

# A Grand Charity Concert

In aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital

At the Wonersh United Reformed Church

7.30pm

Saturday 24th September

Music by

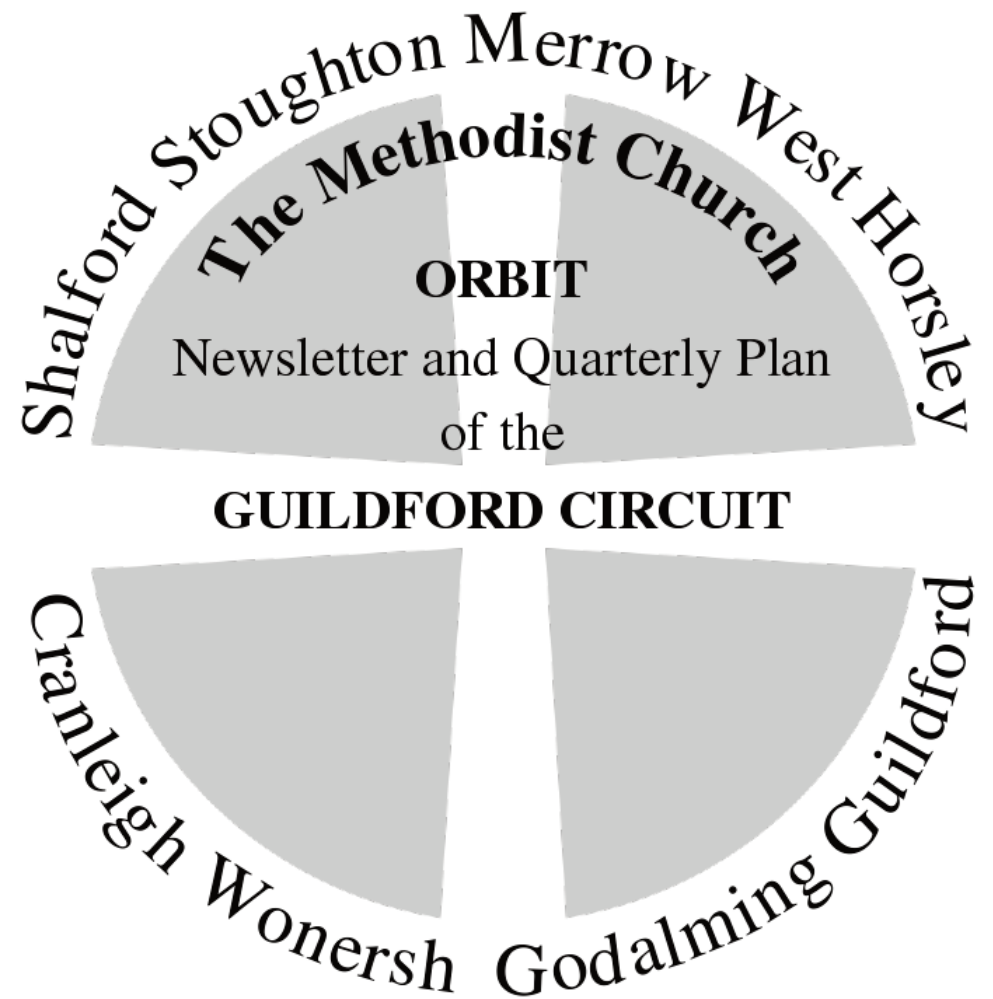
**Sounding Brass**  
and special guests

Tickets £5.00 and £3.00  
include interval refreshments

Phone 01483 892579

to reserve seats or for  
more information

Tickets may also be available on the door



September 2011 to November 2011

# Verdi's Otello

8-9, 11-12 November 2011

7.30 pm Weekdays, 6.30 pm Saturday

Tickets £16 Tues, £18 Weds, Fri, Sat

box office 01483 444789  
[www.electrictheatre.co.uk](http://www.electrictheatre.co.uk)

Musical Director      Francis Griffin  
Stage Director         Jackie Shearer  
English translation     Andrew Porter

**G**uildford  
**O**pera  
**C**ompany

*The Electric Theatre*



[www.guildfordopera.com](http://www.guildfordopera.com)

**Saturday 12th. November 2011**

Cranleigh Quiz and Curry

**7.30pm Wednesday 16th. November 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

**7.30pm Wednesday 30th. November 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

**7.30pm Thursday 8th. December 2011**

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting At Stoughton

**Saturday 17th. December 2011**

Epworth Choir at Guildford Cathedral



## ORBIT

The next edition of Orbit will be published in November 2011. Anyone can submit items for inclusion but news about Methodist activities at local and wider levels is particularly encouraged. Photographs of children and vulnerable people can only be included if consent has been obtained.

Please let me have your dates and items for inclusion in the next issue by the end of September 2011.

Please send your material to the Editor, Jane O'Leary at Sycamore House, 40 High Street, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8AT, or by email to [joleary@oaktax.com](mailto:joleary@oaktax.com).

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition and to Maureen, Alex and Jane for putting it all together.

## GUILDFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT DIARY

### **10.00am Saturday 10th. September 2011**

District Synod at High Cross Church, Camberley

### **Saturday 10th. September 2011**

Book Sale at Wonersh

### **7.30pm Wednesday 14th. September 2011**

Circuit Meeting at Merrow

### **Sunday 18th. September 2011**

MWIB - Roadshow Methodist Central Hall

### **7.30pm Wednesday 21st. September 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

### **7.00pm Tuesday 4th. October 2011**

Quiz at Wonersh

### **7.30pm Wednesday 5th. October 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

### **Friday 14th. October to Sunday 16th. October 2011**

Circuit Weekend Away with the Rev'd. Chris Blake at Sunbury Court

### **7.30pm Wednesday 19th. October 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

### **7.30pm Wednesday 2nd. November 2011**

Fusion at Guildford Methodist Church

### **Saturday 5th. November 2011**

Foundation Module Guide GMC

## **DEAR FRIENDS,**

It has been good to be working closely with Guildford circuit over recent months in Alan's absence. I particularly want to thank the circuit staff for the extra work they have taken on to help cover his work, and in that I would want to include Barrie Tabraham and Allan Taylor, whose help and support have been invaluable.

It is good to report that Alan's health is improving and he is hoping to return to work in the Autumn on a managed basis, and we pray God's blessing on him through this time.

I would also ask your prayers for the rest of the staff, for Claire and Marie as they go through the re-invitation process, which is always a stressful time, for Paul as he continues to look for a new ministry and for Darlene as she works with Woodbridge Road in the new opportunities in partnership with St. Mary's.

The Circuit Stewards are also carrying a significant load at the moment in the re-invitation process, and in planning and managing the changes that lie ahead, so I also ask you to remember them.

Actually, I believe the last few months have been a very creative time for the leadership of the circuit; and by the time we come to the September circuit meeting, I am confident that through the guidance of God's spirit, we will be able to discern a positive way forward. A way forward that will allow the circuit to use its considerable resources of people, buildings and above all faith, to develop God's mission positively in different ways throughout the circuit.

**Yours in Christ,**

**Ian Howarth**

# CONTEMPORARY METHODISM

## A Discipleship Movement Shaped for Mission

NOT LONG NOW! 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Get your names down now!

Circuit Weekend at the Mansion House,  
Salvation Army International Conference  
Centre, Sunbury on Thames TW16 5PL.



The Methodist Conference of 2011 warmly accepted the report of the General Secretary, the Rev Dr Martyn Atkins, which set out the future direction for the Methodist Church. The report is focussed in the phrase “A discipleship movement shaped for mission” and indicates some of the ways in which the church can look to the future with excitement and hope.

**The Circuit Weekend will explore some of the aspects of this vision.**

- Take a look at what is planned:

**Friday:** arrival and finding rooms, ready for evening meal at 7pm to be followed at 8 pm by the Introductory Session: *A Challenging Context.*

**Saturday:** After breakfast at 8am, and around the coffee break, we will be looking at *‘Wonderful Worship’* and

and not a drop of rain.

On Friday, for those who could make an early start, we met at the New Forest Inn in Emery Down for lunch and then had two short walks – the first at Bolderwood, to see some of the forest deer being fed and a walk through the inclosure. After a short drive, we stopped for a second walk among the giant redwood and sequoia trees in the Rhinefield Inclosure.

Our walk on Saturday started directly from the hotel and was approximately six miles long, highlighting three aspects of the Forest - natural woodland, heath/moorland and a managed forest inclosure, where commercial trees are grown. Lunch was at a restaurant in the former railway station building at Holmsley and we then walked back along the disused railway track. Saturday was completed by the usual quiz. Can’t remember who won!

By contrast, our Sunday morning walk started from Keyhaven, near Milford-on-Sea and followed a path through salt and freshwater marshes and a shore path which is part of the Solent Way. In the afternoon, after an excellent lunch at the Gun Inn, the few intrepid walkers still standing walked two to three miles along the shingle spit to Hurst Castle. The building here was begun in Henry VIII’s time to protect the narrows between the mainland and the Isle of Wight, with multiple additions at various times. It was still in use at the time of WW2 as a searchlight station. With everyone now feeling rather tired, we took the easy option and returned to Keyhaven by the little harbour ferry.

**Glenys and Tom Magill**



**A POEM COMPOSED BY ONE OF OUR LOCAL PREACHERS  
AT THE TRAINING AWAY-DAY ON JUNE 9TH.**

Great Sower, I'm sorry I'm often the path;  
Your seed falls on me; birds eat it like chaff.  
Forgive for the times when nothing will grow;  
YOU'VE sown the seed and I've nothing to show.

Forgive me, Great Sower, when I'm like a rock;  
As I've got no soil, your progress I block.  
My heart becomes hard, again and again,  
So there's really no soil to foster your grain.

At times I am prickly, your seed I don't nourish;  
Life's weeds smother grain - your word cannot flourish.  
There are so many things I want to enjoy,  
Yet you've given me time, your gifts to employ.

Great Sower I long for my soil to be good;  
So your seed may grow well, giving spiritual food.  
May my life be productive, my Saviour proclaim;  
So your Word may win others, from hundredfold grain.



**WALKING GROUP WEEKEND IN THE NEW FOREST**

Following from last year's very enjoyable walking weekend in the Lake District another weekend was arranged for the New Forest this year. Our accommodation was provided by the Moorhill House Hotel, located in Burley, towards the western edge of the Forest. It was generally agreed that the facilities were very nice with good food and service throughout the weekend and there were even four-poster beds for some lucky people.

The group consisted of 21 staying at the hotel, three staying at the nearby YHA hostel and another two walkers who joined us on Saturday. The group was mainly from Merrow but it was good to be joined by other friends, including Marjorie and Ron Lee who are now living in Dorset. The weather was perfect for walking - sunny and warm with good visibility for the views

## **CONTEMPORARY METHODISM**

**A Discipleship Movement Shaped for Mission**

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*'Effective Evangelism'*. Then after lunch and time out for 'Walkers and Sleepers' there will be afternoon tea followed by a session on *'A Creative Circuit'* before the evening meal at 6pm. Then bring your 'party piece' and join in the evening's entertainment.

**Sunday:** Breakfast at 8am will be followed by a final session: *'Methodists in Mission'* before Morning Worship at 11am, around the theme of *'Dedicated Disciples'* finishing with lunch at 1pm.

**We hope you will join us to explore these important issues together.**

**All at a cost of only £150.** Can't make the whole weekend? Then why not join us for the day on Saturday?  
**£30 (including lunch) or £40 (including lunch & evening meal)**

**Don't miss out!** To book your place call Jane Vinall on 01252 326428 or Margaret Faulkner on 01483 282267 now, with payment to Margaret at Sonning, Nightingale Road, East Horsley KT24 5DZ as soon as possible.

Further details of accommodation are available in the last Orbit magazine or from Jane Vinall, Margaret Faulkner or Revd Darlene McCarley

# NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

## CRANLEIGH



During the week beginning July 25, a good number of us were involved with our seventh Holiday Club for children aged 5-9. We greatly enjoyed ourselves – as we hope our charges did! Our Club, entitled ‘On the Move’, was organised by Sheila Holmes, and concentrated on various Biblical stories or episodes which included journeys of some kind (for example – Mary’s ride on the donkey to Bethlehem at the first Christmas – or Moses’ planned journey to the Promised Land.) Various fun activities surrounded the serious input, including comic sketches, games, crafts and of course refreshments. (The week was marred by the illness of one of our younger leaders, Jason Stedman, who left his hospital bed on one day to take part in one of the five sketches he had written. We are very grateful to him and hope he will soon be fully fit).

Earlier in the summer, we celebrated two anniversaries (mentioned in my last article):-

On June 5th, we were delighted to welcome back our former minister, Nicola Vidamour, who conducted both morning and evening services: the former a sung Communion and the latter a Songs of Praise service.

On the morning of June 12th we welcomed Rev. Barrie Tabraham to our Choir Anniversary Service. Barrie successfully combined the themes of Pentecost, hymnody and the role of a choir, under the title ‘Breathing Exercises’ (!) The choir sang four suitable anthems.

After the conclusion of a successful Wednesday Group programme, members have been enjoying summer coffee evenings, mostly in people’s gardens! (No I’m not going to dwell on the fulfilment of gloomy predictions about the summer weather).

We were pleased to hear Laura Simpson at the Circuit Service on May 8 in our church. Laura is one of the professional organisers of Christian Aid, and we found her talk inspirational just before our collection week.

## “Summers end” A Grand Charity Concert in aid of Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital

Featuring “Sounding Brass” supported by other talented artistes  
7.30pm Saturday 24th September at Wonersh United Reformed Church  
Tickets £5.00 –inc refreshments Phone 01483 892579 now to book seats or for more details

## Wonersh United Reformed Church Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival Service with all the various age range Scout and Guide units and their families invited - 11.00am Sunday 2nd October – Hymns led by the Pulpit Brothers and Sister !

## Charity Quiz Night

Wonersh URC annual Quiz Night and two course supper in aid of “Chase” in the Wonersh Scout HQ 7.00pm Tuesday 4th October - Teams of four to six  
Price including hot supper £6.50p per person - Payable on the night. Bring your own drink . Please phone 01483 892579 to enter your team and / or to bribe the organiser.....

Chris Cozens



## CREATING SAFER SPACE

Module A of the safeguarding training “Creating Safer Space” has now been replaced by a Foundation Module which includes training on safeguarding vulnerable adults as well as safeguarding children and young people. From September 2011 all those whose work within the church with vulnerable adults and those who work with children and young people who have not done Module A will be expected to do the Foundation Module, as well as those whose role in the church has an impact on or a responsible for these groups of vulnerable people.

## There will be a Foundation Module training session on

Saturday 5 November

9.30am - 1pm

At Guildford Methodist Church

Please let your church safeguarding officer or Sylvia Kelley 01483 423261 know if you are attending.

and uplifting event attended by some 800 people from the many churches in the URC Wessex Synod. If you haven't seen the Hythe URC "Praisin hands" puppet show you must soon! Pictured below is the engine used to pull the carriages on the half mile train track we were all allowed to travel on during the day!



**Looking for that special book or just or just stocking up on your reading material?**

Another really huge Second hand Book Sale and Cake stall at the Wonersh United Reformed Church

**Saturday 10th September - 10.00am - 4.00pm no entry fee**

Take your time and browse round our new stock of used books in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Refreshments served all day. For more information, or to volunteer to help, or to donate books or cakes please

Telephone - 01483 892579

All proceeds in aid of on going Church building restoration work

**Moving house or just having a late Spring clean?**

Looking for somewhere to donate your unwanted Clothing, shoes, CDs, DVDs and other good quality items? Just bag them and place them in the large Red recycling container in aid of the British Heart Foundation situated in the Wonersh United Reformed Church Car park



That week (beginning May 15) was relatively successful for us and our committee hosted a 'thank you' evening in Cranleigh Band Room on June 30, when we all enjoyed a buffet meal and a stimulating talk from Daniel Sinclair about the Charity's work in Cambodia.

On Saturday November 12, we are organising a charity quiz – with – curry. (see separate notice) Book the date and start collecting your teams together now!

On the same weekend that Laura Simpson encouraged our mission work for Christian Aid, we received a visit from an Italian couple known to James and Hilary Strawson. Rosaria and Pietro Vincenzi run the children's Day Care Center near Naples called 'Imparare Giocando Onlus' and we heard much about their successful Association which concentrates on teaching as well as loving the children in their care. 'The Center's mission is to build hope by encouraging emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical maturity through a Christian environment' (from their brochure). Rosaria and Pietro met as children at 'Casa Materna', an orphanage which, preceded the centre where they both now work. Rosaria, who speaks excellent English, spoke on Saturday May 7 at a Bring-and Share supper, and during the morning service on May 8. £123.00 was raised at the Supper and the Church Council donated £100.00 to the cause. The weekend organised by James and Hilary, who also gave hospitality to the couple, seemed a fitting European counterpart of our work overseas for Christian Aid

Among all these enjoyable, hopefully useful, activities, we continue to think and pray about the future of our church and circuit, as I'm sure you all do.

**Glenda Sewell**

## GODALMING

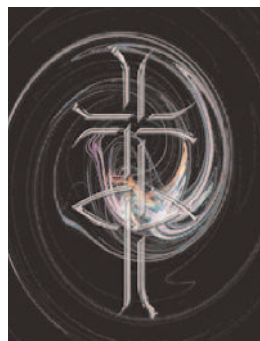


At the beginning of May the Events Committee arranged a Medieval Banquet. It was attended by over 100 people from the church and the local community. A delicious five course meal was served and

entertainment provided by the choir, and the two church singing groups for children and young people, Music Kids and Minor Chord. Many people wore medieval dress mostly provided by Kris Benjafield who is wardrobe mistress for several local drama productions. It was a great evening.

It was with sadness that the church learnt of the death of one of its previous ministers, Rev. Howard Starr on 18 May. Howard was the first United Reformed Minister of the United Church from 1981 to 1986. Several of the church members attended Howard's Thanksgiving Service on The Wirral. At a morning service following Howard's death, in thanksgiving for his life, the choir sang an anthem "Upon a cross of wood" written by Howard and with music composed by our church organist, David Hartnell. Wendy Weston, the choir leader, made a beautiful flower arrangement which took hours to do, displayed on a wooden cross made by one of the church members Malcolm Wilson.

On June 12 it was the Church's 34th Anniversary Service as a United Church. Several members took part in the service. Perhaps one of the most moving parts was when people from the church committees, organisations and activities brought forward and placed on a table an object symbolising the work of their activity just before the offertory so that all the gifts and skills of the church could be dedicated to God for the future. George Paul Varley was baptised whilst his father David's transfer of church membership was officially acknowledged. There was supposed to have been a barbecue on the church lawn following the service but the day proved to be the wettest in June and the barbecue was held inside instead. At its June Church Meeting, the church agreed a new constitution, schedules and committee terms of reference. This change has been required as a consequence of registering with the Charity Commission and is based on a model constitution agreed between Churches Together in England and the Charity Commission. The agreement comes after submitting the documents to all the relevant outside bodies for approval and will be adopted in September. The church has picked up the challenge from the Circuit Review to



## WONERSH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

[www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk) for national information  
or [www.guildfordmethodistcircuit.org.uk](http://www.guildfordmethodistcircuit.org.uk)  
for news of our church and other local partners

### **Reasons to be cheerful September 2011**

Sounding Brass - sounding great !

We were blessed with fine weather when Sounding Brass - a brass quintet played to a congregation of around 90 people on the evening of July 10th at a "songs of praise" Service uniquely held on the lawn in front of the Church. The nine favourite hymns were sung with great gusto (good old Gusto he was so loud and enthusiastic we plan to ask him to lead us again next year! )

The Service which was actually a combined Songs of Praise and a Circuit Service was very ably led by our Minister the Rev Marie Greenwood with Prayers led by the Rev Debbie Sellin from St John's Parish. The food after the service was very yummy too.....



### **URC Wessex Synod open day.**

We had great time at Open day at Fawley Hill the estate and home of Sir Robert MacAlpine near Henley on 18th June. it was a really fun filled

## WEST HORSLEY

There are exciting times ahead for West Horsley. At the time of writing, the Wesley Room, which holds so many good memories, is empty, looking surprisingly spacious, and awaiting destruction at the beginning of August. We hope that the rebuilding will be more or less completed by the end of August. We have been so fortunate to have Bob Spackman to mastermind the whole process, giving of his time and his professional expertise and dedication to the task; without him, I doubt whether the project would have been feasible. Keith Yule too, on whom we rely so much, spends endless time giving professional help to make sure that all things electrical meet his high standards. There are so many others who have given their time to help in various ways, not least the daunting task of clearing the Wesley room and finding temporary homes for all the contents. Meanwhile, the building site is cordoned off but we are carrying on business as usual, with Sunday coffee served in the Chapel and the Thursday coffee morning decamping to the Village Hall Cedar Room .

One of the features of the Chapel, and indeed of West Horsley village, is the delightful garden, created and maintained by Liz Hart with the invaluable help of her husband Ted. Throughout every season of the year the garden is a source of great pleasure and enjoyment to all who see it. It requires constant attention to keep it in such perfect order and we are so grateful to Liz and Ted for all that they do. It was fitting that once again the garden received a Silver award in the Horsley in Bloom competition. Ted has also set up a website for our chapel, including photos, and he regularly updates it. Do look and enjoy it. ([www.westhorsleymethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.westhorsleymethodistchurch.org.uk)).

**Ruth Isaac**

develop the discipleship of its church members. It was felt that such an initiative should be underpinned by prayer. This has begun by encouraging the prayer life of the church. The prayer fellowship which meets on a Friday has been inviting, on a monthly basis, the members of various organisations and committees of the church to come and pray for the life of the church and in particular the joys and concerns of that particular activity. The congregation has been encouraged to form prayer partnerships. As the next step it is hoped to set up various discipleship groups in the autumn.

**Sylvia Kelley**

### **It's proving to be a summer of celebration at GUC.**

Church Anniversary in June was "home-grown", being led by our worship-group and with the sermon being preached by our minister, Paul Dean. It focused on GUC as a witness to the community, and during the service members of our varied church-based groups brought up representative items to place at the front at the church. The result was an overflowing table ranging from a Christian Aid collector's bag through Pantomime props to youth-group games-equipment. In their time out, Weysiders contributed a collage of faces on a background cross, representing the whole of humanity being welcomed into the Church.

Plans for the traditional Anniversary lunch were hurriedly modified in view of the rain. Furniture was swiftly rearranged during coffee-time to turn the main church into a dining-room, and the outdoor children's activities took place in the hall. More action followed for some of our singers and musicians as they moved on in the afternoon to the Godalming's annual Songs Of Praise - transferred from the town's bandstand to the parish church in view of the weather.

Another cause for celebration has been the wedding of one of our younger members - Olivia Garriock. On July 23rd the church was packed as over 200 family and friends gathered for her marriage to Ross Hartey. It was a great joy to witness one of our former Weysiders - now training in midwifery - taking this momentous step in life's journey.

The celebrations continue as a number of our members celebrate significant birthdays and anniversaries. (At the end of August the main church will be transformed again - this time for a barn-dance!)

For family, friends and fellowship, we give you thanks, O Lord.

**Nancy Wilks**

## MERROW

**C**ELEBRATION and COMMITMENT form the background to our report this quarter.

At the Methodist conference in Southport in July recognition was accorded to the Revd. Robert Salmon for his 70 years of ministry. Much loved and cherished by us all, we celebrate with him his ministry since 1941.

In June we celebrated the 56th Church Anniversary and a photograph is included here.



*Elizabeth and John Allman cut the 56th Anniversary cakes on 5th June, when Revd. Barrie Tabraham was the preacher*

**C**ongratulations go also to Julie Webber and John Wallis, both part of our congregation, who married on 2nd July.

The house group has concluded its interesting sessions based on Douglas Connelly's book, "Angels". We celebrate in August with a tea party at the home of Lyn McKay who has arranged another full programme.

Suzanne Burnham works tirelessly for Action for Children and the results of her commitment are impressive. The Lent "Count Your Blessings" raised £160. The Sainsbury's store collection brought £599.02 and the house-to-house collection £989.81. Patrick Johnson, the Legacies spokesperson for AFC, spoke at AFC Sunday on 3rd July and donations amounted to a further £299.50.

## STOUGHTON

**T**he fete we held as part of the Church Anniversary celebrations in June was a huge success and raised almost £800 for church funds. Fortunately we had a fine sunny afternoon and we were grateful for the support of families and friends from the church and community. A huge effort went into the organisation of the event and thanks go to everyone who helped to make it such an enjoyable afternoon. The addition of 'Sounding Brass' playing a variety of popular tunes certainly let the local area know that 'something was happening at SMC'.

We welcomed back Rev. Nick Holt and his wife Linda to lead our Church Anniversary service and we finished off the weekend with a lunch for the church family which Nick and Linda were able to share. After the last cup was washed there were some very tired people at the end of the afternoon but we all agreed the weekend had been very worthwhile.

By the time this issue of Orbit is published the Holiday Club will have been held over three days at the end of July and there are currently collections of various tubes, yoghurt pots etc. going on in true 'Blue Peter' style!

Many of the organisations who use our premises take a break over the summer months but will be back in full swing in September. At this time we remember and pray for the many ministers and their families who will move to new areas and begin new challenges from September.

**Linda Macbeth**



service was "Wanting to be a Christian" and was jointly led by Rev Claire Hargreaves and Rev John Cruse. Although this was one of our normal shared services with St Mary the Virgin it was also a "showcase" for our future plans for our churches to work more closely together from September and was very positively received by all who came.

Every Thursday between 10 -12, coffee mornings are held in the hall and a warm welcome is extended to both regular and new visitors. Towards the end of the morning, those who wish to do so join in prayers led by Claire.

Monthly Bible Study classes continue, and details of times and dates may be obtained from Claire. Everyone is welcome.

During term time a Parent and Toddler Group meets in the Church hall at 10am every Wednesday. New faces are always very welcome.

Information about Toddler Services which are held from time to time is available from Claire. These services have proved popular with families who enjoy the informality, and old and new faces are warmly invited to attend.

Our Harvest Festival will be on 9 October, and on 13 November we will be joining St. Mary's at their Remembrance Service.

Eurios Kemp (with thanks to Claire for details of the new worship arrangements).

## QUIZ WITH CURRY!



**SATURDAY 12TH NOVEMBER**

**BAND ROOM CRANLEIGH**

**7PM - TEAMS OF 4 - 6**

**£8 PER PERSON**



**(INCLUDES CURRY/VEGETARIAN OPTION)**



**ALL PROFITS GO TO CHRISTIAN AID**

**RESERVE TABLE OR FOR ENQUIRIES :-**

**PLEASE RING GLENDA ON 273037 OR JANE ON 276519**

Let me give you a date for your diary: on Saturday 17th December the Epworth Choir are performing at Guildford Cathedral when the retiring collection is for AFC.

At the end of July a coffee morning has been arranged for "Tools for Self-Reliance", a charity that has been working in Africa for more than 30 years. A decent set of tools can help many to earn a living for themselves and their families. [See <http://www.tfsr.org/> ]

The walking group continues to flourish. Many paths are trodden and pubs explored. An article is included here about the weekend in the New Forest.

We give thanks for the guidance and support of ministers and lay preachers, and look forward to the happy time when Alan will be fully restored to us. Our prayers are that we will go forward in strength together.

**Iris Walker**



## METHODIST CONFERENCE 2011

### Report from Jenny Jackson

The Methodist Conference in Southport engaged representatives spanning a wide age group, in stimulating discussion and debate about important and serious issues facing the church both locally and internationally in the 21st century. I was privileged to be a nominated representative from our District Synod to Conference. Privilege brings responsibility, so having received and read most of the three volumes of Conference agenda (comprising nearly 1000 pages) before setting off, I arrived on Friday July 1st in time to join in the communion service at the conclusion of Ministerial Conference. The Representative Conference sessions began on Saturday. Conference was formally opened by John Wesley in 1744 and has never ended – put simply it simply adjourns at the end of each session with much work continuing throughout the year by members of the church with oversight provided by the Methodist Council! Mr Wesley called the first Conference together to consider 'what to teach, how to teach, and what to do, i.e. how to regulate our doctrine, discipline and practice'. Today, it is the annual meeting of ordained and lay representatives, who together with Connexional staff confer in order to agree policy about many important key issues affecting the life of our church in our time.

No one observing proceedings could doubt the wholly Christian atmosphere in which conferring took place. We worshipped God through the gospel, music and prayer as we sought to discern God's will for us and the wider church we represent. Included in proceedings was the official Methodist launch of 'Singing the Faith' and much of the Conference worship music, ably led by a small, talented and inspirational worship band, came from that collection. The new hymn book is available from October this year and until December, can be ordered through Methodist Publishing at a reduced price. Music from this new resource has already been used in a BBC Songs of Praise service and morning worship on Radio 4. Last year many of us enjoyed time away at Waverley Abbey learning new musical items which form part of the new collection.

We inducted the new President and Vice President, and listened to their Conference sermons which included pertinent challenges to us all about the meaning of pastoral care and what welcoming strangers into our churches means; and about the importance of teaching and learning as we grow in faith together. We then received and extended greetings to local church and faith leaders and received the handwritten bible prepared by members across the Connexion to

## SHALFORD

Shalford welcomed friends from the village and other Circuit Churches to its Garden Party on 12th July. We enjoyed sitting in the garden for a short while before moving indoors due to rain where we continued with our conversations, tea, strawberries and scones.

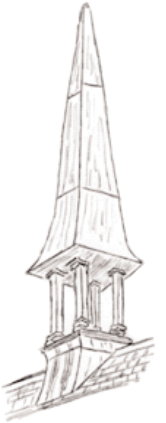
At the Church Council on 18th July, the decision was taken by unanimous vote to pursue a new way of being church in partnership with St Mary the Virgin, Shalford. It was agreed that from the next plan (subject to formal Circuit approval) Shalford Methodist will hold a united service with St Mary's on the second Sunday of each month offering worship in a different style to attract younger adults and families; on the fourth Sunday there will be a Methodist-led Holy Communion. Additionally, Claire and John Cruse, the Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, will run an "enquirer's course" from October with the ultimate aim of growing a new congregation based in the Methodist Church. Current worshippers will be encouraged to attend local church services on the first and third Sundays.

On a practical level, St Mary's will take over the management of lettings at the Methodist premises from the autumn as our highly valued lettings secretary Nancy Smith is unable to continue due to recent illness.

There will be a re-branding of the churches to reflect this partnership. Various options are being considered such as "Shalford Christians – St Mary the Virgin and Shalford Methodist working together" but no final decision has been made yet!

Shalford members see these proposals as positive and exciting and are optimistic about the future. Please support this new mission initiative through prayer and encouragement as we work through how we might be a more effective church for God's kingdom purposes in the future.

We were encouraged by a full church and an uplifting message at our regular shared service on 31st July with our Anglican friends from St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Shalford. Together with our regulars, including a party of 5 from Sunrise Residential Home, many of our visitors made the trip from the other end of Shalford including a number of families with young children. The theme of the



buildings or traditions, but rather God's mission. Churches, ministers, and traditions may be a tool towards that goal, but they are not the goal.

At the meeting where we put together the plan there was a good deal of conversation about a report which looked at situations just like ours, because our situation is by no means unique in British Methodism. The report, presented and discussed at this year's Conference, was a part of the General Secretary's report and called "Contemporary Methodism: a discipleship movement shaped for mission", and can be found on the Methodist Website. A 'user friendly' summary will be available soon and I hope that we may be able to discuss the report as churches and a circuit before too long.

Meanwhile as we begin this new year, I would ask each of you, individually and in groups, to pray for the Circuit Leadership over the coming months as we seek, on your behalf, as your representatives, to make decisions affecting the life of the Circuit over the coming years.

Remember in prayer our current ministers and any that may be looking to join us next summer. Remember too the Circuit Stewards as they consider the deployment of our circuit resources, our buildings, our finances and our administration. And of course, our wider Methodist Connexion, our District and its leaders and representatives from each of the circuits, as well as the Connexional leadership.

Remember most of all to pray for each other that we may fulfil our calling, by God's grace, to be a holy people called to the service of God's Kingdom.

Happy New (Methodist) Year everyone!

And may God's love and peace go with each of us and our Circuit and churches,

**Your sister in Christ,**

**Darlene**

mark the 400th anniversary of the King James translation of the bible. Later in the Conference we confirmed that the presidential roles will continue as annual appointments. Conference Sunday saw the reception into full Connexion of all those ministers (presbyters and deacons) to be ordained later the same day, and it was a real joy to be present at the ordination service of nine women and men to the Methodist presbyterate, at Chester Cathedral.

On July 4th, a lengthy session was devoted to the General Secretary's report. Entitled 'Contemporary Methodism – A discipleship movement shaped for mission', we were challenged to listen to the growing sense of change from grass roots in our churches, and the opportunities this opens for us in our local churches and circuit. The report focuses on the key discipleship themes of allowing ourselves to be transformed into agents of change, paying attention to the means of grace, building the church of Christ in a broken world, engaging in kingdom-living lifestyles, and telling our stories in contemporary culture. Change through worship, evangelism, and raising the right leaders for the requirements of a changing and responsive church for generations to come is vital – anyone who grows anything knows the importance of nurturing seeds in the right climate and environment, and growing Christians is no different! It is important too that we have the right numbers and styles of buildings to fulfil our calling within a context of good and safe governance, working with world and local church partners.

The discipleship themes set the tone for much of the remainder of Conference business over the next four days when our discussions included issues and reports such as:

- Methodist Women in Britain – bringing together Network and the Uniting Federation of Methodist Women – was launched and the new President of MWiB is a member of our Synod. On Sept 18th at Methodist Central Hall the launch continues with a road show event.
- Big Society – how do we as church respond to the far reaching ramifications of policy of our current government, elected by the majority of British voters, without allowing Churches to be exploited and used in place of important public and social services for those in need?
  - The Theology of Pastoral Care – for ministers and all in contact with our churches.
  - The work of the Methodist Youth Assembly – including testimony from members in their early 20's who begin ministerial training in September, and the

One Programme providing gap year opportunities for young people un Christian service

- Poverty and inequality – at home and abroad, also discussed at Synod in April
- ‘And are we yet alive’ - Methodist statistics confirming that there are key areas of growth
- Education and Learning policy - including students grants, Methodist Schools, ministerial and probationers oversight and establishment of a new Connexional Ministries Committee
- The role for local churches in 2012 Olympics – are we in Surrey prepared for a influx of national and international visitors (spectators and athletes), many of whom might wish to share in fellowship in our churches as they benefit from our superb sports facilities and proximity to London?

The more difficult business to engage with was presented with clarity (and at times humour), such as the scrutiny of finances, reports from the Faith and Order Committee and amendments to standing orders. Reports on the pensions for, ill health and Stationing of ministers and Methodist Housing, safeguarding, Methodist Council, ministerial development review and the future of Epworth Press were sensitively considered and policy decisions taken. During the Methodist Missionary Society AGM, we heard from international visitors – who also contributed to our debates - this year from Japan following the tsunami, Pakistan following the assassination of a Christian politician and the use of drones in warfare, as well as others from The Caribbean, and South Africa and Nigeria.

The six days were action packed and many discussions have been reported through the Methodist Recorder. With the exception of the Ordination Services all our business was broadcast live via the web and forms part of the archive on the Methodist Conference website, where all the reports are also available in PDF format. The live broadcast was evidently followed by press, media, ministers, members and others at home and abroad, and was also the subject of much ‘tweeting’.

Are we prepared to be a people willing to take risks and make changes to stay relevant and alive? We accepted the General Secretary’s report on your behalf. We are therefore now officially a discipleship movement, with work to do. As ordinary members of our circuit where ‘new and creative ways forward are beginning to emerge’, we each have a part to play: our leaders can inform, guide and encourage us, but nothing can happen without our support to make this work!

## TO THE GUILDFORD CIRCUIT CHURCHES

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Odd beginning? Most of you will recognise it as being in the style of Paul in his letters to the churches under his care. I particularly like the fact that he often goes on to thank God for the people to whom he is writing, even the Corinthians who often worried him. And I do indeed Thank God for all of you – not at all like the Corinthians by the way.

We are once again at the beginning of a new Methodist year and soon the meetings, reports and decisions will begin. And as always with any new year, we wonder what it will bring. Things have not been easy in many ways over the past few years – and there are many decisions and changes that lie ahead of us in this coming year and beyond. Changes in staffing, in church groupings, and for some of us, even in where we worship.

So like Paul I want to begin by saying that I am grateful to God for all of you, for your service over the years and still in this time of change. For your devotion to God. For your kindness and care to me over the years I have been here. No, I am not planning to go anywhere before my retirement in 2013 but I want to start this new Methodist year with each person and each church remembering and focusing on the fact that you belong to God, that he has through his Son made us holy, even when we don’t feel very holy, and by his Spirit will give us the gifts needed to face any situation. We need only to remember and focus on the love God has for us and the purpose we have in him.

Then, as now, there is some uncertainty and change ahead of us, it is particularly important to remember God’s love for us, and our calling to him. In my own life, being somewhat afraid of heights, difficult times are a bit like being on an extremely high ladder and remembering not to look down at the danger but up at the goal.

In the context of all our lives and that of our churches, the goal is not the church