

Rejoice!

May 2017



**The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit**

Dear friends,

Since last September Deacon Irene Tafirenyika has been working with us in the Circuit. The focus of her appointment is work with children and families at Hilgay and Downham Market who are not already committed in the life of the Church. Her work is not primarily traditional pastoral and ministerial work, but involvement with and reaching out to those on the edge of church life. It is for this very reason that we have received from the East Anglia District a 50% grant towards the costs of this project. We are fortunate that Irene is a Local Preacher and has been able to lead Sunday worship on a number of occasions. Again, however, the role of a deacon is not to lead our traditional Sunday services. It is not a requirement for a deacon to be a Local Preacher and the Diaconal Order specifically states that a Circuit cannot request to have a deacon who is a Local Preacher. Nevertheless a deacon will normally have a role in sharing in worship leading in a way that takes forward the aims of their appointment.

It is interesting also to note that members of the Diaconal Order follow a “Rule of Life” according to which they endeavour to:-

- attend worship regularly, especially Holy Communion.
- set aside time each day to read the Bible devotionally and to pray, including a time of intercession for members of the Order.
- regularly set aside time for self-examination, a chance to look back and see where we have failed in loving God and our neighbours and to give thanks for blessings received.

Six months into the appointment we felt that it would be good for Irene to share some news about what she has been doing. So this is what we have asked her to do in this month’s Rejoice after we have shared what are the main points in her appointment “profile” on the basis of which she was stationed in our Circuit.

Andrew Maguire

The appointment is to a new project of outreach and renewal in Downham Market and satellite villages.

The general aim of the appointment is to minister in the liminal space between church and community by building on identified areas of connection in Downham Market and Hilgay, to explore possible areas of connection in Feltwell and Southery, and identify contextually appropriate means of working in those places.

The specific objectives of the appointment are as follows:

- To identify new opportunities for outreach through presence in key institutions including other churches, schools, village halls, pubs,

children's groups, existing community groups and lettings;

- To develop and deepen pastoral relationships with those families who have already made contact with the churches at Downham Market and Hilgay through Messy Church and Shell Group and to extend family-friendly work in those communities through the establishment of holiday outreach programmes and appropriate work with parents/carers of young children;
- To 'grow' children up through the church as they become too old for Messy Church, identifying other ways of connection with church that is rooted in worship and learning, rather than just social activities;
- To connect with parents of children coming through the child-focused activities, and nurture discipleship through appropriate means and to develop expressions of worship that connect with those who are beginning a journey of faith and/or work on integrating newcomers into more traditional patterns of worship;
- To work in cooperation with the presbyter in pastoral charge in discerning vision, and ensuring that new work does not become a sub-culture but fully integrated into the life of the church in its broadest sense;
- To roll out the programme of outreach into Feltwell and Southery in the later years of the appointment;
- To work towards making projects self-sustaining as far as possible, wherever possible;
- To work ecumenically wherever possible;
- To root the work in prayer and reflection, both alone and with others;
- To support the overall vision of an inclusive, open church for all.

And from Deacon Irene.

We've been in Downham Market for just over six months now and we have settled in well. Nathan and Petra have also settled in well at school. I have been working with the churches at Downham Market and Hilgay and have prepared a report of some of the things I have been doing.

Downham Market

I've been attending the Coffee and Chat sessions at Downham on Tuesday mornings. It's a fairly small group but I am enjoying having a chat with the moms that come and sometimes playing with their children.

I've been working with the Messy Church team, attending the planning sessions and helping lead a craft on the day. Messy Church runs very well at Downham Market. It has a good number of volunteers and is very well organised. It sees large number of families coming and a good number attend regularly. Some families from Hilgay also join us. Messy Church is said to be the best contact the church has with young families as only a few of them come to worship on Sunday mornings.

I've spent some time in the Social Centre having conversations with people. I've helped give badges to the boys in Boys' Brigade. I've helped Steph at the Light Party last November, a celebration offered as an alternative to Halloween. It was well attended and Nathan was the DJ!

I sometimes have chats with parents when I bring Petra to the Street Dance group that runs on a Thursday, some of these parents come from Hilgay. The lady who runs the group travelled to help judge the World Championships a few weeks ago and some of her dancers went to Britain's Got Talent!

I've been meeting regularly with Maurice and we've had conversations about work in the church. We've shared in a Baptism Service where I preached and he baptised 6 year old twin girls. I've also helped with distribution of Holy Communion. I have led services alone at Downham Market, Hilgay, Southery and Feltwell. I have also covered for Maurice by leading worship on Wednesdays at Downham Market.

I have been to see the Brownies, they have a good sized membership and there is a waiting list of children waiting to join. I have been to the Tufty Club that meets at Downham on a Wednesday morning. They are a very active group with a good number of mums coming with their toddlers each week. They have an active Facebook page called the 'Tufty Club'. I helped give out Easter eggs before they closed for the Easter break.

I hosted a meeting for recently ordained ministers in the district at Downham in March. Sheila and Andrew were there as part of my management group. Maurice joined us for lunch. Julian, the Chair of the District, and Heather from Diss were there as part of District Support as well as three presbyters. I thought the meeting went well. I spoke about my transition from Bradford to Downham Market and some of the things I've been involved with since I came. Sheila and Andrew also gave input from their perspectives.

Hilgay

I spent the first two weeks with Deacon Janet Stafford having chats about the work that has been taking place and possibilities of how it would continue or develop. Janet introduced me to some key people in Hilgay. We went to the

Toddler group held at the Village Hall, met the local butcher – Ali Dent and visited some members of the church.

I have been going to the Drop -n sessions held at the Chapel on Tuesday mornings run by Lesley Dent and I have started building relationships with some of the mothers who come to this. The group has been running for a year and it's an opportunity to meet and get to know families from the school.

I've also been helping with the Shell Club that Lesley runs once a month and we have a programme for the rest of the year. I will continue going to these with Nathan and Petra and will help as needed. Shell Club has some exciting events coming up including a workshop from a Zimbabwean lady called Anna who sings, dances and plays traditional Zimbabwean music known as 'mbira'.

I led the Harvest Festival Service at Hilgay on the 2nd of October and shared in the Harvest bring and share lunch. There were some people from the village who came that morning who don't normally attend worship and this was a chance to meet and talk to them.

During the school half term in October we had a Messy Church session on the Tuesday morning. We started with bacon butties followed by a story of the Good Samaritan, some crafts and a celebration. It was well attended and ran very well.

I've been invited to give a talk at the Guild group that meets fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon and written an article for the Hilgay Village magazine introducing myself and saying something about what I do.

We had a Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday at Hilgay. Families and church members from the village came to enjoy pancakes cooked by Lesley.

We had a Celebration of Mothers event after school at Hilgay on the 22nd of March. There was a selection of cakes baked by Lesley and Janet. I received some really positive feedback from some of the mums who come to the drop-in session on Facebook saying that the event had been lovely and that they had appreciated the memorial tree to remember mothers who were not with us anymore.

By the time you read this we will have had an Easter Coffee morning with decorated egg competition at Hilgay and I will have led a Love Feast/Agape meal Service at Hilgay on Easter Sunday.

I look forward to continuing to work with people to take these projects forward and to share with children and families.

Deacon Irene

BIBLE MONTH

2017

30 days with James

— #BibleMonth —

The Methodist Church is encouraging churches and circuits to run a 'Bible Month'. This could be in June this year or any other month. Resources will be made available for those leading worship for 4 Sundays and there will be material for study groups for 4 sessions. The month will be based on the book of James.

You can read more about it on the Methodist Church web site. To quote from the material there: *'By focusing on a single biblical book, the aim of the Bible Month is to help all in church engage more deeply with Scripture. A pilot project showed that the Bible Month model could be effective in raising biblical literacy, and the majority of those who took part were keen to hold another Bible Month in the future!'*

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all found this a way to engage more closely with scripture and renew our enthusiasm for the Bible and understanding of it? So.....do visit the website and find out more about it!

(If you can. Or phone a friend!)

Praying together in the Circuit

Luke 24: 49-52

I am going to send you what my Father has promised,
but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on
high.

The Ascension of Jesus

When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His
hands and blessed them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.
Then they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

Acts 2: 1

When the Day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place
Suddenly ... the promised gift was given ... read on .. Acts 2
Power came from on high, sent by the ascended, glorified Jesus.

Acts 4: 33

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the
resurrection
of the Lord Jesus.

Christ is the head of His body, the church;

He is the source of the body's life. Col. 1:18

The Church is Ecclesia - a called out people. Called out to be
consecrated, dedicated, purified in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Called out - to be sent out -

into all the world with the good news of the gospel.

Witnesses for our living Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of our lives.

Lord, may we be ever mindful that we need your empowering for
discipleship today, to witness to who you are and what you have done
for us, for your Spirit to connect with people in convincing power.

With hearts on fire and streams of living water flowing from us
send us out in the power of Your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.

We dedicate ourselves anew to you. Come Holy Spirit come.

O consuming fire, O spirit of love, descend into the depths of our
hearts and there transform us until we are the fire of your fire, love

of your love, and Christ himself is formed within us. [Elizabeth of Schonau].

Prayers have been requested for:-

Derek + Viv, Stephanie, Janice, Amy, Trisha, Linda, Andrew, Mavis, Julia., Rachel, Judy, Dulcie + Neill, Kelly, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom, Ken + Norma, Brian Osborne, Sarah. For all young people undergoing treatment.

For others who are on our hearts and in our prayers
Let your healing love flow.

For strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
held in Your perfect peace.

Release your healing power, for by your stripes we are healed.

Thank you for the wholeness you bring to us through the self
giving, outpouring of your life blood for us.

Yours Lord is the greatness, the power and the glory forever.

Irene Garrard and family would like to thank everyone for their
support and prayers following the loss of John.

THY KINGDOM COME

A global wave of prayer

25th May (Ascension Day) – 4th June (Pentecost)

Individuals and churches of all denominations are encouraged to
join in this initiative from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to
pray that our families, friends and neighbours come to know Jesus
Christ.

Information and resources can be found at thykingdomcome.global

The Rev. Catherine Dixon

Around the churches



Downham Market

Ladies Friendship Group

The Annual lunch at the Castle on March 7th was very well attended and we all enjoyed a very nice meal with lots of talking and laughter. It was Ruby's birthday and she was given a bouquet of flowers.

We had a very interesting evening when Helen came to show us slides of a village in Ghana to which she has been helping to bring clean water and sanitation. It was a real eye opener to see just how poor some people are and how grateful they are for all the help they are given.

Next meetings

May 3rd Rev. Anne Richardson talk on Sign language

May 17th Peter Thorpe

May 31st Outing to Clacton

We meet in the Function room at 7.30pm. All are welcome

Margaret Fox

Well into the Spring season now with some very hot days followed by very cold nights (just like the desert climate) but then the temperature drops and a cold wind blows. I always say we Brits have to be content with weather, whereas other countries have climate (the same hot sun, day after day) while we have to be prepared for whatever is thrown at us making us more adaptable and hopefully more resourceful.

Writing this at the start of Holy Week, I have just taken part in Downham Singers' concert and still have the wonderful words and music of The Power of the Cross running through my head, which we sang in the tranquil surrounds of Littleport's Anglican Church. More music to come with the Maundy Thursday service, the Walk of Witness round Downham on Friday morning and our Church Choir service in the evening. Sunday morning's service will see us decorating a wooden cross with flowers which will then be displayed on the green in front of the Church. Unfortunately all the daffodils seem to have gone over (so much dead heading to be done now to ensure good blooms for next year) but I am sure we shall find plenty of other flowers

in the abundance Spring brings. Is it my age or do flowers not seem to last as long as they used to? Just time passing more quickly I suppose, each year being a small percentage of one's age.

At the risk of being repetitive, with new readers in mind, I'll briefly mention all our normal ongoing activities. Our social centre staff and volunteers continue to provide refreshments from Monday to Friday with freshly cooked lunches at 12 noon; Messy Church attracts more and more children on the 2nd Friday of each month from 4.30 to 6.30 (do come and join in the fun helping with meals or activities, volunteers are always welcome); our Saturday coffee mornings are also well attended with, apart from the fellowship, bargains on the bric a brac, book and plant stalls as well as home made cakes with refreshments; our choir meets at 7.15pm on Thursdays and would welcome new singers, especially altos; Brownies meet at 6.00pm on Mondays with Guides at 6.30pm; the coffee and chat group meet at 9.30am on Tuesdays with Boys' Brigade at 6.30pm and there is a short Service of Worship on Wednesdays at 11.15 am.

I moved out of my house at Shouldham in July 2015 and at long last have been able to empty the two garages loaned by kind friends, my son-in-law's garage and our caravan and campervan, of all the furniture and boxes. The timing isn't very good just before all the duties and services for Holy Week, but at least everything is in the cottage now. As I look round the tiny rooms at all the accumulation of stuff I must decide what to get rid of and what to keep. Lots of the things are happy memories of 56 years of marriage and family life, so really I would like to keep everything, but it cannot be. This set me thinking about our Church life. We try new ventures to spread the word and love of God; some things work and we carry on with them, some things don't and are discarded. Meanwhile, unless we are able to involve more people in our activities we will get stretched too thinly, doing too much and we then need to discard what is not important so that we may become more like Mary and less like Martha. To finish I'll share the words of an Easter card my brother has sent me, which I specially relate to.

God is everywhere we go, just take a look around. Each springtime bloom, each budding shoot is where the truth is found. For Easter brings a promise that is plain for all to see. It tells us that God's love will last for all eternity. May the blessings of Easter remain with us all through the coming year.

Joan Macey

Wimbotsham

At this time of the year it is thrilling to see the seed sown a while ago being transformed into beautiful flowers and we are reminded that the Word of God is like the scattered seed.

We at Wimbotsham are regularly encouraged by Don Gates to take an active part in our services (as well as heartily singing the hymns!) and have again on one Sunday this past month enjoyed a mix of inspiring contributions. Worship and prayers were led by Mary Rose, Joy Maidstone recalled words by Wendy Craig of God's love being the greatest love of all, Meg Cooper played an organ medley "The Hero's Welcome", and one of Emily Dickinson's finest poems "Hope is the thing with feathers" (hope being likened to a singing bird) was read by Margaret Mould. As it happened to be the first anniversary of my attendance at our Wimbotsham Chapel I took the opportunity to thank everyone for their warm welcome, also to speak briefly of my Christian "re-awakening" some years ago and my personal experience of God's love through the years.

Mothering Sunday service was beautifully led by Heather Brown who had invited us to take along any item which belonged to our mothers. These items included bibles, photographs, a "Treasury of Poems" and a birth certificate. Along with the theme of a "Mother's Love" we were encouraged to say a few words about our mothers, these proving to be amusing, inspiring and moving. Fathers, too, were specially mentioned as of course, without a father none of us would be here!

It is always a pleasure to welcome our visiting preachers. John Miles based his talk on God's covenant with Abram and the call to trust in God's promises. The raising of Lazarus and the knowledge that Jesus is with us in times of grief as well as joy was the message of Dudley Pickston's talk.

Although it is still several weeks in the future – time passes quickly – so please make a diary note that it is our turn to host the Fellowship Breakfast here at 8.30 am on 8th July – please join us!

Mary Davies

London Road

The weekend of 25th/26th March saw London Road celebrate 158 years – (over the weekend I managed to break my 150th Anniversary Beaker that Neil designed and ordered.).

On the Saturday there was a well supported coffee morning in the church, whilst in the Hall there was an exhibition of Model Railways – something for everyone.

On the Sunday morning the church was packed for a Church Anniversary /Mothers Day /Parade/ Baptismal Service.

All hymn books and extra hymn sheets were fully utilised.

As Catherine had to miss the Beavers' Faith Badge evening as she was visiting the vets with an ill dog, she used the Baptismal service to cover sections that she had intended to on the night.

After Catherine had paraded the young , newly baptised Winston around the church – she reminded everyone of their baptism by sprinkling the congregation (and choir) with water from the font.

During the aptly chosen "Think of a world without any flowers" –daffodils were presented to all the ladies in the congregation.

A visitor from Malaysia was witnessing Mothering Sunday for the first time in her life, so there will be many more photos winging through the ether to Kuala Lumpur to show everyone the flowers.

A very special Church Anniversary Service!!!!

David Gifford

Stanhoe

Life at Stanhoe goes on more or less as usual. We continue to worship jointly with the Burnham Market congregation, alternate weeks in each church, and enjoy each others' company, especially at our joint Bible Study meetings, where we have some very lively discussions, under the firm leadership of our minister, Steve. (Well, he tries to be firm). Sadly, we are soon to lose one of our most challenging members of the group, Ann, who is moving away to live in sheltered accommodation, as she is suffering a loss of sight due to macular degeneration. She will be very much missed.

As I write, we look forward to Good Friday morning, when we shall, as usual, welcome pilgrims from the Student Cross organisation, who will be calling in for refreshments (hot cross buns) and a short time of shared worship. Their visits are always inspiring. They will have walked all the way from Leicester, starting on Palm Sunday, and carrying a heavy wooden cross, and will be heading for Walsingham, where they will join other pilgrims for the weekend celebrations.

On Good Friday afternoon, we shall have a quieter time of worship, when our service will be led by Sheila Johnson, and again, we shall follow this by serving hot cross buns and tea, and having a time of fellowship together. On Easter Sunday morning, we look forward to our Service of Holy Communion, conducted by our own minister, Rev. Steve Oliver.

Sadly, our senior steward's husband has been recently diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer, and will be receiving treatment over the next few months. We ask for your prayers for Valerie and her husband, Willie.

Elizabeth MacLeod

North Lynn

Are we there yet? Are you sure this is the right road? We must be there soon! How many times have we been challenged like this? By children, fellow travellers or strangers.

Getting there is a life-long ambition, one that never ceases whoever you are, whoever you are with.

And North Lynn has plenty of life-long ambitions that people are asking of them – Are we there yet?

Lent and Easter tide are good seasons during which to consider and review 'Are we there yet?'

Firstly we have considered our journey of faith via a study of the Beatitudes.

Led by Rev. Laura from the Minster and assisted by Canon Chris Ivory, Rev. Becca Rogers and Rev. Andrew Maguire. We shared a truly ecumenical study with members of St. Johns, the Minster and our own congregation. We regularly had 21 attending on a Thursday afternoon which complemented the same course being offered at the Minster on a Tuesday evening.

The course comprised five sessions looking at a different pair of beatitudes and we had wide and varying discussion that helped us discover our own understanding and other interpretations of what we termed 'The Gospel Manifesto' in modern day parlance. More importantly we each discovered how we might live out this 'Manifesto' in our daily lives as a reaction to hearing how the word of God has made an impact and shaped the lives of those who have heard and acted on them.

Are we there yet on our journey of faith? – not yet, and we gave thanks we were still on that journey.

The next journey concerns the plans to build a vicarage for our Team Vicar we share with the Minster and St John's, Becca. After false starts and setbacks we understand plans and permissions are approved and provided and shortly we expect to see earth broken and work begun. We liked in particular the additional provisions against flood – could our presence in North Lynn be likened to Noah's Ark? We are getting there! Soon Becca will be living in North Lynn and a further mark of God's presence a reality.

Becca's work in North Lynn prospers with 'Messy Church', 'Community Meal', 'Tiny Tots' and 'Coffee on the Couch' plus her prayerful visiting and presence in the community.

Our collective journey of faith to bring others to join us was a definite 'Yes! We are there' a new member joins us. Andrew Maguire was able to confirm and welcome Margaret Hewitt into membership during our service on 2nd April. Margaret has long associations with the church in this Circuit especially in the Terrington area.

Are we there yet – are we getting nearer remodelling our church? Well yes, though things do happen at a different pace in such matters. Further work has been done in drawing up a sharing agreement with the Anglican Church, a required step so monies can be added together. We have been measured for valuation so the Methodist contribution ‘in kind’ (our building) can be added into the equation. Soon we hope to issue information to would be designers so they can offer us some imaginative ideas so we can realise our hopes. So yes, we are nearer getting there!

PLUS as this is written we are almost at Easter and it will be past and gone as you read. Nevertheless we can still ask the question – are we there yet? Yes in so far as Easter has happened, we have witnessed again Christ on the Cross and the Glorious Resurrection. But no, not everyone knows the love of God is able to do great things for them, and we too don’t always let the love of God take us where he wants us to be. Work in Progress.

Happy Easter, may that work continue in us always.

Neville Posnett

Terrington St Clement

At Network (MWiB) our guest speaker Joella Nash spoke about John Wesley starting the Methodist church and his brother Charles the hymn writer. We sang Joella’s favourite hymn, Jesus Christ is risen today.

The next meeting was an open afternoon when Andrew and Helen shared their experiences in Africa.

We held our Easter Coffee Morning with stalls, raffle and hot cross buns.

The total raised was £314.50. A big thank you to all concerned.

In the Lent period we added to the banner each Sunday. Around the central cross we put a bag of silver coins, a whip, a chalice, a crown of thorns and palm leaves with daffodils on Easter Day.

At the GIG meeting we hope to make arrangements to provide the Safer Space Refresher course. Watch this space!

Linda Howling

Dersingham

By the time you read this Easter will have come and gone, but at the time of writing we are looking forward to the Good Friday Meditation at 10am followed by the Village Walk of Witness finishing at St. Nicholas’ Church Hall. Then on Saturday we shall be taking flowers to the church to decorate the cross ready for Easter Day. We are expecting a visit from about 20 scouts from Wisbech who will, as usual, be camping at Sandringham.

The month of May brings our annual Flower Festival from Thursday 25th to Sunday 28th. Our theme this year is 'Called to serve' and is about people God called to serve. Each of the thirteen displays will depict a different person such as Moses, Elijah, Mary, Ruth, Peter, Hannah and Jesus. The children from the local primary school will be opening the Festival on Thursday and Friday mornings at 10am with their singing and every day there will be coffee, lunches, teas and stalls selling books, cakes, cards, gifts, plants and Fair Trade products. The Rev. Andrew Maguire will be taking the morning service at 10.30am on Sunday 28th May which will be followed by a bring and share lunch. In the evening our own minister the Rev. Steve Oliver will lead a United Songs of Praise at 6pm when friends from St. Nicholas' and St. Cecilia's churches will join us. We hope, as usual, to see many of our friends from around the circuit.

Following a major clear out of the store room (it needed a skip!) we have a box of copies of Songs of Fellowship, published in 1991, which we will willingly donate to any church that can use them. They are used but in good condition. Do get in touch if you would like them.

Rosemary Caink

**Radio
Heacham**

**The Gospel Hour
Every Sunday from
9.00 - 10.00p.m.**

DJ Rev. Steve Oliver

Listen on
www.radioheacham.org



Fired Up!

A Circuit Celebration Service

**to coincide with Aldersgate and
Pentecost**

**and including thanksgiving for
50 years service as
Local Preachers by
Elizabeth Batstone
and
Philip Batstone**

**Service co-ordinated by the
Rev. Catherine Dixon**

**Music co-ordinated by Mr Mike
Warnes (Hunstanton)**

**London Road Methodist Church
Saturday 20th May 2017
2.30pm**

DERSINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH FLOWER FESTIVAL

THEME - CALLED TO SERVE

**25th 26th and 27th May
10.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
Sunday 28th May
2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.**

**Books + Cakes + Cards + Gifts
Plants + Fair Trade products**

Coffee + Lunches + Teas

**Sunday Service 10.30 a.m.
Songs of Praise 6.00 p.m.**

**Proceeds for Church Funds and
Looking Good, Feeling better**

• **Property Stewards' Firefighting Training Course.**

Venue – South Wootton Methodist Church, Kings Lynn

Thursday 11th May

SESSION No.1 = 9.30am –
10.30am

Property Stewards from
Churches listed below:

Hunstanton	Dersingham
Snettisham	South Wootton
North Lynn	Highgate
Heacham	Burnham
Stanhoe	Market
	Pott Row
Gaywood St	
Faiths	London Road

SESSION No.2 = 11.30am –
12.30am

Property Stewards from Church's
listed below:

Clenchwarton	St Germans
Marham	Wimbotsham
Stowbridge	Hilgay
Downham	Southery
Market	
	Terrington St
Methwold	Clements
Feltwell	

If a property steward is unable to attend the course it is important that a representative from the same Church attends.

Should you have any queries concerning the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

David Scotney – Circuit Property Secretary - Tel 01485 535001 or email david.scotney79@btinternet.com

With the knowledge gained this could be appropriate.

I intend to live forever... So far, so good.

But the following does not perhaps apply!

Attend and you will hear an excellent speaker and have a healthy lunch.

CIRCUIT PROJECTOR

The Circuit recently purchased a new digital projector. The previous one had sadly died on us! We have decided that this will now be kept at the St Faith's Office. The office is open each weekday morning from 9am to midday. If your church would like to make use of the projector then please ring the office (01553 774916) so that arrangements can be made to book, collect (and of course return!) it.

Andrew Maguire

M.W.i.B.

EASTER OFFERING SERVICE

To be held at London Road Methodist Church on
10th May 2017 at 2.30pm

Speaker:- Rev. Catherine Dixon

All are welcome to this service

QUIZ NIGHT

FRIDAY 12TH MAY AT 7.00 PM

UP TO 6 PEOPLE PER TEAM

**£2.50 ENTRY FEE PER PERSON
INCLUDING LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

PRIZE FOR WINNING TEAM

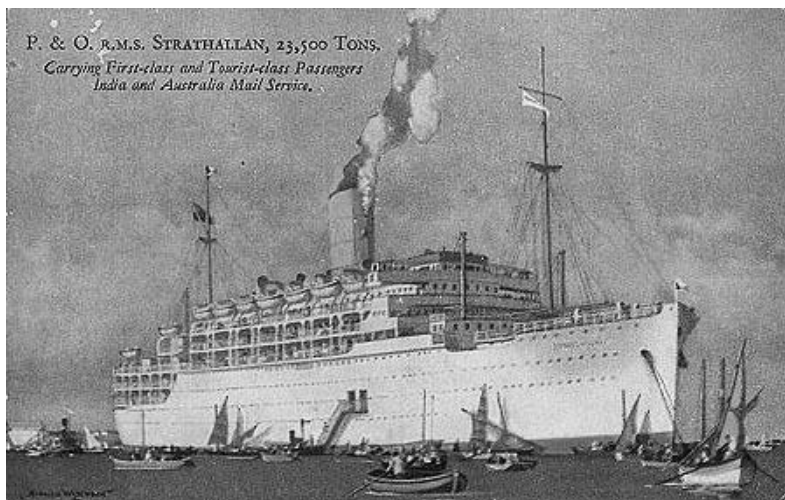
ALSO BOOBY PRIZE AND RAFFLE

**VENUE : THE SCHOOLROOM AT
CLENCHWARTON METHODIST CHAPEL**

In aid of Chapel Funds

**To register your team please call
Stephanie
On KL 769301**

LIFE ON A WARTIME TROOPSHIP CONVOY



A postcard of the 23,000 ton SS Strathallan launched in 1937 for the P & O Line.

You have to be very old to have travelled in wartime troopship convoys, so perhaps I should try to explain what it was like.

Our unit was preparing for overseas service in the quiet village of Gileston, South Wales. After the London blitz we thought we would be quite safe there, but no! One evening a wooden canteen we were in received an almost direct hit. A small table just a couple of yards away from me was smashed to smithereens. As close as that.

Embarkation leave was quite moving, to steam away from your home station wondering when, or indeed if, you would see your loved ones again. In my case it was to be 4 ½ years.

We were given our marching orders on Monday March 17th 1941. After a rowdy evening sing-song and a hot meal at midnight, we were marched to the local station and boarded a train which would take us through the night with the carriages in complete darkness, wondering where we would end up.

Morning light saw us in Liverpool docks, a magnificent sight. We were to board the requisitioned SS Strathallan, its gleaming white paint now camouflaged. On the Thursday we moved out of harbour with all up on

deck and the band playing. Then we dropped anchor out in the estuary. We had to carry lifebelts all the time now and engage in boat drills as well as the occasional guard duty. I had a comfortable top tier bunk. The food was good but there were long queues in the canteen , what with cigarettes at 50 for 1s 8d, (or 8 pence in decimal money). The ship's wireless was usually only on for the News. There were hot sea- water showers but fresh water was turned off most of the time.

We moved off on a Sunday evening, March 23rd 1941, with an escort of Hurricane fighters past a balloon barrage. I thought about my loved ones just going to services. I had attended a parade service but when it came to the Holy Communion the Anglican chaplain was adamant that this was for confirmed members of the Church of England only. This made me a confirmed ecumenist. Happily things are so much different now.

As we moved out into the open sea, a full company of ships and escort joined us. Among the other ships I noted were 14 famous liners including the Strathallan. They were the Stratheden, Strathmore and Strathnavar, Andes, Georgic, Orion, Orontes, Orcades and Otranto, the Viceroy of India, Empress of Canada, Empress of Australia and the Duchess of York. The warships included Denbigh, Warwick, Sterling and the battleships Nelson, Resolve and Ramilles. I was particularly interested in the cruiser Birmingham because I had seen its launch while on holiday in Plymouth in September 1936, little thinking that one day I should be under her protection. By another chance, my parents had gone over the Strathallan when she was in Tilbury dock before the war.

We took a zig- zagging course as a precaution against U- boat attacks. First we sailed about 3,000 miles into mid- Atlantic, where the weather took a turn for the worse with waves 20 feet high breaking over the bows of the warships. Most of us were horribly sick. It was a relief when part of our company moved off to America and we came south into warmer and calmer climes, changing into our tropical gear. I saw some flying fish and a school of porpoises and wonderful sunsets with the sun going down very rapidly. At night the water seemed phosphorescent.

There were two pianos on board, and I played at some impromptu concerts by ear as there was no sheet music available. I did a few guard duties, continued with my army job administering the pay, went to services and discussion groups and did some reading.

We spent a weekend in the magnificent harbour of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Its high mountains were covered on one side with luxuriant vegetation, huts

nestling among the trees. Flimsy canoes soon appeared and were round us all day long, diving for sixpences and selling fruit and chickens by means of basket and cord. I was surprised to hear their occupants singing "Hallelujah" and "Ay Ay Ippy!" One supply boat also contained monkeys. I saw a canoeist who was wearing a bowler hat, collar and tie but without a shirt. Two rival canoeists engaged in their own naval battle, pelting each other with fruit until one of the canoes started sinking, but was soon righted.

One canoe had the name 'Apapa' painted on it. That was the name of the Elder Dempster Line boat which had taken my uncle the Rev. John Watson to be a Methodist missionary in what was then Dahomey.

We crossed the Equator on April 9th. The traditional ceremony was definitely a highlight. Father Neptune had a train of mermaids, jailor, barber and surgeon. Offenders were summarily convicted for various spoof offences such as hanging from a yard- arm pretending to be a flag, or wrapping a penny in silver paper and throwing it to diving boys, and of course the padre was accused of being drunk and disorderly. Offenders had the contents of a bucket of very soapy water thrown over them. The adjutant got a special ducking for making us wear greatcoats on boat drill. Then the court adjourned and everyone dived into the pool.

H.M.T. "STRATHALLAN"

Commander J.K. Chaplin, R.D., R.N.R.

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THE EQUATOR

BEHOLD YE, Mariners, Sea Gods, Mermaids and Dwellers within
my Dominion that

.....JOHN GARPOOT.....

has satisfied my Kingship, Spouse, Lord High Octopus
Davy Jones, Barber and all my other Subjects within
my Equatorial Seas, as to his fitness . . . to
enter and dwell in my dominion.

THEREFORE, I now, in virtue of my divine right of Kingship of the
High Seas, grant

.....JOHN GARPOOT.....

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

Given under my Fin and Seal this ..Ninth..... day of

....April.... in the Year One thousand nine hundred

...and forty one. A.D.....

Master ..King Neptune.....

We continued southwards with the sun now behind us. At night the Pole Star was low on the northern horizon and the Southern Cross rose higher ahead of us. Half of the convoy left us to go on to Durban while we reached Cape Town on April 16th. I was able to get a shore pass with my friend from six until midnight to see big American cars and enjoy for once the rare wartime sight of street lights as well as to see the Houses of Parliament, museum and glorious gardens. There were free refreshments at the Methodist canteen. Everyone was ‘adopted’ by a local family, and we were invited out by a family in a posh car to the suburbs for dinner. When we returned next day we were driven right round Table Mountain to see the Indian Ocean. Every car we saw had soldiers in it, and there were locusts and zebras in the countryside. Back at the harbour we could see the other South Africa where Cape Coloureds were squatting down eating chicken bones from a communal cardboard box.



The Strathallan at Cape Town, April 1941.

As we left Cape Town on April 20th the man who loosed the moorings was loudly booed and a plane dipped to salute us. Our journey continued through the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa keeping out of sight of land, but with albatross, flying fish and porpoises for company and another visit from Father Neptune. We were also able to read magazines we had been given in Cape Town. We had no idea where we were going, but we ended up in Aden. There we saw both the Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mary which had been requisitioned as troopships. They were said to be so fast that they did not need an escort. Arabs came alongside in their flowing robes selling wallets and other leather goods. The temperature reached 109 Fahrenheit (43 centigrade) in the shade.

After waiting for a week, we left the Strathallan on May 5th and were crowded on to lighter barges, with everyone bleating as we were penned together like sheep. Then we were transferred to an old troopship for the final stage of the journey up the Red Sea to Suez. Fortunately it was not a very long trip as we only had the basic ration of bully and biscuits. It made us realise how important our job in number 25 Field Bakery Royal Army Service Corps would be to provide fresh bread for the troops.

My Strathallan story has a sad ending. On December 21st 1942 she was torpedoed off Algeria during Operation Torch. Most of the 5,122 on board were rescued before she exploded the next day. This serves to illustrate the real danger faced by soldiers during every one of those 12,860 mile voyages round Africa, and why we were not able to take the direct route through the Mediterranean.

John Garfoot, assisted by Raymond Garfoot. John has contributed his reminiscences to the Strathallan website which can be found at www.thestrathallan.com.



Any items for the **JUNE** edition should be with the editor by **MAY 12th**, earlier if possible. **If you don't get an acknowledgment of emails PLEASE enquire if I have received them as some articles have found their way into my spam bin which I don't check very often!**

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West Norfolk Methodist Circuit Diary

MAY 2017 onwards

Saturday May 6th (A week early to avoid clash with Shell Club) Fellowship Breakfast at Hilgay at 8.30 am

Wednesday May 10th Easter Offering service at London Road Methodist Church at 2.30 pm.

Thursday May 11th Stewards' Fire Fighting Course

Friday May 12th Quiz at Clenchwarton

Saturday May 20th FIRED UP at London Road 2.30 pm

Thursday 25th/Sunday 28th May Dersingham Flower Festival

Saturday June 10th Fellowship Breakfast at Terrington at 8.30 am

Saturday July 8th Fellowship Breakfast at Wimbotsham at 8.30 am

Saturday August 12th Fellowship Breakfast at Pott Row at 8.30 am

Saturday September 9th Fellowship Breakfast at St Germans at 8.30 am

Saturday October 14th Fellowship Breakfast at Downham at 8.30 am

Saturday October 11th MWiB Autumn District Day at Ely Methodist Church

Saturday November 11th Fellowship Breakfast at Marham at 8.30 am