

Journey



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

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Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

A time for every matter under heaven... Sometimes these familiar words from Ecclesiastes help me greatly when I worry that I may be facing in too many directions at once! During May, Carrs Lane will be hosting – and I will be speaking at – the annual meeting of the Congregational Historical Society: essays have been reprinted, the dust has been blown off some of R.W. Dale's books, Georgian silver will be taken from the safe and the keynote speaker will be talking about, 'R.W.Dale and the ministers of Carrs Lane'. I am pretty sure that I won't get any mention during the talk since, after all, this is a meeting of an historical society! At the same time, May brings with it events and opportunities where the focus will, unashamedly, be on the present: the Synod 'Fun and Faith' Day for children at Carrs Lane on 7th May will channel spiritual, mental and physical energy into a particular place at a particular time (albeit in the hope of fostering Christian growth); equally, the Plant Sale at Trinity URC in Hall Green on 14th May will offer specific opportunities at a particular time...even if the plants are purchased in the hope of sustained growth! Yet for people of faith, the promise of – and challenges presented by – the future often features in our worship and is taken up in our private prayers. On 21st May, I will be preaching at the induction of Rev. Peter Little, as he takes on the pastorate of Wilton, Road URC, in addition to service in South Aston: whilst such services mark a prayerful, hopefully inspirational and emphatic start to ministry, there is always the expectation that vision will be offered, and encouragement provided for the coming days. Equally, I must share in a number of 'planning' meetings... in relation to future ecumenical promise, the national multicultural event at Carrs Lane in September and more besides.

Jesus...the same yesterday, today and forever: more familiar words from Scripture. Sometimes, it seems to me that these words are used in ways that amount to little more than platitudes, a kind of cozy, biblical 'cover-all'; for me, they amount to far, far more than this. We do live in demanding times; many of us have to face in many directions at the same time; whilst we acknowledge that the Christian life is necessarily a life lived in constant tension, not least as the ways of the Kingdom clash with the ways of the world, we do not always know how to cope well with this. It seems to me that we do well to dwell on the constants, the unvarying, the 'ever-presents' of faith. The God who stands outside of the time that has been fashioned is the same God who brings order within time, speaking through familiar voices and resourcing constantly by the Spirit. Faith needs to be grounded in such seemingly simple facts: profound truth doesn't necessarily require many tomes if it is to be imbued with life...and I commend, 'yesterday, today and forever' as an effective breathing prayer to be used often in these times.

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,



Sunday Worship during May

Sunday 1st May

10.30am Morning Worship, including the Lord's Supper, led by Pamela Turner
All are invited to stay and share in First Sunday Lunch at the close of worship
Neil Riches will be at Bockleton for the weekend, acting as a team leader at a residential event for 120 members of the BB in Birmingham

Sunday 8th May

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Johnson
All are invited to stay and share in the Church Meeting at 12 noon.
Neil Riches is leading morning worship at Trinity URC, Hall Green, but aims to be at Carrs Lane for the second half of the Church Meeting!
2.45pm for 3.00pm Kidz Aloud – A Children's Church - Godly Play focused on the theme of 'Communion'

Sunday 15th May

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches - Key passage: John 10.1 – 10
4.00pm for 4.30pm Service of Healing and Communion led by Neil Riches

Sunday 22nd May

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches - Key passage: John 14.1 – 14
Notes for next Sunday morning's Quaker 'style' worship will be available today
Members of The Girls' Brigade in Birmingham meet for their annual service of thanksgiving and celebration at Carrs Lane during the afternoon
6.00pm Radical Worship focused on a fellowship meal:
don't eat before you come!

Sunday 29th May

10.30am Morning Worship facilitated by Neil Riches
This act of worship will follow the Quaker 'style', but there will be some visual elements to the service and an opportunity to sing

About People

We send our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of Margaret Tonks, and of Andy Bond, a former member of Carrs Lane, who died in April.

There is an unfortunate misprint in my article about the John Hick Symposium in the April Journey. In the last paragraph, I described John as being 'very charming and IRENICAL', which came out as 'very charming and ironical'. One thing John is not is ironical, but he is irenical. I invite you to look it up!
Simon Rowntree

Tons of Money - Carrs Lane Players are grateful for the tremendous support for their performances in February of 'Tons of money'. We have beaten our previous record for attendances and, as a result, were able to send a donation of £1000 to our chosen charity 'Home From Hospital Care'.

Notices

Tuesday 10th May Connecting Christians in the Heart of the City
Believing in Birmingham Annual General Meeting at St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter 7.30pm. The main discussion will be the future of Believing in Birmingham. All welcome.

Friday 13 May Congregational Historical Society Study Afternoon and AGM Carrs Lane – from 1.00pm

The programme for the afternoon follows; if you would like to come for lunch (£4) and stay until tea at 4.30pm, please let me know. The dust will be blown off all manner of goodies from the past! The AGM of the Society is for members only. Thanks. Neil

1.00pm – 2.00pm Lunch

2.00pm Neil Riches speaking on 'valued legacy, current challenge'

2.45pm Exhibition, tour etc... (the official programme for the day speaks optimistically of 'artefacts and treasures' – I will have to work on this! N)

3.30pm Dr. Alan Argent speaking on 'R.W.Dale and ministers of Carrs Lane'

4.30pm Tea

4.45pm AGM

5.15pm Departure

Saturday 14 May Gardeners' Sale
10.30am – 12.30pm at Trinity URC, Etwell Road, Hall Green. Refreshments available. Lots of bargains – shrubs, bedding plants, gardening items etc. All proceeds to TroopAid

Christian Aid Week 15-21 May 2011



Warley Woods Methodist Church, Bearwood. Saturday 21 May **Praying with Colour**. Saturday 18 June **Praying with Clay**. No artistic skills required. From 10.30 to 3.30. An offering of £10 per day is asked to cover expenses. Days may be booked individually or together. Further details and booking form from: Sr. Morag Gardham La Retraite 12 Clifford Road, Bearwood, Smethwick B67 5HJ 0121 434 5184 or email: mfgardham@talktalk.net

Saturday 21 May Many Voices 2011
11.30am – 1.30pm at St Philip's Cathedral. Each year we've heard over 40 languages from around the world and have raised over £7,000 towards Restore's work with refugees and people seeking sanctuary from persecution. We are looking for people to participate through singing, reading or speaking. Details from Jeremy Thompson, 0121 236 0069, befriend@restore-uk.org.



Monday 6 June Operation Noah
4pm Annual supporters meeting and 6pm special seminar "The Climate Crisis: Why is nothing Happening? A Social, Political and Moral Perspective on Obstacles to Action". Seminar led by Lynn McDonald University Professor Emerita at the University of Guelph and former member of the Canadian Parliament. At Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. To confirm attendance contact Natalie Hall Operation Noah administrator 07804059426 admin@operationnoah.org

Monday 6 June Restore's Annual Meeting and 12th Birthday Celebration at 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed. Please put the date in your diary and join us. Keynote speaker: Rt Revd David Urquhart, Anglican Bishop of Birmingham. Hear reflections on Restore's work in 2010, enjoy refreshments and share together.

12 June Plans are underway to hold an outdoor service in Victoria Square on Pentecost Sunday from 4.00pm to 5.30pm Open to all Christians from across the Churches and Christian traditions. The 60th Anniversary of Birmingham Christian Council of Churches will be marked during the event. *Please keep this afternoon free.* More details in May's edition of BEN

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 7.30 - 9.15pm St Martin's Church in the Bull Ring. ***Faith Awareness and the Christ we share***
13 June Towards understanding Muslims. 20 June Towards understanding Hindus. 27 June Towards understanding Sikhs. Contact Pall Singh, East West Trust 0781 303 8756 email Eastandwesttrust@aol.com £5 donation welcomed for a session, but please contribute as you're able.

Monday 13 June Queen's Foundation, Edgbaston, 10.30-3.45pm 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 for helping us grapple with contemporary mission and ministry. Price £15.

Would you be interested in becoming a volunteer at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospitals, being part of a large, multi-faith team; visiting patients on the ward, or assisting with Sunday services? The next Volunteer Training Programme for the Chaplaincy will be held on six consecutive Thursday evenings 9th June – 14th July, 7-9pm Light refreshments provided. The course will include listening skills; insights toward visiting; key information about different faiths; how we respond to our own health issues; with opportunities to speak to existing volunteers and to meet chaplains from the various faiths. For more information contact Revd Susan Shewring or Revd Dr. Barry Clark Chaplaincy Office 0121 371 4574

National Multicultural Celebration at Carrs Lane 10.00am – 4.00pm Saturday 24th September 2011
Keynote Speakers: Mrs Val Morrison, Assembly Moderator, Rev. Nigel Uden. Very, very early notice of this, I know...but those of you who helped with the last event of the nature will recall that it was a phenomenally busy and demanding day! Again, we are expecting 350 visitors from around the country for worship, workshops... with demonstrations of dance, song, drama, poetry, drumming, textiles, art and goodness knows what else. Among the many challenges of the day, all the visitors have to be fed a hot lunch in less than an hour (and, yes, lessons have been learned following the 2009 event!) So, make a note of the date and commit to volunteer for an hour or two.

Thanks, Neil



Margaret Tonks (1933-2011)

We heard with sadness of Margaret's death in April.

Margaret had been taken to Weoley Castle Church by her parents from a small child, and it was there that she met Harold Tonks, who later became one of the ministers at Carrs Lane URC.

Before her death she sadly renounced her life-long faith, and this was reflected in the cremation service attended by all her family and friends, including some from Carrs Lane. There was just one hymn, a reading by her daughter-in-law, Sally, and a poem read by her grandson, Sam, with a brief address by a minister.

Margaret had battled with M.S. for over 40 years, fighting each loss of ability long after others would have given up. She also saw a positive side to her illness, taking advantage of reduced prices for wheelchair users for theatre and concert tickets, and was at the ballet only weeks before her death. Despite her difficulties she managed to keep her illness from her four children until after they had left home. She always ran her family home unaided, and provided their meals on time however she was feeling. When the children were a bit older she also found time to work with young people considering abortion through the British Pregnancy Advice Service.

During Harold's 17 year ministry at Carrs Lane Margaret made her own important contribution to the life of the church. It may be hard to think of a lot of the present congregation as young mums, but we were - once! Margaret saw a need for support and set up a monthly day at the manse, hosted by herself, and it was so welcome to all who came. It enabled those with several little ones to relax, knowing that someone was watching over them, and to have a few hours to rest and chat. For those who were new to Carrs Lane it was an opportunity to meet people and form lasting friendships.

Also, without Margaret, I wonder if there would be the thriving Traidcraft Stall there is now? It was her idea when people were far less aware of such issues. The Prayer Group too was something that she involved herself in. She left a legacy for all time to Carrs Lane, and it is sad that her last days at the church were unhappy ones through circumstances not of her making. I find it sad that, to my knowledge, she was never again involved in any regular church life.

We all have personal memories of Margaret, including in our case, some shared holiday times. Then there was the wine-tasting evening in Zweibrucken which got very merry because she didn't believe in discarding the wine! In more recent times after a concert I was left in mid-sentence as Margaret hit the wrong button on her buggy and took off, scattering people as she went! (I've since done that myself and can sympathise) Margaret did not have time to enjoy her new flat in New Oscott Village, which is sad. She will be remembered for her achievements and for the battle she fought with her illness. She saw all her children achieve success and happiness, and had the joy of her grandchildren which, at times, she must have felt she would never see. We remember her with great affection.

Margaret Cross

Meet the Producers



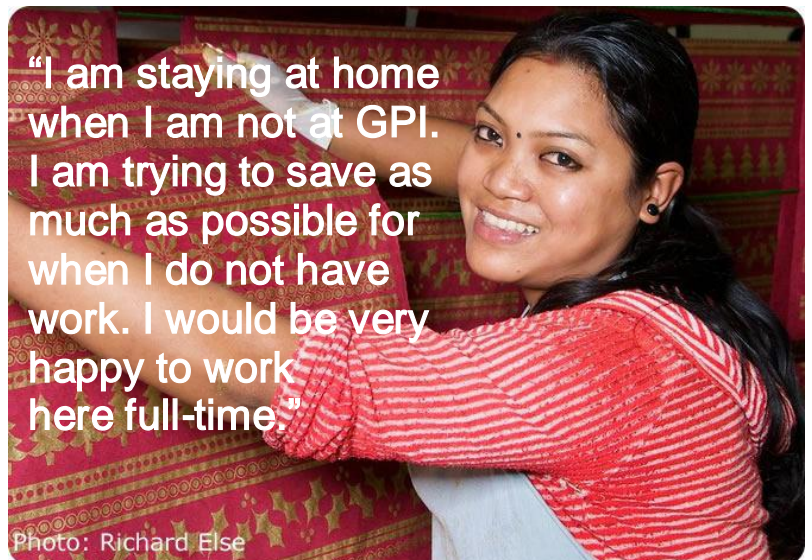
“Without the money I earn, it is impossible to run my house and provide for my family”

Photo: Richard Else

Buying Traidcraft’s handmade paper products from Nepal not only provides employment for Rome, but also helps to send his daughter Rashmi to school. Rome has worked at Get Paper Industries (GPI) in Kathmandu for more than 19 years. While he is making handmade paper, Rashmi and her brother, Rohit, are studying nearby at the Anita Milan School – thanks to scholarships provided by GPI.

Traidcraft has been trading with GPI since 2004. Around 100 workers have permanent positions, but it also provides seasonal employment and in 2010 more than 550 women got the opportunity to work for about seven months.

Seasonal worker, Ganga Shrestha, depends on orders from organisations like Traidcraft to give her work. Like many of the women working at GPI, she did not go to school. She learned how to read through informal classes run by friends who lived nearby.



“I am staying at home when I am not at GPI. I am trying to save as much as possible for when I do not have work. I would be very happy to work here full-time.”

Photo: Richard Else



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Fighting poverty through trade

Traidcraft was set up not just to sell fairly traded products but to train and support producer groups in other practical ways. That’s why when you buy products from

GPI, a percentage of its profits goes to its sister organisation, GWP, which delivers social activities including educating girls and promoting HIV/AIDS awareness.

Come to Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop and see these beautiful cards, as well as notelets in a handmade paper box and gift wrap from Nepal. Buy something and help people like Rome and Ganga improve their lives. World Fair Trade Day 2011 is on 14 May. Why not come and buy something new to you? Try it or give it to a friend. Carrs Lane Fair Trade shop is open Tuesday through to Friday all year round.

Seven Days: 15 – 21 May - One Goal; an End to Poverty

Be part of it - Include the world's poorest people in your prayers on Sunday 15 May

For more than 50 years Christian Aid Week has brought churches together in an ecumenical act of witness, raising money to end poverty. Christian Aid Week is an opportunity for churches to demonstrate God's call to love all people by working together to end poverty. You could join thousands of others in Britain and Ireland, praying for all people living in poverty and for those who will go out during Christian Aid Week to raise funds. When the churches in Britain and Ireland work together, combining their prayers, voices and generosity, profound change is possible. Will you join us in prayer? Simply use the prayer below on Sunday 15 May.

Loving God,
Believing that we are all made in your image,
We pray for justice, peace and an end to poverty.
Believing in the miracle of your love,
We pray for a dismantling of all systems that oppress.
Believing in the promise of creation made whole,
We pray for the vision of a new earth.
As we are made in your image,
May we live in your image and be Christ-like,
In service, endurance and love.



www.christianaid.org.uk

Birmingham Christian Homeless Forum

The Homeless Forum meets every two months when it gathers together representatives of a wide variety of local projects, centres and outreach initiatives for mutual support and the sharing of news and concerns. At a recent Forum meeting, for example, a cross section of organisations contributed to the discussion, including the Birmingham YMCA, Betel, St Martin's Help Desk, Jesus Army, Soup Run and Housing Justice. The main issue that faces the homeless sector is the cut in services due to the redirection and reduction of central funding at a time when the number of people being recognised as homeless is increasing. As a consequence, there is mounting pressure upon the remaining provision as hostels, drop-in centres and other services struggle to cope with the needs of growing numbers of vulnerable people.

To ground the present situation in human terms, I offer to you a case study that comes from the St Martin's Help Desk which is the story of one person's struggle to access support in our city:

This case concerns a 50 year old lady with bipolar and arthritis. She came to us having fled domestic violence. She was clearly vulnerable; she had never been

homeless before and had spent the previous two days sitting in McDonalds. She had no money left and no paperwork. We helped her get emergency housing but she wasn't given any practical support.

She was in a B&B then left in a bedsit for 5 days with no money, no food, nothing with which to pay for electricity or for travel to get to appointments. Because of her arthritis she found walking very painful and her mobility was limited. At one point she only had just over a pound credit on the electricity which she was saving to make hot drinks, she was unable to heat the bedsit which exacerbated the pain caused by her arthritis.

We tried to make a referral to social services and explained her situation. They said that they couldn't help because her problems were essentially financial. They said that they couldn't help her with food or heating despite her situation.

While we were working with her we visited her several times and bought her food and several bus tickets; we have helped her register with a GP and paid for a birth certificate to use as ID. Eventually Women's Aid took out food parcels and her Benefits claim started to be paid. Women's Aid is working with her to sort out longer term accommodation.

The Soup Run is no longer meeting on the car park of St Michael's Church, and this has raised questions about possible new locations for this nightly service, also it highlights more fundamental questions about the future of this network of churches and other Christian groups. The Forum is offering support to the Soup Run as it faces these challenges, and we wish to make an appeal to the members of 'Believing in Birmingham' asking you to consider how you may be able to help. There is need for a whole range of projects offering different types of support to the whole range of people who find themselves in need on our streets. To lose the Soup Run would mean that one type of support was no longer available to those who benefit from the sense of community that can be created by it each night.

We were sad to say good bye to Steve Oakey of 'Street2Home' when he emigrated to Canada in March. Steve is well respected among professionals working in the homeless sector and well loved by many members of the Street Community because of his selfless outreach work in Birmingham city centre over the past 10 years. He will be greatly missed.

During the month of May the Homeless Forum will be undertaking its own Street Count in order to assess whether the official figures about street homeless reflect the actual reality of the situation in Birmingham. We continue to hold the '(Off the) Street Banquet' on a regular basis at Carrs Lane Church, this is a time to re-live Jesus' parable of the Great Feast. On Easter Day we celebrated with a Banquet, and remembered how the Risen Jesus met his friends over food. There is an opportunity for the Forum to enter into a partnership with the national Christian charity Housing Justice through the appointment of a worker, the financing of this post is being considered by our members at present.

Remember, the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head.

Neil Johnson

University and Airport Chaplaincy

In November 2007, Major Vic Kennedy asked me if I was interested in joining a new Free Church Chaplaincy Team at Aston University. I had very little idea of what chaplaincy was about, and I'd never studied at University, but with Hope 2008 around the corner, I was keen to have a go at engaging with the local community. Eighteen months later, a chance (?) conversation with a certain *War Cry* seller in Solihull introduced me to airport chaplaincy, since which time I've spent three years exploring what chaplaincy is about.

Some quotes I've come across include 'It's the ministry of the wave' (Major Brian Snell), 'It's about loitering with Christian intent' and 'Building relationships' (SA Chaplains' conference 2010), 'It's about eating cupcakes, drinking tea, and casting out demons' (Captain Danielle Strickland).

My own experiences include plenty of waving, nodding, smiling, chatting, listening, loitering, drinking tea, attending and leading prayers, meditations and services, to which can be added serving and eating cake, soup, chilli, pizza, hot dogs etc, prayer walking, supporting other chaplains, feeding babies, playing with toddlers at a university nursery, hosting meetings and lunches, getting lost in the bowels of the airport, plating Wii, praying for folk and moving furniture but I have not been asked to cast out any demons ... yet!

I never know quite what the day will bring, or what influence I will have, so as I walk onto the university campus, or across the airport car park, I have to hand it all over to God, and pray he will guide, bless and protect whatever I do and say. The verse that helps me believe I am making a difference is 'But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.' (2 Corinthians 2. 14 NIV)

Hazel Ellison
Citadel Scene Winter 2010

HS2 = Sustainable Transport and Jobs?

As the Hi-Speed 2 station's access route will extend via a walkway across the Ring Road on to Carrs Lane's pavement I thought our readers would be interested in this article. Ed.



A lot has been written, said and shouted about the proposed High-Speed route from the Midlands to London. It would be easy to characterise the new route as a line of concrete and metal destroying the landscape with no regard to the environment in the name of progress. However, High-Speed Rail is not air travel or coal-fired power stations, trains themselves are not inherently bad for the

environment. In fact trains are a key part of any sustainable transport system. For something like High-Speed Rail the question as to whether it is a “good” thing depends on the specific plans in question and the circumstances in which they are being pursued. So the question is not whether High-Speed rail is good or bad, but whether High-Speed rail fulfils the criteria for a low-carbon, sustainable form of transport that will regenerate the economy and be socially inclusive for everyone to use.

Firstly will it be low carbon by getting people to leave other less carbon-intensive forms of transport? Well the travel times would suggest yes, with London to Birmingham completed in about 40 minutes, faster than any other form of transport currently on offer. However, there are no flights between London and Birmingham, so it is not low carbon by increasing modal shift from air to train. Added to which, high-speed trains are much more energy intensive than normal services, so if people are going from conventional rail to high speed, they are actually switching to a more carbon intensive form of transport. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the electricity to power the trains will probably not come from renewable sources.

Moreover for trains going further north to Manchester or Scotland, where there is an air market to take passengers from, trains would only be going at high-speed until the Midlands before switching to conventional rail. This is because the new trains would not tilt into curves, meaning they would actually run slower than the current tilting trains. If the route is extended beyond the Midlands (which is by no means certain), then one has the extra carbon cost of building a longer route against the greater carbon saving of achieving modal shift from an actual existing air service between Scotland, the North and London. In fact the Government’s own report into the route admitted it would only achieve carbon parity (taking into account energy costs of building and running the route) if it went all the way to Scotland.

A further problem with the proposals in terms of delivering a low-carbon sustainable transport system, is that it risks taking money from local and regional transport projects. For example, how would many people in South Birmingham feel if the re-opening of the line to Moseley and Kings Heath could no longer happen because of a lack of funds, while at Curzon Street Station at the same time there was a brand new shiny high speed line running between Birmingham and London? While there is an argument that the new route will create capacity for more local trains on the existing network, this will also mean that certain areas, such as Coventry, will lose their current fast and frequent connection to London. Added to which, there are probably cheaper ways to have more spaces for more trains, such as more tracks or passing loops and better signalling.

The next thing to consider is whether the new route will benefit the region economically. Its proposers argue that it will create jobs and investment in the region. This is probably true, invest billions in any major infrastructure project, and it will almost certainly create jobs and some amount of investment in any area. The question here is whether the jobs being created will match the labour pool in the Midlands, or will these jobs be filled by people outside the region? And more importantly is this the most cost-efficient way of creating these jobs, could we create

more jobs that are more permanent in the region using less money? For example, how many jobs could be created by upgrading and expanding the local and regional rail network? Or by building new rolling stock to expand capacity on the current network?

Furthermore with a quick link between London and Birmingham, the risk is that the line is used as a commuter route for people to live in the Midlands and commute to London, hardly a sustainable idea, and provides no regeneration for the region, instead contributing to the greater economic power of the London and South East region. If this sounds far-fetched, one just has to consider comments by Paul Kehoe, Chief Executive of Birmingham Airport, who stated that the airport could become Heathrow's third runway with High-Speed Rail linking it to the capital. If Birmingham could become London's new airport with the quick travel time provided by High-Speed Rail then why not the Midlands the new London commuter belt?

The final consideration is social inclusivity, who will the line actually benefit? Firstly it will only benefit people who live near the ends of the route, there will be few if any intermediate stations between the Midlands and London, meaning the only people it will actually benefit in terms of higher speeds will be people in Birmingham and London and, as we have already mentioned, some people in some areas will actually lose services. Also tickets to travel on these services will not be cheap and certainly more expensive than current services to London, and so the question of who can actually afford to travel on these shiny new trains also arises. The worry is it will only be affordable to people travelling on business, fuelling the feeling that it is just a vanity project that will result in a rich-man's railway.

"Well what would you suggest?" I hear you cry? And I admit there is a temptation to back the new project because it appears green, and as environmentalists we often find ourselves opposing every new big project that comes along, which makes it even more tempting to support this idea. But as I hope I have already shown, the current High-Speed plans aren't green, they won't benefit the regional economy and aren't socially inclusive. If we were building a high-speed railway from Scotland down to the Midlands and then the South, I could possibly see the benefits, a longer distance where High-Speed makes more sense, and starting construction at the end of the country with the worse transport links (Scotland and the North) as opposed to the best (London and the South East), but these plans do not do that, the line is not certain ever to reach Scotland. Added to which, should we not be questioning the nature of needing more capacity? While there are those who say the railway will be full if we do not build this route, there are some who argue that travel demand will begin to plateau, questioning the entire need for more routes in the first place. But instead of arguing over the need for more or less long distance travel, how about we invest this money in strengthening local and regional links, so we have good quality services in our area that benefit local people, and keep our investment in the region as well as truly strengthening our local economy? So instead of just being against High-Speed 2 how about we are also massively for Regional Rail 1?

Julien Pritchard
Birmingham Friends of the Earth Newsletter Apr-May 11

Carrs Lane Lectures 2010

In October 2010 we returned to dialogue with other faiths, and arranged sessions with two Hindu and two Sikh speakers. We followed the subject areas we had used in 2007, namely, *'Hindu/Sikh perceptions of God'* and *'Living as a Hindu/Sikh in 21st century Britain'*. We were extremely fortunate to have the Rev Dr John Parry of Northern College in Manchester to moderate each session. He established an excellent rapport with each speaker, not least because he had met them all and knew some very well, but also due to his own extensive knowledge and experience of these faiths. Because of this, we felt the dialogue aspect worked better than in 2007.

As always, we are extremely grateful to those in Carrs Lane who support this activity, especially the volunteers who make the occasions such a success. Carol continues to provide invaluable support in the Office, and we are very grateful to other Centre staff for their help in preparing for the evenings.

Plans are almost complete for the 2011 series. This will be under the general title of *'Radical Re-thinking of Christian Theology'*, and two lectures each will be given by Professors Paul Knitter and Roger Haight, both from the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Paul will speak on *'What is Atonement?'* and *'Is there Life after Death?'*, and Roger on *'Who was Jesus?'* and *'What is the Trinity?'* All four evenings will be chaired by Dr David Cheetham, Senior Lecturer in the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham.

We have already met Paul when he was in Birmingham for the recent symposium in honour of John Hick, and have been in touch with Roger on a regular basis. We believe they will be very challenging speakers, and we hope they will attract a large audience. We are already working on the publicity.

Both will have some time in Birmingham between lectures, although they both have commitments elsewhere. Roger, a Jesuit, is happy to offer an additional session on spirituality based on Ignatian practices, and we are considering how best to organise this, possibly during the day time.

As yet, we have no specific plans for 2012. We took on responsibility for the lecture series in 2004, and feel it is appropriate to consider its future, not least in the light of the emergence of the united church. There also comes a time when it may be right to end our involvement. These discussions are ongoing, and Elders and Church Meeting will be kept informed of our thinking.

Julie Grove and Simon Rowntree



On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle May 1911

The L.M.S. Scholars' Pageant (by M.P)

In these days when so much of our own and our children's education is conveyed by means of Pageants and pictures, it is not wonderful that lovers of Missions should fall in with this tendency and the work of the foreign field should be shown to the children in the form which most appeals to our times.

Certainly one of the prettiest pictures seen in Birmingham of late was in the Town Hall on the occasion of the Scholars' Missionary Pageant, when a rainbow-hued procession of children and young people filled its aisles, singing as they marched the stately pageant music from "The Orient." From North and South, from East and West they came," and one might have imagined that the veritable children of China, India, Samoa, Africa and Madagascar were in our midst – but for their bonny English faces – in the distinctive costumes of those countries

A large audience of children and friends gave rapt attention to the programme.

The first tableau showed the Roman slave-market and Bishop Gregory, who, filled with pity and indignation at the sale of the children who are "not Angles but angels," vows to send the Gospel to their land if he becomes Pope.

The second scene represented the reception of St Augustine as Pope Gregory's Missionary to King Ethelbert and his Queen, and the introduction of Christianity into our own land, which has since done so much to spread the Gospel then heard for the first time.

The scholars of Kings Norton school then presented a pathetic picture of Zenana life in India. The sorrowful life of a child widow was vividly realised, as well as the new joy and hope the coming of a lady missionary may bring into darkened and ignorant lives.

Hymns in Tamil and Samoan were rendered by scholars from Acocks Green and Saltley Road, followed by a sketch entitled "Darkness and Light in Madagascar," by Carrs Lane scholars and friends. The scene represented a heathen Malagasy village, where, with hideous native chant and drum, the villagers perform their evening demon worship. Some of the degrading customs of the country were graphically portrayed in a dialogue between two women. To this village comes a band of Christian Hova merchants from the capital, who, invited to sup and spend the night, very soon proclaim the Gospel of Christ, which is eagerly received by these worshippers of spirits.

The merchant band sang, with much sweetness and pathos, the Malagasy martyr's hymn, and closed the scene with "Abide with me" in Malagasy. A repetition of the Pageant March brought to an end a most successful and impressive Pageant.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – May 1961

Aldermaston 1961 (by L.N. Tedstone)

I wonder if you ask the same questions that people have been asking my wife and me since we came back from the Aldermaston March. Such questions as “Do you expect to achieve anything by the March?” or “Was it worth it?” or “Do you really think the Government takes any notice of you?”

Consider the demonstrators of the Suffragette Movement or those of the Tolpuddle Martyrs’ time, or maybe the opponents of the Slave Trade. Obviously, as they demonstrated, they did not know if the Government would take notice, and no doubt many bystanders shook their heads as they do when the Aldermaston Marchers pass by, but history has proved that the governments of those days took notice, and our Government must be no less sensitive to public opinion.

We, therefore march in faith; faith that before the world is made into a foetid mass of decaying humanity, people and Governments will be stirred into action.

No newspaper article, radio or T.V. broadcast can ever have captured a fraction of the experience we got by being on the March. Here is the answer to those who say it is impossible to get agreement on big issues. Where else could you see Christians marching with Communists, Teddy Boy and Trade Unionist, Baptist and Beatnik, together with the representatives of the ‘difficult’ countries such as U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. or Arabs and Israelites; side by side in a common cause.

No one asked his neighbour why he was marching. Creed, Colour, Status, Political Opinion were all forgotten in a Hope common to all. I was introduced to a member of the Communist Party by a Quaker; I gave lifts to many students at odd times; I also thumbed lifts with members of the stage, met the Managing Director of a company we do business with, and sat on the grass eating our meal alongside a couple who were making ‘The March’ their honeymoon.

We gave of our time and energy to take part in Aldermaston because we believe that peaceful demonstration is something of which we in a democracy should avail ourselves. But what we gave is infinitesimal compared with what we got from the March. It rekindled our faith in, and love of, our fellowmen as nothing else has ever done before. We remember the words of five friends, who marched for the first time this year, as they reached Trafalgar Square – “This is an experience we would not have missed for worlds.” But we were not greedy – just one world is enough – and we marched because we want to keep that one fit for God’s People.

I feel that these extracts reflect powerfully their times – in one case the height of the British Empire (this was the year of the Delhi Durbar for King George V and Queen Mary), and in the other the campaigning for nuclear disarmament around the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

Commitment for Life

Hope for Children in Gaza (from the March update)

Two years after the Israeli military offensive which brought death and destruction to Gaza, life in the Strip remains unremittingly bleak. Largely cut off from the rest of the world by Israel's blockade, it is now the most impoverished place in the Middle East. Children in particular are still traumatised by the events of early 2009, and their parents are increasingly unable to provide for their basic needs, such as shelter, clothes or food.

The Sunrise and Hope Centre in Khan Younis, run by Christian Aid partner Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA), offers children a safe place to play and learn, and to receive counselling to help them cope with their fears. It also encourages them to take an active interest in social issues. (The Protecting Children in Conflict project is funded by the European Union and Trust Greenbelt.) Recently children at the centre went out into the community to photograph instances of children working to draw attention to the issue of child labour. On a rubbish dump they found 11-year-old Fatima (the name has been changed).

Now attending CFTA workshops herself, where she studies Arabic, English and maths, Fatima recalls: 'I used to collect building materials from a rubbish tip and rubble from the main street, but then the police came so I had to travel to the beach to collect waste instead. I would collect two bags and get five shekels (£1). I would keep one shekel and give the rest to my mum to buy food for the family. I would start work at 6am and carry on until 10am when I would go to school. I was very tired.' Miryam Zakkout, CFTA's general director, believes that the centre offers children hope amidst their difficult circumstances: 'The centre is like a lighthouse for them to enjoy their life and learn important life skills. Even if the economic and social situation does not improve, there will always be a sunrise and hope.'

Voices from Jerusalem: Extracts provided as part of the awareness for the World Council of Churches initiative: World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, 29 May – 4 June

I come from Bethlehem and I work in Jerusalem. The journey to work used to take half an hour but now it takes two hours every morning. There are at least a thousand, sometimes two thousand people coming through here every morning. People come at two in the morning and sleep on cardboard so they can be near the front when the check point opens at five. *(Rasheed Mohamed, 35)*

For Jerusalem, I would like to be able to go back and forth and be at peace. I was always there, I used to buy clothes, eat, go around friends, come back at 10 or 11 o'clock. Where do I go now? *(a resident of Ramallah)*

We still hope Jerusalem is not a lost cause. I hope that we will have a Jerusalem without Occupation where people can be free and practise their lives. *(Palestinian Jerusalemite, Human Rights Worker)*

I belonged to the Anglican Church in Jerusalem and was a volunteer there. I arranged the flowers and was active with the women. Now I cannot go to Jerusalem; the Wall separates me from my church, from my life. All my life was in Jerusalem! I

was there daily. I worked there in a school as a volunteer and all my friends lived there. They took our land and with that they took our lives but our roots are here. The Palestinians will stay. I feel as if the Wall is built on my heart. I feel very sad. They took our land and because of that they took our lives. (*Antoinette Kinesevich, living near Rachel's Tomb*)

I can't go to Israel, they can't come here. It's just not life. We have a saying, 'What you like for yourself you like for everyone.' (*Mahmoud, a Jerusalem taxi driver*)

The Church Leaders of Jerusalem call on the political leaders to search for a new vision. In this city, in which God chose to speak to humanity and to reconcile peoples with himself and among themselves, we raise our voices to say that the paths followed up till now have not brought about peace for the city and have not reassured normal life for her inhabitants. Therefore they must be changed.

Jerusalem is the heart of Christianity for more than 2000 years, and it is the city that Jesus sat and cried over fearing that this part of the world will never see peace. The precious tears of Jesus are still deeply planted in the hearts and souls of the minority Christian Palestinians living in Jerusalem despite all the social, economic and political difficulties they face.

If you plan to get married and you fall in love with a partner who lives in the West Bank, then your suffering will start; because you would be unable to get this partner to live with you in Jerusalem due to the residence permit restriction imposed by the Israeli government in an attempt to minimise the number of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. This has forced a lot of couples to leave and reside in the West Bank, losing their residency rights in Jerusalem, or leave the country and seek for a better joint life anywhere in the world where they are offered the right to stay. (*a Christian Palestinian living in East Jerusalem*)

Jerusalem is my home. In my home I don't tolerate fighting and I encourage everyone to share. What don't some people understand about this? All my friends feel the way I do, but it will take a while to spread the word. (*Gila Svirsky, an Israeli Jew - www.gilasvirsky.com*)

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

Millennium Development Goals



Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

Please send your contribution for Journey to the Editor,
Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX
or by email to 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.

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Carrs Lane Regular Activities

SUNDAYS

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

WEEK DAYS

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

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