lived in Redditch and have been a member of Emmanuel URC-Methodist Church in the town centre.

*So fairly local, presumably you went to school around there as well?*

Yes, that's right. I went to The Summerhill School in Kingswinford until I was 16 and then studied for my A-levels at King Edward's VI College in Stourbridge. Then I moved to Aberystwyth University where I read Economics.

*And you are married?*

Yes, I am married to Jenny who I met in the Methodist student dating agency (also known as MethSoc) in Aberystwyth. We met in 1997 and got married on 18 May 2002 in High Wycombe, her hometown. Apart from putting up with me, she teaches science and geology at Stratford Girls' Grammar School and also runs the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in the school.

*What do you do in spare time?*

Training to be Methodist Presbyter doesn't leave all that much free time! That said, we enjoy ballroom dancing and in the summer I am often found glued to Test Match Special. We enjoy walking, especially long distance footpaths when we have the time! I hope to find more time for gardening when we move to Wolverhampton!

*What do you hope to bring to the two Churches?*

That's always a difficult question! Although it sounds a bit of a cliché, I guess I can only bring and offer what and who I am. Part of that is being

willing to be shaped and formed by the churches as we journey together as I have a strong sense that we are all the church and all have a place and gifts to share. I hope to be able to encourage and equip all to respond to God's call. I also bring a deep and profound appreciation of Holy Communion which I hope to explore in traditional and more contemporary and contemplative ways. I am also interested in exploring the development of work with children and young people and the place of small groups within the life of the church. I have always had a passion for peace and justice and hope to continue work already going on in the churches.

*So what did you do before going into the ministry?*

When I left Aberystwyth, I went to work for KPMG and trained to be a chartered accountant. I stayed with KPMG for eleven years and had some really great experiences. I then worked briefly for an industrial company before leaving to train at Queen's.

*From your hobbies, I'm guessing your more of a Strictly fan than X-factor?*

Correct. We hardly ever miss it! Although we've been dancing for six or seven years we are nowhere as good as the celebrities they have on there!

*What's top of your iTunes?*

I'm not sure I should answer that in public! I have what one friend kindly called an eclectic taste in music from Elgar to Emeli Sande and most things in between!

*Radio 2 or 4?*

I'm a bit of a current affairs addict, so it's mainly Radio 4 and if not then usually it's Radio 2.

*Finally, is it Christopher or Chris?*

Ah, that always confuses people! I prefer Christopher for anything official such as the preaching plan or church notice boards and so on. Informally, everyone always calls me Chris...unless I am in trouble!

Thanks Chris, I am sure we will find out much more about you in September!

# Speaking Out

Joint Public Issues Regional Action Team – West Midlands

---

## **Baptist – Methodist – United Reformed - News from these churches which are ‘Working Together’**

**The bad news:** These denominations no longer have their own secretaries speaking out on church and society matters.

**The good news:** As is increasingly well known they work together to speak out in what is called the Joint Public Issues Team – see <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>

**The local news:** The Heart of England Baptist Association, the Birmingham and Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury Methodist Districts and the West Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church are setting up a Regional Joint Public Issues Action team. Its agreed aim is:

*In association with our Denominations’ Joint Public Issues Team we will help our churches in this region to work together in living out the gospel of Christ in the church and in society. We will promote equality and justice by influencing those in power and by energising and affirming local congregations.*

This initiative has been fully supported by the denominational JPIT team whose leader Rachel Lampard has been to all the early meetings. As well as these denominations’ church leaders and other representatives it also has in its membership Colin Marsh the secretary of the West Midlands Forum - a grouping that seeks to address public issues across the region which includes Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

The West Midlands JPIT will seek to work in partnership with a range of other Christian groups and partners and will seek:

- ✦ to deliver resources to enable the churches to deal with public and political affairs, in the region.
- ✦ to facilitate dialogue on public issues with decision makers, church leaders, members and congregations.
- ✦ to advance joint working whilst retaining denominational identity

and discipline.

- ✦ to increase opportunities for churches to speak with one voice, when appropriate.
- ✦ to research and provide briefings on issues of public policy and concern as required by the parties.
- ✦ to coordinate campaigns.
- ✦ to maximise the opportunity for expertise to be developed.

The Revd Professor Michael Taylor, ex Director of Christian Aid and Baptist minister living in Birmingham, has agreed to become the Team's Chair taking over from Roy Lowes, (the United Reformed Church Synod Moderator) who has been chairing the process in its early stages.

We believe the establishment of this Action Team is good news – and as a first small step it has asked the denominational JPIT to produce a summary of their recent publication 'The Lies we tell ourselves..' for church magazines which you might find near this article. We believe it makes important and key points for our consideration and should be read as widely as possible within our churches. The JPIT website as well as the full report, has additional resources: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandliesaboutpoverty/> including a short pocket guide <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/truthandliespocketguide.pdf>

Watch for further activity later in the year.

## Truth And Lies About Poverty

Lesley Cook, Circuit Representative to Synod

---

The Spring Synod of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District took place on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Dawley, Telford. Members of The Joint Public Issues Team, who are a coalition of Methodist, Baptist, URC and Church of Scotland, were the keynote speaker and leaders of some very interesting workshops.

You may have heard of the "Truth and Lies about Poverty Report", as it featured on the television and in the newspapers at Easter this year.

The report was written to expose the myths, reinforced by politicians and the media, which conveniently allow the poor to be blamed for their poverty, and the rest of society to avoid taking any of the responsibility. Churches have a special interest in speaking truthfully about poverty. Both the biblical warnings of the prophets and the example of Jesus teach us to pay special attention to the voices of the most vulnerable and under-privileged.

In our workshop we were asked how many children live in poverty in Britain. Answer: 1 in 4. By 2020, government statistics suggest it will be 1 in 3. (This is the case whatever definition of poverty you use). Then we were given a choice of reasons why this should be so. The correct answers relate to being in poorly paid employment, not being able to work enough hours and long-term ill health. All other ideas we might have suggested were proved to be blatantly untrue, though often promulgated in the press and by politicians. Here are a few of the myths you might have heard:

**“They” are lazy and don’t want to work.**

The majority of children in poverty are from working households. It is readily accepted that across the country there are families in which three generations have never worked. Examples of such families have not been found.

**“They” are addicted to drink and drugs.**

Fewer than 4% of benefit claimants report any form of addiction.

**“They” are on the fiddle.**

Over 80% of the UK population believe that “large numbers falsely claim benefits”. In fact benefit fraud has decreased to historically low levels – the kind of levels that the tax system can only dream of. Less than 0.9% of the welfare budget is lost to fraud.

John Wesley, in 1753, said “so wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection, ‘They are poor, only because they are idle.’”. Surely part of our calling as Christians is to seek after truth, and that means facing up to our own blindness as well as calling others to account?

I would encourage everyone to read the full report, which can be

found at [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandlies](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandlies) For those without internet, I have printed off a copy of the "Pocket Guide" and pinned it on Springdale's notice board and a summation follows this article.

## The Lies We Tell Ourselves: Ending Comfortable Myths About Poverty

---

"Churches have a special interest in speaking truthfully about poverty. The systematic misrepresentation of the poorest in society is a matter of injustice which all Christians have a responsibility to challenge."

### **1. 'They' are lazy and don't want to work**

Child poverty is most commonly blamed, by churchgoers and the general public alike, on "their parents not wanting to work". Yet the majority of children in poverty are from working households. In-work poverty is now more common than out-of-work poverty.

### **2. 'They' are addicted to drink and drugs**

Churchgoers and the wider public cite addiction as the second most common cause of child poverty. While addiction is devastating for the families and communities touched by it, fewer than 4% of benefit claimants report any form of addiction.

### **3. 'They' are not really poor – they just don't manage their money properly**

Nearly 60% of the UK population believes that the poor could cope if only they handled their money properly. The experience of living on a low income is one of constant struggle to manage limited resources, with small events having serious consequences. Statistics show that the poorest spend their money carefully, limiting themselves to the essentials.

### **4. 'They' are on the fiddle**

Over 80% of the UK population believe that "large numbers falsely claim benefits". Benefit fraud has decreased to historically low levels - the kind of levels that the tax system can only dream of. Less than 0.9% of the welfare budget is lost to fraud.

### **5. 'They' have an easy life**

Over half the British public believes benefits are too high. Government ministers speak of families opting for benefits as a lifestyle choice. Yet we know that benefits do not meet minimum income standards. They have halved in value relative to average incomes over the last 30 years. We know the ill and the unemployed are the people least satisfied and happy with life.

### **6. 'They' caused the deficit**

The proportion of our tax bills spent on welfare has remained stable for the last 20 years. It is ridiculous to argue, as some have, that increasing welfare spending is responsible for the current deficit. Public debt is a problem but why is it being laid at the feet of the poorest?

Read the new report from the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland and find more resources at [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandlies](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandlies)

## **JUST FAYRE – a Circuit event** will be held at

**Springdale Methodist Church and Community  
Centre, Warstones Rd, Penn**

**on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October, from 11am to 3pm**

**Fairly traded gifts and foodstuffs on sale.  
Fashion Show. Refreshments.**

**If you can help on the day in any way,  
please ring Lesley Cook on 330614**

# **Ecumenical Summer Bible Study**

## **Try something new this summer**

### **'Out of the Blue - Challenging times for Paul'**

This year we will be following a Steps in Faith course, looking at Philippians 4: 12-13. The course aims to help us on our own faith journeys by discovering God's presence in our lives. The Bible will be brought to life in new and memorable ways through pictures and models, music and stories, tastes and smells, movement and touch, group discussion and individual reflection.

**Each session will be held at Springdale.**

**7.15 for tea and cake for a 7.30 start.**

**Dates are:**

**31st July, 7th August, 14th August, and 21st August.**

Each session is stand alone, so you can attend one or all four.  
No need to sign up – just pop in.

If you would like a lift or more information speak to  
Helen Cook



# **Penn Christmas Tree Festival**

The Four Churches of Penn are delighted to be hosting another Christmas Tree Festival this year. 50 trees will be sponsored and decorated by local people and businesses for you to enjoy. There will be a variety of entertainment for adults, activities for children and refreshments available throughout. All money raised will be split between Alz Café, who provides support for dementia sufferers and The Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd.

**When: 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> December**

**Where: Springdale Methodist Church**

**Like to sponsor a tree or help during the event?** Speak to Helen Cook

# Opwall Indonesia Expedition 2013

Olivia Cooper

---

As many of you know I am venturing to some of the remote islands of Indonesia this July to study ecology and conservation, spending a week in the jungle and a week diving. I am travelling with about 20 other girls from Wolverhampton Girls' High School with the organisation 'Opwall' - more information about the sort of things I will be doing can be found on their website at <http://opwall.com>.

For me this isn't just about going on a trip of a lifetime. It's actually what I am really interested in and what I hope to study when I go to university in 2014, all being well. I've also started my own blog which you can find at <http://evolutionaryidea.blogspot.co.uk/> with my thoughts and photos that I've taken.

I've had most of the jobs, still need to shop for clothes etc., and still have a lot of bills to pay (thanks Mum and Dad for paying upfront!). I am planning 2 fundraising events before I go and suspect I will still have to do them when I get back! The first event is an easy listening concert led by my Mum Helen and my elder sister Eleanor who is reading music at Surrey University. It will be about an hour duration followed by refreshments. The second event will be a quiz 2 days before I go! Details are below and overleaf. Thank you in anticipation of your support!

A decorative border made of black musical notes and stems, forming a rectangular frame around the text.

An evening of light musical entertainment with  
Helen, Eleanor and Olivia Cooper  
followed by refreshments

Springdale Methodist Church  
Saturday 29 June at 7.30pm  
Admission £3 (£2 concessions) at the door



## Olivia Cooper's Fundraising Quiz



**Where:** Springdale Methodist Church



**When:** Saturday 13 July, 7.15 for a 7.30pm start.



**Cost:** £8 per team of up to 4 paid for in advance; £10 on the night.



**Refreshments:** filled rolls, crisps, homemade cakes, drinks.



Please contact Olivia, Mum Helen or Dad Julian for more info or to book tickets.



Deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

**Monday 16 September.**

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

Remember! No photocopies! Please check copyright and gain permission where necessary! Email if you can - it makes things so much easier! Thanks!

Please hand in your articles directly to **David Hotchkiss**, email them to [dphotchkiss@btinternet.com](mailto:dphotchkiss@btinternet.com), follow the link on the Springdale website in the "contacts" section ([www.springdalechurch.org.uk](http://www.springdalechurch.org.uk)) or just email them to [triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk](mailto:triangle@springdalechurch.org.uk)