



West Street News JUNE 2015



The quarterly magazine of the
United Reformed Church, West Street, Dorking
www.dorkingurc.org.uk

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
West Street, Dorking

A Church with a Welcome
and a

Clear Christian Message

We are so glad that you have picked up this magazine

Our Church Community is made up of people of all age groups who come from different walks of life. The diversity is fascinating. This being so, we have sought to develop the life of the Church, so that as many different needs as possible are catered for.

Here you can come to worship God.
Here you can meet with Jesus Christ, who is the
Head of the Church – because He lives in the
hearts of His people.
Here you can find companionship and build
lasting friendships – and so much more.

The opportunities for children and young people are
particularly good at West Street

Our Chaplain, Church-Community Worker and Elders are
available to help you.

An Emergency Prayer Chain operates for anyone who feels
they need prayer for any reason.

See the Weekly Leaflet, or ask for a WELCOME PACK,
or visit our website on www.dorkingurc.org.uk for more details
of our life and work

CHAPLAIN'S CHATTER

In the days following the earthquake in Nepal I was asked why God allows such disasters to happen; why some people escape from these incidents yet others do not; what reasons can we give? The short answer is that we cannot begin to understand the mysteries of how God works. But perhaps this is to duck the question and a fuller answer needs to be attempted. To my mind the starting point is to consider how we view God.

Do we view God as the ultimate planner who is working from a master plan, and our lives and what happens in them are pre-determined? That everything has a purpose and what we experience in life, either positive or negative, is God's will.

Or do we view God as the great designer who as part of the design has given us free will? A freedom to make our own decisions for better or for worse. To travel to Nepal or not. To be standing on that spot where the masonry stone falls or to one side.

Or do we view God as part planner, part designer? God has a plan but God's design means that the plan has to be implemented through our actions. And given the gift of free will we can chose to ignore the plan and go our own way; or perhaps we just don't realise there is a plan.

Each alternative is a possible way of viewing God. Even the great theologians of the past and those of the present cannot agree. In the end none of us will know the answer until we meet God face to face and can ask the question. All I can say with certainty is that God is with those affected by the Nepal disaster: whether it is those mourning; those maimed and injured; those homeless and hungry; or those who in so many ways are trying to help the victims of the earthquake. And they all need our prayers.

Ted

GOMSHALL CHAPEL

Jesus said, "I am with you always: to the end of the world". Yet again the time has flown by and I sit at my computer collecting my thoughts for the coming month. There is an overwhelming comfort contained in these words of Our Lord to his disciples before His Ascension: words that are as apposite now as they were those two thousand years ago.

By the time you read this, the events of Pentecost will have been thoughtfully remembered and we shall be moving on in our understanding and wonder of our creator God who gave us this world to live in. We rejoice that, following discussions with the Coptic Church (just up the road in the former Catholic church), our little chapel will ring once more to the excited voices of young people meeting to learn more of the creator God. Part of their large Sunday School will meet there. Such ties are very meaningful in a world where there is so much disagreement and disharmony.

"Bright Hour" in June (Wednesday 17th at 2.30pm) will be a talk about the churches of Turkey: In July (Wednesday, 15th, again at 2.30pm) will be our annual Cream Tea. Do join us if you can - you know how welcoming we shall be!

It is good to know that we have the 'go ahead' to find a new Minister. The words of the prophet Joel quoted by Peter to the crowd at Pentecost bring with them the promise of eternal life - "In these last days, God says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people - and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." May that same Lord be with us all as we continue our lives here on earth - and as we step forward into an unknown future.

With love,

David Beard

MISSION

The Mission Committee has discussed a wide range of things recently, including: our programme of social activities; our work with young people; the way we pray for the work of the church; our online presence; our role with the Dorking Foodbank; the Church Welcome Pack; running a Christianity Explored course; participating in Heritage Open Days; and our church 'branding and identity'.

That forms a pretty mixed list that could perhaps be divided into three broad areas:

- Things we do (Social Activities, Foodbank, work with young people);
- How we are seen and perceived (Welcome Pack, Online presence; 'Identity and branding')
- Who we are (Christianity Explored; Our Heritage as a church - and all that has brought us to where we are).

Exciting things are going on in all of those areas, which of course, in reality have many overlaps and need to be connected to each other. Who we are as a Christian community should directly impact on the things we do, and how we present our church to others needs to reflect both of those if it is to be authentic.

Our prayer life for the work of the church certainly needs to encompass everything we are and do; it is something that needs to underpin all the above. It came to the Mission Committee for discussion in response to concerns that it was not currently one of our strengths. As a result it was decided to run a six month programme of different ways of praying together for our church, with the aim of establishing which ways members find most helpful. A Prayer Walk around our town was held in April, and a Prayer Tour of our buildings in May. The guides for both of these are available on the website for

anyone wanting to engage with them in that way. Look out for more ways to pray for our church over the coming months.

The Mission Committee thrives on a wide range of input and is open to all. If you would like to receive details of the next meeting, please speak to Ted Bellingham or Chris Currie.

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TRAI DCRAFT

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Traidcraft at Christmas and the recent sales leading up to Easter. We hope you all enjoyed the Easter Produce.

As you know all the products are Fairtrade certified which means farmers receive a fair price for their produce. The farmers also receive a Fairtrade premium to invest in improving their community, which can be anything from school books, solar panels, to providing fresh water supplies - things we all take for granted in this country.

Look out for the monthly bulletins on the notice board in the hall and for information from the farmers themselves where this lovely produce comes from.

If anyone wishes to have a look at the catalogues please ask us. Traidcraft will continue to be on sale on the third Sunday every month in the Hall and when dates are suitable look out for a stand at Open Doors.

Many thanks for your continued support on behalf of Traidcraft, helping to fight poverty through fair and just trade.

Derek and Rosemary Morrison





NOTES FROM THE CHURCH MEETING

Printed copies of the minutes of the March Church Meeting are available from the holder on the Church Notices board in the Main Hall. I encourage you to take a copy of the minutes of the Meetings, or to let me know if you would like to receive them by email, as they contain a lot of information about what is going on at the church and in the wider URC.

One piece of information is that the March Meeting agreed that the suspension of the evening service, with Holy Communion, on the 3rd Sunday of the month, which had been in place from January, should be continued indefinitely. The evening service at 5.30 pm at Chapel Court on the 1st Sunday of the month will be moved to the 3rd Sunday, with effect from June, and will include Holy Communion in the last month of each quarter of the year (March, June, September and December). There will be no service at Chapel Court in December if the 'Carols by Candlelight' service is on the third Sunday of the month (which it usually is) – instead residents will be invited to the service in the church and 'transport' will be provided if needed and the November service will include Holy Communion.

The URC has published a booklet entitled 'What is the Spirit Saying to the Churches?', which is a study guide for Churches about the future of the URC. For various reasons, churchgoing across Europe is in decline and the Christian faith is being challenged. There are no 'quick fixes' to this situation. The future of the Church lies in God's hands – the response of Christians must be to discern the leading of his Spirit. The URC 'Faith and Order Committee' has been considering this matter over the past four years and reported to the URC Mission Council and General Assembly last year. The publication of the booklet is the next step forward in terms of consulting the URC as a whole. Local Churches are invited to discuss it and to feed back (by the end of July) their thoughts as to where they see the Holy Spirit leading us.

This matter will be on the agenda for the June Church Meeting. A copy of the booklet is available from me and I will make available a summary of it for the Meeting. It is important to realise that the future of the URC will be determined by its members, guided by the Holy Spirit, as they gather for Church Meetings. That is why it is important that as many members as possible attend the Meetings.

Leslie Mitchell, (Church Meeting Secretary)

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CHRISTIAN AID

After a couple of late donations, the total raised for Christian Aid from the streets allocated to the URC including Gift Aid was £1,312.14. A fantastic total. Some donations included a completed Gift Aid slip which enables Christian Aid to boost the amount given by recovering tax from the Government that the donor would already have paid. The effect of this on our total this year has boosted our collection to about **£1330.00**. If you are a tax payer, it is well worth completing a Gift Aid slip with every charitable donation so that the value of your gift to the charity is increased.

Churches Together in Dorking organises the collection by dividing the streets of the town between the churches and then each church arranges for volunteers to cover their list. Unfortunately there are always more streets than volunteers so your home address might not have received an envelope through the door. The URC team of collectors is supplemented with volunteers from other churches but if you would like to join the team in 2016, you would be most welcome. It can be very pleasant walking around areas of Dorking on a May evening with many pretty flowers out, meeting some kind and generous people and having the satisfaction of knowing you are providing Christian service in a practical way.

Most people already know that Christian Aid supports those who struggle to survive in many different parts of the world. The support provided is practical and sustainable so far as possible so that communities can become self supporting and not reliant on hand outs.

Many thanks again for your generosity.

Jenny Langford

Do you fancy a Tour of Britain this summer, whilst staying in your own home? If so, you might be interested in:



A week of talks, activities, meals, and outings, based at Dorking URC and The Christian Centre.

For details & brochures: Christian Centre 01306 886830,
Ted Bellingham 07889 878471, or Chris Currie 07771
596654

www.dorkingurc.org.uk

Holiday at Home is organised by
Dorking United Reformed Church in partnership with:
The Christian Centre - St Paul's Church, Dorking – Dorking Quakers

ACCESS TO GOD

(The following has been submitted by Hazel Durham whilst she has been recuperating after breaking her hip – the article has been taken from 'Daily Bread – The Bible in One Year' and has been re-printed with their permission)

‘Technology is a blessing in so many ways. Need a bit of information about a health problem? All you have to do is access the Internet where you instantaneously get a list of options to guide your search. Need to contact a friend? Just send a text, email or Facebook post. But technology can also be frustrating at times. The other day I needed to access some information in my bank account and was asked a list of security questions. Unable to recall the exact answers, I was blocked from my own account. Or think of the times when an important conversation is cut off because of a dead mobile phone battery, with no way to reconnect until you find a plug to recharge it.

‘All of this makes me delighted with the reality that when I need to access God in prayer, there are no security questions and no batteries required. I love the assurance that John gives when he says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14)

Jon Stowell

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OPEN HOME GROUP - We would like to thank those who participated in our Sunday Roast Lunch which we served on 26th April. We provided around fifty plus meals and achieved our object to raise enough money to purchase a bench seat for Project Oasis.

Val Longhurst

FAMILY NEWS

Doreen Howes is recovering from two cataract operations

Rhona Howell has had a cataract operation. Both Roger and Rhona are awaiting tests

Hazel Durham is recovering from a partial hip replacement following a fall

Joan Tennant has had a spell in hospital with an infection but is now back at home

Daphne Etheridge has recovered from a hospital stay with an infection

Simon Ring is making progress from a chest infection and time in hospital

Diana Wakeford who continues treatment for her cancer

Congratulations to Richard and Pauline Selley on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 15th May

Congratulations to Colin and Hazel McCarthy on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 24th May

We remember all those young people who are preparing for exams at this time of year and for those who have to make decisions for their future

Ivan Longhurst has had tests and is undergoing treatment for a back problem

Grace Williams has moved to a Methodist Care Home in Witney due to the increasing severity of her dementia

Anna Langford, daughter of David and Jenny Langford, is to be married to Mr Simon Richardson at St Nicholas Church, Ringwould, near Deal, Kent on Saturday 27th June, 2015. Ringwould is the village where Jenny's parents live and we pray they will be able to attend the service

Stanley Saunders - In case any members were not in church when the announcement was made, Stanley Saunders passed away in a rest home on the 24th February aged 93.

Many senior members of the church may remember him, up until he retired to Worthing, proudly standing each Sunday at the door handing out hymn books, and collecting the offering.

He was a keen active member of the Dorking URC and served on the Property Committee for many years when Roy Currie was the minister.

He leaves his widow Gertrud Saunders, daughter Christine, grandchildren Scott and Laura and great grandchild Lily.

John Quincey

NOTES

The picture(s) on the front and back cover are provided by Mike Shaw

Thanks go to Maureen Flood who once again proof read this new issue

Produced by Val Longhurst

Material for the next issue of West Street News should be available by Sunday, 16th August.

SILVER ACORN FOR SIMON



We are delighted to announce that Simon Ring, our Scout Leader, has been awarded the **Silver Acorn** in recognition of especially distinguished service to Scouting. He and his family were invited to Windsor Castle on 26th May to attend the St George's Award Ceremony.

Simon has been involved in the 5th Dorking Scout Group from 8 years old; he has held positions as Assistant Scout Leader, Scout Leader & more latterly Assistant District Commissioner for Scouts in Dorking.

Simon is a wonderful example to all the young members of the Group, giving them motivation and encourages self confidence in all the Challenges they undertake, he shows amazing dedication, he is reliable and always on hand to help with whatever is needed in the Group, District or County. Simon recently led a party of Explorer Scouts from Surrey to Finland on an international Trip.

He is also part of the County Training Team and an excellent trainer in all skill areas, sharing his vast knowledge of 'Everything Scouting'.

Simon is a very worthy recipient of a very special and noted award in Scouting and we would like to congratulate him on this award.

Judi Currie



PLASTIC BOTTLE TOPS

(What happens to them and where do they go)

Many of you collect bottle tops. They are of all kinds as this is what I have asked you to do.

You may be wondering what happens to these when you have left them, usually on my mobility scooter.

Well, I bring them home and then sort them out into those that I can send with those that I have already collected, and then there are those that I am unable to send on but these I give to another charity for them to use.

I do then have to decide if they are clean enough or do I have to wash them (if you can make sure the tops are clean it would make life easier). I have been told that if they find a dirty one in a sack it is not used. The tops are collected in a sack, which holds about 4 kg, but this is the size of a potato sack. Once I have ten sacks I contact a company that works out of Portsmouth and when they are in the Dorking area they pick up what I have.

The lids are then sent away and are ground up into pieces like a fairly rough grain of sand. They are forwarded on and are melted down - at this point they all turn back to looking white. The plastic cannot be used for making soft plastic items, but is fine to make the tougher plastic to be used in the construction of outside tables and chairs and also again the more robust children's toys.

I am still chasing the monetary target of £30 but I have to have sent them 500 kg. So please keep on collecting and remember to make my life easier by making sure the tops are clean. Thank you very much for your help.

Janice Brown

ANN WOOLGAR

Chris Currie writes: - Over the past few months we have been stepping up the online presence of the church through a new website and Facebook page, steps were taken with our eyes on keeping up with the times and looking to the future. Through an email received recently via the website, the power of the internet has had us looking back in time too. The email came from someone called Terri Woolgar in Canada. She was keen to visit the church during a forthcoming trip to Britain in the hope of finding out as much as possible about her ancestor, Ann Woolgar who had been a member here before relocating to Canada in the 1830s. The details of her story pieced together as a result are a fascinating part of our history, and a reminder that economic migration is by no means a new thing.

Mary Turner writes:- Ann Woolgar and her husband, William, were living at Huckstools Lane when their son, John, was born in 1819 and christened in St Martin's on 21st March. William was a labourer (probably an agricultural worker) and later the family moved to Milton Street, where a daughter, Mary, was born in 1821. She was christened on 22nd April, less than two weeks before the death of her father, who was buried in St Martin's churchyard on 7th May 1821, aged only 33.

Milton Street was part of the Bury Hill Estate and housed many of its work forces. Among them was carpenter William Willard. He married Charlotte Longhurst at St Margaret's, Ockley, on 22 April 1812 and the couple had at least nine children between then and 1830, 7 boys and 2 girls. The eldest child was christened in Abinger and the rest in Dorking (7 at St Martins and 1 in West Street in 1827). On 30 January 1828 Ann Woolgar and William Willard were received into membership of the West Street Church.

At the risk of over-simplifying a difficult time in our history, living standards of labourers and cottagers fell drastically after the Napoleonic Wars as prices rose. Many needed Parish Relief

(the benefits system of that time) and the Poor Law Rates rose steadily to pay for it. Magistrates refused to set a minimum wage and unemployment caused by mechanisation and the poor harvest of 1830 made matters even worse. In the South of England many were starving and unrest spread - there was rioting in Dorking and elsewhere.

The Parishes struggled to pay even more Relief and Lord Egremont of Petworth, Sussex, came up with a plan to assist some claimants in the local counties to travel to Canada to start a new life. Robert Barclay, owner of Bury Hill, introduced the scheme in Dorking where 43 adults and 18 children were assisted by the Parish. Among them was West Street member, William Worsfold, a 29-year old single man. William & Charlotte Willard and their large family applied and their costs were divided between Dorking, Shere and Albury as a dispute arose as to which parish should support them. They all joined up with the Petworth Party at Portsmouth and sailed to Canada on 11 April 1832.

A year later Barclay published a report, declaring the project a great success and including many letters written home by the local emigrants. One was headed "Letter from Charlotte, wife of Wm. Willard, to her sister, Mrs. Wolgar (sic), of Milton Street, Dorking". In this long letter she described the journey and praised their new life encouraging Ann to make the adventurous journey with her children. Ann did so in 1833, taking with her a letter of recommendation from the minister of the West Street Church. Neighbours and fellow West Street members, Richard and Martha Willett, also emigrated at this time. Ann settled in Hamilton where she was a founder member of the Congregational Church.

Mary Swain writes:- It was in the afternoon of Friday 27th March, while we were in the Main Hall having refreshments after the service for Cecily Anniss, that Terri Woolgar came to the church. I took her up to the Archives to see the original handwritten entries in the Register where Ann Woolgar (sic)

came into the church on January 30th 1828, and then written in a different hand “emigrated to Canada 1833”.

Terri told me that they had already been to Dorking Museum and someone had driven them to Milton Street, where Ann had lived. It was a sunny day and Terri, realising the beauty of our countryside, felt sad that Ann had never been able to return; in fact Terri is the first to have the opportunity to visit. She really appreciated our help, gave a donation to our church and took away an envelope full of information, which Mary Turner had prepared for her.

When she emigrated, Ann took a letter of recommendation from our church and she became one of the founder members of the church in Hamilton, Ontario. After a few years her son, John, was able to farm his own land.

Ann Woolgar was living in Hamilton in 1851 with her daughter, Mary who emigrated from Dorking with her mother. In 1856 they emigrated from Ontario to the U.S. settling in Beloit, Rock County, Wisconsin. She died on 6 Nov 1870 in Beloit. Her daughter Mary, married name McCrimmon, died on 6 July 1887 also in Beloit.

Terri kindly sent us a photo passed through the family, that they are pretty sure is of Ann and shared that the letter of recommendation from our church that she took with her to Canada is recorded in the records of the Congregational Church of Hamilton that she helped found. She also expressed her gratitude for the warm and friendly welcome, and the help she received from the church.



WELLiFARE

When the Synod Scoping Team visited the church last month one of the many highlights of our mission work they identified was the support we give to the BMK School. The fundraising work for the School has less of a profile now than once was and it is easy to forget what has been achieved and the continuing story of success. Since the initiative was launched in the spring of 2006 nearly £100,000 has been raised. The School has water; classrooms; toilets; solar power; a playground; school bags and books; and a dairy farm. This is all thanks to the generosity of church members and the work of the Well-Fare Committee.

The School now has over 1000 pupils, many of whom would not be receiving an education if it were not for these efforts. And the story continues. As we have written here many times before, for the last two years we have been working towards a large grant from Rotary International. Such a grant will see the farm developed to a point where its profit will fund the running of the School. When we visited Uganda in July 2013 we returned in high hopes that a deal had been secured with a Uganda Rotary Club to be the required in-country partner. But even with our experience of the African way we had underestimated their need to say 'yes' to our face when they really meant 'no'. We were then again caught out by another Club and another six months went by. But we pray that it will be third time lucky as the Mbale Rotary Club has stepped into the void and things are once again on track. By the next edition of West Street News we should have definite news. Meanwhile we have to continue to fund aspects of the School including a yearly donation of £4000 towards the teachers' salaries and on-going sponsorship for 14 BMK pupils at secondary school.

As they say – watch this space!

Ted and Jane

**FROM THE OFFICE OF
ARTHUR POUND
Dorking United Reformed
Church
West Street
Dorking**



May 2015

Dear Friends

The Oasis Project

Well, the work for Project Oasis is well underway to upgrade and improve the rear entrance and courtyard to the back of the Church – and it should all be complete by the end of the summer. Exciting times!

And I am pleased to report that our fundraising for the remaining £63,000 to pay for this important project is also gaining momentum. Our 50p (yes, half-a-pound or “Arthurs”) collection continues every week, so keep saving them please, and in addition there have already been kind donations for all the benches and the central water feature.

A number of other donation items and initiatives will be announced in the coming weeks for people to contribute, as well as various fundraising events that are being organised. I am delighted to announce that the first of these has now been finalised with our friends from the Martineau Singers, which includes two of our Sunday musical stalwarts in Barbara Christopher and Helena Twentyman.

Accordingly, Arthur Pound Productions will be presenting a foot tapping musical extravaganza on Sunday 26th July at 7.00pm in the Church Hall. Under the directorship of Jamie Cordell and

with piano and brass accompaniment “Feeling Groovy” will be a wonderful evening of summer entertainment. Tickets will go on sale shortly and the Martineau Singers are very kindly offering all profits raised from the event to go towards the Oasis Project.

So make a note in your diaries - and keep an eye for further Arthur Announcements!

With my best wishes,

ARTHUR

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PROJECT OASIS

As I write this we are at the start of week eight of an eighteen week programme. All the “destructive” work has been completed and from what looked like an untidy mess we are starting to see footings rise from the ground. Reigate Construction, who are carrying out the works, are making steady progress and our architect, Graham Stevensen, is very pleased with the way things are going. He commented that unlike one of his other projects, nothing has been found that will seriously delay the project. He was particularly pleased that we have found no bones or surprises underground and even more pleased that there was no asbestos, which delayed a similar job in Reigate.

There have been one or two items that our meticulous planning didn't account for, namely wooden rather than stone lintels used over the doors inside the old lean-to construction that housed the toilets. The main stop cock had seized up and will need to be replaced. The lead flashing above the lean-to will have to be replaced as it is no longer serviceable and a manhole appeared that wasn't in the same place as on the original plans. On the positive side the cover between the main hall and Little Chapel does not require a pillar to support it.

Our main surprise was the discovery of a fourth memorial stone bearing the following inscription:

Elizabeth Fenn
19th November 1810
Faithful servant of
Mrs Alexander of this town
Also of Edward Fenn died 1808

We believe the Mrs Alexander who installed this stone was the same Mary Alexander who owned the cottage in what is now the front garden of our current church. We still benefit from a legacy of this lady to this day. We will therefore display this stone as one of three on the memorial wall at the end of the Main Hall.

With the exception of one or two incidents our alternative access arrangements are working well and I would like to thank everyone for their co-operation during the works.

What next?

Bricks have been approved by the listed building officer and they are on order. Unfortunately these could take up to six weeks to arrive. In the meantime footings have been laid and the whole surface will start to rise up once more and brickwork for raised planters and the water feature will start to appear. This week a Stannah Low Riser Lift was ordered and this will be installed towards the end of July. We hope that, given good weather, steady progress will be made over the coming weeks to enable some kind of grand opening in August or early September. A final decision will be made towards the end of July.

John Quincey



**Arthur Pound
Proudly Presents**

***A concert with songs to get your
feet tapping featuring:***

**The Martineau
Singers
“Feeling Groovy”**

Conducted by Jamie Cordell

Sunday 26th July 2015 7pm

Main Hall, Dorking URC

Interval Refreshments, good company and
some great music to listen to.

Tickets £10 each available from

Arthur Pound or Roger Currie

All proceeds to the Project Oasis

www.dorkingurc.co.uk