

Local Preacher Matters

The back pages of the *Methodist Diary* remind us, that, amongst other duties, all Preachers who have come onto Full Plan since September 1995 should participate in a programme of continuing local preacher development. It is pleasing to read in the annual returns from LP Secretaries (the 'pink form'), that almost all of our Circuits are involved with CLPD work, whether this is done formally or informally. So we have at least two reasons to be grateful to our District Officers this year, not least because funds continue to be set aside to provide some financial support for preachers attending training events (matching any funding offered by a preacher's Circuit). Also District staff work hard to provide interesting and varied training opportunities, and a good number of preachers have benefited from these. As it is usually a condition of any funding that preachers later share the benefit of this training with Circuit colleagues, the message of these meetings, seminars and courses is heard by a wider audience than just those who were present. By the time this report is read, over 50 preachers will have given a long weekend of their time to come together for fellowship and spiritual refreshment, etc. at Belsey Bridge.

With several Circuits becoming geographically larger, but with a reduction in the total number of ordained Ministers, the percentage of services taken by Local Preachers has again grown. However, most of our Circuits will notice that their Plans list a growing number of preachers who, for various reasons, are no longer active. It is very important that we still cherish them – whilst they might not be filling a pulpit, their knowledge, experience and depth of their faithful relationship with Our Lord means that still have much to offer their fellow preachers and all our chapel members. They could also give the word of encouragement to anyone whom they feel could be open to a call to preach, and then give invaluable help as a mentor to a person On Note or On Trial! Those 'star' preachers on our Plans are such a valuable part of our heritage and tradition!

The Annual Returns also show a steady increase both in the number of Worship Leaders throughout the District and an encouraging trend that they are welcomed into more Circuits' Preachers Meetings. Worship Leaders often have a different set of giftings from our Preachers and by being fully included in the planning and preparation of a service can give freshness and extra dimensions to the act of worship. Whilst a Preacher may be travelling some distance, a Worship Leader is usually local and knows the congregation's needs, desires and repertoire.

I want to thank all the Preachers in the District for their continued obedience to their calling and for their freely-given time, energy and service to God. This especially applies to those who serve as Circuit LP Secretaries, and all who respond promptly to my correspondence. I am, however, still waiting for a couple of those 'pink forms' that I asked for in October. I won't name the Circuits involved this year, and hope I won't need to next year!

Richard Hompstead

District Policy Committee report to May 2011 Synod

The Committee has met twice since the last Synod to consider the business of the District and its committees. Their reports follow separately.

Updates on the new projects at Carlton Coalville Discovery Family Centre and Cottenham Community Centre were received with interest and reviewed.

The conclusions from the Circuit Visits are still being formulated as the last few take place.

A programme is being put together for the visit of the President's visit to the District in October this year.

The DPC held a Strategy Day in the new year focusing on 'The Future of the Church' and the Leadership in the District. The actions from that day will become apparent as they are implemented.

Jennie Harris

Secretary District Policy Committee

Evangelism Group Report

The District continues to be involved in supporting a number of outreach schemes, including Carlton Colville, Red Lodge and Cottenham. Each of these has their particular strengths and challenges but they show us what can be done.

The 'Gateways to God' booklet has been studied by many churches and groups, and hopefully will have caused thoughts about ways of making our churches more relevant in the 21st Century. If you have not used this yet, please think about doing so. I remind you all that there is some grant money available to churches or groups where GtoG has been studied and where a new idea for outreach has emerged from this. Ely Methodist church is one example where a thorough study of where the church needs to be is at present being made. North Walsham has benefitted from a grant to help set up their Cafe worship project.

A reminder from Alison Thompson that March was the month of National Celebration of RE teaching in schools. She suggests that, as a church, we should be involved in our local schools wherever possible. Those of you who are will recognise the importance of this.

As a lone 'coordinator' I have some difficulty in finding out about outreach ideas. I would be very grateful for any information about outreach, however unimportant you may think it is. Please contact me!

John Hull

Broads Chaplain's Report



The new branding logo and developing a brand to promote the Broads has been a combined venture by the Broads Tourism Forum and the Broads Authority which has been one feature of the chaplaincy during the last year.

The Wordpower dictionary has a definition of magical:-

'beautiful and delightful in a way that seems removed from everyday life'

which sums up the Broads in so many ways.

I am still searching for openings and ways to help people to develop their personal journeys of faith.

As a member of the executive of the Broads

Tourism Forum I have regular and frequent contact with a number of, mainly business, men and women who are central to a range of Broads enterprises. I regularly lead worship in Broads' chapels in the East Norfolk circuit and also as a guest preacher in the URC at Wroxham, as well as taking part in the annual Bishop/Abbots service at St Benet's Abbey. In May this year I shall be leading an annual service for the Broads Society. I visit a range of businesses such as boatyards, inns and other establishments that are not yet members of the BTF, and engage with visitors to the area as opportunities arise.

I regularly lead courses / walks around the Broads which are 'open' to the public, as well as walks for specific church groups. My book Recreation – THE BROADS is still available as a self help guide for those who seek a wider perspective of God as the Creator revealing wonders to us through the beauty of creation.

If you have wondered what the Broads Chaplain does I hope this will give you a flavour of some of the openings and opportunities that God has put in my way during the last few years. If you are interested to learn more please come and join a walk, book me for a church outing to the Broads, invite me to come and address a group, read an article in the Grapevine, visit my website – www.broadsspirituality.org.uk or email me briant@broadsspirituality.org.uk

Rev Briant Smith

DISTRICT LEARNING AND CARING GROUP

Report to Synod, May 2011

Though not without some difficulties and setbacks, it is encouraging to note the progress being made on various fronts within the group,

Among the successes was the launch in February of Biblefresh, the latest stage of the Journey Into Faith programme and was an event which proved stimulating and rewarding for those who attended,

The efforts of the Under 19 group continue apace with the organisation of training and sharing opportunities for leaders and events for children and young people in the District. The leaders' events have been particularly welcome and useful.

One problem encountered has been the lack of information on contacts for individual group leaders. Would anyone involved in work with an under 19 group please ensure that Rev. Sharon Willimott knows of their existence and has contact details? It is an encouragement and practical help both for leaders and youngsters to know they are part of something bigger. While work at District level continues, it is envisaged that at least some future events will run on a cluster basis.

Safeguarding work, including Module A training, continues throughout the District, though it will be necessary in each circuit to check that all appropriate personnel have received the training. Circuits need to be aware that CRB checks still need to be done (with a five-year recheck).

All presbyters should now have received the new Safeguarding pack, which supercedes the old Safeguarding book; to help circuits deliver safeguarding policy effectively it is felt that circuits should purchase an additional copy for the circuit safeguarding officer.

Please continue to pray for these vital aspects of our work in extending the Kingdom.

Richard Dean,

District Learning and Caring Group Coordinator.

SERVICE GROUP REPORTS

WORLD DEVELOPMENT

The Ecumenical World Development Conference February 2011

After the campaign in recent years to Make Poverty History, the title chosen for this year's conference was What Replaces Poverty? During the week-end we were challenged to see what poverty looks like in the world today and to look beyond the purely economic measurements (i.e. income per head) to consider all that prevents people living fulfilled and happy lives (ie access to health care and education, political participation, social connectedness and harmony with the environment.) We explored how the Church thinks about poverty, as this influences the way Christian aid agencies carry out development work on our behalf.

Three different aspects of development work were discussed:-

- the importance of supporting small scale projects initiated by local people to improve life in their own community;
- the ongoing need for larger national and international organisations to prepare for relief work in disaster situations;
- and the need to change those structures which keep people poor e.g. campaigning to change unjust trade rules and reverse the damage caused by climate change.

I came away feeling that I needed to keep the wider picture in mind, even if I could only make a small contribution to one aspect of this work.

Listening to the excellent speakers, which included theologians, aid agency staff, African and Asian participants who had personal experience of growing up in very poor communities and those who were ministering in situations of poverty in both the developing world and this country, made me realise the importance of listening to the stories of others' experiences, seeking to see the situation from their standpoint and the need to stand alongside the vulnerable and disadvantaged as we work together for justice and peace.

Wendy Moxon

METHODIST RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

Haiti

Some reconstruction work has started but there are so many agencies working in the country that disputes have arisen between them and the government. More than £1.3 billion was pledged after the earthquake and it had been hoped that more progress would have been made by now. It has not been helped by the elections for a new president held in February. MRDF continue to work through its partners to support as many Haitians as possible to rebuild their lives.

Pakistan

Last July disastrous floods hit Pakistan and 1600 people were killed and more 18 million affected in other ways, including the loss of homes and livelihoods. The MRDF appeal raised over £400000 which helped to provide relief in the immediate aftermath of the floods, and is now helping people to rebuild homes and communities.

Thank you to all those who have responded to these appeals.

During the period of March to October of this year, Graham Hart of the Ipswich Circuit is celebrating his 60th birthday by attempting to climb all 214 Lakeland Fells. He would like to raise £60 000 and would like people in the District to sponsor him. Please ask your churches and circuits if they can organise an event to help. Further details can be obtained by visiting www.mountainsformoney.co.uk.

Grahame Lindsay

Worship Group Report

Big Sing:

By the time you read this the Big Sing should have taken place at Bury St Edmunds on April 2nd. The focus for the evening will be the new hymnbook "Singing the Faith" which is due to be launched in September this year.

Local Arrangement Resourcing:

Whilst reviewing the reports from the District Visits a common issue was how to deal with worship with less preachers being available to fill the circuit plans. One suggestion was to have "Reader Services" but this was not felt to be ideal. We are now hoping to hold resourcing days to help to equip local people to deal with "Local Arrangement" services. Ideally we would want to hold four such events across the District and we are currently looking for people who would be interested in being involved in leading workshops. These might include, Creative Worship, Poetry, prayer guides, internet resources etc. If anybody would like to be involved in this project, please ring Derek on 01603 811999 or e-mail Dkgrimshaw@msn.com

Praying for the District: (or maybe that should read Praying IN the District)

During the autumn of last year, Nigel Fox worked hard to pull together two praying initiatives.

Firstly work is now completed on updating the district prayer calendar which will focus on different areas of the work of the District during the month. This will be published in grapevine.

Secondly, we are trying to re-introduce the idea of Half Days of Prayer around the District. We have decided to have a few different centres, rather than attempting to gather in one place and again information about this will be in Grapevine.

Rev Derek Grimshaw



It's no secret that our churches lack huge numbers of young people. If we could change the situation would it simply be 'out with the old and in with the new'? Do we value what we have, or are our older people taken for granted without having their commitment, wisdom and skills fully appreciated?

As a nation we have just been counted in the census, and once the number crunching is done, it will come as no surprise to learn that we are an ageing population with numbers of the very old considerably increased since 2001.

Who counts in our society and who counts in God's eyes?

Our 2011 Methodist Homes Sunday theme is 'Count me in' and if your church or circuit recognises this on the official date of June 12th, it will also coincide with the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost highlights God's empowering of His church to carry out His mission on earth. This gift is offered to everybody regardless of creed, colour or age.

MHA is committed to offering older people every opportunity to lead a full and active life, and for the most frail and vulnerable the dignity and respect they deserve.

By supporting Methodist Homes Sunday you are helping to celebrate ageing and value older people.

Please ensure that the date features on your Circuit Plan
Download or request copies of our Worship Resources
Visit our website: www.mha.org.uk

Contact Lesley or Angela in the Leeds office 0113 2728466/2728477
Stop and talk to us on the MHA Conference stand in Southport
Sign up for our monthly e-prayer letter

District News:

Celebrations will be in order this year at our Housing with Care Scheme Edina Court in Wisbech, when residents and staff will mark the anniversary of the project opening 25 years ago. MHA continues to expand the delivery of our Music Therapy service. This initiative is making a huge difference to the well being of residents in our Dementia Care Homes.

METHODIST HOMES

Last autumn I attended the annual conference for District Reps at The Hayes. We enjoyed a varied programme, bringing us up to date with recent projects and future planning for MHA.

The highlight of the conference was a presentation on music therapy, given by two therapists who encouraged us all to take part. Even those of us with no musical ability discovered an innate talent! We watched a video of the work in one of the homes. It began with an elderly resident simply sitting, lost in her own world, not communicating at all. As the therapy progressed she gradually joined in, and by the end we saw a happy lady, smiling and back in contact with others. It was a stunning transformation.

The work is only possible through our contributions. Thank you to everyone who has given so generously to allow people like her an opportunity to live life to the full. Please continue to do so – MHA is highly regarded as one of the leaders in the field of “care for the elderly” We are proud to own it.

I am available to speak at your meetings – do contact me on 01502 471763 or email revbayliss@btinternet.com.

Rev Pam Bayliss

ADMINISTRATION GROUP REPORT

This year's report begins in thanksgiving for the life and Christian service of Mr Walter Moss, who died earlier this year. Walter's tremendous source of knowledge and expertise gave encouragement to all of us across the District, as he helped us in so many ways particularly with property schemes, schedules and grants. He will be sorely missed and we continue to offer our love and prayers to his widow June and the family.

Finance & Property

1. The budget for 2011/12 has been sent to Circuits. All District Accounts are provided in the District Treasurer's Report.
2. A meeting for circuit treasurers was held in January 2011. Issues covered were – Budget 2011/12 and allocation of assessments. A projection of the cash flow forecast for the next 5 years was given. A time for consultation and news sharing was had.
3. District accounts for Connexional year 2009/10 will all be presented to Synod for approval.
4. Charities Act 2006. **All CIRCUITS & CHURCHES with annual income in excess of £100,000 should have already registered with the Charity Commissioners.** An annual report to be sent to the Charity Commissioners is required.
5. The District Consents Panel for Property schemes / projects remains Graham Thompson, Tony Jacobs, Beverly Richardson, Paul Harris, and Mary Keer.
6. Mr Roger Pauley is proposed as the new District Property Secretary.
7. Please take appropriate action to register those final properties where Title Deeds are missing.

APPROVE: Accounts for 2009/10.

ADOPT: the Budget for 2011/12 & receive rest of the report.

Personnel & Grants

1. A reminder to all circuits receiving a Ministry & Mission Grant that a report is **now required annually** by the Grants & Personnel Committee to review the work & progress of the project. For DAF grants which are more than £5,000 per annum, the district requires a monitoring and evaluation report in line with the above.
2. Since my last written report another Ministry & Mission scheme has received District grant funding. **Appointment of Deacon for Mission in deprived areas of Ipswich (Ipswich 14/02)** has been offered a £50,000 DAF. All District grants awarded by the Grants and Personnel Committee are subject to ratification by District Policy Committee.
3. Proposed Administration Group Representatives to Synod for 2011/12: Mrs Mary Keer, Mrs Barbara George and Mrs Aileen Fox.
4. To review the District Grants Policy:

"The East Anglia District of the Methodist Church will consider making grants for work/projects that meet all of the following criteria:

- **relates directly to 'Our Calling' in at least one of the four constituent parts**
- **relates to at least one aspect of 'The Priorities for the Methodist Church'**
- **relates directly to at least one aspect of the District Policy**
- **meets the objectives of the Circuit Mission Policy**
- **is innovative and/or involves risk-taking**
- **will also be supported by Circuit monies**

It should be noted that District grants are not normally more than the amount also granted from Circuit resources."

5. For 2011/12 I will remain District Grants Officer and Chair of the Grants & Personnel Committee; a new chair is sort for the Finance & Property Committee.

Adopt the Report

ANDREW KING. – Group Coordinator Administration

REPORT FROM WOMEN'S NETWORK EAST ANGLIA DISTRICT

At the start of 2010, we began a year under the guidance of our new President, Miss Brenda Searle who was commissioned the previous October. Her theme of 'Be Still' has been followed during this past year especially at the opening and closing of our meetings and District Days. These have once more been very successful.

In spring of 2010 we held our District Days in Sheringham and Felixstowe where our speaker was Mrs. Esther Shreve and in the autumn we went to St. Ives for the first time and then to South Lowestoft for the second day. On both occasions Mrs. Jill Baker who is to be the first President of Methodist Women in Britain was our speaker. She took 'Trees' as her theme and shared her experiences of the various trees she had come across during her time in the Caribbean and on holidays in various other places. Of course, she was able to bring us up to date on the various changes that we are now about to adopt as we move forward in anticipation later in this year (2011) when we will finally become established!

This spring our District Days are to be held at Hunstanton and Thetford when Deacon Brenda Hayes is to be our speaker. In fact, as I write, we have already had our day at Hunstanton which was extremely successful. It was the first time that Network had been there and everyone was so impressed with the building, the members who helped and, of course, with our speaker who shared with us her work in Romania.

We have had a very encouraging eighteen months of support for Brenda Searle's chosen charity, The Teenage Cancer Trust. At the last count Network had raised over £17,000 for the project based at Addenbrookes Hospital and we can't wait to go and visit when it finally completed in a few months time.

This year we are also holding a day conference at Belsey Bridge (formerly St. Gabriel's) at Ditchingham at the end of March, which is being led by our Vice President Mrs. Jackie Smith and her husband Bryant. Incidentally this, too, is themed on trees! As I mentioned last year, we had thought this might be our last conference but two Network members came forward and offered to take on the role of secretaries of the Network conferences.

Thank you to everyone who supports Network and all who work so hard and give so generously to the projects, as well as supporting all that we do by their prayers.

This is an exciting time for us all and we pray that Methodist Women in Britain will flourish and grow throughout our District, calling upon the experiences of Network and fully embracing the new ones to come.

Carol Selwyn
March 2011