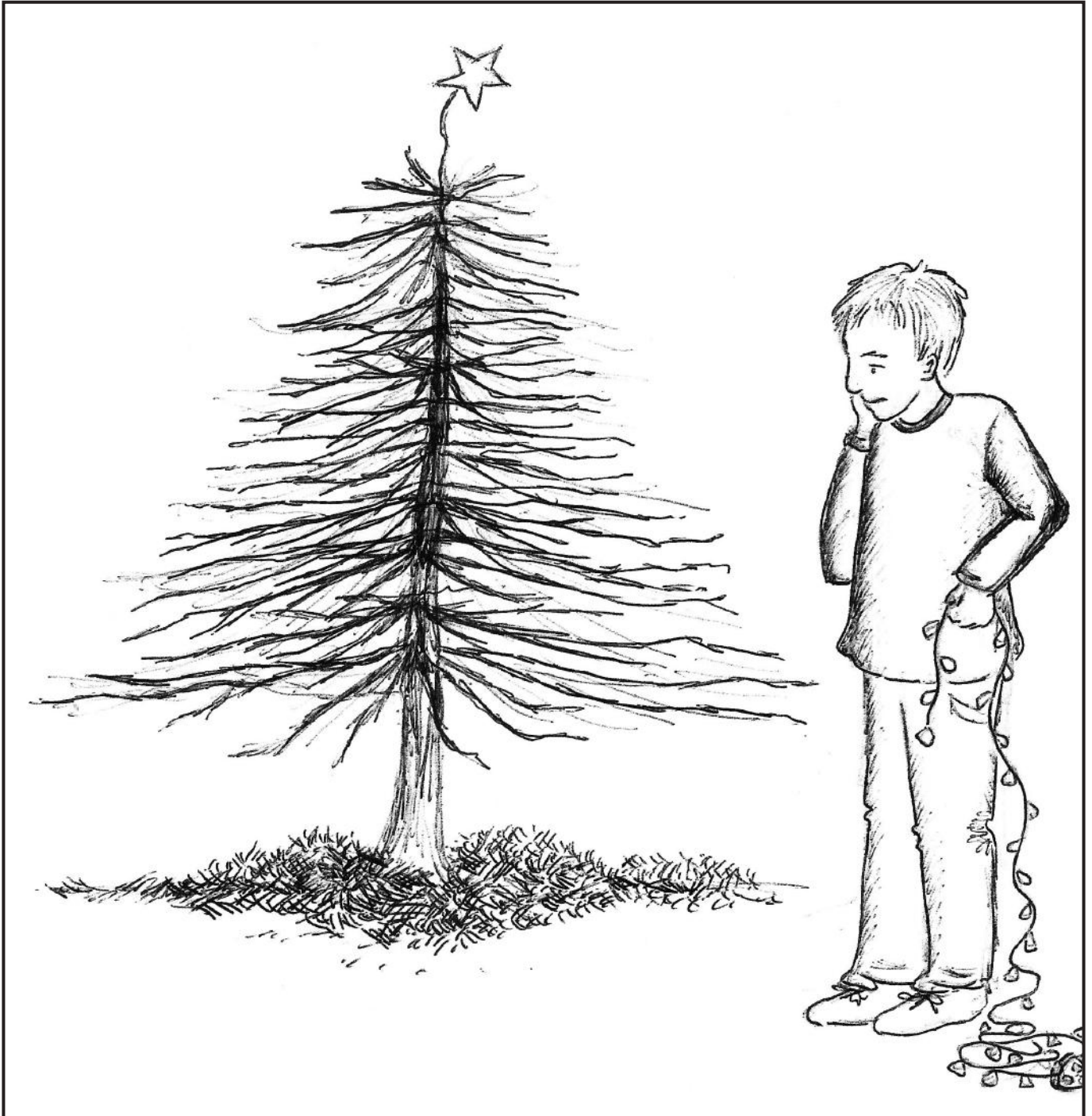


Wesley Memorial *news*

The magazine from Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford | Christmas 2017



Paradise lost?

The Manse, 26 Upland Park Road, Oxford

Dear Friends,

When John Milton left London in June 1665, seeking refuge from the plague, he settled in a small Buckinghamshire village, where his Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood found him a house to rent. There Milton completed *Paradise Lost* and wrote *Paradise Regained*. About half a century later my many times great grandfather arrived in the same village and, much later, I was born and brought up there. I walked past Milton's Cottage (actually quite a substantial house) every day on my way to school. And when the Primitive Methodists opened their new chapel in 1866, they called it the 'Milton Chapel', proudly claiming a link with Milton the Nonconformist and staunch Parliamentarian. So I feel a strong connection to Milton, although I'm ashamed to say that I have only read a couple of books of *Paradise Lost*, and one of those was an A-level set text!

Milton is a fascinating figure in England's religious and political history, as well as its literary landscape. But the theme of 'paradise lost', chosen for this issue of *Wesley Memorial News*, may suggest reflections for those who have never read his works, as well as for aficionados of his astonishing poetry.

First, Milton sets out with an apologetic purpose — 'to justify the ways of God to men'. Whether he succeeds is open to debate, but his aim is surely one every Christian should endorse — to make a thoughtful presentation of faith, in a form which is accessible and persuasive to as many people as possible. In his first letter, Peter tells his readers 'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you' (1 Peter 3.15). More prosaically, one of the 'priorities of the Methodist Church' is to 'speak of God and of faith in ways that make sense'.

Secondly, Milton paints on a broad canvas. *Paradise Lost* is a cosmic drama, involving the struggle between God and Satan. Human characters and choices are set against the backdrop of the clash of what the New Testament calls 'principalities and powers'. Now, we might not want to personify evil in the way that Milton does, but we are wise to recognise that there is a cumulative force in our wrong choices and a strength in structures of injustice and oppression which require a Divine power to bring redemption and transformation.

Thirdly, what do we make of the notion of 'paradise lost'? The traditional biblical picture of creation and fall was challenged in the nineteenth century, when thinkers in the wake of Darwin wrote of a 'fall upwards', as human beings progressed to moral consciousness rather than slipping from Edenic perfection. We may read the Genesis stories today not as factual narratives of the early history of the human race, but rather as insights into the challenge facing individuals and societies, as well as our whole species, whether to follow God's way or to turn in upon ourselves and cut ourselves off from God and one another.

Finally, what of the Christmas story? Debate still rages around Milton's understanding of Jesus — whether his presentation of the Person of Christ (termed his Christology) was broadly orthodox or not. In our Christmas readings and hymns we affirm that God took flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, stooping to earth in the miracle of the incarnation to make new life possible for us all. The Wesley brothers knew and loved Milton's poetry (John Wesley even abridged *Paradise Lost* to make it more accessible to Methodist readers). We may conclude with a verse of Charles Wesley, describing the self-emptying of Jesus Christ for the world's sake:

<i>'Him the angels all adored,</i>	<i>Emptied of his majesty,</i>
<i>Their Maker and their King;</i>	<i>Of his dazzling glories shorn,</i>
<i>Tidings of their humbled Lord</i>	<i>Being's source begins to be,</i>
<i>They now to mortals bring.</i>	<i>And God himself is born!'</i>

May the good news of paradise regained through the love and grace of God bring us peace and joy this Christmas.

Yours in Christ, *Martin Wellings*.

Editorial

This year marks the 350th anniversary of John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*, giving this issue of *Wesley Memorial News* its theme. Don't worry if you've never attempted to read Milton, you'll find in these pages all the introduction you could need on the text, the man and the political, social and religious upheavals of the period.

Other contributions make clear what the idea of a paradise lost means for some of us today. There's a discussion too of the habit of harking back to an imperfectly remembered golden age, the temptation of seeking a return to a former period that becomes a mythologised garden before a subsequent fall.

But thinking about a paradise lost can also prompt hopes for the future and a paradise regained. This can be very appropriate at this time of year. There are the preparations and prayer of Advent, the promise of a baby born at Christmas and the bringing in of a new order, and resolve for a new start with the New Year.

An account of a stay at the Iona community talks about experiencing there a thinness between the real world and the spiritual. Christmas, too, is also about the spirit made real. And as the *Wesley Memorial News* team wishes you all the best for the season, perhaps we can also remember another slightly less literary anniversary: It's 30 years since Belinda Carlisle released her single 'Heaven is a place on earth'! Happy Christmas.

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Brexit — paradise lost?

Living in Britain as a foreign national has always been a bit of a challenge. But it still was a good place to live, as the country and the majority of the people were forward looking, innovative, hip, tolerant, easygoing. But then things began to change. The atmosphere became more inward looking. Questions like 'Where are you from?', 'Are you from France?', 'Are you from Germany?', 'Are you Polish?' became more frequent.

During the referendum campaign, some people felt they had to tell me that 'there were too many foreigners in this country', but assured me that had nothing to do with me as I 'spoke English/had been here for a long time/was married to a Brit'.

And then came the vote for Brexit. Now some people felt justified to call some foreigners 'vermin' and tell them that they would be on their way 'home' soon. Over night three million people had been turned into a group of the population the Methodist Church calls 'vulnerable', and who will have to prove their eligibility should they want or need to stay in Britain.

So what is my 'paradise lost'? It's not the EU, although it brought wealth and opportunities to many and 70 years of peace in Europe. After all, it's only an institution. It's not Britain. I suppose no place is paradise once you've lived there for a long time and know it, warts and all.

My 'paradise lost' is the convictions I held for a long time. That people can live together. That the things that bind us together as humans are stronger than differences in culture and language. That a multicultural society is a richer society. That in a democracy the rights of minorities are protected, not voted away by the majority. That in Europe, after the catastrophes of the past, hostility to parts of the population would not become state policy again. It seems they were Utopian illusions. Illusions lost — paradise lost.

Beatrice Tauber



Milton and *Paradise Lost*

In *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674) John Milton re-told the Genesis story of humanity's 'fall'. The poem is long, and the language is difficult – a Miltonic sentence is an infamously multi-clausal labyrinth. But sampled in parts, or in a modern English translation, or in John Carey's abridged edition for busy people, *The Essential Paradise Lost* (2017), Milton's work offers rich rewards.

The poem is often recognised as an 'epic' in the classical tradition, and with its dizzying cosmic architecture, scenes of battle and voyages across the empyrean, it can certainly feel more like *The Iliad* than Genesis. Milton begins with Satan, cast out from heaven and plotting to wreak vengeance on God. When he discovers the new world, Earth, and glimpses Adam and Eve's delight, Satan resolves on destruction. A flashback fills in the story of his initial rebellion and the war it incited in Heaven, before we move to Paradise, where Adam and Eve have started to argue about the gardening and Eve has wandered off alone. Satan's temptation follows, and the Fall and its aftermath: Sin and Death build a terrifying bridge to secure their hold over Earth, while Milton's Christ figure, 'the Son', a separate being reflecting Milton's anti-trinitarianism, pleads with God to be merciful.

If the poem in its final form is 'Protestant epic', Milton's initial intention was to write a tragedy. Through soliloquy he lends Adam, Eve and Satan a complex interiority, while the structuring of the narrative hints at a tragic concurrence of events. Satan becomes a significant focus, with Milton drawing on Shakespearean villains, the Jacobean malcontent and even the alluring avenger, Hamlet, to represent unhappiness as such a compelling force. Adam and Eve's marital drama – Milton had campaigned for rights of divorce – is no less captivating. Though the incrimination of Eve is undeniably coloured by problematic assumptions about female role (if only she hadn't wanted some time to herself and a tidier garden!), Milton's work is marked by a moving sensitivity to what fractures reciprocal contentment and an astute depiction of post-lapsarian 'work' as a re-establishment of relationship without illusions.

By the 1660s Milton had lived through civil war, regicide, the ideal of democratic government, its reality, and the eventual restoration of Charles II to the throne. His portrait of an ambitious leader struggling with a sovereign God, as well as his

depiction of marital hierarchy

and independence, is strongly shaped by seventeenth-century debate on the nature of power, tyranny and freedom. This political context was a profoundly personal one: as a republican, Milton's prose was acclaimed, then censored and burned when royalist support resurfaced. He was briefly imprisoned in 1659 and throughout these years he had also been going blind. Much indeed had been lost for Milton when he came to his self-imposed task of 'justifying' the ways of God to man.

Many have felt that, far from 'justified', Milton's God is intolerably detached, while Satan ploughs his fatal course unhindered. The logic of freewill struggles to outweigh the poem's horrifying portrait of death, disease and discord, while God's ultimate rebuke can seem abhorrently merciless, whatever mitigating pleas are marshalled by 'the Son'. Milton's heterodox doctrines certainly complicate the poem as 'theodicy', and I never realised how essential the Trinity was to my understanding of God's place in our suffering until I tried to teach Books 9 and 10.

But we need not regard Milton as a convincing apologist to feel strongly that *Paradise Lost* is unsurpassed as an elaboration of the Genesis story. Here is a poem that seeks to come to terms with transience, that dramatises the ambiguous, maze-like forces able to fissure the individual's trust in God, that expresses the agonised confusion of unclear thresholds and unforeseen loss, that voices not just shame and regret but the lament of the disillusioned and the dispossessed before a God they might have offended but can only struggle to understand. Milton shares one vision of what it looks and feels like to be 'fallen', and in due course his human couple 'prostrate fall' and 'pardon beg', watering the ground of Satan's dissimulations with the finally authentic tears of 'sorrow unfeigned' and 'humiliation meek'. I wonder what 'fallenness' means for us, and how, today, we might respond.

Fiona Macdonald



Paradise lost: the oldest archetype

Maybe a harking back to a paradise lost is one of the oldest human stereotypes. The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, the oldest known work of literature, talks of a great flood and what it swept away. The Roman poet Ovid, drawing on earlier Greek poets, talks of a Golden Age of lost innocence and wealth where sheep grew ready-coloured wool. George Orwell's Winston Smith clung on to an image of the Golden Country even in the depths of oppression. So the Christian theology of a lost paradise of fruitfulness and ease from which humans were expelled reflects something very deep in the human psyche.

Why is this so deeply wired into us? Part of it is uncertainty about the future, compared to the certainty of a past where we know what happened and are able to control both our memories of it and what we make of the consequences. We may not have enjoyed school at the time, but the nostalgia for the known and familiar where we know what happened next and can treat it selectively in our memory casts a glow over it, which softens the edges of what happened in reality. Memory is remarkably good at remaking things in a more comfortable image.

As human beings we are good at blocking out the painful, at least in memory. It would be hard to face suffering otherwise. We forget the screaming, the dirty nappies and tantrums of childhood and remember the good moments, the smiles and the first steps and words. If we think back on a memorable journey, we forget the waiting, the discomfort and the sense of being on edge and remember only the spectacular view, the amazing sunset or the stunning cathedral. So the past generally appears in rosier colours than we experienced it at the time.

Our psychology therefore predisposes us towards a memory of the past as sunlit and secure in a way which may not necessarily have been true. A belief in an ideal society now lost gives us some reassurance that we might be able to regain it and that there is something to hope for; even if we know intellectually that a pre-lapsarian society is a myth, there is emotional comfort in the thought. And Christians can hold onto the belief that with sufficient faith and good works they can regain this lost paradise, at least as individuals.

Carol Sweetenham

Seventeen tales

Inspired by this photograph of some of her 17 cousins when young, Eva reflects on some of their struggles.

You look out at me with shiny eyes under curly hair, smiling from the centre of an early 1970s family picture. The technicolour background tells me so much about the way lives were lived: about housewives carefully choosing acrylic curtains with their husbands' say-so; about babies crawling in non-disposable nappies, about toddlers wearing their Sunday best, about a big cake purchased to celebrate your first birthday with a lively tribe of cousins.

And yet, seeing that happy scene, my heart breaks for what we have lost. In that split second, our parents' camera captured our innocence lost, a window into another era, before I was



even born, where things seemed simpler somehow — even if they were not. It makes my heart grieve — for the people close to us we have lost, for the ones that were never born, for the struggles that lay ahead, unbeknown to us for the days when

I didn't know yet you were breaking into small pieces, for the dreams that wouldn't become realities.

We are part of a race of survivors, we wipe away our tears, roll up our sleeves and get on with our lives. We are agents of our realities; we set up the traps that become our downfall, choose to listen or to transform the shadow within us. We are the ones who carve our destiny.

But perhaps that was the one gene that we didn't share. And I so wish I could reach out and tell the boy that you once were that you can change your life too, before it is too late.

Eva Oliver

Paradise in Devon?

Not many of you will know this, but I was born in 1945 at a house called 'Paradise' in Cullompton, Devon. I think it was my grandparents who coined this name, but I can't be sure. On rare occasions when I drive past it these days on a B road, then the A38 main trunk road to the south-west, I see that it has a new name – 'Holywell' the last time I looked, if I recall correctly.

So was it a true paradise? Yes and no. My parents were loving and I had a much older sister. I lived in the county which the song *Glorious Devon* describes as the Eden planted after 'Adam and Eve were dispossessed' – and where the unpolluted air was more heavenly than that which Oxford affords. Cullompton itself had a 'low' and subsequently 'evangelical' parish church to which I belonged, so I became aware of another 'paradise' through hymns and sermons.

In my adolescence, with few friends at school in Tiverton near, and parents who were not at all well off (we had three holidays away in my 18 pre-university years), our cold damp home built largely of cob (i.e. mud) became less paradisaal. With no silver spoon in my mouth, 'paradise lost' became a necessity. I was

glad to escape to Bristol to read physics and live for at least some weeks of the year in a warm hall of residence with new companions. My future path was by no means certain and it took me 10 years via Harlow and back again to Bristol where I worked in publishing, met Susan, married and started a family.

Had I then paradise? Again, with no disrespect to my lovely family, not quite. Was it our next place of residence, Cheltenham, or is it Oxford? Same answer. As Hebrews puts it, 'Here we have no abiding city'. There were of course times when Paradise, Cullompton seemed to live up to its name. I am one who remembers some things about home life (travels round farms with my father solving crosswords as he ate his sandwiches, my mother making cheese straws on Sunday with the left-over pastry) with great affection.

There were exciting national events to

cheer a post-war Britain (the conquest of Everest and winning the Ashes in 1953, for instance). But when I left school I had to move on. I guess it was like that for Adam and Eve. Looking at the origins of humanity from another angle, we all have to grow up and move on, hoping maybe for that 'eternal city' that Hebrews speaks of, which is the true paradise.

Don Manley



'Paradise' built in the 1830s, showing my father Chave, Aunt Mary, their parents (who I never knew), and a housekeeper about 100 years ago. I was born in the room immediately above the one shown. The stool made of bamboo and wood and used for tea survives in our garage.

Paradise of childhood

Is childhood being lost by the over-use of screentime and the lack of freedom our children have today? When I was asked to write about this for the newsletter, I felt I wasn't really qualified to speak about it. I have no research to back up my ideas and my own children grew up at a time when smart phones were just arriving and it was still relatively easy to ration screentime. I do however work with children on a day-to-day basis and so this is a collection of my observations.

- Children today have many more opportunities now. Many of them have experienced exotic holidays and expensive trips.

They are busy with after school clubs and organised activities. But most can be just as excited about going for a walk up a hill with a picnic, if they have a chance to run down the hill at the end, as they can about an expensive day out.

- Children need 'down time' too. They need space to rehearse, practise and hone the skills, events and challenges that are developing in their lives. They need time to experiment with thoughts and ideas through play and this often happens when they have time just to 'be'. A little bit of boredom is good for children.
- Young children hardly remember anything about the specific places and events that occurred, but the skills they have

Did we find a bit of paradise?

In August, a group of us from Wesley Memorial spent a week as part of the Iona Community. We slept, worshipped, ate, laughed, cried and did our chores in the wonderful Abbey buildings. George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community, famously described the island as “a ‘thin place’ – only a ‘tissue paper’ separating the material from the spiritual”. It felt like that – especially when the sun shone, when the swallows swooped in and out of the cloisters, when we talked and shared on the pilgrimage around the island, when we meditated, when we sang Taizé chants in the ancient Saint Oran’s chapel. A very special place.



Karen and others walking down to St Columba’s Bay on the pilgrimage.

Based on this remote Scottish island is a Christian ecumenical community working for peace and social justice, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship. We were

privileged to be part of that for a week. The worship was uplifting and challenging. The liturgy and songs accessible and moving to deep places within us.



I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Psalm 121

We were reluctant to leave. But I’ve come back with renewed energy and commitment to bring paradise closer in the way I live my life.

Wendy Spray



Celebrating Anna’s birthday – delicious cake, Carolyn, and amazing chilli chocolates, Malcolm!

learned and the way that they felt are what helps to shape them as individuals.

- As the great Barbara Eddy says, “a little danger is good for children”. Jim once memorably drew a caricature of her sitting on a rock in Sark with children climbing and falling around her. Children tend to know their limits but will rarely have a chance to reach them if we over-protect them.
- Technology can be just as creative as any other activity. It’s not the use of screens that is bad for children but how they are used. Stories, art, music, films can be created by technology and it will be a big part of our children’s lives in the future. On the other hand, there is a rise in childhood

depression in the west, and technology (especially social media) can cause young people to be introspective. We need to encourage physical interactions and concrete experiences in all stages of our children’s development.

So what is the recipe for creating happy, healthy people of the future? Well, from an unresearched but personally observed point of view, I would say: One part boredom, one part danger, mixed in with a generous helping of concrete experiences and a dash of technology. Everything in moderation! Oh yes, and of course – love. Lots of it.

Jo Godfrey

Deafness: paradise lost?

This article is about deafness, and how God uses it positively. The ideas also apply to other disabilities and conditions. The Revd Vera Hunt, in *The Place of Deaf People in the Church*¹, points out that in Mark 7:31-37 'Ephphatha' means to 'open up' deaf people's needs.

Romans 10:13 says 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'. 'Everyone', whatever their colour, creed or ailment, they can all be saved. As John Wesley said, 'All need to be saved, All can be saved, All can know that they are saved, All can be saved to the uttermost'. Deaf and hearing, everyone and anyone, ALL can be saved. (See also Romans 3:22-24.)



Do I want healing?

No! God made us in all sorts of human forms. We were made to be a part of the body of Christ, and the body has many different parts.

Romans 12:4-8 'We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined

to each other as different parts of the body.' See also 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. It is important to have all sorts of people serving Christ in different ways.

There is no direct indication that I myself should be healed. If God wanted to heal me then He could do so, and might well have done so by now. God works for good in all those who love Him, those whom he has called (Romans 8:28-29). It is our job to do God's will too as we are called through the Holy Spirit.

The Deaf journey in Christ

Despite its many barriers in wider society and an increase in disability hate crime, I see my deafness as a positive thing.

I am profoundly deaf from birth — I don't know any difference. I gained a cochlear implant (CI) in 2008 having worn two hearing aids all my life and gaining no benefit. Some of you will remember that transition. Yes, I get some sounds through my cochlear implant but not in the way you hear it. Speech sounds like lazy Daleks speaking mumbo jumbo — so I use British Sign Language (BSL). A wasp nearly made my CI fall into the River Thames once too! My mother had to rescue it (not the wasp) before it fell in! The verse in Mark 8:22-25 states the blind man sees the "people walking around like trees" as part of the healing process. Unlike the blind man who saw clearly after Jesus laid his hands on his eyes the second time, I finally accepted at the end of 2013 that the CI is not going to be perfect and that I just had to get on with it. I continue to rely on BSL and other visual communication methods.

Just as we suffer, through communication difficulties, Jesus suffered on the cross so that, through his love for us, we might be saved and have eternal life. God is reaching out to other people so that they may know His love. I believe that God's calling to me is to be a link between deaf and hearing people. This is because:

- Deafness becomes a gift from God as we know His love and reach out to other deaf people. We understand social exclusion from society;
- We have also been given the ability to integrate with the hearing community, raise awareness and break down barriers. Wesley Memorial is extremely deaf and BSL friendly! The church has an extremely positive attitude and I am amazed now at the regular provision of BSL interpreters we have and the number of members learning BSL!
- We recognise the call from God to serve Him, to serve as a bridge to Christ for deaf people within the hearing world.

Across the denominations, there are BSL-using deaf ministers, vicars, lay/local preachers out there. Being deaf or any disability does not stop us from hearing God's call spiritually. Paradise lost? No, paradise gained! So let us all pray for each other as we seek to work out our calling and to serve in God's kingdom.

Anna Herriman

1. *The place of deaf people in the church: The Canterbury 1994 conference papers*, by International Ecumenical Working Group, 1 Jan 1996.

Our mission and heritage initiative: reclaiming a ‘paradise lost’?

I suspect that for some, mission and heritage make awkward bedfellows. How can digging into the past help us live faithfully in the present, let alone prepare for what is to come? Others might longingly feel if only we could go back to the good old days, the future of the church would be safe.

Personally I am just as worried about this second ‘rose tinted’ view of our Methodist heritage and in particular about its value in clarifying our mission today. That is not to say that remembering good times is not a valuable exercise. Indeed we would like to capture some of your memories as part of an oral history project. On the contrary, remembering, if it is done honestly, thankfully and with an open mind, can bring new insights into what has shaped our values and the Methodist movement.

Yet those insights might be salutary: what if a fondly remembered, well-established and respected church grew in part because it was ‘the place to be seen’, met a need for entertainment and childcare in a pre-television age or required dedicated hours of work by unpaid women, discouraged from entering the workplace, in order to make the whole edifice function? How much of that past would we like to recapture?

I suspect that what we really cherish is having been guided by practical, perceptive preachers, saintly and hardworking members and having enjoyed fellowship that was enriching and fun: characteristics in fact very evident in Wesley Memorial today.

Of course we would like the church to be more ‘successful’, in other words for there to be more of us. But most of us probably don’t want to return to the ways of the past. Our heritage can be unhelpful if it keeps us harking back and distracts us from seeing how God might be calling us along a different path today, when Church-going is counter-cultural rather than the norm.

Jesus spread his message of God’s love through stories and good deeds. How good are we at sharing our story with others; the

story of how God has been at work in our lives, in this place of worship and service and through the Methodist movement?



Alison welcomes a visitor during the Oxford Open Doors Day in September, when we welcomed over 500 people to the Church.

Who would be interested? Well, for a start, some of the hundreds of people who already cross our threshold on a weekly basis, others who are seeking meaning in their lives or who want to understand something of their family history. In a city with people coming and going all the time, there will always be those looking for a church to settle in and yet more who are just plain interested.

As a newcomer I have been deeply impressed by the commitment to social justice in this congregation and warmly applaud and support existing and new initiatives like the Oxford Winter Night

Shelter scheme. However in this day and age, when secular organisations and people of no faith undertake great humanitarian work, I think we should ask, is it enough to believe that “they will know we are Christians by our love”?

If, through fear of being misunderstood, we back away from opportunities to be open, honest and relaxed about sharing our faith (and doubts), I am afraid we run the risk of being perceived as a closed sect of wealthy proprietors and earnest do-gooders. If, on the other hand, we can learn sensitively to share with others the true story of God’s transforming love **as well as** working to meet the needs of our neighbours, then we might reclaim the energy and dynamism of the Methodist Movement in the past.

The good news is that those visiting ‘heritage sites’ are often open to being stimulated and inspired by places they visit. The missing ingredient is often human conversation. We can offer that too and, handled well, deep encounters can take place and important staging posts on someone’s faith journey may be reached, even if we never know about it. What a great privilege to be able to help someone move even one step closer to God!

Alison Butler

Greetings to our Wesley Memorial community!

Joy and I have been attending Wesley Memorial for over two months, and we are excited to become a part of this church family. We are originally from Oklahoma in the United States, but we moved to Oxford from Columbia, Missouri, with our 16-year-old cat, Janie. Joy recently obtained her PhD from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and is completing a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at the Reuters Institute for the Study of



Journalism here in Oxford. She worked as a magazine journalist in Oklahoma before pursuing her PhD. I, Hank, am a minister in the United Methodist Church in the US, and I most recently served as minister to youth and families at Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia. I will be using my time here in England to pursue a Doctorate of Ministry at Wesley House in Cambridge.

I have worked with teenagers for the past 10 years as a youth minister in three different churches in the US. I am passionate about my identity as a Christian and feel called to help connect people, both youth and adults, to the Church and the grace that God offers to everyone.

My recent passion is in helping the church connect with people with disabilities. At age 7, I was in a car accident and have used a wheelchair for most of my life. Although many people view disabilities as

tragic, I have never let it slow me down and have had many wonderful opportunities and adventures in my life.

Joy is passionate about journalism and learning how news production is changing, particularly at the local level. She will spend the next two years travelling in Europe to better understand how local journalists do their work and connect with their communities. In Oklahoma and Missouri, she enjoyed teaching youth Sunday school classes, assisting with summer youth missions, and playing flute with the church choir. She looks forward to becoming involved with these ministries at Wesley Memorial.

We look forward to getting to know everyone at Wesley Memorial and sharing our life story with you all. We are always open to lunch or dinner, laughs and fun adventures.

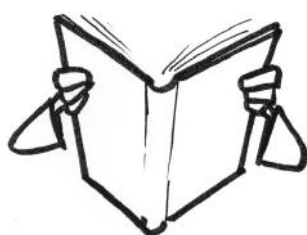
Hank Jenkins

Reviews

Do you enjoy reading crime, mystery, psychological thrillers? I love a page-turner and have just enjoyed a couple of months reading some recently published books which I would recommend:

- *The China Thrillers* by Peter May (should be read in order),
- *Dead Woman Walking* by Sharon Bolton and
- *The Girlfriend* by Michelle Frances.

Do you enjoy going to the theatre? It is one of my favourite things to do. In the last couple of years I have taken advantage



of the live cinema streamings from London theatres in order to see some amazing performances, for example Benedict Cumberbatch as Hamlet and many ballets (my passion) from the Royal Opera House, including a stunning production of the Royal Ballet's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* only last week. These special event screenings are usually shown at the Odeon, Magdalen Street, Vue and the Phoenix cinemas at a fraction of the cost of going up to London and paying London theatre prices!

Janet Forsaith

Enough for everyone this Christmas with Christian Aid

At Christmas, we come together to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Food is found at many celebrations in the Bible, so it feels entirely appropriate that it is at the heart of our festivities when we celebrate God's only son coming into the world.

Colette lives in Burkina Faso, West Africa, with her family. Colette's Christmas is not dissimilar to ours. It starts with cooking delicious food and then getting her children ready for church. She prays for her children, and asks that God will give them health and everything they need. When Colette gets home, she greets her neighbours and they share food. They gather together and show their joy by dancing and singing. Like us, they eat special food on Christmas Day. For Colette and her neighbours, this will be rice, goat and spaghetti!

But life has been hard for Colette. She had to work at a gold mine to earn money to feed her family. Colette spent days without finding any gold to sell. She made so little money that she was not able to buy nutritious food. Her daughter Eulalie was very ill and weak, and was diagnosed with malnutrition.

However, Colette found hope through a market garden project supported by Christian Aid. She and her husband were trained in how to grow crops and were provided with tools and seeds. She produces nutritious food to eat and sell, and can work with her children close by. Eulalie is now four years old and has recovered, and her little sister Ornela has, thankfully, never been malnourished. Colette sells some of her vegetables to pay for healthcare and clothes for her girls. She plans to extend her garden to pay for her children to go to school.

At Christmas we enjoy and look forward to our special Christmas food and often have too much. Isaiah 58:10 shows God's love for the hungry and oppressed. Jesus revealed this by feeding the hungry many times. When we respond to the hungry and needy, we reflect the light of Christ. We all probably know the

foods we buy that no one really likes, and those that we buy far too much of. Join Christian

Aid's 'Enough for Everyone' Christmas

Appeal by committing to not buying at least one thing that you know would be wasted. You can turn that pledge into a donation to Christian Aid's work providing life-saving aid and long-term solutions to hunger and malnutrition.

If you save just £13, that could be turned into a village nutrition demonstration in Burkina Faso, teaching more than 25 mothers about nutrition for their children. Together, we could raise £170 to train a nutrition committee to run regular porridge demonstrations and educational sessions in a village like Colette's.

Will you join thousands of others helping to ensure there is enough for everyone this Christmas?

You can make a donation by visiting christianaid.org.uk/christmas or calling 020 7523 2269.

You can share the appeal on social media and see what others are doing using #enoughforeveryone

Twice the impact! For every pound you give, the UK government will give a pound more.* That's double the support for people living in poverty.

* Donations made to the Christmas appeal between 6 November 2017 and 5 February 2018 will be matched up to £2.7 million. We will use your donations for projects such as those featured. The UK government's match will fund our work in South Sudan.

Reproduced with permission from the Christmas newsletter, November 2017. www.christianaid.org.uk/christmas-appeal



The market garden project.



Measuring for malnutrition.

Volunteering for VSO in Kenya

In April this year, Anna Clements went to Kenya for 11 weeks to live and work in a small town in Makueni County, volunteering for Voluntary Service Overseas.

She was taking part in the International Citizen Service programme, a government-run programme for 18-25 year olds, which takes UK volunteers to a developing country, and pairs them up with in-country volunteers who are lodged together in the homes of generous community members. Hosts are encouraged to involve their volunteers fully in family life, and volunteers are strongly expected to join in!

Here is Anna's account of her six-week stay with a primary school teacher, Mama Lucy, and her work in the programme.

'The highlight of my stay was living in the compound of a gospel church, right in the middle of town with Mama Lucy. She lived alone, her children having grown-up, and she treated my volunteer partner Irene and me as her daughters. I treasure memories of sitting with Mama Lucy and Irene for dinner, chatting and laughing, often comparing cultures and outlooks. We all agreed that men had the ability to be perfectly good cooks — a view not held widely in that conservative society! Irene, who is from Mombasa, was able to give a Kenyan viewpoint that was much less conservative than that usually found in Makueni County which she found as bizarre as I did in some respects. We discussed the differences in opportunity that men and women

Hand washing our clothes on a Sunday morning with Irene.



have in our different cultures, how poverty manifests in our countries, how politics works and corruption manifests itself in each context. The Kenyan election was then approaching!



At a wedding with Mama Lucy and Irene.

There was a lot to adapt to in terms of the host home experience — an outside pit latrine, showers from a bucket in the morning (the water was heated on the gas stove thankfully), lots and lots of bugs. I learned to hand wash my clothes, which we did on a Sunday morning after church, cook some dishes, and tuck in a mosquito net really well! Watching Mama Lucy, I realized there is so much less time to rest for her, what with water to be fetched inside from the tap outside, hand washing of clothes, rearing chicks to supplement her teacher's salary, hand washing dishes with cold water. Irene and I helped to lighten the load a bit, and she reciprocated by feeding us enthusiastically with excellent meals!

Mama Lucy's house.



During the day we were working in various placements, with different local volunteers, and with a general focus on empowering young people for entrepreneurship and employment. We had volunteers in the county government, a technical college for disabled youth, Kenya Red Cross and several local NGOs. I worked in Anglican Development Services (ADS), an NGO supporting small farmers with training and market connections. My supervisor Steve really knew his stuff in terms of agronomy and I was able to work really constructively with him over the 10 working weeks.

Kenya suffers from high youth unemployment, with young people aspiring to work in office jobs in cities, and a lack of opportunities like that to go around. This problem leads to rural-urban migration, and so a lack of investment and development in rural areas, over-crowding of and over-stretching of resources in urban centres, and disillusion among young people which can culminate in substance abuse. Lots of older people in rural areas make a living through agriculture, selling to local markets and sometimes further afield, but young people are much less interested in it and young farmers are hard to find. The challenge is how to persuade young people to be farmers, and support them in it so that they are successful – connecting them with markets, with the latest best practices and technology, and with improved seeds and animals. Added to all this is the question of food security in the future. Who is



Session on goal setting for boda boda drivers.

going to grow the food while the population increases and urbanises? Our programme in Makueni County was all about looking at this youth unemployment challenge from all angles, figuring out how to reduce youth unemployment, and laying the groundwork for the subsequent VSO volunteer cycles that will visit Makueni County over the next 2.5 years.

The support of the Wesley Memorial congregation was invaluable to me in enabling me to take this opportunity. Thank you for your prayers and support through those 11 weeks, and always. I am grateful to be back in my Wesley Memorial community. I am also grateful for showers.'

Anna Clements

Book reviews: Donna Leon

Fans of Donna Leon's Venetian crime thrillers may wonder why I'm reviewing her 16th book, published in 2010, rather than the latest, number 26, *Earthly Remains*. But then, it is a series not a serial, so ignore Amazon's chronological order, buy them in Oxfam, and enjoy in any order the investigations of the intrepid and ever-thoughtful Commissario Brunetti and his trusty sidekick, Ispettore Vianello.

Suffer the Little Children is painfully about a very tangible 'paradise lost'. A

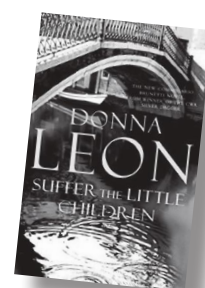
senior paediatrician has been the victim of a brutal attack, by three men bursting into his apartment in the middle of the night, attacking him and taking away his beloved 18-month old son. The thugs turn out to be carabinieri (the Italian equivalent of French gendarmes) and the child they removed has, allegedly, been illegally adopted.

Who could be so base as to report this? And why? Meanwhile, what are some local pharmacists doing accessing the on-line medical records of their nearest

neighbours? Very scary. Could there be connection between these two investigations?

Brunetti and Vianello search for answers with the help of secretary Signorina Elettra's hacking skills, and reach unexpected conclusions. Never underestimate Leon's capacity for giving us Italy, beauty, cuisine, warts and all, and for plumbing the very depths of human wickedness!

Kate Dobson



Rainbow House — a little corner of paradise not yet lost!

Drop into the Hall any Wednesday, Thursday or Friday between 10.30am and 2.00pm and you will find small children playing happily, parents and carers relaxing over coffee or lunch, and not infrequently a little person protesting because Mum says it is time to go home.

The Rainbow House welcome, tried and tested over 32 years, needs no major change. It's open house to all who are in town with a pre-school child, come in, play, chat, eat and go when you're ready. Listen to a story on Thursday, join a sing-song on Friday, try the new dishes, herbal teas, ground coffee: these minor additions keep us alert. But the joy of old customers returning, some with grandchildren, is that it hasn't changed.

Until this summer, Rainbow House was technically a separate organisation, although all the committee are church members. The outreach was always associated with the name of Wesley Memorial. We regularly meet old customers who remember with pleasure bringing their children.

Since July 2017 we are a fully integrated project of the church, and this has enabled us to access some funding from the wider Methodist Church. We have also been fortunate to receive two generous grants this year, one from the Doris Field trust, and

the other from the Oxford Community Foundation's 'Small and Vital' fund.

The other good news in 2017 is that Bryony Thomas, an old friend, customer and member of our Lime Walk church, became the eleventh co-ordinator of Rainbow House, to our great delight. It's a challenging post. Organising the volunteers, ensuring the catering supplies, the hygiene in the kitchen, the sales and the takings, the safety of everyone and security generally, when you add it up, sounds like multi-tasking gone mad!

Our reputation is world-wide! A few months ago, a young couple came with a little girl about 12 months old. They were very pleased to access Rainbow House and had heard about us in Bolivia! And the customer numbers are definitely on the increase now that we are safely installed in the new hall, which is much admired by everyone.

So please support us with your prayers, your cake-baking, your donations, and, if possible, your volunteer help in the kitchen and hall. We aim to make this outreach a powerful demonstration of God's love at work in the world.

Kate Dobson

Gospel meets Boogie

It was great to be present at such a joyful occasion in October when the Oxford Gospel Events Choir and Boogie Me joined forces to entertain a packed church at Wesley Memorial!

The energy from the singers and musicians was tangible and it was impossible for the audience not to join in with the enthusiasm transmitted by them. There was such talent on show with people multi-tasking by conducting, singing solo and as part of the choir. The two groups complemented each other perfectly. There was very little time to breathe for the performers as they sang some well-known and lesser known songs in a packed programme. During the song *This train*, we

were entertained by members of the audience moving around the Church and at other points some were spontaneously dancing in the aisles! People from outside were drawn to the beautiful sounds and were still coming into Church at the end just to hear the encores. We wish the Gospel Choir, who rehearse at Wesley Memorial on Tuesday evenings, every success as they take part in the final of the BBC Songs of Praise Gospel Choir of the Year competition in November. Over £900 was raised for our *Open Doors* project — thanks to all who were involved in making this possible.

Janet Forsaith

Oxford Winter Night Shelter



As a result of our *Open Doors* project and in response to the chronic problem of homelessness in Oxford, we decided to share our amazing new premises with some people who really need it.

Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS) will open every night for three months from January to March 2018. It is being run in seven venues (all churches) in Oxford from 10.00pm until 7.30am with 10 beds per night. Wesley Memorial will be hosting Sunday nights. Our first date is January 7th 2018. Other churches who cannot offer venues will help as partners in the scheme.

Our guests will sleep in the hall, with access to toilets and a separate space to register them. They will enter through the back door only, and the hall doors will be locked.

There is a paid Project Manager appointed to oversee the whole project. We need to find four volunteers for every night we are open, i.e. 12 days/48 shifts for Wesley Memorial. One of the four volunteers will be Shift Manager for the night. Helpers will

be able to come at the start to help with drinks and snacks without needing to stay all night. Training will be given to all volunteers and we will be supported by the Project Manager and the team.

The referral of guests works like this:

The Outreach team (St Mungo's) will meet people and make a list, send it online to the Project Manager by 3.00pm along with any sensitive data about health and risk; she will pass any crucial info to the Shift Manager. Guests will be signed in around 10.00pm and anyone who doesn't turn up by 11.00pm (or send a message to the dedicated mobile) will lose the bed for that night. No one can just wander in.

Donations may be passed to Kate Dobson. Application for Charitable status for Oxford Winter Night Shelter is almost complete, after which donations may be gift-aided.

Jo Godfrey and Kate Dobson

Notes from Church Councils

Matters discussed:

Monday 10 July 2017

- Progress on the Community Flat project.
- Our monthly Evening Service.
- Security.
- Church Treasurer — John Cammack has stepped in until a new treasurer is appointed.
- Rainbow House — approved to formally become a Church project.
- Ecumenical Youth Work and clubs.
- New boilers installed.
- Vision 2020 Partnership Group updates.
- Oxford Winter Night Shelter (OWNS).

Wednesday 18 October 2017

- Circuit staffing: Following the withdrawal from training of probationer minister Revd Alison Mares, Revd Judy Turner-Smith has agreed to cover Kidlington for this Connexional year. Revd Dr Martin Wellings is taking responsibility for the three other northern Churches.
- It was agreed to re-appoint Maria Moore as a steward.
- Rainbow House is going very well.
- £50,000 borrowed from the Circuit for Phase Three of *Open Doors* has now been written off as a grant, with £20,000 left as a loan to repay.

- The Community Flat now has 3 tenants.
- The Annual Property Schedule (state of the building).
- Progress with OWNS.

Dates of next meetings:

Wednesday 24 January 2018: No-agenda Meeting;

Wednesday 28 February 2018.

Janet Forsaith, Church Council Secretary

Open Doors update

We are now enjoying two concurrent themes with *Open Doors*: fundraising for Phase Four and entering new partnerships with organisations making use of our refurbished and extended premises. We are pleased to welcome (back) Oxford Aspire using the John Wesley Room kitchen for cooking training with those seeking to get back into work and the Archway Foundation providing support for young adults who are lonely.

Phase Four includes the Heritage Atrium; additional toilets for women on the ground floor; refurbishing existing toilets, including rearranging the layout in the first floor WCs to include a new cubicle designed to ambulant standards; a new 12 sq m store at the rear of the premises; together with a new rear entrance lobby to the hall and revamped landscaping to the forecourt to the John Wesley Room, including refurbished railings. Although the cost of Phase Four was originally estimated at £451,000, we expect this sum to increase by the time the work is actually carried out.

We have received a second grant offer from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (to be claimed by December 2017) towards the cost of replacing the first floor windows in the spaces occupied by Cruse, the landing and first floor WCs with purpose-made double-glazed windows to match the existing ones. Church Council approved the cost of £34,010 at its meeting in July. The windows have been ordered but we are awaiting all the consents we need before installing. Aided by our additional income from the Bradbury Room, we were able to pay back £20,000 of our Circuit Loan (of £90,000) in August. The September Circuit Meeting agreed that £50,000 of the loan could be converted into a grant (subject to our completing Phase Four) and we expect to be able to make the remaining payment of £20,000 during this current year.

Our own events have raised £2,850 between July and October. Thanks to Peter Berry for the £780 from his nine walks since 2013 including 'Town and Gown' in September. The return visit by *Starfire Singers* from Los Altos Methodist Church in California was an exciting evening in which we enjoyed their production of *Borderless*, and tested our new kitchen by providing a hot supper for 80 and also raised £1,200. Equally successful was

the long-awaited concert by the *Oxford Gospel Events Choir* and *Boogie Me* which raised over £900. Refreshments from the Oxford Open Doors event raised £250 and we were grateful to Botley Baptist Church for their donation of £300 from our concert version of *Amazing Love*.

We are delighted that artist Vital Peeters is talking about the design and making of the Amazing Love window in the hall on Sunday 14 January followed by a bring and share lunch.

We expect to benefit by £1,130 from the *Grow Your Tenner Match Funding Scheme* through localgiving.com. The next similar opportunity will be the *Big Give Christmas Challenge 2017*. Thanks to our pledgers who promised £2,500 by 31 August, the Reed Foundation has offered a grant of £1,250 if we raise £3,750 in the week 28 November – 5 December. Log on to <https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/project/27598> to donate. If successful, we can raise £7,500 from this initiative.

Wesley Memorial hosted a conference in October organised by the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance. Over 120 delegates, involved in planning, building or managing projects in such buildings, attended and Martin, Alison and Derek all spoke during the formal sessions. One point we made about our experience of *Open Doors*, was the positive impact of our partnership with Christian Aid, enabling us to raise £26,247 for the projects in Burkina Faso and the general work of Christian Aid.

Future fundraising events include providing refreshments at the CD/record fayre on 25 November followed by a Tabletop Sale on Sunday 26 November. Anna Herriman is running a Quiz Night and Supper on Saturday 2 December – an ideal opportunity to bring your friends and raise funds for *Open Doors*.

At our October meeting we heard from John Cammack that, including all promises and pledges to date, our fundraising total has now reached £1,410,713 – thanks to all who have contributed in any way to this amazing total – let us now raise the balance to complete the project.

Derek Rawson

Free Solo — the musical

It was great to see two performances of Jack and Celine's musical, *Free Solo*. The first occasion was at the Camden Fringe in July in a tiny theatre above a pub in Highbury and the second in September at a slightly larger theatre in Covent Garden at the end of Jack's master's course. With a cast of three actors, a band of three musicians (keyboard, guitar and cajon or 'kick-drum') and a simple set which was used very creatively, this is an engaging musical with great storytelling through its songs. It showcases many different styles of music and the talent of the actors and band. This original idea is cleverly conceived and

delivered and takes the audience through a story of highs and lows on a rollercoaster of different emotions. Congratulations, Jack — we will watch your career with great interest and look forward to seeing where your journey in musical theatre leads! If *Amazing Love* and *Free Solo* are a measure, the future looks bright!

Janet Forsaith in collaboration with Marc Forsaith



Same love, different dreams

My annual letter to Katie on her birthday.

Seven years ago, you were born, early in the morning, the perfect product of forty weeks and a handful of extra days. You were small, purple and angry. You were like a little doll; you cried and smelt like only newborns do. You seemed so fragile and defenceless, yet you had the power to turn a couple into a family, and a house into a home.

We took you home up the hill in the number 52 bus, full of university students cooing at you. We were excited and a little afraid at the steep learning curve ahead. Soon we got used to your presence everywhere, a little stranger

sleeping in the Moses basket next to us, a snowflake-like baby on the pushchair out and about, ready for your first winter. You were three days old when you came to the supermarket with us and five days old when you got your first library card. You had your favourite toys and blanket.

We didn't know then what we know now. We felt destined for the same path that millions of other feet had trodden since the beginning of times. We thought you were a baby like all the others, even if to us, you are like no other.

And as the years passed, we unravelled the first clues of what became a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in 2013. We met therapists, we spent hours researching approaches, discussing ideas, being alert in a Sherlock Holmes kind of way and noting down triggers. We are your parents and acting therapists at home, paid for with love. We are your entourage, looking after those needs that right now you cannot

yet fulfil, protecting you and more than that, interpreting your needs for the world and explaining its mysteries to you — many times.

Every year, your birthday comes and goes, that dot in the horizon that was, and is, the happiest day of our lives, because we adore you. We add another candle to a bittersweet cake, we celebrate your victories and more than that, how the magic of your spirit doesn't need words to shine through.

Every year, we redraw our map, the one that charts where we are headed and how to navigate the challenges, our highs and lows. And somehow, along the way we are learning to say goodbye to our old dreams and ambitions for you — a spelling bee crown, university. It is not a desert landscape, it just looks different, as together we are planting tiny seeds that will grow into humble flowers. We want to see them grow and develop as time goes by. Sometimes life will not be easy, but our love will sustain us.

Happy birthday, with much love.

Eva Oliver



Obituary — David Alfred Clarkson

1932 – 2017

David Clarkson was born into a farming family near North Frodingham, in Yorkshire, on 28 January 1932. He went from Beverley Grammar School to Leeds University, where he read French, intending to become a teacher. Hearing a call to the ministry through an Ordinands' Testimony Service, he offered as a candidate, was accepted, and trained at Wesley House, Cambridge. David met Ruth in Cambridge, and they married in 1957. Appointments followed in Banbury, Birmingham, Shipley, Liverpool and Hall Green, before retirement to Oxford in 1997. David was a conscientious pastor and thoughtful preacher, and it is a mark of the high regard in which he was held that churches

in the Banbury Circuit, where he served as a probationer, were delighted when he was able to visit them in retirement! David enjoyed walking, and loved Shakespeare, regularly attending the Shakespeare Summer School at Stratford. Following a long illness, he died on 11 September 2017.

Martin Wellings



Year-end financial report

We are coming to the end of producing the financial statements for the year ending 31 August 2017. The highlights:

Total income for 2017: £511,663 (2016: £790,509), **and expenditure for 2017: £350,541** (2016: £304,890). This includes income for the *Open Doors* refurbishment project for the year up to the end of August 2017 of £163,635, and expenditure of £18,273. In addition *Open Doors* long-term 'capital' expenditure was £257,130. This was for Phase Three of the project (the refurbishment of the John Wesley Room and the kitchen area).

General funds: deficit of £9,649. The lettings income from rooms in the church has increased this year, but the income from our offerings towards general funds has decreased, and is lower than we expected in the budget. This deficit will be funded from previous years' surpluses.

Church 'reserves' or savings. Our church reserves for general funds, represents

about 29% of one year's expenditure. This is a normal proportion for a charity of the size and activities of Wesley Memorial.

Property 'reserves'. This fund has increased to just over £60,000. This is held for future (non-*Open Doors*) expenditure on our buildings, and to offset the loss of income when we start Phase Four of the *Open Doors* building work.

Open Doors. This year a £90,000 loan was given by the Oxford Methodist Circuit to help with the cash flow for our building project. By the end of the year we had repaid £20,000 of this loan. In September 2017, the Circuit agreed to make £50,000 of the loan into a grant. The remaining £20,000 will be repaid in the current financial year. We cashed in just over £70,000 of our endowment funds to help fund the project. There is still £200,000 remaining in these funds, and for the majority of these, we can only use the annual interest rather than the amount invested. We had an appeal

to the congregation for *Open Doors* Phase Four. This enabled us to secure a national Methodist Connexional grant of £180,000. The funds held and promised for Phase Four are now about £266,000, as some of these funds have already been spent on the John Wesley Room and the first floor windows. This part of the work will be completed shortly.

Mission and Heritage. We received the first tranche of a Connexional grant during the year, which will pay for our Mission and Heritage officer.

When finalised, the annual accounts will be independently examined by Peter Stevenson. A copy of the trustees report and financial statements will then be available on the church website at: www.wesleymem.org.uk/annualreports.htm

Finally a big thank you for your continued financial support of the work of Wesley Memorial, both for our general funds and through the *Open Doors* project. Your gifts are very much appreciated.

John Cammack, Acting Church Treasurer



Heard it on the grapevine...

Baptisms

Molly Storm Jerman, 14 September 2017

Edmund John Blainey, 15 October 2017

Deaths:

Norman Black, 7 July 2017

Jean Richings, September 2017

David Clarkson, 11 September 2017

Weddings:

Tom Pocock and Emma Butler, 1 September 2017

New Members:

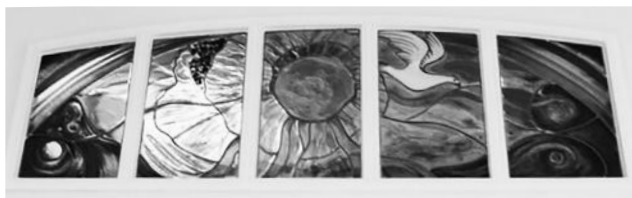
Alison and Chris Butler, by transfer

Sizwe Mkwana, by transfer

Chris and Sarah Darko, by reinstatement

Joe Hagan, by reinstatement

Vital Peeters will be coming to talk about the Amazing Love window at a bring and share lunch after the service on Sunday 14 January 2018. All are welcome to attend and hear about this beautiful work of art in our church.



Songs from the Wesley Mem shows!



February 2018 marks the bicentenary of the opening of the first chapel on our present site. As part of celebrations to commemorate this occasion, we will be putting on a musical extravaganza which looks back at six homegrown musicals in Wesley Memorial's recent decades – *Moses*, *Barleytime*, *Alternativity*, *Mark My Words*, *Francis* and *Amazing Love*. Performances will be on Friday 16 and Saturday 17 February. Come along and sing at rehearsals on Sunday afternoons in January and February or sign up to help backstage, with catering or in any other way.

Junior Church Holiday Club 2017

The children had a 'whale' of a time at our Jonah based Holiday Club this Summer.



There were crafts, daily challenges, games, songs, stories, music and cooking.

Many thanks go to the wonderful helpers and organisers. It was great to get people of all ages together to have fun!

We're now looking forward to next summer. Planning for Holiday Club 2018 has started! See Jenny Arnold or Mel McCulloch for more details, to sign up to help or to sign your children up to come along.

Kate Howes, one of Anna Herriman's church sign language interpreters, took this photo after the Harvest Festival service on 24 October. The church was beautifully decorated and here at the centre was the bread (baked by Anne Bull) to replicate Mel McCulloch's artwork for the loaves and fishes on the Stewardship campaign leaflet.



Dates for the diary

Thursday 14 December	5.30pm	Carols for the City
Sunday 17 December	6.30pm	Service of Readings and Carols
Monday 25 December	10.30am	Christmas Morning Service
Sunday 7 January	10.30am	Covenant Service
Sunday 14 January	12.30pm	Vital Peeters will be coming to talk about the Amazing Love window at a bring and share lunch after the service
Sunday 21 January	6.30pm	United Service at the Friends' Meeting House
Saturday 27 January		Church New Year Party
Sunday 4 February		JWS Pudding Party
Friday 16, Saturday 17 February		'Songs from the Wesley Mem shows' musical extravaganza to celebrate the Bicentenary
Sunday 25 February		Faith in Action Group pulpit swap
Thursday 29 March		Maundy Thursday service at Wesley Memorial
Friday 30 March		Good Friday service at New Road Baptist
Sunday 1 April	10.30am	Easter Sunday Communion

Wesley Memorial Church

New Inn Hall Street, Oxford OX1 2DH

Minister: *The Revd Dr Martin Wellings*

Children, families' & outreach worker: *Mel McCulloch*

Mission & heritage office: *Alison Butler*

Church manager: *Nikos Paplomatas*

Services: Sunday mornings 10.30am
monthly Sunday evenings 6.30pm
Wednesdays 12.30pm

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Contributions, letters, questions, pictures, book reviews and any other suitable material for publication are always welcome. Please pass them to the editorial team by hand or by email, stating if you are unwilling for them to appear on the church website. Articles may be edited. Articles express the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of Wesley Memorial or the Methodist Church as a whole.

Deadline for the next issue

9 Feb 2017

