

# Journey



The continuing story

of

The Church at Carrs Lane

November 2013



## Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

**A**t our recent Synod in the centre of Birmingham, a number of things which I saw and heard struck me – challenged me – encouraged me. One particular phrase remains with me, however, which I feel that I need to share with everybody, the words of a former Chair of the Methodist Conference. As he moved around the country during his time in this office, many things delighted him and moved him as he shared (albeit briefly) in the life of many local churches; he was concerned, though, at the number of churches which appeared to be 'functionally atheist'. Functionally atheist. You may feel that this is a curious phrase, but it is one with which I have grappled during the last few weeks.

In a sense, I relish its starkness, for it contains the challenge – the reminder – that in everything that we do, we need to ensure that there is a 'Jesus dimension'. We are the People of the Way, and together we have to 'function' (not a particularly attractive word, I know, but the one which I have been given!) in a way which is demonstrably God-driven...rather than in a way which takes no account of the supreme presence of God. So, when we are thinking about pastoral responsibilities within the church, it is not simply a question of being 'nice' or caring in the way that many in the world behave: we have to ask, 'What is distinctive about the Christian way of offering care?' In our dealings with money, it is not simply a question of saying, 'We invest our money ethically and, at a personal level, try to give generously'. Instead, we have to ask: 'How does the radical teaching of Jesus on matters of money and wealth affect our decision making and our planning as a church?' When we are thinking about opportunities for fellowship, it is not simply a question of inviting those whom we know and like and with whom we are comfortable; we need to hear the words of Jesus which address this attitude directly...'even the heathens (sic.) do this'. I could carry on through every aspect of the life of the church...and similar questions and challenges would arise: 'church' is not simply about looking at the world and emulating its very *best* ways to the extent of our abilities – very often, it is about doing things in *radically* different ways, so that we, too, do not stand open to the charge that we are, 'functionally atheist'.

There may be those who are tempted to say, 'Well, we open and close all our meetings with prayer: doesn't that automatically set us apart from the world'. I would have to say, 'Not necessarily!' One eminent Methodist minister saw far too many churches for his liking against whom the charge of functional atheism could be laid. Let us work together to ensure that no-one could ever say it about us!

With love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,



## Sunday Worship during November

**Sunday 3 November** – 10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd John Craig  
*Worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch and the monthly lunchtime concert*

**Sunday 10 November** - 10.30am Morning worship for Remembrance Sunday led by Revd Neil Riches Key passage: Luke 20.27 – 38  
*Worship will be followed by the monthly church meeting at noon: all welcome*  
2.45pm Children's Church: 'Making waves' – the story of the parting of the Red Sea  
6pm Circuit Praise – informal worship in the Church Room

**Sunday 17 November** - 10.30am Morning worship led by Revd Neil Riches  
Key passage: Luke 21.5 – 19  
4pm Street Banquet: food, worship and fellowship inspired by Jesus' story of the Great Feast  
6pm Civic Service at St. Martin-in-the-Bull Ring Preacher: Revd Neil Riches

**Sunday 24 November** - 10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Johnson  
6pm Radical Church: continuing exploration of Old Testament perspectives on justice

## Worship at The Church at Carrs Lane during Advent and Christmas 2013

**Sunday 1st December: first Sunday of Advent** - 10.30am : 'Walk in the Light'  
celebrating The Lord's Supper and receiving new members

**Sunday 8th December: second Sunday of Advent** - 10.30am: 'A Child shall lead them'  
including signing cards for prisoners of conscience  
2.45 for 3pm: Kidz Aloud: John the Baptist - Children's Church

**Sunday 15th December: third Sunday of Advent** 10.30am: 'Streams in the Desert'

**Sunday 22nd December fourth Sunday of Advent** 10.30am: 'Name Him Immanuel'  
informal café-style worship for all ages  
6.30pm: Carol service for all

**Tuesday 24th December: Christmas Eve** - 6pm: 'A Great & Mighty Wonder'  
worship with Journey Metropolitan Community Church

**Wednesday 25th December: Christmas Day**  
10.30am: 'A Sign for You'

**Sunday 5th January: Epiphany**  
10.30am: Gifts with meaning



## Notices

We shall be printing the December Journey early this year, so articles and notices for our Dec/Jan edition must be received by **14th November at the latest**. We also need to know by then if you wish to send Christmas Greetings via the Journey this year. Ed

**Forthcoming concerts at Carrs Lane:**  
Sunday 3 November 1.00pm: Robson Piano Duo. Wednesday 4 December 7.30pm: Quinborne Choir.

**'REFORM' for 2014** - Cost £25.00. (If paying by cheque, please make it out to me) If any new people wish to subscribe via me, please contact me by **no later than SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER**  
*Simon Rowntree*

### **Carrs Lane Players**

Please note the dates for our next production, which is '*When we are married*' by J. B. Priestley, to be performed on 20, 21 and 22 February 2014. Details about the play will be circulated as usual and ticket sales commence in January 2014 so please reserve the dates in your diary.

### **Civic Service**

On the evening of 17 November, at 6.00pm at St. Martin-in the-Bull Ring, I will be preaching the sermon at this year's Civic Service for the Lord Mayor. I am conscious that this is a significant honour; I will endeavour to ensure that I have something to say which is both affirming and challenging – and I would appreciate your support at the service. Thanks. *Neil*

**The Windermere Centre Programme of Events for November** 15-17 Elder's Weekend, 21-24 Card Mania, 25-28 Spiritual Direction.

**Knowing Longing** - a weekend of creativity with Rev Elizabeth Gray-King, Artist Theologian **Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th November** at Carrs Lane. Friday 22 November 7.30pm Exhibition opening - meet the artist. Saturday 10-12noon workshop: praying partnership and longing. Saturday 2-4pm workshop: imagining partnership. Sunday 24 November worship at 10.30am.

**3 November - International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.** Christian Solidarity Worldwide will be holding a special event so that Christians can gather together and pray on **Wednesday 6 November** 7.30pm - 9.30pm at Selly Oak Elim Church, Exeter Road. Special guest speaker: Reverend Stuart Windsor, CSW Special Ambassador

On **November 30th**, Nick Ball and Kathryn Darby, Chaplains at Birmingham Children's' Hospital, are leading a morning from 10.00-12noon at Carrs Lane focusing on the needs of those who are in hospital and those who care for them. This may interest anyone who is caring for someone who has serious health problems. If you would like to go please let me know by **November 15th**. *Andrew Veitch*

**Saturday 14 December** Amnesty International Christmas Concert for Human Rights 11.00am at Carrs Lane. Performances by Samba & Reggae Band; Zambian Womens Choir (and dancing); Welsh & Irish songs and Quinborne Choir. Tickets £6 (under 16 free).

## The UK Gold Film Tour

See for yourself “The kind of film to get the blood boiling and steam hissing out of your ears...” (The Guardian). Christian Aid, in partnership with Oxfam and Action Aid, are bringing ‘The UK Gold’ to Birmingham this November. It’s a film which confronts the UK’s involvement in tax dodging, via tax havens, and is said to ‘shift perceptions of finance and flag forever.’

It follows Hackney vicar Father William Taylor as he speaks out against the crime which is robbing poor countries of US\$160 billion a year. “As Christians we surely have the ability to look at dark things and see them for what they are. We need to confront and expose them.”

On Thursday 21st November 7pm (doors 6:30pm) we will be hosting a free screening of ‘The UK Gold’ in The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, B94AA. A panel for discussion after the screening (TBA).

For more information or to book your tickets contact: John Cooper (Christian Aid)  
Phone: 0121 2002283 Email: [jcooper@christian-aid.org](mailto:jcooper@christian-aid.org) or book online  
<http://theukgoldbirmingham.eventbrite.co.uk>

## An Advent Reminder

*Advent should admonish us to discover in each brother or sister that we greet, in each friend whose hand we shake, in each beggar who asks for bread, in each worker who wants to use the right to join a union, in each peasant who looks for work in the coffee groves, the face of Christ. Then it would not be possible to rob them, to cheat them, to deny them their rights. They are Christ, and whatever is done to them Christ will take as done to himself. This is what Advent is: Christ living among us.*  
Archbishop Oscar Romero (3rd December, 1978)

To state that Christ is living among us is a source of great strength and one of huge challenge. Strength because we know that we have a companion through thick and thin on the way of life, and a challenge because of his companionship which takes us to places and people we may not have expected or wanted.

As The Church at Carrs Lane we are a member of the Birmingham Methodist Circuit, which is conducting a review of the life of its churches. The Circuit Review has come at an important time for us as a church community because we have begun to revisit the guiding principles of our ecumenical partnership. The review makes us consider our own priorities for mission and ministry as a local congregation so that our shared resources can be used more effectively. In the process of the discussion and discernment we have to face our understanding of Christ living among us both as his people and among our neighbours, particularly those on the edge.

May this forthcoming Advent be a reminder of the Christ we seek, and where we find him.

Rev Neil Johnson

## About People

We send our sympathy to John and Katie Best and their family following Peggy's death. A service of thanksgiving for her life will be held on Wednesday 6 November, 1.30pm at Robin Hood Crematorium.

### Daphne May Harper 3 May 1931 - 15 August 2013

During September we were told of the death of Daphne Harper and members were asked if there was anybody able to attend her service on 12 September at 10.00am. as I had often spoken to Daphne I said that I would go to the service, I met Joan White and Anne Veitch when I got to Yardley.

Daphne had made herself 'at home' within our congregation earlier in the year, in the worship on Sunday, at lunch on the first Sunday during fellowship after worshipping, also when we had a concert once a month. She also attended the W.I. Although she lived with her nephew she was not often found at home.

I had seen her around the city centre and always stopped to speak to her. She was an independent person, but not lonely. During the service we discovered that she was never married but had a large number of great, and great-great grandchildren family members from her sister who had died some years ago, and she was lucky enough to have a nephew who lived with her. One of her nieces told me that she was the mother that she never had, a wonderful comment from a young woman. Daphne also had other church connections; she attended St Martins until she could not walk well. Kingshurst Evangelical Church ran a lunch club – a few weeks before she died she joined them in a coach trip and had a wonderful day out on a narrow boat. There were people from each of the churches present at the service together with her family.

We give thanks for her life, knowing she is out of pain. On behalf of the Church at Carrs Lane, God bless you, Daphne.

Margaret Checkley, Joan White and Anne Veitch

## Amnesty International Greetings Card Campaign 2013

It will soon be time to think about The Amnesty Greetings Card Campaign again so I thought that I would give you an update about some of the people and organisations that we wrote to last year.

First of all thank you to everybody who took part. We know your messages of support mean a huge amount, because the recipients have told us so:

*'When we receive cards from Amnesty International activists... We read them with love, because we know they were made with love for us. And they mean recognition for our work. That is a big source of satisfaction for us as human rights defenders.'* - Kenia Oliva, COFADEH member. Honduras

*'Greeting from Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)'*  
*Amnesty members have spoken for us when we could not speak! They have helped send a clear message to the individuals and institutions that oppress us to respect Human Rights.*

*Gao Zhisheng in China disappeared in February 2009, after police officers took him from his family home, where he was being held under illegal house arrest. For nearly two years his family didn't know if he was dead or alive. Following the 2012 Amnesty appeal Gao Zhisheng has been allowed a visit from his family for the first time in nine months*

As you see these cards have had an enormous impact. As well as offering encouragement, providing support and raising spirits, they are a tangible sign that people care. They also help to bring about change; the impression that mail makes on police, prison staff and political authorities can help to improve the treatment of the recipients and keep them safe.

Last year the Greetings Card Campaign at Carrs Lane took a different form. We wrote cards as part of the morning service. Several people commented how good this had been as it gave people time to think about the people who were detained and their families. This year it is hoped to take a similar format on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December. More details will be supplied later.

Just to let you know that the Annual Christmas Concert for Amnesty International and Freedom from Torture is being held again this year at Carrs Lane Church Centre on Saturday 14 December. More details about that later as well.

Christine Rowntree  
November 2013



## Multicultural Celebration 2013

Dear Friends,

**O**n behalf of the Multicultural Celebration Planning Team, Racial Justice and Intercultural Ministry and the Mission Department, please accept our heartfelt and profound thanks for your generous support of the Multicultural Celebration. You would be pleased to know that there were more than over 425 of us who came 'together to celebrate and be inspired by each other's stories and cultures' and most of us stayed to the end!

The Planning Team rely on congregations/groups from the United Reformed Church to share their gifts of our rich diversity in the church and in society, making it an occasion to remember. Our theme 'gifted: a time of plenty' was certainly very evident on Saturday.

Thank you for being a part of that day whether it was through your presence on the day, contributing to the programme, participating in the Multicultural Story and the Multicultural Art Awards, acting as host to the event, helping to deliver/manage aspects of the programme, encouraging others to attend, praying for the event, for giving your time to help with the logistics of the day, and for making a financial contribution and commitment to ensure that we could have this biennial event. All these and other contributions continue to make this an event and day a tremendous witness to our life together and beyond.

I look forward to your continuing support as we plan towards 2015.

May grace continue to abound!

Your brother in Christ,

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar  
Secretary for Racial Justice and Intercultural Ministry  
URC Tavistock Place

## Seeing Ourselves Differently Through God's Eyes

I was blessed to participate in URC Synod in Birmingham 11 and 12 October 2013. It was energising to be with a group of over 200 like minded local Christians and everyone was very friendly and open to discuss theology and church.

The main theme was the 'Parable of the Mustard Seed' which is to be found in Mark 4:30, Matthew 13:31, Luke 13:18 and the Gospel of Thomas. This was introduced by Rev Dr Susan Durber until recently principal at Westminster College and is now the Theology Co-ordinator for Christian Aid, and John Ellis who is the Lay Moderator of the General Assembly having worked at the Bank of England for many years.

The parable of the mustard seed as the tiniest of seeds was applied to inspire us to plant as many seeds as we can. This involves having interesting encounters challenging those within and outside the church to look to the Kingdom of God. We are encouraged to start as many groups and activities as possible which might grow our congregations and communities. Then leave it to God. Some will fail and wither but this gives the best chance of the Spirit taking our seeds and growing them into the greatest of trees. I was encouraged by the enthusiasm relating to the theology that stated we should have ideas and start groups and projects but then let go and let God do his creative work. John talked of those people who are functionally atheist. Coming from the business world I am minded to prepare a full business plan and not start anything until it is fully researched and success is all but guaranteed. This relies entirely on my own strengths and abilities and leaves God out of the equation. John mentioned the strategy of an honoured Venture Capitalist who said the secret of his success was funding as many business opportunities as he could, but only expecting one in twenty to succeed. We need to do more within our world to spread our faith and expect not to see the fruit. Some projects will fail; others will last for only a short time some may have different outcomes. The 'Parable of the Sower' comes to mind: of seed being eaten by birds, falling on stony ground, being choked by weeds. However it is only if we plant seeds abundantly will some grow to fruition and be harvested.

The Mission Streams gave interesting small group workshops and they were of such good quality I had difficulty deciding which I could go to, only being able to choose 2 out of 15. It is well worth any member going along to Synod just for these alone. It is excellent value being heavily subsidised. The URC has such a great variety of ministries with Ordained Ministers, Special Category Ministers, Church Related Community Workers, Local Leaders, Elders, Lay Preachers and Evangelists. There were Methodists and Anglicans etc from our Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Streams included 'Fresh Expressions', worship, making accounts understandable, Eco-congregations, Christian Franchises like food banks, Social Networking, finance and resources and 'Well before 2053' how to grow churches in a URC liberal inclusive way.

Stephen J. Bentley

## Above our weight...

... **a**s in, 'punching above our weight'. It is not a phrase which I like particularly, but it does seem appropriate at the present time. Some people talk of the URC as a denomination punching above its weight consistently in terms of matters of justice: we make a noise – a difference – a change out of all proportion to our modest membership. As I reflect on the life of The Church at Carrs Lane during these last few days (I am writing this on the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> October, a few minutes after our friends from Ernstweiler have departed for New Street and home!), it seems to me that we can say the same about the life of this church. I am not bragging- simply offering an observation by way of encouragement to others, and using this as an opportunity to say 'thank-you' to a good many people. A month or so ago, we pulled out all the stops to facilitate the URC's national Multicultural Day – and now we have supported a number of other events here in quick succession.

Well over a hundred people attended the **Traidcraft Sermon**: those who claim that the fair-trade movement is past its sell-by date and that high street shops are now offering an adequate range of fairly-traded goods are missing the point completely. The work continues – and prophets such as Amos address the needs directly – because in too many places injustice prevails. A good number of folk also supported this year's **Radical Lecture Day** and evidently enjoyed it and were challenged by it. My notebook is full of bite-sized quotations from Alastair: human beings as, 'icons into the likeness of God', T.S. Eliot's comment on an age which shows, 'a dazzling disregard for the soul'...the scandal of faith communities which have peddled little more than a, 'gospel of sin management'. At the same time, we were looking after our friends from **Ernstweiler**: a partnership which goes back forty years...friendships which enable us to talk about the legacy and challenges of the past, and the opportunities of present and future. I hope that we faced up to a little of this in worship on the Sunday morning.

I note these things, because I have tried to 'tot up' the number of people involved – on a purely voluntary basis – in the space of a few short (long?) days. By no means can Carrs Lane be described as a 'large' church, and I estimate that over forty different people have been involved in one way or another in enabling us to 'punch above our weight' again in recent days. A robust and appreciative word of thanks to everybody!

Neil



## Diwali



Diwali Celebrations 10 November 14:00 to 19:00 at New Bingley Hall. Hindus all over the world have been celebrating Diwali and the Hindu New Year for thousands of years. This year's celebrations will mark the beginning of the Hindu Year 2070. This year's Diwali celebration in Birmingham promises to be one of the best and largest celebrations in the country. The New Bingley Hall will be transformed into a vibrant and colourful arena featuring a stage area where local artists will be presenting entertainment in the form of traditional dances, Bollywood songs, Bhangra etc. To keep the children entertained there will be a dedicated Kids Zone comprising face paintings, cartoon shows, mask making, games, competition and music and dance workshop. There will be plenty of stalls selling arts and crafts, toys and as part of the tradition, there will be Fireworks display to be enjoyed by all.



**TRAI DCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

Dear Joan

**N**ow that the dust has settled, I wanted to write myself to thank you again for all the arrangements you made for that wonderful evening. I hope you thought it was worthwhile. I was really inspired by Paula's exposition – how can you take such familiar verses and make them seem so new? It was great to have underlined how all the work you and we do for fair trade is central to the gospel, not an add-on.

I thought the arrangements worked very well – the church was ideal, and having the fair trade shop and somewhere to have coffee so close was brilliant. A lot of people put a lot of work into getting everything ready – do please thank them again.

God bless  
Paul Spray  
Director, Policy and Programmes  
Traidcraft Exchange

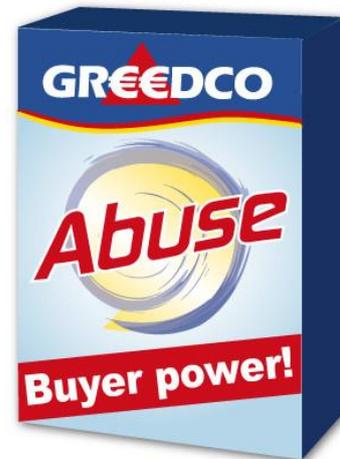
*It was encouraging to see so many supporters from the midlands attending to hear Dr Paula Gooder speak. We were not disappointed and went away inspired to continue the work of fair trade.*

*Joan Davies*

## Supermarkets - who's getting the best deal?

'Selling to supermarkets is never easy' as one Indian cashew factory owner recently told Traidcraft.

Yet these huge retailers dominate the way we shop. In the UK four supermarkets control over three quarters of the grocery market and the picture is much the same across the rest of the continent. They have been shown to abuse their huge buyer power by passing on 'excessive risks and unexpected costs' down their supply chains. Millions of workers, farmers and producers are left with little choice but to work long hours for low pay in unsafe conditions to meet the demands placed on them by supermarkets.



That's why we campaigned for a supermarkets watchdog in the UK and won.

But did you know that three of the four biggest supermarket chains in the world have their headquarters in Europe? If we want to tackle supermarket bullying on a global scale we need to build on the success we've had in the UK and call for tougher rules coming out of Brussels. We're working with partners across the continent on this next exciting phase of our campaign for fairer supermarkets: will you join us?

### Take action

- Help us take on GreedCo, our own (true-to-life) supermarket creation. Check out GreedCo's latest offers, and their hidden human cost, then take action by claiming your 'campaign coupon' against supermarket bullying.
- Sign up to be a Traidcraft campaigner and we'll keep you posted on the latest supermarkets campaign news and actions.

### Find out more

- Watch our video in which Fiona Gooch, our policy advisor and regular lobbyist in Brussels, explains why the new phase of our supermarkets campaign is so important.
- Read more about the successful campaign for a UK supermarkets watchdog.

### Latest news

- Tell Tesco what you think. You may have seen a recent advert from Tesco in which they explain that they want to transform the way their supply-chains operate for good. 20 March 2013

From Traidcraft website

# Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

## Birmingham, its people, its history

Immerse yourself in over 500 years of life, passion, strife and achievement. In the iconic new 'Birmingham, its people, its history' galleries visitors can explore the city's global heritage from medieval times and the industrial revolution, through to the World Wars - to the technology-led life of the 21st century.

These are not just galleries - they are an experience which brings the city into sharp focus and reflects how the people of Birmingham and its industries have shaped not only the city, but the world as we know it today. The galleries' dramatic architecture and imaginative displays can inspire visitors of all ages. There are models, interactive displays and hands-on activities to captivate families. You can design your own 18th century trade card or become a Birmingham Air Raid Warden in the Second World War.

These £8.9m refurbished galleries, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, are a must-see for Birmingham people and visitors to the city who want to discover the fascinating global history of Birmingham. The galleries are free and are located on the 3rd floor at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

*My son and granddaughter had discovered these galleries one wet afternoon and recommended them to me. I have since spent a few hours discovering just some of the fascinating history of our city, and cannot wait to make a return visit to continue the experience and find out more. Ed*

## Unlocked

**H**idden stories from the lives of Birmingham women – 1900s to the present day  
Saturday 28 September – Sunday 15 December Community Gallery

Unlocked is a remarkable exhibition telling the stories of Birmingham women's diverse lives across the twentieth-century to the present day. Through photographs, sound, the written word and objects, Unlocked brings to life the challenges, achievements and aspirations of women from many different backgrounds living in the City through a period of momentous change. Unlocked also features a series of collages produced by young people who worked with photographer Vanley Burke at the 610 Centre in Kingstanding. The collages look back on the experiences of women in the past and express young people's hopes, fears and aspirations for the future.

## The Connection of Two Journeys

It has always interested me that the Carrs Lane magazine and the local Metropolitan Community Church congregation have the same name. These were arrived at independently and may be providentially!

This coming year is the tenth anniversary of Journey MCC being founded in Birmingham, with me now being the only original founding member. Journey and the Church at Carrs Lane have worked together in many ways over the years and this reflects the close ties between MCC both here and in the USA. All but two MCCs in the UK worship in United Reformed Church's buildings. In America- where MCC was founded and is the strongest - ministers have their credentials recognised by the URC's equivalent denomination, the United Church of Christ. So... there has been a history of cooperation between the two congregations.

Throughout my own life, there have been many ecumenical connections and a commitment to unity. As I studied for the ministry, I particularly benefited from training with URC and Methodist candidates at Queens; we noted and celebrated the Free Church approach that we had in common.

I enjoyed my placement at Carrs Lane which started in July 2010. Becoming a member at Easter 2011 – whilst retaining my membership of MCC - was something which was a profound and moving experience for me. I have greatly valued serving here with such a lovely variety of people. From the warmth of the welcome I still receive, I like to think my contribution is appreciated. I recall that for Remembrance Sunday I wore both white and red poppies: along with others, I wanted to balance the need to appreciate and recognise the sacrifices made by many to bring us the benefits of peace along with the Christian aim for total peace.

Inspiration for sermons comes from many sources including The Carrs Lane Players who chose a play for 2011 entitled 'Tons of Money', a farce by Alan Ayckbourn. The plot is about trying to protect an unexpected inheritance from a long list of creditors. I preached on this theme in gaining a greater understanding of the word 'devious' by watching this funny play. In the present economic climate, we look for an appropriate Christian response and try our best to live out our faith appropriately as individuals and communities. I am inspired and humbled by the generosity I see on a daily basis as we are salt and light in the world.

The Wednesday lunch time services have been dear to me and I hope to continue to lead these. I am always impressed by the generous welcome here at the Christmas Day student breakfasts, the invigorating walking weekends and the trips abroad. I fear my memories of the trip to Zweibrucken may be overshadowed by the fact my singing was well below par compared to the wonderful choir! I have been stimulated by participating in the joint study groups, for example the Celtic Saints during Lent a couple of years ago.

The essential essence of the URC and Methodist congregational structures and theologies were debated during the church meetings which paved the way for the

Local Ecumenical Partnership that we now embrace. I was privileged to be part of this process adding greatly to my knowledge of the URC complementing my understanding as I come from a Methodist heritage.

I am pleased that the Lived Community is being revived by Mathew and Steph, the former being the eldest son of one of Journeys' members. I have been supportive of it over the years and believe it is good to have a truly living, incarnational church. Another connection has been through the various Chaplaincies serving this city. The Retail Chaplaincy is well supported by Elaine Hutchinson and others at Carrs Lane. We all cooperated together as Churches and Industry Group Birmingham when I was a Chaplain at Birmingham City Council during the aftermath of the riots. Pastoral care is at the heart of my ministry and that of Carrs Lane with its strong team of carers. More recently I have also been working with Central URC Derby on its outreach using the Wildgoose's 'Living the Questions.' This helps those who do not attend church to explore the Christian faith in an open and innovative way.

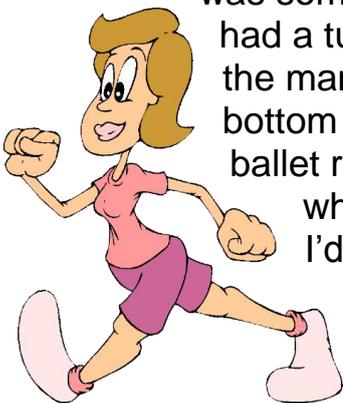
We will share our Christmas services together again this year as usual. I hope that both I and Journey will continue to explore ways of working together in the sense of unity to which we are called.

Stephen Bentley

## Carrs Lane Walking Weekend

I had a word with Ann Parkin on the Monday morning...and she assured me that the weekend had been free from complaints (apart from concerns about hot water in her own room!). I take this opportunity to say a huge thank-you to Ann for all her hard work in ensuring that the weekend took place: year on year, numbers seem to grow – yet again, we had 'new' folk sharing in the holiday this year, and over forty people travelled to the Peak District to walk (and to visit and to shop and to partake of afternoon tea!), to share meals together and to enjoy each other's company.

It was an area completely new to me, and I enjoyed varied countryside during walks which were, candidly, much drier 'above' than might have been the case; underfoot was sometimes a different matter! I have never before used a toilet which had a turret all to itself – ditto the wardrobe in my room! I *almost* resisted the manifold temptations of second-hand books in the village at the bottom of the road; I managed not to disgrace myself too much in the ballet rehearsal which took place on the Saturday evening (the fruits of which will have been shared by the time that you read this) – and I'd like to think that a number of brisk sessions in the swimming pool ate up all the calories consumed during the weekend but, alas, even walking and swimming combined could not prevent a slight shift to the right of the needle on my bathroom scales at home.



Thanks again. Neil

## On this day...

From the Carrs Lane Journal [and L.M.S.] Missionary Chronicle November 1913

*This time, a link between the church here and the mission field abroad. Mr. Berry's November editorial highlighted the fact that, at the Congregational Union's autumnal meeting the dominant subject was the crisis in the affairs of the London Missionary Society. The Society was facing a deficiency of £100,000, and also needed an extra £30,000 a year. The hope expressed was that the income would be forthcoming if individual church members felt the responsibility to contribute. This issue of the Journal also addressed Carrs Lane's own debt.*

### A Letter from Rev. H. M. Dauncey, of New Guinea

The following is an extract from a letter written to a friend in Carrs Lane. It sheds a valuable sidelight upon some of the difficulties of the work, and brings home to us in an intimate way some of the harder consequences of the deficiency in the Society's funds. The reference to the furlough is explained by the fact that the Directors have prolonged by a year the period that missionaries must wait before their next visit to the homeland.

"How am I getting on, you want to know. It can be readily summed up by writing 'It's terribly lonely.' Have only been back here at Delena five months, and it seems like five years. I try to take it as it comes, a day at a time.

"I have just received from Mission House instructions that we are to decide how best we can effect a reduction of £2,000 a year in the cost of the Mission. Some of the work has to be given up, and the first difficulty is to find a means of getting all the men together to decide what is to be done. It's hard lines to have to give up any of the work, after we have put so much into it, and it has cost the English Churches so much money, and the South Sea Churches so much in lives. What is going to be the end of it all? Who is going to be "scrapped"?

"The postponement of furlough hits me hard. I thought three years before I could see them long enough; but four. By that time my youngest girl will be more than 17, and I shall have been on the same side of the world with her for just under 20 months. I cannot say I shall have been with her just under 20 months, for I was on deputation work nearly all the time. Thank God they have their mother with them now.

"How uncertain mails are here. A few months ago I went off to the big steamer (she only calls here every three months) and expected a big mail with news of my wife's arrival in England. There had been a fire on board, and they told me my mail was all destroyed. Three weeks later I got the burnt remains from Port Moresby, and fortunately was able to read nearly all the news from my wife, but how many letters were destroyed I do not know. I have heard of some.

"The lamp" (acetylene lamp given to Mr. Dauncey by a Carrs Lane friend) "is a grand success, and while I was away in Kabadi it saved my treading upon a snake. At night I was going to a small village to show the lantern. Right in the track was a snake. I think the bright light bothered him, for he did not attempt to move, and I was able to kill him.

## From the Carrs Lane Journal – November 1963

### With what Object the Church? *(by Philip Lee-Woolf)*

*An early reflection in the deliberations that led to the creation of this church centre*

The opening sequence from the film “A Yank at Oxford” has, as I mentioned recently in a sermon, stuck in my mind. A young American, on his way by train from Southampton to Oxford comments excitedly on everything he sees to an unresponsive Englishman across the carriage. Eventually the young man says: “Say! Do you realise that you could get the whole of this little country in the state of Massachusetts?” This rouses the Englishman to reply “With what object?” and the American is nonplussed. “With what object the Church?” To most people of our day it has none that counts: and we at Carrs Lane, in a situation changed as much as is ours compared with the past and approaching rebuilding, need to think as clearly as we can about what we are called to be and to do in our particular place.

Our position at the centre makes us all rather like a railway terminus in London. We are linked to other Congregational churches –to one of them, Winson Green, directly by the ministerial work done by the Rev. Barry Jones – as a focal point of witness to the city in its central life. The fact that we are a frequent meeting place for city and county Congregational councils is the easiest part of it. More important is the extent to which, as their representative, we carry out our ministry at the centre. We are at the place less of family life and leisure than of employment and education and the running of the city. With this in mind we recently appointed the Rev. Barry Jones to make contact with shops, factories, colleges and city services to explore ways of exercising a ministry to people beyond the frontiers of our own church life. A church that caters only for itself is not really a church but a religious club. Not long ago, when “Christendom” existed, the church was taken for granted as an authoritative power and as a resource as available as school or hospital: men in need gravitated towards it, and it could minister to them on its own premises: hence the work of institutions and the beginning of the social services. Today “Christendom” exists no longer: we can no longer minister to men on the basis that they will come to us: we are called to exercise our discipleship above all outside church life. Taken seriously that would summon us to find out who are the needy and lost today passing the front doors of our church and to cater for them. Alcoholics? Drug addicts? Immigrants separated from their families? It would involve us in much more thorough training. Only through informed and thoughtful lay people, not through ministers, can the Church be present effectively at the points of influence and decision in the city’s life.

In that ministry, towards those outside our own church life, more clearly than at any other point, our denominational separations are seen to be an irrelevant handicap. We play a part in the Birmingham Council of Churches and the Free Church Federal Council, but the more we think of ministry to the world beyond the church doors, the more we will be called to ecumenical action. This fact underlies our inter-church conversations about re-building: we need, if possible, to express our unity and to gather our strength, in the city where we are placed, to witness to the city of God.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

## Commitment for Life

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (*from Moving Stories 164*)

Yesterday I watched man run for his life... (*by Alwen Knight*)

I returned to Hebron a few days ago, to begin a four-week stint with the Christian Peacemaker Team here. It's been a busy week. Every day there have been clashes between mainly young, Palestinian men - the so-called shebab - and the Israeli Defence Force. There have been many injuries, most from tear-gas inhalation and rubber bullets (a colleague has a very nasty bruise) and the tragic death of an Israeli soldier. It isn't clear what happened. He may have been shot by a Palestinian sniper, but there's also a suggestion that he may have been the victim of so-called 'friendly fire'. We may never know. In the main the only weapons available to Palestinians are rocks and bottles - potentially very dangerous - but not in the same league as tear-gas, percussion grenades, rubber bullets, and very occasionally, live ammunition. I haven't seen the skunk wagon at work yet. Perhaps that's being held in reserve.

This weekend is particularly tense. It's now thirteen years since Ariel Sharon, surrounded by - it's said - a thousand Israeli military and police, entered the area of Jerusalem known as the Haram al-Sharif, which contains the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. It's one of Islam's holiest sites. He was warned of the likely consequences, but went ahead anyway. The consequence was the Second Intifada, which has brought heartache and misery to countless individuals and families, Palestinian and Israeli. The word 'intifada' simply means, 'uprising'. It stands for the uprising of the Palestinian people against the occupation by Israel of the West Bank and Gaza (and, of course, part of Syria: the Golan Heights).

The Second Intifada probably ended some years ago, but the frustration and anger of the Palestinian people who have lived under occupation for forty six years, still explodes from time to time into violence. It is important to say that most Palestinian resistance to the occupation is non-violent, but I think I can understand, but not condone, the actions we have seen in the last few days. I hope KEs over the years have given some impression of the 'heaviness' of occupation, with its restrictions on movement; often arbitrary arrests, even of children; demolition of homes; a fragile economy; high unemployment, especially among the young; checkpoints, and a highly visible and ever-present occupying army. It's a recipe for disaster.

Yesterday's clashes lasted for at least eight hours. They follow a fairly predictable course: the shebab gather, and taunt the IDF by throwing stones. The military respond with a few percussion grenades. The 'action' shifts from one street to another, and usually ends up at a major intersection, where the two Hebrons meet: that is, H1, which is under complete Israeli military control, and H2, which is under nominal Palestinian control. Sometimes the Palestinian police and 'army' take a hand (Palestinians can gain 'concessions' from Israel if the Palestinian security forces are seen to be effective) but a handful of police were no match for the two to three hundred young men on the rampage yesterday. So the IDF took over. Most of yesterday's casualties had been struck by rubber bullets, and the local Red Crescent ambulance was kept busy taking them to a nearby hospital. We understand

that an Israeli soldier was hit by a Molotov cocktail. It was all so pointless. Nothing was achieved but a venting of anger. Some young men, Israeli and Palestinian, were wounded. A new generation of young Palestinians were introduced to the ritual of stone throwing and dodging the tear-gas and rubber bullets - if they were lucky.

But then there was the man running for his life...

It all happened so quickly. We saw a man - a Palestinian - running towards the Israeli military, chased by a mass of Palestinian youth. He was being hit by a hail of stones as he ran. The word was that he had been identified as an informer. I feared the worst. I learned later that he had been surrounded by Palestinian police, and protected. I'm glad about the outcome, but it was a salutary reminder that with occupation comes collaboration (some of it very subtle, but I've written about that before), informers, and the agent provocateur. It's very difficult to know who orchestrates these protests; I do know that they can be extremely violent, damaging to the economy, and achieve absolutely nothing at all.

Today, so far, it has been quiet...In peace, Alwyn.

*Quaker News Autumn 2013*

*Trading with illegal Israeli settlements: Moving from words to action*

A topic that does not usually feature in Moving Stories is trade with the Israeli settlements. An article appeared in the Autumn issue of Quaker News, written by Suzanne Ismael, Economic Issues Programme Manager for Quakers in Britain. It reported a meeting with FCO Minister Alistair Burt with a delegation including representatives of Christian Aid and the Council for Arab-British Understanding, and Douglas Rennie from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee. The meeting was set up to discuss recommendations made last year in the report entitled 'Trading away peace: how Europe helps sustain illegal Israeli settlements.' The policy of creating these settlements, more than 200 to date and with further expansion planned, has been condemned by the EU and the UK, and threatens the possibility of a 'two-state solution.' Yet the article states that £200 million of settlement goods are exported to Europe each year, including fruit, vegetables, wine, cosmetics and household goods. Options for action include mandatory labelling, an outright ban on the import of settlement goods, and discouraging business from operating in the settlements. Alistair Burt would like the dialogue to continue. The effects are as yet unknown of these meetings or of the recent EU regulations preventing its institutions awarding "grants, prizes or financial instruments" to Israeli organizations based in the settlements, but they are a part of a Christian witness and a source of hope.

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*

Universal Children's Day 20 November



**Bonfire Night  
5 November**

*Latecomer:* Am I too late for the bonfire?

*Host:* No jump up there on the sticks, there is room next to that Guy.

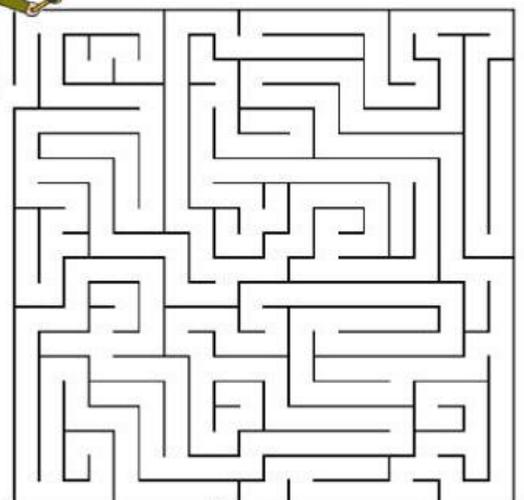
Did you hear about the two men arrested for stealing batteries and fireworks? One was charged but the other was let off.

How is it that one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start your Guy Fawkes bonfire?

**Gunpowder Plot Maze**



Help Guy Fawkes find his way through the maze to light the gunpowder.



## Carrs Lane Lived Community

Taking time to listen

**A**fter two months in the community flat, it is fair to say that life has become increasingly busy, with a complicated balancing act of varied activities ensuring we always have just a little bit more to do than we really have time for. And we wouldn't have it any other way: there is a richness to this life that money can't buy.

But while we juggle priorities and balance responsibilities, it has been very clear from our first day of community life that our first vocation, our primary responsibility is to prayer. Our first moments of community life, at 7.30am on Monday 2 September were spent in prayer. Every morning and evening we stop and we pray. Everything else, be that doing the washing up or getting to a meeting to which we must excuse our lateness, can wait.

Those five hours a week are more important than anything else we do. Because that is when we stop and listen to God, to be reminded that all of this is about something much, much bigger than just us. That is when we allow God to whisper into our hearts, "you are loved", and when we begin to allow that love to inspire us to face new challenges and to live newness of life.

Ultimately, amongst the wealth of riches and the variety of activity, life in the Carrs Lane Community all comes down to this: daring to stop for a while and let God do the talking, and then trying, little by little, to put what little we can into practice.

Our times of daily prayer, the source and summit of all we do, are all public and we warmly welcome others to join us, every Monday to Friday 7.30am and 7.00pm.



Stephanie Neville

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

Open here in the city at  
Carrs Lane Church Centre  
Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am - 2.30pm  
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays  
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs  
- *Traidcraft foods, gifts and much else* -  
0121 643 6151 [fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk)  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)



**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>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

**Carrs Lane Lived Community meet for Prayers -**

Monday to Friday 7.30am and 7.00pm, all are welcome to join them

<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>Harborne House Group</b>	Fourth Tuesdays 2.00pm (various locations)
<b>Central House Group at Carrs Lane</b>	Third Wednesdays at 6.30pm
<b>Carrs Lane Choir Practice</b>	Fridays at 7.00pm
<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>Fair Trade Shop</b>	First and Third Sunday after morning worship and Tuesday - Saturday 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  
Fax 0121 631 2118  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)