

S_{outh} E_{ast} D U_{rham} M_{ethodist}

NEWSLETTER

for Bowburn, Shincliffe and
Elvet Methodists

BUMPER SUMMER EDITION

Sedum:
a family of
small plants
with fleshy
leaves,
found on
rock or bare
ground.



“....I tell you
Peter; you are
a rock, and
on this rock
foundation I
will build my
church.....”

Aug - Sept '08

A letter from our Minister

Dear Friends,

How quickly 13 weeks can go! I said in my last letter, written before my sabbatical started, that I would be able to tell you more about what I was going to do when I had done it (if you see what I mean). So here is a brief account of those 13 weeks.

Hardly anything that I had planned to do – in the way of study and research – turned out as expected. This was partly because I was unable to get hold of documents that I had hoped to see and partly because what was intended to be a very small research project led me into further enquiries that were entirely unexpected. But they were fascinating! In due course, some of this work will, I hope, be properly written up. What was delightful was to have the freedom to travel to libraries up and down the country and the time to think. It did me a world of good. God willing, when I eventually retire from full-time ministry, there will be similar opportunities.

It was not all academic work, of course. My wife, Julie, and I were able to have three short breaks during the three months (two of them including weekends!), and we attended three orchestral concerts and the performances of two plays and one opera. These, together with the trips away, both for 'work' and relaxation, and visits from members of our family, were about the only entries in my diary. The sense of liberation, even for a relatively short time, from the usual relentless pressure of innumerable commitments was very precious.

Worship played its part too, but I was, of course, a member of the congregation for a change. Durham Cathedral was my spiritual home during these weeks. I knew in advance that I would be comfortable with the liturgy and appreciative of the music (and so it proved) but I was also sustained by the quality of the preaching. To be able to worship in such a splendid setting, and not to be directly responsible for a single moment of what was happening, was wonderful. The pew can be an uncomfortable place for those of us who normally lead worship twice each Sunday. That was my experience during my previous sabbatical. It was not so this time.

As I said in my previous letter, I am very grateful to my ministerial colleagues and to members of the churches who shouldered extra responsibilities during my absence. As I predicted, they did a superb job.

And now I am back at work, fully engaged again with the life of our Circuit at a time when considerable change is taking place. The coming months will see us developing new patterns of working, as two ministers depart, as I and most of

my continuing colleagues take on new or added responsibilities, and as a new minister, a new probationer and a new worker with children and young people join the circuit staff. My sabbatical is already becoming a memory – but a very happy one. I shall cherish that memory as, with you, I get on with the job of being the Church in Elvet and Bowburn.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Dixon

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MARK TOPPING AS JOHN WESLEY ON YOU TUBE

You can now hear and see Mark Topping delivering a selection of John Wesley's sermons on You Tube. Listen to what Wesley said in his sermons 'Thoughts on War' and 'Lay not up treasures'.

Why not put them on your own church website?

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/wesleysermons>

<http://www.revjohnwesley.com>

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News from Hong Kong

Augustine Vernon Cheng who worshipped with us at Elvet nearly two years ago has phoned from Hong Kong (at 1 a.m. his time!!) to tell me that he is well and happy and thinks of us and prays for us.

Gus has passed his university exams with flying colours: he was particularly successful with the units he did in Durham and immediately upon his return from Durham - so we must have done him some good! Gus hopes to marry his fiancée, Christine, in June 2009. They would like to visit France and England after their marriage so we may perhaps see the happy couple back here in Durham. Gus has been appointed as a teacher, but feels that he may soon be called to the ordained ministry. Even so, he hopes to complete two or three years teaching before embarking on re-training for the ministry.

Let us pray that this kind-hearted and serious young man very soon finds God's calling for him. Gus has a lot to offer, either as a teacher or as a minister.

WORSHIP IN AUGUST

Bowburn

- 3rd 10.45 a.m. Mr Bill Offler
10th 10.45 a.m. Mr Eric Watchman
17th 10.45 a.m. Miss E Greener
24th 10.45 a.m. Readres' Service
31st 10.45 a.m. Miss H. Stott

Elvet

- 3rd 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon
10th 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
10.45 a.m. Dr M. Wilson
6.00 p.m. Mrs Anne Offler
17th 10.45 a.m. Readers' Service
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
24th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon
6.00 p.m. Dr M. Wilson
31st 10.45 a.m. Readers' Service
6.00 p.m. Mr John Scott

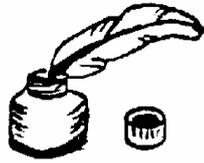
WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

Bowburn

- 7th 10.45 a.m. Mrs Anne Offler
6.00 p.m. Circuit Service at Newton Hall
- 14th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
- 21st 10.45 a.m. Miss Dorothy Hale
- 28th 10.45 a.m. Mr John Scott

Elvet

- 7th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
6.00 p.m. Circuit Service at Newton Hall
- 14th 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
10.45 a.m. Mr s Margaret Wadge
6.00 p.m. Rev Keith Mankin
- 21st 10.45 a.m. Rev Paul Golightly
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion - Rev Neil Dixon
- 28th 10.45 a.m. **Harvest Festival, All-Age Worship, Parade**
Rev Neil Dixon
6.00 p.m. **Harvest Festival** - Rev Neil Dixon



EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

As you can see from the cover, I've gone completely mad and labelled this SEDUM as our "Bumper Summer Edition". I've had lots of contributions and I hope that you, Dear Readers, are going to spend time reading, marking and inwardly digesting what other readers want to say.

I have been particularly pleased with the response to "Anonymous" who challenged Elvet in the last edition. I only published "Anonymous's" contribution in the expectation of a robust response - and that I have got. Thanks to those who both spoke to me about "Anonymous" and those who actually put their thoughts into words. Sorry, Anonymous, those of us really connected with Elvet really see what it does. Why don't you, Anonymous, join in? You may be surprised by what you find.

May I commend those who have responded to "Anonymous" for giving their full names? Thank you.

On page 24 you will see an article slightly different from our usual fare. A representative of the local Primary Care Trust has asked me to include it.

So, take SEDUM to the beach or settle down with a cuppa in the garden. Enjoy your reading.

With my Love and Prayers,

Jackie

John & Doris Ramsden would like to say 'thank you' for all the cards and good wishes they received for their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. They also wish to thank those who made a donation to the Church Project in lieu of gifts. The Project benefited by £400.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2008

A total of £463.24 was raised by the Elvet members who helped with the House to House Collection during Christian Aid Week this year. Thank you to those who helped with the collection.
David Ramsden

National Methodist Youth Brass Band 2008 Summer Tour.



The **National Methodist Youth Brass Band** is going to be celebrating its 21st anniversary in the North East, starting in The Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit and staying at North Road Methodist Church. The band was formed 21 years ago and has travelled far and wide including tours to the USA, Jamaica and even the Isle of Wight!

This year we are starting our tour in Durham, performing two concerts, one at Gibside at Rowlands Gill and the other at North Road Methodist Church on 6th August at 7.30pm. From Durham the band will be moving onto Morpeth, before turning around and then heading to Saltburn and finally ending the tour at Scarborough nearly two weeks later.

Come and hear this pride of Methodism on Thursday 6th August 7.30pm at North Road Methodist Church.

In late May some Elvet members offered us a Readers' Service which, I thought, merited some further distribution, if only because some members missed the insights offered as the Readers' Service was on a holiday weekend and some people were away.

Here are Bob Raymond's, Maureen Harris's and Robin Harris's contributions to the service.

Adoration through Art

by Bob Raymond

It is a common error to believe that an artist on visiting a gallery is in a constant state of excitement or high emotion, but the reverse is often the case. I sometimes feel sympathy for the farmer who 'did' the National Gallery in two hours and said, "If I'd had my nailed boots on I'd have done it in half the time. But in my experience there are always one or two works which catch the attention, or stand out in some way - not the same works on every visit.

In the 1950s I saw an exhibition of the work of the Australian artist, Sydney Nolan. A prominent work showed a cow caught during a flash flood and left stranded high in a tree and, as the waters receded, a gaunt corpse was left behind. I remember the two staring eyeholes of the skull. The effect was quite hypnotic. The body on the crossed branches reminded me inescapably of a crucifixion subject.

A crucifixion by Grunewald, a German artist working in the 15th century, catches the attention in the same way. Christ is shown in extreme agony, twisting on the cross, and every wound, scratch, thorn and bruise is shown. His hands are silhouetted, contorted against the dark sky in pain. The onlookers are pale as death. The garments are composed of jagged lines and include blood red in their folds. Even the brush strokes are harsh and angular.

In a quieter mood is Rembrandt's small picture of the 'Supper at Emmaus', 1648. This shows the moment when Christ takes the bread. The moment is shown with quiet intensity. A sombre but calm light seems to emanate from Christ himself and glows around his head like a halo framed by the dark arches of the background. It is a masterful use of light as drama.

Of course it is possible to analyse works such as these. I could talk about use of line, colour, tone, texture, pattern, movement, sense of space, but the really difficult job is to find words to express the feelings conveyed by the work and the emotions generated or transmitted by the artist. Of course art can be used as in the icons of the Greek Orthodox

Church or it may have a narrative or story-telling value or even just decorative uses - but a work of art in the studio is incomplete, for true greatness comes only when an emotional impact reaches the spectator.

If I might give a personal example, in 1975 I was talking to a sixth form group of students about Michelangelo and was showing a slide of his sculpture known as the *Duomo Pieta*. This shows Christ being lowered from the cross. His shoulders are supported by Nicodemus. Mary, his mother, embraces him on the right and Mary Magdalene is on the left. The work was intended for Michelangelo's own tomb and shows the rough surface which is typical of his style. Michelangelo has made the head of Nicodemus into a hooded self-portrait with the broken nose which characterises him. For a few moments I became lost in this work. I felt as if I was Nicodemus --- **as if I was Nicodemus!** A restive stirring among my sixth-formers brought me down to earth and I don't know to this day how long I had been silent.

I felt a similar sense of involvement when I first saw a 12th century French wood carving of the dead Christ now in the Louvre. This painted and gilded work, almost life size, appealed because of its calmness. Its gentle curving pose and the tender elongation of the hands and arms gave it a pathos and serenity which is quite beyond words.

As an artist I feel it is not possible to produce effective religious works without some personal involvement. When some years ago I was asked to make a set of sculptures of the Stations of the Cross for the Church of St Peter and St Mary in Sunderland I felt it necessary to put into words my feelings about each station before beginning on the clay. I still have my notes for this.

Similarly when I came to make The Good Shepherd I could not do it coldly. I particularly did not want to make a 'Jesus in a nightie' sculpture and was glad when the church council agreed that the figure should be in modern dress, complete with cap and a bit of binder twine hanging from his pocket, bringing the theme up-to-date.

In both of these cases the reaction of the congregation was important to me. At St Peter's a sum of money had been left to the church to pay for the work but the people of the church liked the sculptures so much that they wanted to pay for them themselves. So the bequest was eventually used to install special spotlighting which picks out each station to advantage. I was able (together with other Elvet members) to take part in a processional service which focused on each station in turn - a very moving experience. Similarly, I found great satisfaction in the response of Elvet members to the 'Good Shepherd'. Pauline Smith's father, Wesley Dickens, regularly spoke to me about his enjoyment of the work and he kept a photograph of the 'Shepherd' in his house. Another Elvet member who had

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BAPTISMS

At Bowburn on May 11th
Rhys Robbie Murphy
Sophie Barnes

At Elvet on June 29th
Thomas James CHURCHMAN

Welcome!

WEDDING

Every good wish to all this happy couple married at our
church in Elvet!



July 3 *Daniel JOHNSON* and *Natalie STONES*

Congratulations

Continued from Page 9



better remain nameless said, "Whenever the sermon is dull or boring I simply look at the Shepherd and find inspiration there.' I too find it moving because in all my work there is something of myself. In the Sunderland Stations I had to use my own hands as models for the hands of Christ as He is nailed to the cross and the same hands to model the hands of His executioners. In the Good Shepherd it is my hand which holds the crook and every time I look at it I can see my father's face there.

Sometimes, of course, the response is not what you expect. During the 60s I encountered a formidable lady in the late years of her teaching career. She was Dr Hiller, a German lady, a teacher of German and she would occasionally visit my Art room where some of my own work was usually hanging about. Her eye was caught by a painting of a ruined jetty whose arching structures were hung with trails of seaweed. 'I know what this is,' she said. 'It's a representation of the state of the Christian Church in the twentieth Century'. 'How clever of you to notice that!' I replied. From then on she was my friend and boasted that she was the only one who understood Mr Raymond's paintings.

But when the response really works, when artist, subject, technique and spectator all come together - then the work of art is complete and can truly become an object of contemplation, of adoration and of inspiration.

Eric Gill a noted sculptor and engraver went further. Writing in 1940, the year of his death, under the heading, 'The priesthood of craftsmanship', he uses these words. 'I do not claim a special kind of loftiness for the artist. The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man can be a special kind of artist. For art is the well-making of anything, be it paintings or drainpipes. If we realise that there is no dividing line between the work of poets, musicians, artists and blacksmiths or carpenters we can begin to see that all things work together for good, that is for God, and, whether by the ministry of saints or artists or workmen, we can all be led heavenward.

Continued with Maureen Harris's contribution next page, page 12.

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Music

By Maureen Harris



Probably all that needs to be said about music has been written by Fred Pratt Green:

*How often making music we have found
A new dimension in the world around*

This new dimension is there even before we discover it within ourselves. Music stirs us all but in different ways; children enjoy percussion - drum, castanet, xylophone - anything that makes a loud noise gives them pleasure. It is the sound which helps them to express feelings - of exuberance, frustration, satisfaction at being able to liberate feelings. If you wonder whether music does liberate the spirit, just listen for a minute to a disco. The noise is deafening, the rhythm is reverberative but the seemingly anguished notes of the singer bring enjoyment to the party goes if not to us.

It doesn't work quite like that in church.

For some the polyphonic music of Palestrina sung by cathedral choisters stirs and warms the spirit; it brings a heightened awareness of God in the world. For others it is plainsong which does this.

Perhaps for many Methodists it is the congregational singing of hymns which provides an uplifting of our souls to God.

Methodism was born in song; this is the opening sentence of the 1933 hymn book. Fifty years later 1983 in our current hymnbook we find Brian Hoare's hymn:

Born in sing God's people have always been singing

If you look through the hymnbook you will find many references to music - praise through singing:

*Sing to the Lord a cheerful song
How shall I sing that majesty?*

All people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord

300 years ago Isaac Watts was urged by his father to write hymns, which he would enjoy singing rather more than those available at that time. He wrote:

Joy to the world! The Saviour comes

Let all their songs employ

And these hymns are what we have inherited from Watts, Mason, Wesley all expressing faith and belief.

This combination of words and music as it presents theology to us, provides a medium for God's word. It is a vehicle bringing our hearts and minds closer to God.

Hymns help us to express our feelings to God. Singing them is our response to his great love. Is it then any wonder that our hearts are warmed as we do so? This is worship. The pictorial images presented in hymnody reinforce our knowledge of God's sacrifice.

And in the garden secretly

And on the cross on high

Because the hymn reiterates 'what God has done, is doing, and has promised to do' we are moved in Pratt Green's words 'to a more profound Alleluia'.

That is why it has been said that the hymn's effect can be greater than the sermon's. What better Christian prayer than these lines from the hymn by Thomas Ken can we take with us as we leave church:

Teach me to live that I may dread

The grave as little as my bed

Is your heart strangely warmed by singing in congregations and are you more receptive to God through music?

Sometimes when we sing hymns we are distracted by fitting together words and unfamiliar music. It can be that the poetry of the hymn speaks to us more movingly without the music.

Psalms are meant to be chanted but we both read and listen to them, appreciating and responding to their content expressed so effectively in parallelism, a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry, so well exemplified in Psalm 8.

Just as words alone can inspire us, so can music. Perhaps instrumental music is your preferred medium. For each one of us there is a music which moves us and brings us nearer to God. We are experiencing today what the Wesleys felt all those years ago, as their 'hearts were strangely warmed'.

Continued with Robin Harris's contribution on next page, page 14

Surprised by Science

by Robin Harris

So far this morning, we've heard about how men & women come to see God through music and art. Most people would appreciate these approaches. But would you expect to see God through science?? There are many people who see science as opposed to religion. What a nonsense that is!!! I am a scientist and a Christian. I firmly believe that science & religion can and do go hand in hand.

In fact, there are a number of myths about science & scientists, which need to be exploded. One is that scientists are cold, calculating people, lacking in human sensitivity and in appreciation of the arts. Well, at least people at Elvet should see that as the nonsense that it is, since our membership contains many scientists. After all, who among us has better appreciation of music than our organist, Brian Tanner, a physicist?

Another myth is that whilst artists & musicians are creative and inspired, scientists deal only in cold facts. Of course it is true that we deal in experimental facts, but understanding them requires considerable gifts of imagination and flair. Scientific advances are made by inspired leaps of the mind – scientists often have “eureka” moments, when everything clicks into place and what was puzzling becomes explicable. I've sometimes woken up in the middle of the night to a sudden realisation of how some experimental results, which have been baffling up to then, fall into place as part of a pattern.

But the overwhelming misapprehension is that scientists have difficulty in believing in God. Some do and some don't! It all depends on one's approach to science. If you are an atheist or agnostic, science is unlikely to change you into being a Christian. However, if you are a Christian there is nothing in science to turn you into an atheist. In fact, if you believe in God, scientific research becomes a religious activity. Scientific research involves finding out more and more about God's universe – and the more you know, the more it appears wonderful and awe-inspiring – more wonderful, to my mind, than music or art. Science also provides us with the tools to do God's work if we will – think of medical advances and improvements in agriculture, for example.

The fact is that science and religion address different issues. Science builds a model of the universe and everything in it, but can say nothing about anything beyond it. Science answers the question “how?” – “how does photosynthesis work?”, for example. But it has nothing to say in answer to the question “why?” – such as “why are we here?”. Only religion can give meaning to life or can dare to claim that we are all equally important.

As we have heard in one of the readings, the psalmist, who was obviously an astronomer of sorts, knew this when he wrote “when I consider thy heavens, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?” The sense of wonder and awe which the natural world inspires has always told of the nature of God to all with eyes to see and minds to appreciate. My contention is that with every discovery and scientific advance, the greatness of God becomes more apparent. The modern astronomer, with talk of galaxies and red dwarfs and pulsars and black holes, has many more marvels to celebrate than the psalmist ever did.

Mark Wilson, a local preacher and a research chemist at the university, took an evening service recently at Elvet and gave an insight into this question by talking about how astronomers look into immense distances in space, so big that they are impossible to properly grasp, whilst chemists work with entities (molecules) so small that a million with 17 extra zeroes after it are needed to fill a thimble. Surely the God we worship must be many times more wonderful than the Jehovah who the Jews of Jesus’ time knew and worshipped.

Bob Raymond talked about beautiful art works. To the scientist, the world can appear to be beautiful in ways unknown to other people. For example, I show here 2 small scientific results which I find beautiful – but I doubt if anyone else here does. They are nuclear magnetic resonance spectra, the results of research – a small light on God’s creation which nobody had seen before the student who recorded them. I’ll leave them on the front seats so that you can see them afterwards. For me, they are as moving as Bob Raymond’s pictures are to him – and they speak to me of God.

“Surprised by science”? Yes, certainly – I’m perpetually surprised by what science reveals about God’s world.

Replies to "Anonymous" who was not sure if Elvet would be missed if it went.

I'm sure "Anonymous" was hoping for a lively response and I hope that s/he finds one in these.

As a relative "old timer", that is, an existing member of the Elvet community, I would like to reply to the article in the last newsletter from a comparative newcomer. I have to agree that Elvet is not a touchy-feely church - but why should it be that? Why should we try to be something which we are not, trying to conform with the new wave of touchy-feely Christianity that we so often see?

However, just because we are not touchy-feely, does not mean that we don't care, and just because we don't go round hugging each other at the drop of a hat doesn't mean that we are cold - maybe more reserved, but certainly not cold to the needs of each other. Perhaps we show our compassion and feelings in a more quiet, understated, often practical and more sensitive way, as opposed to great outpourings of gushing sentimentality. The story of the widow's mite springs to mind; the sincerity of a smile is often more than great outpourings of slush.

Elvet is run as a business, but it has to be; any organisation of its size needs structure and form in order to survive and do the things we do. Yes, we should be proud of our achievements, in the projects we do, in the groups that we have and in what we can do, and can do well.

That doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels; by doing that, we can become complacent - and that will be our downfall. In the article by "Anonymous" we read, "Would anyone notice if Elvet just disappeared?". I would like to think that the answer is "Yes", but the question is, would those around us notice, those who may not be regular attendees at Elvet, but who know of Elvet's existence, who know what Elvet does and what Elvet stands for?

If only members of the congregation would miss Elvet, then we really do need to take a long hard look at ourselves - for without the mission that we do in the shape of the projects and the other groups we have, which extend the work of Elvet outside the confines of the building, where would we fit into the structure of the city, into the life of Durham, and what do we need to do to look to the future and secure Elvet's place in that future?

So often in the news etc. we hear that young people only live for today and let the future take of itself. Perhaps we do that here at Elvet. Things are alright now; the building is running and is well maintained; we have a vast

array of talents and abilities to fulfil our needs - and, as someone said to me, the congregation is still quite full. My response to that was what would it be in ten or fifteen years? We will still have the talents and the abilities. Will we still have the congregation in the church in order for Elvet to be the church that we want it to be?

The answer is, well, to be honest, I don't know.

Stuart Lawson

Pro Apologia Elvet

'I'd like to be married in church. Mum says I should try Elvet because the pictures would look good on the steps. So I asked the vicar and he talked to me and suggested Tom and I should go along to the marriage preparation discussions. They were good and made me realize what a lot of things can go wrong if you're not prepared. Everything went fine and we've been a couple of times since; everyone is so friendly.'

'We wanted our baby baptized so we went to Elvet and talked to the minister there. He introduced us to a lady there and we all talked about the promises we would be making. After the service lots of people came up to say hello and see the baby, though the minister had carried the child around for everyone to see. I thought that was really good. When it was the baby's birthday there was a card from the church and they send one every year. They really keep in touch.'

'Dad's funeral was at Elvet and they couldn't have been nicer. The minister came and talked us through the service. They arranged an organist and there flowers in the church. We've started to go to church there at Christmas and Harvest.'

'Our boys have joined the cubs at Elvet. We feel safe to let them go; it's a church organization and there aren't any problems. The boys like it.'

'My friend and I have joined a Craft class at Elvet. We go and she paints while I knit. Some of the painters are good and give her tips. I just enjoy a chat and a coffee.'

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Continued from page 17

'Mother has joined the Women's Fellowship. She goes Wednesday afternoons and they have speakers and she meets a lot of people. She likes it and is getting to know some of the hymns. They have a hymn and a prayer every time; she says it reminds her of old times. I think what she really likes is the chat over a cup of tea afterwards. Someone came to see her from the group when she had that fall. I was impressed.'

'I'm free at lunch times so one Wednesday I went to Elvet lunch club. You just walk in. People are pleased to see you. Well, they were pleased to see me. I had a good lunch and sat with some people who'd come from another church. I really enjoyed the company and the food - all for £2.50.'

'Thought I'd go to church as it was a year since Dad died. Someone shook hands at the door and I told him why I'd come. Nobody fussed me but let me sit quietly at the back. Afterwards someone invited me for coffee and we talked about what a difference a death could make. The person was understanding but not pushy. I think I'll go again.'

'We went to the parade service to see our boy carry the flag up the aisle. We liked it; the hymns were good and the minister taking the service was good with the children. So we've started to go fairly often. Sometimes I go in the evening alone. There's lots going on but you're not hassled to do anything if you don't want to. I was impressed when I heard that the church raised money for Cambodia. Someone told me there is a project every year for a charity unconnected with the church. Actually there was a concert in aid of this project. I went to it and thoroughly enjoyed it.'

The church exists to serve the community in fellowship and to offer a route to God. Meeting earthly needs leads to meeting spiritual needs. What a lot of difference it would make if Elvet church disappeared!

Mud and Saints: the Lindisfarne Pilgrimage

Four of us, Gill Brown, Ken and Dorothy Slater, and I, set out at 9 a.m. on Saturday 7 June on the pilgrimage to Holy Island. This is the annual event organised by Churches Together in Shincliffe and Elvet; we were joined by friends from St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's.

The coach took us from Dunelm House, with a stop at Belford, to the beginning of the causeway. There most of us (but you do not have to do this, and some people stayed on the bus) got out for the walk over the old pilgrims' route to the island. For those who walked, it was a gorgeous experience of sand and mud: we took off our shoes and socks, and, like the hippopotami in the song, wallowed and wallowed in glorious mud: two miles of gloo-y glosly gloppy sloppy swishy swashy sticky stuff, sometimes firm, sometimes soft, sometimes over the ankles, with sea-thrift bravely growing here and there, and with little crabs running across the wet sand. We followed the old route, signalled by poles, that the monks used more than a thousand years ago; then washed our feet on the other side, and found somewhere to picnic. At two o'clock there was a short pilgrims' service in St Mary's Church, next to the Priory. We were welcomed by Kate Tristram, the assistant priest, whom some will remember from her time in Durham. The service was gently led by Andy Doyle, organiser of the trip, and members of all the churches took part: Ken Slater did the Elvet contribution with dignity and grace. We exchanged the peace, between ourselves and between our churches; and we sang 'Be still, for the presence of the Lord': the words 'We stand on holy ground' had a particular resonance on the island given by St Oswald to St Aidan, where St Cuthbert had lived and died.

Truly Lindisfarne is a magic place: the sea, and the sky, the birds and the rocks, all speak of things that are long past but which saw the beginnings of Northumbrian Christianity. The tourist and the pilgrim are reminded of these things by the great statue of St Cuthbert by Fenwick Lawson in the grounds of the priory there, cast from the one now in the heritage centre garden at Durham (his statue of 'The Journey', showing the monks carrying St Cuthbert's coffin, normally in north-east winds. By now the sun was out in full strength, and some of us came back with red arms and burnt faces; and then we were back on the bus, just in time before the causeway closed, past Bamburgh for fish and chips at Seahouses, overlooking the harbour in the afternoon sun. As someone remarked, licking fingers and looking over the sparkling water, 'It doesn't get much better than this'.

To travel to Lindisfarne on a June day is to experience much of the loveliness of nature: sea and sky, sand dunes and sea-birds, with the Northumbrian hills behind; but we also reflected afterwards that the mud and the saints were emblematic of our human condition: the one a reminder of the earthiness of it all, of our human struggle and messiness; the other of our aspirations, of the nobleness of human life, of the sainthood which is beyond most of us but which is somehow always there to thrill and inspire us. It was part of a day that was rich in human fellowship and spiritual significance, as we experienced something of the glorious heritage of the saints of the north east.



Two footnotes:

1. On the Sunday morning I was cycling down New Elvet when I saw one of the people who had been on the bus, someone I had never spoken to before. We waved and smiled, and I thought – ‘there is someone in Durham with whom, after yesterday, I have a new sense of community, of being a part of a shared life’.

2. There were 38 people on the coach (and room for a few more) but only 4 from Elvet. It would be good if we were better represented on this splendid ecumenical occasion. Do think about coming next year!

Dick Watson

GLOBAL CARE CAMBODIA STREET CHILDREN PROJECT

With the total sum raised at £18,500, and the Miners' Big Meeting to be held and catered for on Saturday, July 12th, it seems to be an appropriate time to express sincere thanks to the members of the Steering Group and to the other members and friends of Elvet Methodist Church who have arranged fund-raising events, or taken part in these occasions or supported the project through giving money or providing help and resources to enable this outstanding result to be achieved.

The culmination of the Project will take place on Saturday and Sunday 19th and 20th July when we will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Global Care with the help of Ron Newby, Chief Executive, and Fiona Castle, Patron, and the A.K. Chorale, in Elvet Methodist Church on the Saturday and hand over the cheque for £20,000 at the morning service on the Sunday. Also present will be Ros Titus Cheng, who with his wife Maria, is in charge of the Project in Cambodia, and is involved in the recent developments of acquiring Paddy Fields and a farm with animals which will provide both food and training for the street children. This is the third project Elvet has supported through Global Care, and as the Coordinator for the Rukungiri School and Training Centre in Uganda, the Pavement Club in Calcutta, and the Cambodian Street Children projects, all of which have been successful, and have done much to help children living in poverty and at risk, I feel greatly privileged, and so am grateful for the opportunity of serving in this way, knowing that the resources you have provided have been used by Global Care to such advantage.

Thank you for all your support and generosity.

JOHN FARISH

27 June 2008

Some OSCAR Thoughts (Thank you to all involved)

It's 13 years since its inception!

Some people who were there at the beginning are still loyally helping in whatever way they can, even if it is just moral support & encouragement.

This year saw a surprisingly large turnout of 33 guests of whom:-

21 were from the church congregation or connected with the church in some way and had been several times in the past (if not on every occasion).

2 more guests were from the church congregation but had not been previously and one of these brought :-

2 relatives who were visiting her.

The 8 remaining came through association with Lunch Stop.

Our volunteers were mostly 'senior congregation' members themselves – only 9 of them wouldn't have qualified for a seat as guests!

We had:-

20 volunteers to drive and assist

6 others made tea and in addition several others contributed cakes, scones, pork pies & some strawberries.

Our minister and stewards on duty that evening were invited to join us at tea and the total who ate together was around 60.

The evening service was attended by several of the party and by 8 of the guests who would not normally manage to attend. 2 of these were from the Lunch Stop connection. For them it was a first time at an Elvet service as far as I know. (Out of the other 'Lunch Stop connection' 2 have expressed a desire to help at Miners' Gala! – outreach indeed).

Where do we go from here?

That OSCAR is much appreciated by our guests is not in doubt. It is hard work and the organizing of it is not simple due to the many variables. It is widely advertised in church but some people are still missed (they may prefer it that way) and most of our volunteers are 'regulars' and always willing. We could always use more.

I appreciate that not all 'seniors' want to join this occasion.

Is that why so many are just volunteer helpers?

I also appreciate that our 'younger congregation' lead busy lives and are in the minority.

Is it feasible to keep going in this form?

Do we want to?

Will OSCAR ride again?

A Celebration!



Shincliffe lives on! During the late 1980s - early 1990s, at the then Shincliffe Methodist Church, we had an excellent group of young teenagers, who met with us regularly. Amongst them was Deborah Robinson. Deb (as she is well known) is a local girl who was at one time a 'bright spark' amongst the very able youngsters in our youth group and also took an active part in the Circuit Youth activities. Having completed her school life at Johnston School, she went on to St. Andrew's and then Hull Universities. Following graduation, she took up social work in Stockton and then moved to Darlington, where her current post is with a hospice. Deb also became involved with an Anglican Church there.

We were pleased and honoured to recently receive invitations to "The Ordination of Deacons". This took place on Sunday 29th June (Pentecost) in Durham Cathedral, where the Rt Revd Tom Wright, Bishop of Durham, ordained 14 new Deacons, including Deborah. Deb will serve her title within the Parish of St. Hilda & St. Columba, Darlington, with the focus of her ministry as a Minister in Secular Employment working as the team co-ordinator and social worker for the Family Support Service at St. Teresa's Hospice, Darlington.

We were fortunate to be able to celebrate this event along with her many friends from as far afield as Guilford, Wolverhampton, Blackburn, and St. Andrew's (to mention just a few). We wish her well as she serves in this new role and continues to study with a view to ordination as a Priest.

Jean & Jim Harper

NHS

From the Patient and Public Involvement Manager for County Durham Primary Care Trust

Since the establishment of the new County Durham Primary Care Trust (PCT) over two years ago, there has been a transformation in the way in which the PCT speaks to members of the community and how it engages people in its plans and developments.

As part of these changes the PCT employs Mark Dunne-Willows as its Patient Carer and Public Involvement (PCPI) Development Manager for the North of the County (Durham City, Chester-le-Street and Derwentside).

The PCT will be looking to link into existing groups and a large part of Mark's work is to identify where people are already meeting, and what sort of things local people are interested in.

The PCT has a legal duty to consult with people who use their services and there are some excellent opportunities at the moment for people to influence how their health service is being delivered in their area.

PCTs are NHS organisations that, amongst other things, are responsible for the commissioning of services across a certain area. PCTs control 80% of the NHS budget and are involved in overseeing the delivery of primary care services such as GPs, dentists and pharmacists.

Anyone interested in getting involved and influencing the PCT in the future, can contact Mark at: Mark Dunne-Willows, Patient, Carer & Public Involvement Development Officer, County Durham Primary Care Trust, The Greenhouse Amos Drive, Greencroft Industrial Estate, Annfield Plain. DH9 7XN. Tel: 01207 523 616 or email: mark.dunne-willows@cdpct.nhs.uk

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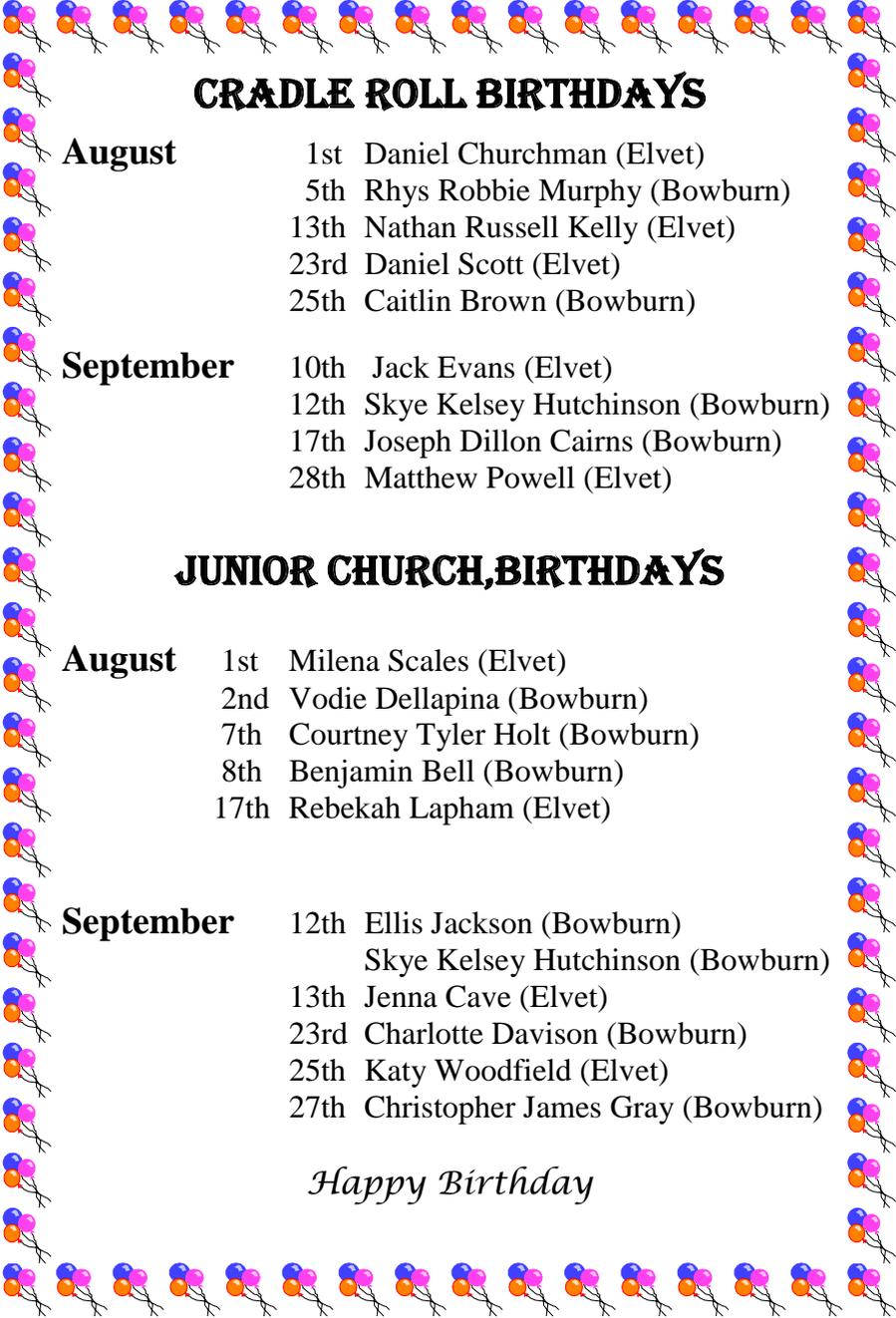
Thoughts and Sayings

Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.

Proverbs 30: 8 - 10

"Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven, but getting God's will done on earth."

Archbishop Richard Chenexic Trench (1807 - 1886)



CRADLE ROLL BIRTHDAYS

August

- 1st Daniel Churchman (Elvet)
- 5th Rhys Robbie Murphy (Bowburn)
- 13th Nathan Russell Kelly (Elvet)
- 23rd Daniel Scott (Elvet)
- 25th Caitlin Brown (Bowburn)

September

- 10th Jack Evans (Elvet)
- 12th Skye Kelsey Hutchinson (Bowburn)
- 17th Joseph Dillon Cairns (Bowburn)
- 28th Matthew Powell (Elvet)

JUNIOR CHURCH, BIRTHDAYS

August

- 1st Milena Scales (Elvet)
- 2nd Vodie Dellapina (Bowburn)
- 7th Courtney Tyler Holt (Bowburn)
- 8th Benjamin Bell (Bowburn)
- 17th Rebekah Lapham (Elvet)

September

- 12th Ellis Jackson (Bowburn)
- Skye Kelsey Hutchinson (Bowburn)
- 13th Jenna Cave (Elvet)
- 23rd Charlotte Davison (Bowburn)
- 25th Katy Woodfield (Elvet)
- 27th Christopher James Gray (Bowburn)

Happy Birthday

ELVET COMMUNION STEWARDS

At the end of each Communion service a retiring collection is always made for various charity organisations. These collections are made over a monthly period. It is planned that the following charities will benefit from our retiring collections over the following months.

July/August - St Cuthbert's Hospice - The Hospice opened in 1988 and provides day care and treatments for people with life-limiting illnesses, as well as giving support to their families. A ten bed In-Patient Unit opened in 2006 to provide specialist palliative care to people living in Durham, Chester le Street and Derwentside.

September - Church Benevolence Fund - An emergency hardship fund for immediate distribution to needy cases within the Church and its community. Distributed at the discretion of the Minister.

October - Mercy Ships - hospital ships that reach out to the world's poorest people. With operating theatres and a 40 bed ward, the vessels became an 11,701 tonne floating hospital, carrying a volunteer crew of 350 from all over the world. This organisation exists as a compassionate response to a world need. On ships and land bases dedicated volunteers bring their wide-ranging skills to promote health and well-being by serving the urgent surgical needs of the forgotten poor and empowering developing communities.

November - British Legion - The Royal British Legion provides financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Currently, nearly 10.5 million people are eligible for their support and they receive thousands of calls for help every year.

December - MIND - is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales who work to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress by: a) advancing the views, needs and ambitions of people with mental health problems; b) challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion; c) influencing policy through campaigning and education; d) inspiring the development of quality services which reflect expressed need and diversity; e) achieving equal rights through campaigning and education.

THE WEEK IN BOWBURN AND SHINCLIFFE

Sundays	10.45 am	Morning Worship (Bowburn)
	5.30 pm	Evening Worship (Bowburn) on some Sundays - see notices
Tuesdays	5.30 pm	* Kid's Club (Bowburn)
	5.30 pm	"Messy Church" (1st in month)
Wednesdays	2.00 pm	Women's Fellowship (Bowburn) (1st and 2nd in month only)
	2 - 3 pm	Prayer & Fellowship Meeting (Bowburn), last Weds of month.
Thursdays	9.00 am	* "Drop-in" (Bowburn) * <i>term-time only</i>

THE WEEK AT ELVET

Sun	8.30 a.m.	Second Sunday, Holy Communion
	10.45 a.m.	Morning Service & Junior Church, including Crèche
	6.00 p.m.	Evening Worship
	7.30 p.m.	MethSoc (term-time)
Mon	2.00 p.m.	Prayer Meeting (2nd & 4th Mon)
	6.00 p.m.	Cubs (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 8-10½]
	7.30 p.m.	Guides (Open Group) [Girls 10-16] meets at St Giles'
	7.30 p.m.	Explorers (Open Group) [Mixed 14½ - 18]
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Newton Hall (alternate wks)
Tue	10.15 a.m.	Halliday Grove House Group (alternate wks)
	5.30 p.m.	Beavers (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 6-8]
	7.10 p.m.	Scouts (Open Group) [Boys and Girls 10½ - 14½]
Wed	2.00 p.m.	Women's Fellowship (1st & 3rd wks)
Thurs	10.00 a.m.	Arts & Crafts Workshop
	7.45 p.m.	Thursday Club for All (alternate wks)
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Shincliffe (alternate wks)

ELVET and BOWBURN METHODIST CHURCHES

Minister:

Rev Neil Dixon BA MPhil,
Tel: 384 8755

University Chaplain:

Rev. Julie Lunn, BEd, MA
Tel: 377 8089



DON'T FORGET

Copy for the **October-November** Newsletter
should reach Jackie Fielding by

August 31st

via the pocket in the rear entrance hall at **Elvet**,
by phone on Durham 384 7305
or by e-mail at fielding@durhamcity.org.uk

Alternatively, those at **Shincliffe** can contact
Jim Harper on Durham 386 4360.
Those at **Bowburn** can contact
Liz Atkinson on Durham 377 0687.