

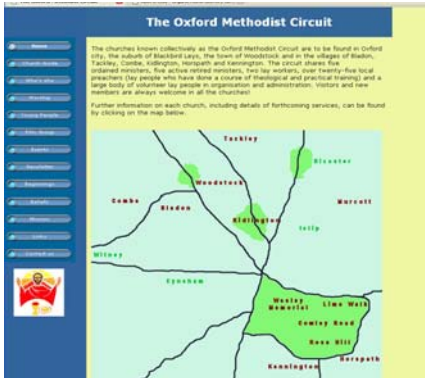


Kitbag!

Volume 7, Issue 4

June 2007

Websites



Do you ever lose Kitbag and then wonder what is going on? Do you want to know who is preaching on Sunday but can't find your plan?

An increasing amount of information is now available on the web. You will find copies of both the latest Kitbag and the current plan on the circuit website, www.oxfordmethodists.org.uk, and a number of churches also have their own websites (Bladon, Horspath, Kidlington, Rose Hill, Wesley Memorial and Woodstock), all of which are accessible via the circuit site.

The circuit film group, SoS, also has a website which you will find at www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk. There you can find information about the current programme as well as copies of the study guides for the films we have watched.

Moving further afield, the district also has its own website which has a variety of useful information on it: www.methodistdistrict23.org.uk. For connexional things, the national church website can be found at www.methodistchurch.org.uk. Meanwhile, if you want to keep in touch with the Methodist Conference, which this year takes place from 5th—12th July, you will find details of everything that is about to happen (including copies of the agenda), as well as reports of what did happen, at www.methodistconference.org.uk.

Siyahamba!

On Wednesday, 13th June, we were delighted to welcome to Woodstock the Arthur Wellington Methodist Church choir from the township of New Brighton in South Africa. Despite this being the final concert of a gruelling two week tour, the choir was still full of energy and enthusiasm and thrilled the audience with their African music and dancing. Knowing our Methodist church would be too small, we had arranged to use the parish church but even that large building was full to overflowing as over 400 people, including a good number from the circuit as a whole, came to support the choir. They were not disappointed and everyone there thoroughly enjoyed themselves, It was also lovely to see such an event so warmly embraced by the community at large.

Following the concert, and then food back at the Methodist Church, the choir were hosted in homes across Woodstock and beyond by members of our own church, friends in the Oxford circuit, friends from other Woodstock churches and other people in the town who, having heard about the visit, generously opened up their homes to complete strangers. The choir then reassembled outside the church the following morning to board their coach back to Brighton before flying home the following day. Before they left, they sang a farewell blessing outside the front of the church and our minister, Jonathan, replied in kind by also singing a blessing. It was then



New Brighton Feeding Programme

time to wave them off and wish them well.

New Brighton is a township on the edge of Port Elizabeth. As a church, we have supported a feeding programme there for the last two years and the £2500 raised by the concert will go to support that continuing work.

We are very grateful to all those across the circuit who helped and supported this venture. An enormous thank you also goes to Ann Leck who organised everything at our end and without whom the visit would simply not have taken place. More pictures along with some songs from the evening's concert are available on the church website www.woodstockmethodists.org.uk. We are also hoping to get some CDs of the choir to sell. If you might like one, please contact Jonathan Todd or Ann Leck.



Bladon Junior Church

Junior Church Trip

Following our rather wet visit in March, Thorpe Park kindly invited us all back as their guests last month. This time, despite a rather wet morning, by lunchtime the weather had brightened up and we even saw the sun by the end of the day! All the rides were operational and the poor



weather in the morning meant queues were minimal or non-existent so we got to ride on our favourite attractions again and again! All in all we had a wonderful time!



Anniversary

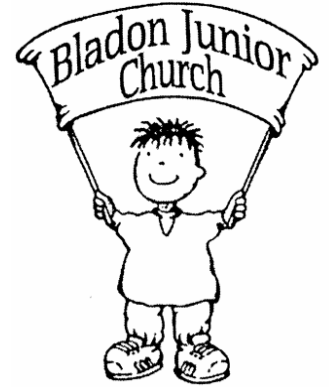
Last month the Junior Church celebrated its 164th Anniversary. We held a special afternoon service which included a play called "The Famous Five and the Five

Thousand" – an amusing sketch based on the feeding of the five thousand but incorporating the Famous Five! The service also included our annual prize-giving where we presented books to all our current members.

Songs on the Green

The Junior Church will be joining in the Bladon Feast celebrations with *Songs on the Green* from 2.00pm to 4.00pm – weather permitting! Refreshments will also be available. The Junior Church first resurrected the Bladon Feast tradition for the first time since 1955 when we held an Open-Air Service on the Village Green as part of our 150th Anniversary celebrations back in 1993. Bladon Feast always traditionally began with an Open-Air ser-

vice on the Village Green on the Sunday evening followed by a funfair on the Monday and Tuesday. However this year we felt we'd like to do something a bit different, hence the Songs on the Green! Incidentally, there is more information on the history of Bladon Feast as well as the Junior Church itself on our website: www.juniorchurch.co.uk/history.



Sponsored Child

For the last 12 years the Junior Church has sponsored a child through the charity PLAN International. For the last few years our 'foster child' has been Boniface Wanjiru in Munyu, Kenya and several of the children at Junior Church have corresponded with Boniface and his family. We have just heard from PLAN that our sponsorship must end. PLAN have completed their work in Boniface's community – constructing classroom & latrines, training health care workers, providing fresh water and providing building material to improve living facilities. PLAN feel the community have now reached the stage where they can continue independently using the training and resources that we have helped provide. We have agreed to sponsor a new child – Emiline Atenge. She is 3 years old and lives with her mother and father in Mukuju in the Tororo province of Uganda. PLAN is already well established in Emiline's community and has built and equipped a local health centre and improved school facilities by constructing new classrooms and installing water tanks and sanitation. However, there is still a lot of work to be done and we are really pleased to be able to help in our small way. The Junior Church donates a minimum of £16 every month to PLAN for their vital work and we also make extra donations to appeals by PLAN for specific projects. We keep in regular contact with our sponsored child by writing letters and sending photographs and small gifts.

Philip Rumsby

Seventy Five and Counting

The seventy fifth anniversary of the Kidlington Women's Own was celebrated in great style on Tuesday 22nd May. Representatives from a dozen churches and other groups, including folk from the circuit and from ecumenical partner churches in Kidlington, joined the members of Women's Own for a service of thanksgiving, followed by a superb anniversary tea. The guest speaker at the service was Mrs Stella Bristow, a former Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and Connexional Secretary of Women's Network. Stella took the theme of last summer's gathering of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, 'Women making a Difference', and spoke about women in the life of Jesus, women in the history of the Church and women in the world today.

She showed that women have often been overlooked or oppressed, but that their role has been and still is crucial in the quest for justice in the world. At the end of the service, members of the congregation were invited to use an autumn leaf to reflect on someone who had been a significant influence in their life, and the act of worship concluded in the presence of this great 'cloud of witnesses', wishing Women's Own well in the journey to its centenary in 2032.



Martin Wellings

A wet weekend in Wales

At the beginning of May Jonathan and I joined about 250 other Methodists in Llandudno for a weekend conference entitled "Heart of Worship". We were treated to some inspiring morning prayers led by Alison Adams, a former member of the Iona community. We were lost in admiration at her teaching technique, and tried to make notes about how she moved her arms, while surreptitiously recording the songs to take home with us. The keynote speakers, both from the States, challenged us to think about the accessibility of our worship and the need to cross cultural barriers. We also had a vast array of workshops to choose from, ranging from "What's God got to do with it?" to "Finding God through baking bread".

I was dispatched to find out more about "Godly Play", which we have recently experimented with in Woodstock Junior Church. The session was led by the Revd John Fellows, who simply involved us in our own Godly Play, encouraging to ask us our own questions, and made us realise that all ages can benefit from a chance to play. We looked at the very expensive and beautifully made American toys, and their cheaper (and they certainly looked it!) British equivalents, which could be used to introduce Bible stories, the Church Year, festivals, and so many other areas. We hope to be continuing the experiment at Woodstock, so watch this space!

Other workshops included the one in which I fell asleep (it was a session on meditation and was very peaceful), the one on "Worship and Justice", which raised the question of whether Amos was right when he said that God despised our acts of worship, and one on World Church music. Look out for this in future Todd services!

We both attended a session on the "missing generation" which looked at how Westminster Central Hall had built up a group of those in their 20s and 30s. The key

however did not seem to consist of exactly what they did with them (though there were all kinds of trendy ideas), but the fact that this group had a worker employed by the church, whose only job was to support them, share their leisure time and their worship and generally nurture them. We came away wondering if this had a message for our circuit as we consider our own staffing needs.

Jonathan deliberately went to different groups, to maximise the learning experience! He found out about techniques to retell stories from the Bible: strip the story down to its bare essential before building it up again. He also wondered if the "Fresh Expressions" workshop was expressing anything that fresh.

On Saturday evening, we sat through Paul Field's new musical about slavery: we loved the pictures and some of the music, but weren't entirely sure about Paul Field trying to sing everything!

So, what did we think? Although, if truth be known, we failed to make it to the early morning communion on the beach on Sunday, or the early morning worship on the Great Orme on Monday, and we skipped a Saturday evening session in order to watch Dr Who while eating fish and chips, we nevertheless came away full of ideas, and with much to reflect on: the wonderful songs, the cross in the main hall made out of lighting cross beams, the enthusiasm of those there who were all committed to rejuvenating worship in their local communities, the shared stories and the fact that technology can go wrong even in the best of hands!

Julie Todd



Some pictures from Woodstock



Our church weekend break near Cheltenham



On the bank of the Thames for the recent anti-poverty demonstration *Ring the alarm*



Tuesday Tots, along with our ecumenical partners The Buggy Club, win the cup for best float at the Woodstock Carnival



Is there life in the south?

The astute amongst you will have noticed that this quarter all the reports in *Kitbag* are from the northern end of the circuit. While the north may indeed be the centre of the universe as far as church and circuit activities go, surely there must be life elsewhere! So please do remember *Kitbag* when going about church business. Let us know what you have done. Let us

know what you are planning to do. Let us know what you think about church life, about your vision for your church and the circuit as a whole, and about the future of the Church in general. Send us your pictures. Convince me that there is indeed something going on out there! Thank you!

Jonathan

Oxford Circuit

Circuit Office
Wesley Memorial Church
New Inn Hall Street
Oxford

Phone: 01865-243216
Fax: 01865-247706

Email:
newsletter@oxfordmethodists.org.uk

Web:
www.oxfordmethodists.org.uk

Deadline for next issue
20th August 2007



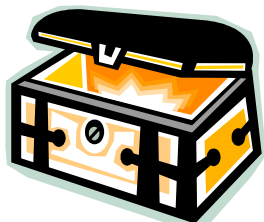
**KEEPING
IN TOUCH**

Please send contributions to the
editor, Jonathan Todd, either
via the circuit office or by email.

Hunt the BBQ



The northern section of the circuit are having a car treasure hunt followed by a barbecue on August Bank Holiday Monday. Everyone is welcome to join the fun, whether you live in the north or not! Look out for further details or contact Jonathan Todd.



Dates for your Diary

Saturday 23rd June—3pm

Strawberry Tea and Bring & Buy at the home of Jocelyn Brownlie, Latimer Road. Tickets available from Lime Walk.

Sunday 1st July—5:30pm

SoS: Spirituality on Screen—*Little Miss Sunshine*
10 Bletchingdon Road, Islip

Thursday 5th July—Thursday 12th July

Methodist Conference meets in Blackpool

Sunday 29th July—6:00pm

Charles Wesley Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral

Thursday evenings in August

A series of study evenings focussing on worship beginning with a bring and share supper at 7:30pm and meeting at 8pm

2nd August	Tackley
9th August	Bladon
16th August	Woodstock
23rd August	Kidlington

Bank Holiday Monday 27th August

North Section Car Treasure Hunt and Barbecue

Sunday 2nd September—5:30pm

SoS: Spirituality on Screen—*The Wind that Shakes the Barley*
10 Bletchingdon Road, Islip

Thursday 13th September—7:30pm

Circuit meeting at Lime Walk. Important decisions about the future of the circuit will need to be taken at this meeting. All members are urged to be there if at all possible!

Sunday 7th October—5:30pm

SoS: Spirituality on Screen—*I, Robot*
10 Bletchingdon Road, Islip

Celebrating Charles Wesley

We continue to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley with a number of events in coming months. On 29th July, there is a special Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral beginning at 6pm and Wesley Memorial will be hosting a circuit Songs of Praise on 21st October. Meanwhile, the Jasperian Theatre Company is coming to Marlborough Road Methodist Church in Banbury on Thursday, 29th November to

perform *Charles Wesley 1707*. The play not only considers Wesley the hymn writer but also explores his great love for Sally Gwynne, his often testy relationship with brother John, and his desire with John to change the nation through evangelism. Tickets for this latter event are available from *The Mustard Seed* bookshop in Banbury and cost £6.50 (call 07879 057401 or email shop@banburysseed.co.uk).