

# **Journey**



**The continuing story of Carrs Lane Church  
June 2011**

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## MINISTERS LETTER

Dear friends,

I am still working through the implications of becoming a granddad in the middle of June! In particular, I have been thinking about the human responsibility to be 'life-givers', 'life-bringers'...not only in terms of physical life, but in the many other ways in which life can be understood as well. However fragmented the world feels sometimes – and however great the gulfs created by human beings over the millennia – the fundamental interconnectedness of all human life is beyond question: we belong to one global family, one earthly community. In terms of my own human family, yes, I have been thinking about what it means to be involved in ensuring that one generation succeeds another, but this has led me on to many other thoughts. What does it mean to bring life to others? How are we engaged actively in this process, this responsibility?

As Christians, the questions are particularly pertinent, because we celebrate God as the giver of life, and we believe that human life becomes fuller, richer, imbued with meaning and understanding if we allow God to address us by the Spirit and through the words and example of Jesus. We acknowledge the poverty of the lives of so many people; at best, something akin to a half-life is lived by some because of tragedy and circumstances beyond their own making...but we know too that many whose existence is rich to overflowing with material things and opportunities are not fulfilled in such a way that they can lay claim to 'life in all its fullness'.

We cannot offer life without problems and tensions and questions; faith is not a panacea which provides enduring freedom from earthly pain. Yet – in faith – we can and should and do offer the promise of purpose and fulfilment; its values are lasting and significant; it reminds us that every human life is unique and consistently precious. What I wish for my grandson, I wish for every human being: an opportunity for life to be grasped and lived and enjoyed in the knowledge that all of us are a part of a greater purpose and that there is hope.

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steve', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

## Sunday Worship during June

### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June

10.30am Morning Worship, including the Lord's Supper, led by Neil Riches

Key passage: John 17.1 – 11

*First Sunday Lunch takes place immediately after this service; all are welcome to share in fellowship and food*

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June – Pentecost Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Johnson

*The monthly church meeting takes place after this service; all are welcome to share in this*

Kidz Aloud – our Children's Church - will be sharing the family fun event at Earlswood Methodist Church in the afternoon

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June – Trinity Sunday

10.30am Morning Worship led by Elaine Hutchinson

4.30pm Service of Healing and Communion led by Stephen Bentley

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches and Sharon Ferguson; we will be joined by friends attending the LGCM annual conference at this service

6.00pm Radical Worship – Open Table...meeting for fellowship around the meal table



## Notices

**Sunday 5 June Disability Sunday**  
[www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

**Sunday 5 June Environment Sunday**  
[www.arochoa.org](http://www.arochoa.org) and [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk)

**Christian Music Ministries Choir** present **'Two Sisters and a Funeral'** a brand new musical by Roger Jones.  
5 June 6.30pm Holy Trinity, West Bromwich.  
9 June 6.30pm St Germain's Church, Edgbaston  
11 June 7.30pm St Thomas Church, Garrets Green.  
12 June 6.30pm Woodside Avenue Methodist, Coventry.  
18 June come and learn the work in a day from 10.00am at Wylde Green URC. Singers and string players welcome. Choir costs £10, audience £5 for performance at 6.00pm. More info CMM 01527 576 440 email [ents@cmm.org.uk](mailto:ents@cmm.org.uk)

**Friday 10 June Birmingham Prayer Breakfast** 7.00am in the Banqueting Suite, Council House. Speakers Rt Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham and Councillor Timothy Huxtable Cabinet Member Birmingham City Council responsible for Transport, Environment and Regeneration. Places £20, to book email [chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk](mailto:chris.dinsdale@chaplaincyplus.org.uk)

**Open Gardens** Nether Whitacre Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June, from 1.00- 6.00pm. Proceeds shared between Methodist Church and St Giles. Tickets £3.00 (children free) Refreshments available, car parking at B46 2EH

**11 – 19 June Green Transport Week**  
[www.eta.co.uk](http://www.eta.co.uk)

**Pentecost Sunday 12th June 5.30pm** - open air celebration service in Centenary Square entitled 'United We Stand' Organised by The Council of Black Led Churches and Birmingham Churches Together. Just like Pentecost in the book of Acts, and in keeping with Christ's prayer in John 17, we are inviting and encouraging the body of Christ to come together in one place, as one family, with clear aims to proclaim God's kingdom, declare His unifying love and join with the Body of Christ worldwide. What a great witness to the City of Birmingham and beyond of God's people standing together in worship in the centre of the city on this Global Day of Prayer!

**13 – 19 June National Carers Week**  
[www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org)

**Birmingham's Healing on the Streets Ministry Training.** For those interested in joining a team, and a refresher for those already on teams. The Healing on the Streets model is a simple but beautiful way to reach out to the lost and hurting. It enables you to connect with your community, powerfully expressing God's love. We simply invite people to sit on chairs so we can pray for them. Friday 17 June from 7.00pm at St Martins in the Bullring. Saturday 18 June 9.00am coffee, 9.30 start with 'Putting it into practice' outside St Martins and the Cathedral in the afternoon. Cost £7. Application form and info [www.riverside-church.org.uk](http://www.riverside-church.org.uk).

**17 – 19 June Nationwide Quiet Weekend** [www.retreats.org.uk](http://www.retreats.org.uk)

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June** . The Queen's Foundation, 10.30am – 3.45pm. £15 including lunch.. History as a resource for mission and ministry in local churches; a one day conference to explore ways in which the stories and histories of our churches and communities can be a rich resource to help us grapple with contemporary mission and ministry. To book email [hannah.mathews@saltleytrust.org.uk](mailto:hannah.mathews@saltleytrust.org.uk) 0121 427 6800.

**Asian Awareness in Birmingham** – towards understanding and building bridges with other faith groups, to inspire you and your Church to serve and bless the Asian Communities. Monday evenings in June 7.30 -9.15pm at St Martin's Church in the Bullring. *Faith Awareness & the Christ we share.* 13th Towards understanding Muslims 20th Towards understanding Hindus 27th Towards understanding Sikhs Contact Pall Singh at East West Trust on 07813 038756 or email on [eastandwesttrust@aol.com](mailto:eastandwesttrust@aol.com) £5 donation welcomed for each session, but contribute as you're able.

**Saturday 18 June Play and Pray with Clay.** A Meditation on Creation 10.30am – 3.30pm at Warley Woods Methodist Church, Bearwood. No artistic skills required. Details from Sr Morag Gardham, La Retraite, 12 Clifford Rd, B67 5HJ. 0121 434 5184 [mfgardham@talktalk.net](mailto:mfgardham@talktalk.net).

**Sunday 19 June Woodbrooke Garden Open Day** 2.30 – 5.30pm £3. Enjoy a relaxing summer afternoon in 10 acres of organically-managed gardens and woodland. Talks from local groups, cream teas on the lawn, rowing on the lake and childrens activities. Details [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk). call 472 5171

**St Marys Selly Oak 150th Celebrations** 19 June Victorian Sunday with a Garden Party in the Vicarage from 2.30pm followed by Choral Evensong with a Victorian flavour. 10 July Church Fete with sports in the afternoon. 10-11 September Flower Festival. [www.stmaryselloak.org.uk](http://www.stmaryselloak.org.uk)

**20 – 26 June Refugee Week** [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

**Saturday 25 June Armed Forces Day** Drumhead Church Service with the Band of the Royal Marines 11.45am Centenary Square in front of the Rep Theatre. Come and say Thank you to our Armed Forces. Afternoon events in Chamberlain and Victoria Squares. Details Revd Dr Dick Rodgers 0121 476 0789 [dick@rodgers.org.uk](mailto:dick@rodgers.org.uk)

**Sunday 26 June International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** [www.un.org/events/torture/](http://www.un.org/events/torture/) and [www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)

### Carrs Lane Directory

If your details are included in the Church Directory please inform us of any changes, including your address, phone number or email address, on [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk).

Thank you.

## May Day 2011

**M**ay days come and May days go – but May Day 2011 is sure to remain in our memory for a long time.

Glorious blue skies and sunshine – another day in the Royal Wedding Weekend.

After first Sunday lunch - always a 'good' occasion - there was a happy canal walk around the city centre. But to crown the day, at 4.00pm we all returned to a most glorious concert back at Carrs Lane. It was wonderful to have Richard Silk playing for us again, sharing the programme with David Joyce (violin). It was a perfect selection of music for such an occasion; violin sonatas by Mozart, Handel and Schumann, and also some Dvorak. It was so good to have Richard's wife helping too; how we treasure the memories of their contributions to the past life of Carrs Lane, and their support always of the drama group. I remember Richard playing music by Poulenc sometimes on Sunday evenings at the close of the service.

Thank you to everyone who made this concert possible, and to Joan and Jill for the lovely celebratory tea following the concert.

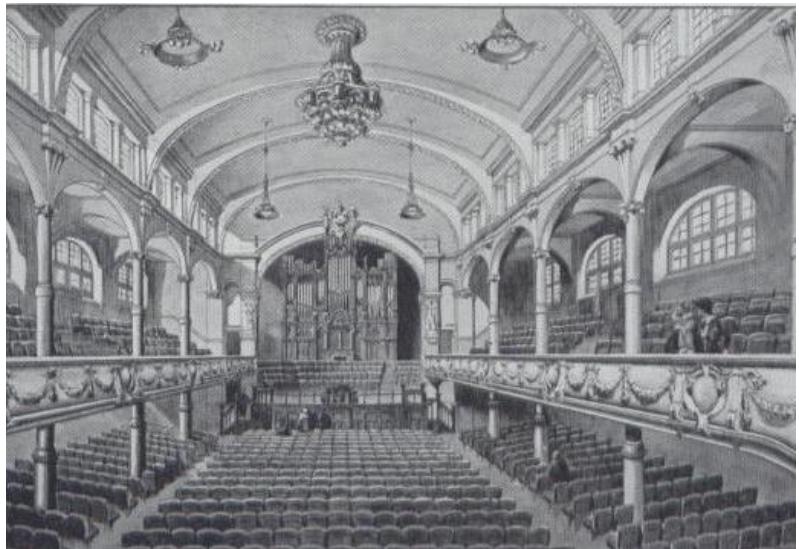
I personally am delighted that Richard may return to offer another musical treat for us. Soon, please!

Joan White

## Congregational History Society

*The following letter was received following the meeting at Carrs Lane on 13 May.*

**I** am writing on behalf of the Congregational History Society to thank you and the people at Carrs Lane for your hospitality last Friday. I think it was one of the best gatherings that we have had! You looked after us so well and provided a wonderful lunch. The exhibition that you arranged was just right, and provided a good background to the story of the church.



Thank you also for your talk which was so interesting, giving us something of both the past and present work of the church.

Every good wish, Chris

## The Passion Play

About three years ago my friend made a remark to me, 'If Ken had still been alive we would be thinking about going to the Passion Play again in 2010, as we had in 2000'. I had never seen the play and responded to her, saying, 'If you want to go I will come with you.' So we made the arrangements and set off in June last year to see the play.

After landing at Zurich we stayed in Austria and Italy before arriving in Germany; our hotel was in Linderhof, about 8km from Oberammergau.

We were taken to the village by coach the following morning, this was the first year that the play had been performed starting at 2.30pm, with a break at 5.00pm, recommencing in the evening, and finishing around 11.00pm.

The play to me was an experience that I find difficult to explain. The choir and the singing was amazing, there were tableaux in the most brilliant colours. We saw everything as it happened to Jesus during that fateful week with our own eyes. Palms waving as Jesus came into Jerusalem; we moved from day to day; Judas betraying Jesus, then, as he showed great remorse as he wrung his hands, sobbing. As he went to the tree and hung himself.

Jesus, as he presented the bread and wine as he had his last meal with the disciples (I felt very humble watching this and thought I too should have been there).

Then we watched the final part; the crucifixion. Christ hung on the cross; blood flowing from his head and arms until his loincloth was covered in blood.

It took six hours to be reminded of a whole week in the life and death of Jesus,

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Margaret M Checkley



## Notes from the Organ Bench

**M**ay was a very varied month of music-making. Richard Silk and David Joyce delighted us at the very start of the month with a programme of music for piano and violin. Such was the positive reception of this that Richard will be appearing again, in November, this time with a clarinettist.

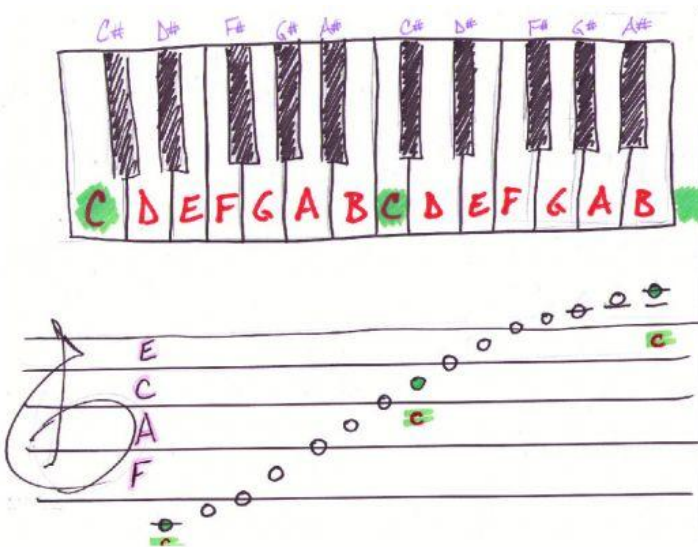


Also early in the month was a chance to have a go at African drumming; in all 16 people participated and had a lot of fun, thanks to our teacher Sarah Westwood, of DrumVoice. The success of this workshop is currently under review, and may be repeated later in the year – hopefully leading to something for a Sunday morning! It was also a real pleasure to hear Clara Bergstrand play a lovely piece by Breval at the end of our Quaker-style worship. I am hoping that we'll hear Clara again in June before she goes back home.

It has been a useful month for me to find out more about your musical tastes, and I will endeavour to programme more of what was obviously popular, whilst also giving a taste of some more new things over the coming months. Some photos are now available on the recently-launched Facebook page (search for: 'Carrs Lane Church Centre'); the page is still under development, and more photos and more details will be added in the coming months.

As always, please keep an eye out on the notice sheets for details of upcoming events!

Tim Batty  
Church Musician



## Escape Routes...

I have said to a number of folk that a broken finger was rather a dramatic way of avoiding the AGM of the Women's Fellowship at Hall Green! What folk may not realize is the fact that I was effectively 'working away' from 29<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May, thereby being denied an opportunity to share in other things...

I have been serving as President of the BB in Birmingham since I returned to work after my sabbatical, and this long weekend provided a welcome opportunity to share in a residential weekend at Bockleton with 120 members of the movement, both youngsters and their leaders. Many of you will be aware of the work of Bockleton, as it continues to serve as an outdoor pursuits centre under the auspices of the Birmingham LEA. It was an excellent weekend, with all the young people sharing in a wide range of challenging activities.

My memories? Being woken up one morning to the sound of 'Happy Birthday' being played on a recorder (not my birthday, I hasten to add); relief when the swallows who had flown into the Great Hall finally made their way out again; opening every conceivable door and window in the building, since there were issues with the thermostat on a very hot weekend (hence the aforementioned swallows...); awareness of emotional responses from some leaders during 'Toy Story III'; sharing in supervising the outdoor tunnel system in the grounds; the joys of Snakes and Ladders and Lego and more (this was a weekend for those 11 and under); excellent levels of behaviour and interest, not least during worship... In fact I cannot actually remember anybody being told off - a relatively rare occurrence during such a weekend! You will know that I remain convinced that future models of church have to be relational rather institutional, based on fellowship rather than structures, shared values and experiences rather than inflexible rules; time away like this is an essential part of 'building church' and adds to my long-held conviction that the Brigades can continue to be at the cutting edge of the mission of any local church.



"You mean to tell me there are no fire exits?!"

Neil

## Connecting Christians in the Heart of the City

The annual assembly and AGM of Believing in Birmingham was held at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter on May 10th. The sparse attendance at this gathering echoed the trend at recent Forum meetings, which led to the decision that the principal item of business should be a discussion of the future of Believing in Birmingham.

It had therefore been agreed that reports on projects and activities would be made available via email or in printed form and not presented as part of the proceedings. The topics covered included the Birmingham Homeless Forum and the Carrs Lane Lectures for which reports appeared in last month's issue of Journey. Other reports concerned Carrs Lane Fair Trade, the Birmingham Retail Chaplaincy, and the annual Heritage Open Days (see items following in this issue).

There was a brief report concerning possible funding from the Methodist Church for a two year project to improve understanding of, and effective response to, issues of human trafficking by church communities in the West Midlands.

In view of the fact that recent joint activities had attracted little support, the suggestion for the main item was that a bureaucratic structure for B in B is not helpful or needed. It was proposed to move to a system of quarterly lunches. This would present an opportunity for networking, fellowship and mutual encouragement. In this regard the papers for the meeting included a supportive and perceptive message from the Ecumenical Development Officer at Birmingham Churches Together, who helped to formulate the current B in B constitution as a Churches Together group.

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will continue in their roles as appropriate to the new system. The next AGM will take place in May next year. It was agreed that the constitution will be formally dissolved at that meeting. In addition the financial situation will be reviewed, and a decision made about donating remaining funds to needy causes. No subscriptions will be sought for 2011/12. The lunches will be open to all members of Christian groups, and possibly include a short act of devotion centred around grace for the meal, and a short talk on a local Christian ministry. The meals will be catered, with donations on the day. The first lunch will be held at St Paul's on Monday 25th July at 12.30pm. It was noted that people working during the day would not be free to attend lunches, and suggested that an evening cheese and wine party might be arranged.

There will be no formal write-up of these sessions, but I hope to be able to perform a supportive ecumenical function in disseminating via email (and then on through notice sheets, church magazines or possibly a website) information about Christian initiatives. Such activities, and there are many of them, will be of interest but possibly unknown to the wider Christian community in our city, for prayer or for action. I feel sure the new less bureaucratic system will receive Carrs Lane's usual much valued ecumenical support, and interest some of the many Christian groups in the city centre who did not feel that Believing in Birmingham was for them.

Wendy Firmin

## Annual Report from Carrs Lane Fair Trade

**W**e are pleased to say that our total purchases from Traidcraft for the last financial year are still in the top ten out of all the 5000 Fair Traders in the UK. As the Chief Executive has written to us “this has made a real contribution to our work and to the lives of our producers and their families”. In addition, thanks to the outstanding help of our volunteers, we have been able once again to make a substantial donation to Traidcraft Exchange.



As well as our work at Carrs Lane we continue to sell at outside events throughout the year, particularly during Fair Trade Fortnight in February, where this year we promoted Traidcraft at five events in the city.

All our activities help to sustain the momentum behind the continued growth of Fair Trade in the UK and underpin Traidcraft’s work as a pioneer in bringing new commodities to the market; as experts in developing business skills and opening the markets for poor producers. Just recently we have been pleased to be able to sell bath mats made from rubber sourced from Sri Lanka – the first in the world to use latex from the Forest Stewardship Council and also providing the usual premium to the rubber tappers and their communities. Traidcraft is also a leader in campaigning for changes in trade rules and large company practices.

In spite of the Fair Trade Mark appearing on more and more products, Traidcraft producers need our support more than ever in these demanding economic times. Fair trade still accounts for only 1% of the total sales of potentially fairly traded products in the UK. Through everyone’s support for Traidcraft plc and Traidcraft Exchange, the benefits of fair trade sales get ploughed back into the greater mission of working for a fairer world where all can flourish and enjoy the fruits of their labour, thus addressing the scandal of global poverty.

As the catchphrase for Geobars goes “*change the world one bite at a time*”!

*Postscript:* We are grateful for all those in Birmingham who bought the Real Easter Egg this year which ensured donations to Traidcraft Exchange as well as conveying the true message of Easter.



Joan Davies  
Co-ordinator, Carrs Lane Fair Trade

## Be.friend retail Chaplaincy Report

The work of be.friend Chaplaincy to the retail sector in the city is going from strength to strength. There has been a real positive response from those who work in the retail sector of the city, and it's beginning to feel a little less daunting. We now offer Chaplaincy to The Bullring, Bullring Markets, Pallasades, and Tesco's Express and are currently in conversations with Great Western Arcade and Retail Birmingham offering Chaplaincy to the independent retailers across the city. We await response from the Mailbox, Pavilions, and Marks and Spencer.

We are now a part of Bullring welcome pack, every new Retailer has our details, which has been really helpful in making initial contacts when visiting. We are also in the process with Retail Birmingham who supports all the independent retailers across the city, preparing an article which will go out to every independent retailer in the city raising the profile and awareness of Chaplaincy in the city.

We continue to be a presence in the Markets, and last year offered non-alcoholic mulled wine and mince pies to all the traders which they are still talking about now! If you can remember last year we had horrendous weather but we managed to brave the storm and gave out about 250 mince pies and countless cups of hot mulled wine. We hope to do the same this year. Hopefully the weather won't be as bad!

There have been issues around publicity, rent increase and new bus routes which has had a huge impact on trading in the markets, we are invited to every liaison market meeting and we try to attend to show we're interested in the day to day business of the markets, and it gives us insights into what the real issues with the traders are. I took part in the yearly judging of stalls; it was an insight to just how much variety and diversity there is in the markets.

The Pallasades are currently undergoing renovations with New Street Station, which has had huge implications for retailers and it feels a very insecure place to be for traders. Some have had to leave the impact of the building work was just too much for them, but we continue to offer chaplaincy and continue to be a sign of hope in these times of uncertainty. Chaplaincy at the Pallasades has opened the opportunity to offer chaplaincy to the Tesco's Express store in the Pallasades, with the intention to offer chaplaincy to all Express stores in the city.

As the chaplaincy grows so does the need for more volunteers and I am pleased to say we have four new chaplains added to the team; Andrew Veitch, Emmanuel Ijioma, Dolvis Ferdiand and Alison Whybrow. Dolvis was commissioned on Mothering Sunday at Hall Green Methodist Church. This work is dependent on volunteers who are willing to commit their time and energy and I could not do the work without them. I ask that you continue to pray for the work of be.friend, the volunteers and the people whom we seek to serve in the city



Elaine Hutchinson  
Birmingham City Centre Retail Chaplain  
be.friend Team Leader

## Heritage Open Days

**A**fter sixteen years the annual Heritage Open Days (HODs) nationally as an organisation is still going strong. In 2010 a record 4,463 entries were registered and a total of 578,445 voluntary hours spent in making it the biggest and best event so far. The event took place between Thursday 9 and Sunday 12 September. The following BinB Churches joined in to celebrate England's fantastic architecture and culture through their participation:

Birmingham Cathedral of St Philip, CofE  
St Chad's Metropolitan RC Cathedral  
St John and St Peter, Ladywood, CofE  
St Luke's Church Centre. CofE, Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank  
St Martin-in-the-Bull Ring, Birmingham Parish Church, CofE  
St Paul-in-the-Jewellery Quarter, CofE

The total number of visitors was most encouraging and some of the feedback received was a great boost and re-confirmed that the BinB churches should continue to be part of the HODs. Some churches have reported visitors subsequently returning for the Sunday services. There was also some good publicity including a TV crew reporting on the event at St Martin's. It would be fantastic if those BinB churches not currently involved would consider either rejoining or doing so for the first time. English Heritage provides balloons and posters to indicate the HOD sites and will give helpful advice.

In 2011 the HODs are between Thursday 8 and Sunday 11 September. So we look forward to welcoming greater numbers of people of all ages and backgrounds, and hopefully they will be enriched by discovering more about our Christian faith and associated heritage in Birmingham. Everyone's support will be greatly appreciated

For more information visit: [hods.@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:hods.@english-heritage.org.uk)



Jean Jepson

## The spice of life...

There are times in ministry when the sheer variety of opportunity and responsibility serve as forcible reminder that the impact of the Christ faith can be all-encompassing. A couple of weeks in May were so 'rich' in terms of experience that I could do with a significant block of time to think and to pray through their implications!

- The Annual Meeting of the Congregational Historical Society – *how should the civic gospel impact on our mission and ministry in these times?*
- The Plant Sale at Hall Green – *what models of community engagement are most likely to be fruitful?*
- The planning meeting for the national multicultural event being held at Carrs Lane in September – *to what extent can we talk truthfully of an 'inclusive mindset' within the denomination?*
- Leading a walk for the Carrs Lane walking group – *what social opportunities are likely to be appreciated most by a gathered congregation?*
- Presenting the awards at the display of 1<sup>st</sup> Rugby BB Company – *how can we continue to breathe new life into time-honoured methods of youth ministry?*
- Preaching at the induction of Rev. Peter Little at Wilton Road URC – *on what aspects of city life should the Christian voice be heard most clearly?*
- GB District Service at Carrs Lane – *how should members of small churches be enabled to experience 'celebration' within their Christian life?*
- Offering a 'blessing' for a Christian charity shop in Erdington – *how can the volunteer culture within faith communities be sustained, at a time when many people feel alienated by deep cutbacks?*
- Job interviews for a person to coordinate a scheme called 'Urban Buddies', linking vulnerable youngsters with youth work in churches able to offer appropriate support and stability – *how can we ensure that work with the most vulnerable forms a part of the 'loving service' offered by all churches?*



I could continue. All these opportunities and questions arose in the space of just over a week and represent something over and above the 'normal' demands of ministry. In a sense, they underline the fact that whatever else churches do or don't do, so-called 'strategic thinking' is essential...a non-negotiable in terms of energy and prayer.

Neil

## On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle June 1911

### The Mission Study Circle

This class, a new one, I believe, among our Carrs Lane activities, has just concluded an eight weeks' study of "The Reproach of Islam," or an account of the life and teaching of Mohammed. Our numbers have not been great, but some, at least, of our members kept up their interest to the end. One of the chief difficulties in a class of this kind is one's comparative ignorance of the matter under discussion, and the swiftness and persistency with which modern social problems emerge. Occasionally, too, a problem like that of the nature of conversion cropped up, which took us for a while right out of the customary channels. Still, in the main, we stuck to Mohammed, and I think we felt something of the power and attraction of his personality. Most of us knew Carlyle's essay, and this made us sympathetic, while our text-book gave us a good survey – and on the whole a very fair one – of the field. Generally our feeling was that the Christianity which was abroad in Mohammed's day was of a very poor type, and was chiefly absorbed in trivial disputes; while in regard to his own particular nation, at any rate in the early days, we could hardly look upon Mohammed except in the light of a benefactor.

"The Reproach" consists in the fact that good as many of Mohammed's reforms were, Islam generally is an attempt to put the clock back, while from a religious or from any other standpoint there is no comparison between our Bible and the Koran, which claims to supersede it. There is little doubt, however, that when some of the great Eastern nations become Christian their Christianity will not follow the line of our Western development, but will strike out a path of its own. You cannot read the sketch of a life like Raymond Lull's without a thrill of enthusiasm, and some of the finest and noblest personalities of the Christian Church, from Paul downwards, have spent their lives in foreign fields. If we cannot imitate them in this, we can at least strive to catch something of their spirit and to appreciate, in some measure, the difficulty of the problems, both social and intellectual, which they have to face.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – June 1961

Extract from the Vestry Letter, by Revd Philip Lee-Woolf

By our decision in Church Meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> and that of the Church Meeting at Francis Road on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the two Churches have entered a new stage of life. We have both felt ourselves called to unite and when the necessary details of the amalgamation have been worked out, perhaps by the autumn, we shall come together to worship in a single fellowship at Carrs Lane. More than a century ago in the Rev. Angell James' time as minister and with the strong conviction of Dr. Dale, the Church at Francis Road began its life and since then has made its own witness alongside us. In recent years it has become plain that its lines of work and ours overlap to so large an extent that we should both be stronger and freer to face tomorrow and its claims if we were united in one church. Both churches, for instance,

are near the centre of the city; in both the membership comes from all points of the compass; and both have been seeking the proper pattern of Christian witness in the centre of the new Birmingham which is being built round about us.

It is never easy for people to decide to leave the buildings in which for as long as they can remember they have worshipped God. The people at Francis Road have shown spiritual vitality and courage to do so, and they bring not only their material resources but those splendid qualities into the new fellowship. I believe that our coming together can be historic for us both if we can share equal openness to God's guiding spirit in entering the new day.

From a union between two churches of the same order to a union between churches of very different traditions and ways. On June 11<sup>th</sup> the service will be led by the Rev. Dr. Daniel T. Niles of Ceylon, a man of power and wisdom in many directions. He is a Tamil by race, a Methodist by denomination, a preacher, one of the great ones of the world, by calling. In 1939 he was chairman of the great Christian Youth Conference at Amsterdam. For years he has been secretary of the Evangelism Department of World Council of Churches and an outstanding thinker about the Church's mission in the world. In recent years the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations of Ceylon have moved closer together and have now produced a plan of union of which Dr. Niles is a chief architect. Because he represents to us so much of the Church's life in 1961 – its spread throughout the world, its search for unity, its rediscovery of the Gospel for today – I hope that you will all come to hear him and bring with you as many others as you can.



*I felt that these items were of interest in one case because of the great importance of Islam in current affairs, and in the other because of the ongoing developments relating to the fellowship here and to the wider Christian presence in the city centre.*

Contributed by  
Wendy Firnin

## Commitment for Life

Important Achievement, *by Alwyn Knight (from Moving Stories 137)*

B'Tselem writes of a very important achievement of the human rights community: a change in Israeli military policy to ensure greater accountability for Palestinian civilian deaths.

Those of you who follow B'Tselem's work know that accountability has been a central priority from the day B'Tselem was founded. In fact, accountability is the heart of human rights organisations around the world; what is the meaning of human rights if no one is held accountable when rights are violated? This is especially true when it comes to the most basic right: the right to life.

Unfortunately, since 2000, accountability in cases where Palestinians are killed by Israeli forces has been the exception rather than the rule. The root of the problem was a military policy adopted in the fall of 2000 to only open investigations in cases where there was prima facie evidence of illegal behaviour – but how can there be such evidence without an investigation?

B'Tselem invested great efforts to change this policy, filing 300 demands for investigations; conducting comprehensive research on the broader policies regarding accountability, and engaging in legal advocacy, direct engagement with military officials, public campaigns and international advocacy.

Within the last month the military have announced that the policy has been changed; from now on the military police will automatically investigate every case where a Palestinian who did not engage in hostilities is killed in the West Bank. Of course, getting an investigation opened is only the first hurdle - these investigations need to be effective. And effective investigations are themselves instrumental to a larger goal: obtaining justice and redress for victims of human rights violations and deterring future violations.

B'Tselem speak of many moments of frustration in their work, and many setbacks as they struggle for human rights. But every once in a while the impact of their work is abundantly clear; this is a moment to savour. It is also a moment to recognize all those who helped make it a reality. They say, 'It is a privilege to be a part of a community of organisations and individuals who share our vision of universal respect for human rights.'

'At least they can't arrest my feelings'

I'll call him M. He's a personable young man, as skilled a shopkeeper as is his father. They live on their little 'island' with special permits. Other Palestinians are not permitted to cross the road to patronise the shop. The only customers are international visitors, the occasional settler, and some of the many Israelis who visit Hebron for the major Jewish festivals. It's a precarious living.

M. is in love. He talked to us about the protocols of courtship in this deeply

conservative Moslem city, but M is conducting a long-distance relationship, kept alive by Skype and email, and the hope of meeting in several months' time. Then he said, 'At least they can't arrest my feelings'

Like M. we depend on Skype and emails to keep in touch. When I arrived back in Hebron three weeks ago, workmen were renovating one of the cave-like shops here in the Old City. We wondered what it would become. Another souvenir shop for the tourists, perhaps? Now we know. It's an internet cafe. An enterprising Palestinian has accumulated a dozen or so old computers, set up the necessary broadband provider, and opened a welcome window to the world. Late afternoon it's full of small boys – no girls, as yet – playing games. Later the older boys and young men take over. When we pass on our evening patrol, it's buzzing with activity. But we are not the only ones who patrol the Old City during the evening. We often encounter Israeli military patrols as well. Our fear is that they will find an excuse to close it down, as they did the cafe near the mosque last year. All they need to do is utter the word 'security' and another speck of freedom is lost.

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*



## Restore

*Forthcoming events arranged by Restore, a project of Birmingham Churches Together supporting refugees and asylum seekers.*

Restore's Annual Meeting and 12th Birthday celebration on Monday 6 June, 7.30-9.30pm at Birmingham Central Baptist Church, Ellen St, Hockley. Guest speaker Rt Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham. All welcome. Details 0121 236 0069 or [info@restore-uk.org](mailto:info@restore-uk.org)

Celebrating Sanctuary – Refugee Week, 20 to 26 June.

Festival events with refugee contributions include 'Songs of Sanctuary' on 18 June, featuring refugee artists and school performances, 11.00am – 4.00pm in the Symphony Hall foyers, and on 25 June all day at the MAC, Cannon Hill Park, workshops, activities and music. We would value your support at these fun days.

'Who is fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary?' Information sessions on asylum issues and training on befriending on Wednesdays 8, 15 and 22 June 2.00-4.00pm at St Johns Church, Vivian Road entrance, Harborne, and Thursdays 30 June, 7 & 14 July 7.30-9.30pm at St Georges Community Hub, Great Hampton Row, Newtown. More details from Jeremy Thompson 0121 236 0069 or [befriend@restore-uk.org](mailto:befriend@restore-uk.org).

## Annual Retreat St. Oswald's Pastoral Centre

The year turns full circle...and from 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June, I will be on retreat at St. Oswald's Pastoral Centre in Sleights, a house run by the Sisters of the Order of the Holy Paraclete (often referred to as the Whitby Sisters). Broadly speaking, Benedictine rule is followed: four acts of worship daily, with silence being observed from after Compline until after Morning Prayer and breakfast the following morning. For the past few years, I have been self-catering... eating alone, but sharing fully in other aspects of the life of the community: a reasonable walk and a very steep hill separate the centre from the nearest village shop, so I have to be very organized in respect of shopping! I spend my time reading, writing, walking and at worship; other than participation in community worship, it is perfectly possible to go through 24 hours and more without speaking to anybody else – very different from the normal tenor of my working life.

Whilst a retreat is intended to be a time of 'otherness', I am always pleased to take specific prayer requests away with me: these will be offered in prayer in a more consistent, disciplined and frequent way than is sometimes possible in the midst of all the busyness of Birmingham. Additionally, I make a point of writing to all those who pass on prayer requests for me to take away. So...please don't hesitate to pass on your concerns, whatever they might be: word of mouth, writing, 'phone, email or other are all fine! Rest assured that all will be treated in confidence. I continue to feel that this week is central to my ministry, rather than 'time out'.

Neil



*'Supporting independence from alcohol and tackling homelessness'*

### Celebrating Sanctuary and SIFA Fireside Music Group

Wednesday 8 June, 2.00pm

Kurdish musicians Bland Mahdi and Dilan Azad team up with the SIFA Fireside music group for this summer lunchtime concert. Come along and hear classic songs including "Message to you Rudy" along with traditional Irish and Kurdish music, and enjoy this sharing of tunes in a warm and hospitable setting

At SIFA Fireside, 18-28 Lower Essex Street. 0121 6227250. Free Entry

## Campaigns.....

### Vulture Funds

**F**antastic news. The Government has announced that the law clamping down on Third World Debt profiteering (so-called vulture funds) is to become permanent.

Vulture funds sue some of the world's poorest countries for full repayment of debts they buy up cheaply. In April 2010 an Act of Parliament - the Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Act – was passed which restricts the ability of Vulture funds to sue the poorest countries in UK courts, a favourite jurisdiction of the funds. The Act represents the first of its kind anywhere in the world, and attracted cross-party support in the UK.

The Act was due to expire in June 2011, as a result of a 'sunset clause' in the legislation, but the government has now announced it will be made permanent. The law has already saved Liberia \$40million, and successfully kept vulture funds out of UK courts.

The vultures are still allowed to operate in UK territories such as Jersey, so there is still more work to be done. The Act has not yet been extended to cover all UK overseas territories and dependencies. A US vulture fund, FG Hemisphere, is currently suing the Democratic Republic of Congo, the second poorest country in the world, for \$100 million in courts in Jersey.

There is a postcard campaign now to change the Jersey Government's mind. If you would like postcards please contact Audrey Miller on 0121 471 4175 or [jubileedebt@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jubileedebt@blueyonder.co.uk).

JDC Noticeboard Issue 74, May 2011.

### World Bank and Fossil Fuels

**S**ince January, worldwide pressure on the World Bank to stop funding fossil fuel power has seen it withdraw plans to invest in coal power in some countries. This is genuine progress - and it's all thanks to people like you taking action.

The World Bank will review its energy strategy at its international board meeting in July, so we're running out of time to make our demands heard. We need to make sure the Bank maintains the ban on coal, extends it to all countries and commits to clean, affordable and reliable energy for all. Please write to your MP and ask that the UK government keep up the pressure on the World Bank. Thanks for campaigning with Christian Aid.

Sarah Whittington  
Climate Change Campaign Manager, Christian Aid



## Millennium Development Goals

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.

Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

### Did I Read it Right?

*Seen in a Laundromat:*

Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out

*Posted on a toilet door:*

Toilet out of order..... please use floor below

*Displayed in a London department store:*

Bargain basement upstairs

*On the office noticeboard:*

Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken

After tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board

*Notice in health food shop window:*

Closed due to illness

*Spotted in a safari park:*

Elephants please stay in your car

*Notice in a farmer's field:*

The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges.

*On a repair shop door:*

We can repair anything (please knock hard on the door - the bell doesn't work)



Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor,  
Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX  
or by email to [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk).

## Room Hire at Carrs Lane

Carrs Lane Church Centre is in Birmingham city centre and within a few minutes walk of New Street and Moor Street train Stations and the National Express Coach Station. Public car parking and bus stops are also nearby.

The Conference Rooms on offer at Carrs Lane are of several sizes and situated on three floors. We can support most types of events. Rooms can accommodate from 6 up to 350 delegates. You will find that our prices are very competitive. Our staff will be pleased to discuss ideas for your event with you and advise on the suitability of our facilities.

Hot and cold drinks can be supplied in the meeting rooms as often as required. Buffet meals can be pre-ordered. These range from a simple sandwich menu to a full buffet

Full details and prices are available on our website, [www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk), or you may call the conference team on 0121 643 6151 if you have any questions or email [booking@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:booking@carrslane.co.uk).



**Carrs Lane**  
**FAIR TRADE SHOP**

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**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

## Carrs Lane Regular Activities

### SUNDAYS

<b>Morning Worship</b>	Every Sunday at 10.30am with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month
<b>Afternoon Worship and Healing Service</b>	Third Sunday at 4.30pm
<b>Children's Church</b>	Second Sunday at 2.30pm
<b>Radical Worship</b>	Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm
<b>First Sunday Lunch</b>	First Sunday each month at 12.30pm
<b>Church Meeting</b>	Second Sunday at 12 noon
<b>Singing Group</b>	Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

### WEEK DAYS

<b>Lunchtime Healing Service</b>	Every Wednesday 1.15pm
<b>Prayer Group</b>	First Wednesday at 7.00 pm
<b>Discussion Group</b>	First Thursday at 10.15 am
<b>Carrs Lane Players (drama group)</b>	Fridays at 7.45 pm
<b>Charity Knitting Circle</b>	First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
<b>Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop</b>	First and Third Sunday after morning worship and Tuesday - Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm
<b>Counselling Centre</b>	Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

### Contact details for Carrs Lane Church

Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX

Telephone 0121 643 6151

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[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)