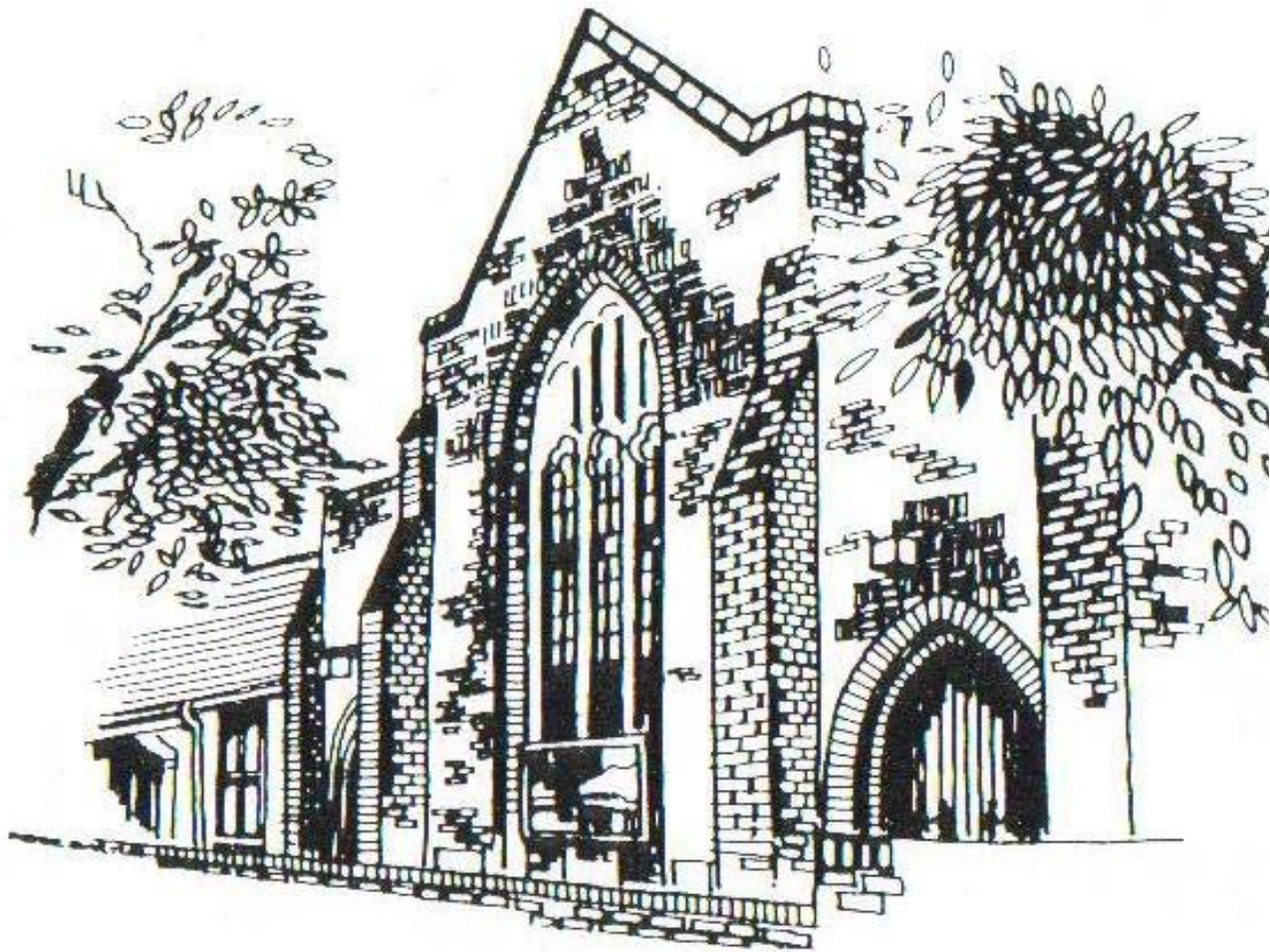




*The Magazine*  
*of*  
**Highams Park Baptist Church**

Cavendish Road, E.4.



**SUGGESTED DONATION £1**

**2016 NUMBER FIVE**

# CHURCH PROGRAMME



**SUNDAY SERVICES:** 10.00 a.m. Morning Worship (including a crèche and groups for children and young people)

Holy Communion is conducted regularly within the Services. We invite all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour to eat and drink in Communion. Please see the Church Diary (at the back of the magazine) for details.

**Monday** Gathered Prayer 10.00 – 11.00am at the Church  
An opportunity to pray for the life and work of the Church and for the local community

**Friday:** Boys Brigade and Girls Association:

Anchors (For boys and girls in school years 1-3)	6:30 - 8:00 pm
Juniors (For boys and girls in school years 4-6)	6:30 - 8:00 pm
Company Section (For boys in school years 7+)	7:30 - 9:30 pm

**Cell Groups:** The cell groups are small groups of people that meet together every other week for friendship, support, Bible study / application. It would be great if you wanted to try one of the groups.

Sunday Cell Group : 7.30 - 9.00 pm at 21 Falmouth Avenue, contact Margaret on 8527 3544

Thursday Cell Group: 2.00 – 3.30pm at 212 The Avenue, contact Sheila on 8531 5480

The deadline for items for the next edition is Sunday 13th November 2016  
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**Cavendish Road, London E4 9NG**  
**(☎ 020 8527 8993)**  
**October / November 2016**

***Moderator:***

***Rev. Gareth Wilde***

***Church Secretary:***

***Mr. Philip Slaney***  
***49, Chingdale Road,***  
***Chingford,***  
***London E4 6HZ***

***☎ 020 8524 6258***

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Heb 10: 24*

Weren't the Rio Paralympics inspirational? And what about Paralympics Team GB? They came away with 64 gold medals! That's even more than London 2012! So what was the secret behind their success? Was it the National Lottery funding? Possibly? Money can be a helpful incentive but was it the *primary* driver? I want to argue that most paralympians are successful only when they discover their inner determination, inspiration and perseverance to strive for gold!

However, behind Team GB, there are many unseen contributors, most of whom will never be famous. These are the coaches, assistants, technicians, nutritionists and many more. When did you last see an interview with **a GB sports psychologist** discussing the mental preparation for an athlete's event?

So what might this have to do with a church in transition? A church *in-between* ministers?

Many churches in this situation often appoint an interim moderator. May I suggest **the role of the moderator** is very similar to that of a sports psychologist! They are unlikely to be interviewed or seen on a podium. They are unlikely to vote in a church meeting or envision the church with new strategy. They don't expect remuneration or praise.

So what might be expected from them? Just like a sport psychologist, the moderator might encourage the athletes (that's **you!**) with words like, "*There is no need to rush your next decision or panic when things seem to feel chaotic*". "*Stay focused and be patient*" "*Keep training regularly. Keep serving. Keep giving. Stay the course*". "*Don't be too disappointed when you haven't made personal best in the heats*". "*Don't panic over not having filled in all the forms about your health category*".

A good sports psychologist will mostly **listen to the athlete's aspirations**. Yes, help them strive for gold but most of all encourage them to just give it their best shot and stick to their game plan! Encourage them after an event with much praise especially when they have done their best.

There will be occasions when sports psychologists (and interim moderators) will need to bring a calm presence especially after any sense of loss. To listen closely especially when the church council expresses any anxiety. Sports psychologists may encourage the athletes to stick with their regular recommended diet (physically and spiritually) and discourage them from eating instant junk food.

Highams Park Baptist has just said farewell to a really great minister, not because of anything *it* has done, but because God in His wisdom has new plans for both Jonathan and this church. In the first few months, an interim moderator may need to spend time helping the church come to terms with this new reality, and assist as they **refocus** their attention on who they are as the body of Christ, and what God desires for them.

However, the best sporting analogy I bring as your moderator is the importance of becoming **your biggest fan**. To speak positively of how I think you are one of the best churches in North London. Fans can often spur on their team to greater performance.

As your interim moderator, I can help chair some of your meetings, advise how the national settlement process works, and occasionally offer hospitality to candidates. But there may be occasions when all that is needed is to listen and encourage the church members especially in those moments when they feel bruised, battered and disappointed.

So I hope I am not required to do very much. I don't expect to preach, undertake pastoral care, assist the youth work or manage your web site.

But as your friend and interim moderator, I sincerely pray that HPBC will find the person to **fit the coat!** I don't know if you saw Ellie Robinson enter her Paralympic swimming event wearing an extremely large hooded coat. It gave her gravitas and celebrity status and admittedly a gold medal, but her coat really didn't fit!

Let's pray that HPBC finds a minister who believes this church is a coat that perfectly fits their gifts and vision. Let's also pray that HPBC allows God's Holy Spirit to shape its coat in this transition period!

Above all let's spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

Rev Gareth Wilde Interim Moderator and minister of Broadmead Baptist Church

## Cavendish Circular



Just a few weeks ago Dave and I were visiting a favourite Garden Centre to purchase some bulbs for next year's season. We couldn't believe our eyes when we walked into what was a Christmas wonderland of glittering tinsel and richly decorated Christmas trees (this was during a particularly warm, sunny day in mid-September!).

Much as we enjoy the festive season

we did feel it was a little early to be anticipating Christmas! By the time this issue arrives however we will be deep into Autumn and our thoughts will be turning to the season of Advent. May we all experience the peace and joy of Christ's birth and, as the festive season draws near, learn anew the wonder and mystery that is the true Advent message.

The weeks since Jonathan's departure have been particularly busy ones and we are so grateful to all those who have taken part, or led our Sunday services, and have volunteered to lead future worship. We are especially appreciative of the work that our Secretary, Phil Slaney, has done in ensuring that the life of HPBC continues with even greater energy and enthusiasm under God's guidance, and that the work involved with seeking a Minister proceeds prayerfully and efficiently. We are also grateful for the additional guidance and support provided by our Interim Moderator: Rev. Gareth Wilde, who has agreed to mentor us during this time, and to Rev. Kumar Rajagoplan, London Baptist Association Regional Minister, who is also providing expert help during the Settlement process. Our Church Council have also played their part and we are due to hold Council elections at the AGM taking place on Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup>. Nominations for Deacons must be given to Phil by Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November. Please prayerfully consider the election; there is an article on the Church Council in this issue.

**Fellowship News:** a number of our fellowship are in especial need of prayer at this time. These include: Mavis Grint, who has had another stay in hospital due to breathing problems; she is now home once again and recovering well. June Tresardern, has had a further fall, hurting her head badly, and is generally unwell. June Ashley continues to suffer from painful knees and has recently undergone a cataract operation. Max, the infant grandson of Steve Jenkins, is still under hospital observation concerning his blood count while Phil Slaney's twin grand-daughters, Edith and Tabitha, who were born prematurely in July, are progressing well and are now home from hospital care. Lynda Lewis-Azayear, who has recently undergone hip replacement, has had a fall while out, necessitating treatment in A & E. She is now recovering at home.



Simon Jones' mother Frances is to undergo major surgery soon. Please pray for these and all of our fellowship who are in particular need at present.

We are pleased to hear that the Dixon family have settled happily into their new home in Surrey. We look forward to Kerstin returning to HPBC soon to preach at Sunday morning worship on October 9<sup>th</sup> when our Women's Group will be taking the service.

A number of our young people are off to pastures new: Grace Mitchell is studying at Coventry University while Steven Edwards now attends Epping Forest College. Nearer home, Tendai Antoniou has gained a permanent contract with 'Motorpoint' in Walthamstow.

Jason Close has expressed thanks, on behalf of his mother, Christine, brother, Stephen and all the family, for the support and condolences shown following the recent death of his father, Douglas. There are words of tribute to Douglas later in the magazine. Please continue to prayerfully support the family in their loss.

We celebrated Harvest Festival on September 25<sup>th</sup> when the Church was once again beautifully decorated by our talented team led by Marilyn Robinson. Thank you to all who contributed in any way. The harvest offering this year is to be divided between the Baptist Missionary Society and Operation Agri.

As we go to press we have received the sad news of the death of Geoff Colinese, our former member and a founder member of the B.B. 17<sup>th</sup> Company. He passed away in the early hours of 4<sup>th</sup> October, which is B.B's Founders Day. Geoff was a former Captain and Secretary within the Company and also served faithfully in the Battalion for many years. He moved away from the area some years ago but kept in close contact with the B.B. and our fellowship, and was a keen contributor to our Magazine. We send loving condolences to his family and give thanks for all he meant to our fellowship over so many years. We will have an opportunity to remember Geoff, and give thanks for his life in a further issue.



Proud Grandparent's, Phil and Carol with the twins and proud father, their son Simon.

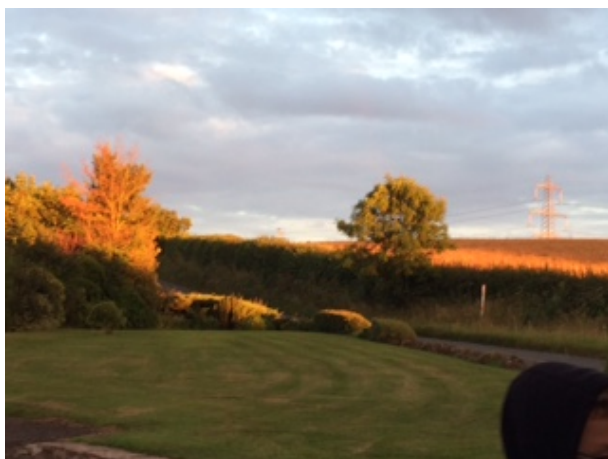
## BBGA Camp 2016 (Almondsbury Scout Camp, Bristol)

Written by Lee Dorrington



A slightly smaller group of 13 this year, but we still had just as much fun. Camp was situated at Woodhouse Park, Fernhill, Almondsbury. As in the past the Scouts made us more than welcome and it was a very tidy, well presented site. We had a whole field to ourselves for the entire week, which is good, as this meant

the young people could play and run about without intruding onto other camps.



Captain Jason Close took us all out on an early evening expedition walk, for a good hour and half and later confessed he didn't have a planned route, but fair play to him as ever he got us back safely to base. There were some very stunning and scenic views along the way.

We visited an open air Lido in Portishead; this first opened in 1962 and is



one of the oldest in the country apparently. The black & white photo shows what it originally looked like. It has had a few improvements over the years but it hasn't changed much since. At least it was heated; in fact we loved it so much we went back for a second visit during the week.

When the camp was first booked we also arranged to do some activities within the Scout camp, first of all was abseiling. This requires a team to



walk to the top of a wooden tower and then descend over the edge using harnesses and ropes and walking down backwards. One of my phobias is open heights so for me I had to overcome one of my greatest fears. After watching a certain senior lady from our party go over the edge for the third time, I decided I had to "man-up" and

show my two lads that Daddy had no fear, I did just that and impressed myself. Little did I know what activity lay in store for us next? Ariel attack, it was called, "safe as houses" they said, "no problems at all" said the instructors, again this meant climbing the same high wooden tower but rather than descend down the side, this required you to navigate around a set of obstacles nearly 50ft up in the air. So we donned the harnesses again and up we went. This was basically "The Krypton Factor" in the air, swings, rope bridges, wooden beams and you start one end and walk around as quickly as possible. Gemma and Stephen Edwards, made this look a doddle, however I took slightly longer!!! In fact Gemma and Stephen became so quick they lapped me twice around the course. Stephen even finished the session by hopping round it in record time too.



One of the obstacles was a dark narrow water tunnel, so claustrophobic that one youngster (Logan, in the photo) was the only one brave enough to go through. Give that guy a medal.

One day we drove to the Bristol Channel and tried our hand at sailing, we couldn't have picked a windier day if we had tried, our boats were going off in all directions and we all agreed it was time to quit. While there we did try out a Canadian Kayak and this was more our style. An evening of Cinema and bowling also took place during the week along with a trip to the seaside at Weston-Super-Mare, so an ice-cream for everyone.



The end of the week rapidly approached and Gemma's talent show was upon us, everyone did well and Gem's did a brilliant fairy tale story using props and officers as characters which the young people thought was highly amusing.



Another year and summer camp passes us by and a good time was had by all. Let's hope 2017 is just as much fun.

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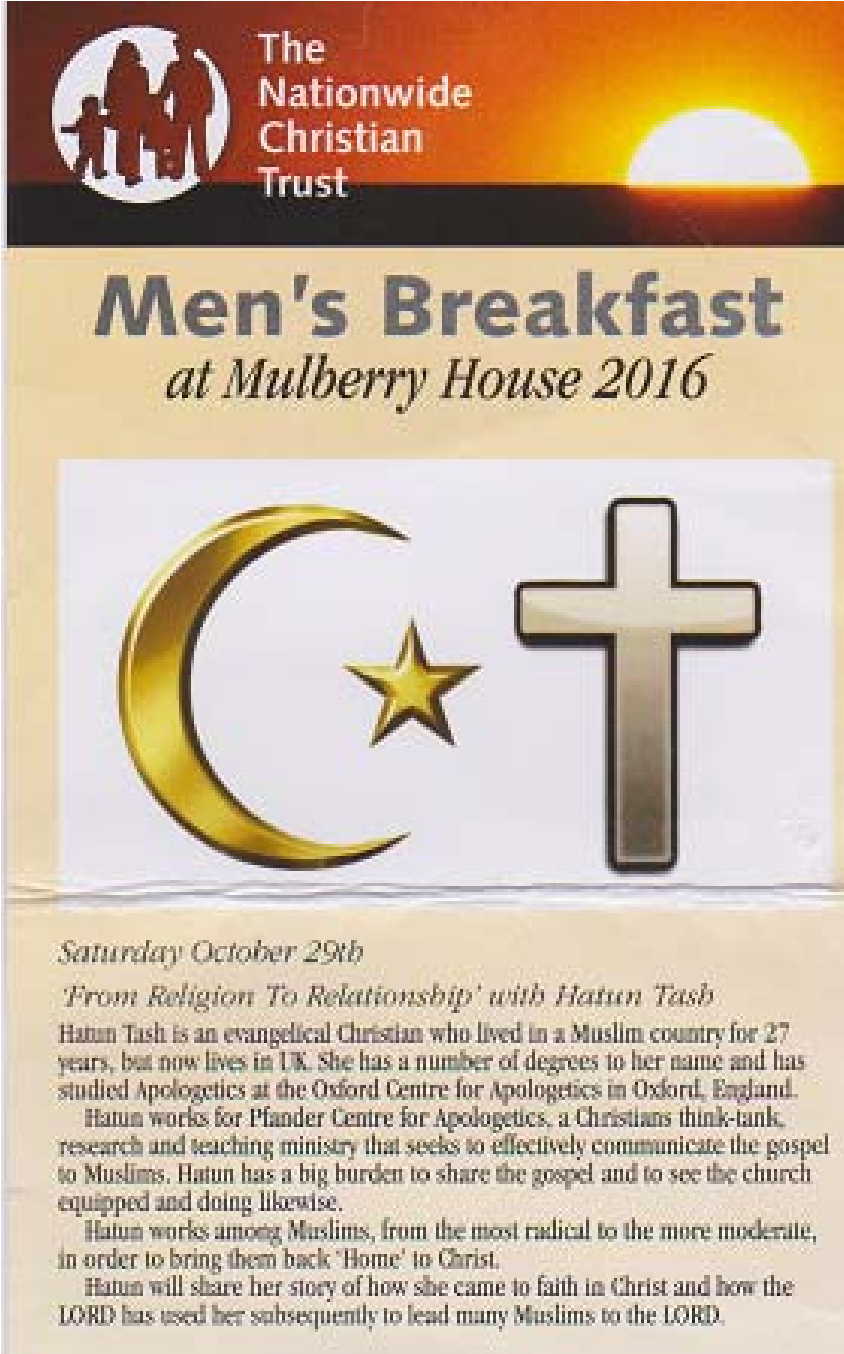
**Cell Groups:** The cell groups are small groups of people that meet together every other week for friendship, support, Bible study / application. It would be great if you wanted to try one of the groups. Details of the dates when the groups are meeting are available from the Leaders.

**Sunday Cell Group :** 7.30 - 9.00 pm at 21 Falmouth Avenue, contact Margaret on 8527 3544

**Thursday Cell Group:** 2.00 - 3.30pm at 212 The Avenue, contact Sheila on 8531 5480

The new session of Cell Groups has now commenced -come along and see.


# HPB Men's Group Events



The poster features a header with a silhouette of a family and the text 'The Nationwide Christian Trust' against a sunset background. The main title is 'Men's Breakfast at Mulberry House 2016'. Below this is a large graphic of a golden crescent moon, a five-pointed star, and a cross. The event details are listed at the bottom, including the date 'Saturday October 29th' and the speaker 'Hatun Tash'.

**The Nationwide Christian Trust**

## Men's Breakfast *at Mulberry House 2016*



*Saturday October 29th*  
*'From Religion To Relationship' with Hatun Tash*

Hatun Tash is an evangelical Christian who lived in a Muslim country for 27 years, but now lives in UK. She has a number of degrees to her name and has studied Apologetics at the Oxford Centre for Apologetics in Oxford, England.

Hatun works for Pfander Centre for Apologetics, a Christians think-tank, research and teaching ministry that seeks to effectively communicate the gospel to Muslims. Hatun has a big burden to share the gospel and to see the church equipped and doing likewise.

Hatun works among Muslims, from the most radical to the more moderate, in order to bring them back 'Home' to Christ.

Hatun will share her story of how she came to faith in Christ and how the LORD has used her subsequently to lead many Muslims to the LORD.

*Please note the venue has changed to :*

*the Barn, Tawney Common, Stapleford Tawney CM16 7PU*

*If you would like to attend this event please see Bob Jenkins by  
23rd October The cost is £14.00*

## Words of Tribute - Douglas Close, 1940 -2016



*Jason's tribute to his father at Douglas' funeral.*

I want to thank you on behalf of Christine, Stephen, myself and the family, for coming today to support and pay your respects to Douglas, and for all those that supported us over the last two months, including when we were away at BBGA Camp, and all the people who stepped in to be with Christine.

### **Dad**

To most people Dad was 'Doug', but to Stephen and me he was our Dad; a man who always put his family first, no matter what. Mum & Dad would have been married for 52 years next month. This brought good and bad times along the way, but a lot of happy and fun times. Dad was a family man, and the home life that went with it. He was always happy to have friends over, whether they were his friends or his son's mates; he also often had his daughter in law, Annette's family over at Christmas too, and our mates in the evening. Dad also liked to have a party or two - mind you, he would never get up to dance! Over the years we all attended different social clubs, but a lot of time was spent at the Kentish Town Railway club which his father in law was heavily involved with, and we all had many happy times there together. It was where my parents courted and had their first 20 years of marriage.

When Stephen and I were growing up we loved family holidays and Dad enjoyed the pool and fun with Mum and his boys. I remember when we went on holiday when it was Stephen's birthday; I told the hotel and we got a cake. You could tell that Dad was not too happy with the fuss, but was happy for us. When his sons needed help, he was there no matter what and, although he would clearly express to me if he was not happy, he would get on and help us any time of the day or night. He was always there in the background with all that we did in the Boys Brigade, both as boys and Officers. He was always happy to lend a word of advice, or talk a matter over with me and I will miss that for sure.

He loved his grandchildren, Toby and Sophie, and when they were younger would visit them each week with Mum and, when they were old enough to go to Boys Brigade, they would come to the family home each week. He looked forward to the grandchildren staying over for the weekend; we would always go out on a Saturday evening to a social club and went on a few holidays with them too.

Dad was very good with time, never late and always early. He liked routine and you knew when he was shopping or having a beer just by looking at the clock!

Later life bought Dad pain but he carried on as he always did, going out every day shopping and an odd beer or two and a whisky in the evening, but it was looking after the family and caring for Christine in every way right to the end - that was what he did no matter what.

Dad, rest in peace. You are no longer suffering or in pain. You tried your best and it was the very best. I know you have gone to a better place in Heaven; you will not be forgotten but you will be in all our hearts and in our thoughts for ever. We will try our best to keep up to your name and be what you brought us up to be.

We will all love you for ever. God bless Doug, you were Mum's everything, you are our Dad, our Granddad and our friend.

+++++++

*The following is taken from the tribute spoken by Phil Slaney at the funeral.*

Douglas John Somerset Close, known to most as Doug, was born on the 24th April 1940 in Barnet Hospital. Mum was Alice and Dad was William, and brother Ken arrived three years later. Because it was war time Mum and Doug were evacuated from their home in Southgate and went to live in Leicester. Sadly, William died in March 1945 in a German bombing raid at Smithfield meat market in London where he worked. Alice and Doug returned to Southgate after the war and Alice remarried in 1947 to Charles and they had a son called Terence. Doug had problems with his eyes and was registered blind from an early age.

At the age of eight Doug was sent to Blatchington Court Boarding School in Seaford, East Sussex. According to his final report at sixteen his Class Teacher wrote that Douglas was: 'Obedient, reliable in his work and the many duties that have fallen to his lot as Head Prefect and House Captain; a good influence in the school that will miss him very much.' Doug was baptised as a child and his Christian faith was confirmed when he was thirteen at Seaford Parish Church.

After leaving Boarding School Doug returned to live in Southgate and went to work for Pifco who made domestic appliance products. Doug then changed his job and went to work for Osborne, Garret and Nagele Ltd, suppliers of hairdressing products and equipment where he met Christine who was nineteen; Doug was twenty two. Doug then went to work for Morgan and Ball, a bespoke men's outfitters in London's West End, later changing jobs to work as an Insurance Agent for the Britannic Assurance Company Ltd.

Doug and Christine were married on the 17th October 1964 at All Saints Church, East Finchley. They lived in two rooms in Leicester Road, East Finchley, then moved to a flat for four years. In 1969 Doug and Christine moved to 28 Wickham Road, Highams Park and were still living in the same house forty seven years later! Stephen arrived on 29th November 1971 and Jason followed on 29th January 1974 but he was quite ill after he was born and spent several months in hospital.

During the 1970's Doug left his job with the insurance company and went to work for Wallace Arnold the coach company as an Operations Clerk which involved matching drivers to the various coach routes. In the 1980's he left Wallace Arnold to work for Grey Green Coaches in Tottenham doing the same job. Doug's last job was working for Parcel Line in Woodford where he worked as a Parcel Returns Clerk. He started in 1986 and retired in 2007 after twenty one years of service!

Stephen and Jason recall that their dad was always there for them and remembered when they had early morning paper rounds Doug would get up and help them deliver the papers even when it was snowing! Doug was always keen to be early, even when going to the pub or club to enjoy his pint of Double Diamond! He was often seen enjoying his pint of bitter in the County Arms, Highams Park or the Royal Oak, Oak Hill, or the Trades Hall in Hoe Street, Walthamstow. They also recalled spending many happy family holidays together including visiting Spain when Doug would always be wearing his trousers and never a pair of shorts!

Jason recalled that on one occasion because of Doug's poor eyesight he actually walked past Jason in the street without seeing him! Apparently, Doug did have a big eye operation when he was fifty years old and as a result recovered some of his eye sight back. Another time Doug fell walking through customs in France on a day trip and broke his hip. He was determined not to be treated in France so he managed to get all the way back to Walthamstow and then got an ambulance to take him to Whipps Cross hospital where he had a hip replacement operation. This left him with a limp but he got out every day for a walk with the use of a stick.

Doug loved spending time with his family, especially with Toby and Sophie, his grandchildren. When trying to sum Doug up it was said he was dead straight, never lied, and was a very honest man. He was a good Dad and Grandad and he and Christine had fifty two happy years of marriage together!

Doug may be gone from our sight but he will never be forgotten from our hearts. We say thank you to God for all that Doug was and for all that he continues to be in our memories, and we entrust him into God's care.



## **Church Council Elections - Thinking about Church Leadership:**

The only two local Church 'offices' mentioned in the New Testament are those of elder ('overseer') and deacon ('servant').

The Apostle Paul gives criteria as to people suitable for the roles. Implicit in these qualities is a person's heartfelt desire for the care and oversight of God's people. The verses of the Bible that address both the roles of deacon and elder clearly speak of selfless Christian servants who desire to humbly and sacrificially care for the people Jesus died to save.

The Greek word for deacon is 'diakonos'. In its pre-technical usage, this word simply meant "one who serves." The seven men chosen to serve in this capacity in Acts 6:1-6 were likely the first deacons ever to be appointed in the Church. Generally, their attention to the physical needs of the early Church was to allow 'the Twelve' (the 11 original disciples plus Matthias, also referred to as 'the apostles' in v6) to give full attention to prayer and the teaching of the word of God (Acts 6:2,4). However, Acts 6:8-8:1 clearly shows that gifted deacons may preach and teach boldly at times!

The criteria explained in these verses as to those who were chosen is that they were known to be 'full of the Spirit and wisdom' (v3). Stephen is particularly mentioned as being a man 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit' (v5).

In Paul's letter first letter to Timothy, a young leader in the Church at Ephesus, Paul doesn't write about the roles of elder and deacon but rather the criteria / 'qualities' that someone should meet in order to be considered for the role: *(v8) Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. (v9) They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. (v10) They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. (v11) In the same way, (their) wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. (1 Timothy 3v8-13)*

Apparently the Greek word translated as 'wives' (v11) can also refer to 'women helpers' or 'deaconesses'. Hence Paul could either be writing about 'wives of deacons' or 'female leaders of the Church' (such as Phoebe, the deaconess mentioned in Romans 16v1). In either case, Paul expected the behaviour of prominent women in the Church to be just as responsible and blameless as that of prominent men.

The lists of qualities in the New Testament for Church office show that living a pure and blameless life requires effort and self-discipline. All believers, even if they don't plan to be Church leaders, should strive to follow these guidelines because they are consistent with what God says is true and right.

For Highams Park Baptist Church the elected leadership is referred to as the 'Church Council'. Individual members of the Council are referred to as 'deacons' but serve together with oversight and responsibility for both 'practical' and 'spiritual' matters within the life and work of the Church (involvement with 'spiritual' matters is often more associated with the role of elder).

The Biblical material that speaks about deacons and elders hence serves as a helpful guide with regards to those potentially entrusted with leadership responsibility at the Church: Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9 & 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Finally '...it is important to understand that they *[those elected to serve as leaders]* always serve with the agreement of the local congregation. The only Lord in the congregation is Christ himself'.

*Please remember that the Church Council Elections will be held on Sunday 27th November at our Annual General Meeting. Nominations to be given to Phil Slaney, Church Secretary by Sunday 6th November.*

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### What does OA do?

Operation Agri supports rural and urban development projects in three continents, attacking the basic causes of poverty amongst some of the most disadvantaged people in the world.

The projects provide local people with the means to address their own problems, rectifying injustice, establishing their role within the local community and responding to their aspirations for a better quality of life, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Considerable emphasis is placed on the development work fulfilling two criteria -

- it should be 'owned' by the local people, and
- where possible it should be sustainable.

With its aim of "showing the love of Jesus in action," OA works with overseas partners who are linked with the national Church, in countries where this is possible.

OA's development activities include:

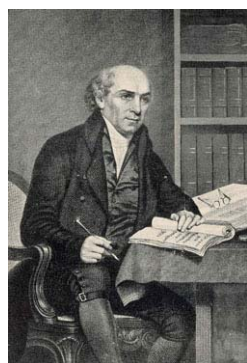
- Agriculture
- Community health
- Vocational training
- Short term loans to encourage family businesses
- Income generation schemes
- Clean water and sanitation projects
- Pre-school education.

*In the past issues we have learned what it means to be a Baptist. We now explain how the Baptist Missionary Society came into being:*

## BMS origins

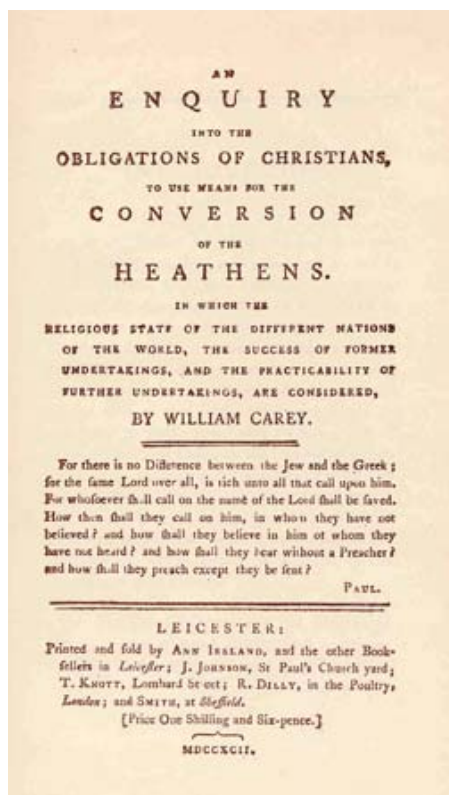
In the 18th century Protestant missionaries were few and missionary societies fewer. In some Baptist circles, mission itself was not even thought to be very theologically sound.

But by the end of the century, this was beginning to change.



In 1792 shoemaker and pastor William Carey published a pamphlet, 'An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens', a survey of the world's countries and people groups and a call to Christians to engage in mission.

Challenged that it was now time to do more than just pray about those without the gospel, a group of ministers in Northamptonshire decided to act together – and on 2 October 1792 they gathered to form “a Society among the Baptists for propagating the gospel among the heathen”. The Baptist Missionary Society, as it soon became known, was born.



The following year, William Carey and John Thomas were sent to India to begin the mission work, and their departure was a turning point in the history of Christian mission. They were the first English non-conformists to travel to India with the sole purpose of mission, and they pioneered a pattern of missionary activity that quickly became widespread. From this time until his death in India in 1834, Carey devoted himself to missionary work, Bible translation, campaigning against injustices and theological teaching. He has often been considered ‘the father of modern mission’.

*The Harvest Offering this year is to be divided between the BMS and Operation Agri*

# Four Months in Ghana –

## Part 2

During my four months in Ghana last year, I was able to visit several villages and experience a little more of Ghanaian life, including their celebrations and scenery. I kept a diary of my experiences and observations, which I have used as a basis for this article. One such visit was to a village in the Volta Region, to the East of where I was living in Nkawkaw, near the border with the country of Togo. I had met Prosper, the chief of the village, in Nkawkaw, through my friends Justice and Christiana. He and his wife Ruby invited me to spend the weekend with them in their home, in the village of Hlefi.



On the journey to the village, we travelled on roads which were partly sealed and partly bumpy brown dirt roads. While it was still light it (darkness comes quickly in Ghana, once the sun has set) I could see a little of the towns, with their market kiosks and some of the green countryside of palm and coconut trees, as well as maize. It was quite scary at times, as Prosper drove fast, so I was glad that we were in a 4x4 Honda pick-up, which was perfect for the road conditions.

The worst part of the journey was the wait to get onto the pontoon, to cross Lake Volta. We sat for ages, hardly moving, for almost two hours. There were vehicles everywhere, supposedly queuing to cross on the pontoon, but it was obvious that bribes were being taken, as vehicles were jumping the queue. Street sellers were everywhere, trying to sell everything from food to trinkets, from bowls and containers on their heads. Soon, we started to move forward slowly, onto the pontoon. The crossing only took about ten minutes but by then it was too dark to see anything.

Once off the pontoon, we continued on our way, along more horrendously dusty, bumpy roads, doing what everyone else was doing – zig-zagging all over the place to dodge the pot holes, many of which were deep and wide. Prosper obviously knew the roads well, as he drove at speed and knew exactly when and where to overtake, with a sudden surge of power when necessary. Hardly any of the roads were lit, so it was very dark, especially in the small towns and villages, as there was a power cut.

We eventually arrived at Hlefi, after what had been a long, harrowing journey of over four hours, being bumped around, with hot air from the open

windows blowing into the car, until the air-conditioning was put back on and it was then almost too cold!

With there being no electricity, we had to unpack and get to bed by torchlight. The next morning, it was lovely to wake up to the sound of the animals and birds in the front yard instead of loud speakers blaring out preachers, medicine sellers or loud music.



Outside the front gate was one of the village's four water pumps, where a woman and her children were filling containers with water and carrying it on their heads.

Prosper took me on a guided tour of the village, along the dirt road to the clinic and to the primary and secondary schools, where he had been educated. I noticed a motor cyclist drive past, carrying his family: his two children (one in front of him and one behind) then his wife, who was carrying a baby on her back! I was horrified, but I soon found that this was common practice in villages!

It was good to see some of the beautiful scenery on our trip to the Agumatsu Waterfall, which is the highest waterfall in West Africa. We retraced some of our journey into the village of Hlefi from the previous night, so I was able to see the beautiful lush countryside that we had passed through. We also passed through a couple of bustling market towns, with people, street sellers and animals wandering all over the place, and market kiosks jostling for space along the edges of the roads and over the storm water drains.



After this, we wound our way up a windy, quite steep hill road where the vegetation was lush and green, with various houses and dwellings scattered along the way. Back on the lower countryside, we bounced and bumped our way along narrow dirt roads, with Prosper skilfully overtaking a variety of vehicles, including a lorry with a very lopsided load.

I don't think the driver realised that his load, which included pipes, had moved sideways, so I was glad when we were in front of him!



It was about a two hour drive to the village of Wlu, where we parked the car. We had a guide walk with us, along the beautiful track through the forest and over the nine bridges which crossed over the river that flows down from the waterfall. The walk took 45 minutes and was a mixture of sun filtering through the leaves and cool, dense shade, along with beautiful bird song.

Just before reaching the waterfall, we saw a huge flight of bats above the trees, against the back drop of a stunning blue sky. Coming out of the bush and seeing the massive waterfall for the first time was amazing.

The white foamy water was thundering down, providing a striking contrast against the green of the vegetation. I hadn't realised that it was going to be so high, even though it is the highest waterfall in West Africa. It really was a spectacular sight, even more so when our guide told us that this was only the bottom part. It would take another two hours of literally climbing the mountain to see the top part. The whole waterfall is 600 metres high.



A number of people were swimming in the pool at the bottom of the falls, but I wasn't going to risk getting my feet wet in untreated water. There were a couple of white girls sitting on a bench, obviously having been swimming. As I was taking photos, they came over and asked me to take photos of them together. I picked a familiar accent straight away and was surprised to learn that one of them, Heather, was from Southland, New Zealand! As well as taking photos and them being photographed with young Ghanaian men, we chatted for ages. I also had a chat with another young Ghanaian man, after he had thanked me for putting rubbish in a bin. His comment was that if you love nature, you don't want to destroy it, which led into an interesting conversation. When I had first arrived in Ghana I had discovered that many Ghanaians do not use litter bins as they should. The storm water drains and road sides very quickly become full of rubbish.

We drove back along a different route from the one we had been on earlier, passing through a number of villages, with a mixture of housing including homes built out of rough bricks, others made of concrete and the occasional wooden shack.

The wooden and brick houses usually had palm branches for roofing. Most homes looked as if they were in family clusters, with a communal area for the animals and for outdoor cooking.

When we arrived in HoHoe, the busy thriving market town we had driven through that morning, Prosper decided to visit his brother Cornelius, a Maths teacher, and his wife Alice and family. I was made very welcome.

We were invited to have dinner with them and to eat fufu (pounded cassava and plantain) which Alice and her son were preparing. It was served on low tables outside, with palm nut soup. Alice wasn't sure whether I would eat fufu, but I assured her that I did and loved it. I enjoyed the meal very much, despite the fact that the soup was very peppery and the meat, which I avoided, was awful.

It was dark when we left HoHoe for the village, so the journey was much like the one we had taken along a similar route yesterday: bumpy, dusty and plenty of pot holes. One thing that amazed me was the number of people, either alone or in small groups, which included children, who were walking along those dark, narrow, unlit roads, often without any kind of light. There were cyclists as well as walkers, often riding towards the on-coming traffic. I wondered how these people escaped being attacked, or hit by the traffic, as, in places there was a steady stream, which included trucks.

Next morning, being Sunday, we walked to the Evangelical Presbyterian church along the road. As we arrived, there was music playing over the sound system and it was a selection of hymns sung African style, so very pleasant to listen to.



The service started about 9.15am and took the form of a harvest thanksgiving. There were people and choirs from two other villages in the Hlefi district. The local church choir, dressed in black and white robes and wearing mortar board style hats, walked in from the back, singing 'Take the Name of Jesus with You', accompanied by several young men playing African drums.



The singing was really powerful, with layers of harmony providing a rich sound which I will never forget. There was lots of singing and praise throughout the service, as well as prayers of thanksgiving and several offerings, with the usual African shuffle to the offering boxes.



The visiting choirs also sang and were just as rich and harmonious as the Hlefi choir. Each time, a member of the choir would sing the opening line, then the drummers picked up the beat before the rest of the singers joined in, unaccompanied except for the drums. Each choir wore their own uniform. The

children also came in and presented a musical item, which was lovely, as they had been sitting outside of the church during the service.

During the second part of the service, speeches of thanks were given to the people who had given monetary donations to the harvest thanksgiving.

By this time, Prosper, the village chief, had arrived, and was eventually ushered by two ladies waving pieces of material in front of him, to the other side of the platform. The same thing was done for Ruby, then I was invited (but not waved) to join them.

Soon after, the auction of produce which the people had brought to church, began. There were several bowls of yam, bananas and plantain, among other things, which fetched a good price. There were four live hens as well, who had periodically made their presence heard during the service, as they were lying on the floor with their legs tied together. Everything had been sold after an hour! We eventually finished about 12.30pm, three and a half hours after the service had started!

We left Hlefi later that afternoon and headed back along the route we had travelled on Friday night, this time in daylight. There was the usual queue of traffic when we arrived at the pontoon, but we bi-passed it and took the road that led to the Akosombo Dam at the south eastern end of Lake Volta. It was bumpy and potholed in places, but was in quite good condition as we got nearer to the dam. Lake Volta is one of the largest manmade lakes in the world and the largest in Africa. It was created when the dam was constructed, to provide controlled irrigation for the surrounding area, in the 1960s. It is also known as the Akosombo Hydro-electric Project. We crossed the dam by driving across the bridge.



Although it was rather hazy and late in the day, we had lovely views across the lake. A bit further down the road, we passed some fig and eucalyptus trees, then a huge area where rice was growing. It looked like a massive expanse of green grass, stretching for miles.





Prosper told me that it was irrigated with water from the dam and I could see that as we walked nearer. There were a few stalks with rice grains starting to form near where we were, but Ruby spotted a better clump further along. As I was taking photos of the developing rice, I thought I had walked onto stinging nettles. Looking down, there were lots of large red ants on my feet, biting me. Obviously I had disturbed an ants' nest and they were not very happy! Their bites stung, as I tried to swish the creatures off. The stinging continued for quite a while, but there didn't seem to be any bite marks at that point. I sprayed insect repellent on and later put some cream on my feet, which helped to sooth the stinging. It actually continued for the next few hours, with some bite marks as well.

It had been a lovely weekend, meeting members of Prosper's and Ruby's families, as well as enjoying some of the magnificent scenery and music of the Volta Region.

*Jan Smithers*

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Marilyn Robinson, Co-ordinator of our Flower Rota, has asked us to pass on her thanks to all the arrangers for their beautiful displays of flowers, and to those who also donated money towards their purchase for our Harvest Festival Service.

Thanks also goes to all those people who arrange flowers week by week or donate money for their purchase.

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*Ed's note: We are sure Marilyn would welcome more names for the Flower Rota. It may be that you would like to remember someone or celebrate an anniversary in this way - please see Marilyn.*



Barry Trotman was a former member of our Church and The Youth Group, who sadly died earlier this year. On recently visiting Penny his widow, she gave us a prayer he had written many years ago. It seems fitting that we share this with others who will remember his many gifts and deep faith.

*J and D*

*Lord, help me not to despise myself  
When I am in the depths.  
Help me to remember Lord  
That you love me.  
You must love me  
to have brought me this far.  
So who am I  
Even if all others seem to hate me,  
Who am I  
Not to love myself  
If my Lord loves me?*

*Lord, help me not to despise myself.  
How can I love others  
As you want me to  
If I cannot love even myself?*  
*Barry Trotman*



# Minster Abbey



The name of this building would, on the face of it, appear confusing. Is it a Minster or is it an Abbey? The answer is, that it is an Abbey in the village of Minster in Kent!

On a recent trip to meet up with friends in Broadstairs we visited the village of Minster for its annual Open Gardens Day. One garden that was open was that of the Abbey and we took the opportunity to visit the Chapel of the Abbey. Pope Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to be a missionary to the Anglo Saxons. He landed in 597 AD, and within a few years Christianity had taken a hold in Southern England and Minster Abbey was one of the earliest founded.

Like many buildings of its age and type there have been many changes. Its history has been entwined with the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. This was built on the site of the first Monastic building founded as long ago as 670 AD, some of this building is still used today. A further monastic building in conjunction with a church of SS Peter and Paul was started in 735 on the Abbey site. Unfortunately, in 755 there began a series of Viking raids, which continued until the late 900's which led to the destruction of the monastery. The site reverted to Crown ownership.

In 1027 King Canute granted the site to St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury which allowed the rebuilding of the monastery including the West (Saxon) wing. It was used both by the monastic community and the local people as a Parish church. Over the next 500 years there were the usual additions, restorations etc. But then came Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries! Again the land reverted to the crown and it was sold as a private house. In 1928 it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Senior. It is sometimes considered as the oldest continuously inhabited house in England.

There then came a 'providential coincidence' - in 1937 the Senior's decided that they wished to downsize.

Buyers were not lining up to buy such a property and this fact came to the attention of Dom Bede Winslow, a priest at a nearby Catholic church. He felt that there was a chance to restore the building to be a monastic community and he made the details known to similar communities in England. When no result was forthcoming he widened his net to the continent. His letter arrived at the Benedictine Abbey of St. Waburga in Eichstatt in Bavaria where the Abbess was Benedicta von Spiegel zu Peckelsheim... On the same day she received another letter from the Nazi SS requisitioning part of the Abbey for use by the Hitler Storm troopers!

The coincidence was seen as the hand of providence and after a trip to America the Abbess stopped off in Kent and decided that there was a future to be had in Minster. Since she was unable to take money out of Germany it was through the good offices of the American foundations that the money was raised and the Abbey at Minster purchased.

After almost 400 years as a private house it became a monastic community again. The Abbess sought travel papers for a group of the sisters in Germany to be allowed to England to help set up the new community and this was granted.

With all this history behind it the Abbey is a fascinating place to visit. At the time we looked around the gardens no sisters were in view but we were allowed to roam freely.

Perhaps the gardens were not manicured and planted to the same degree as some of the other houses in Minster but then none of those houses had the same sense of peace and tranquillity. History hung heavily in the air - a very worthwhile diversion from the twenty first century...



Dave L

## **CHURCH DIARY**

### **October**

Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10 am	All Age Service led by Jason Close
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by The Women's Group.
	6 pm	BB Battalion Officers and Staff Dedication Service Led by Geoff Norris
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by Mandy Edwards
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by John Grant - Moderator of the LBA
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by Bob Jenkins

### **November**

Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7.30 pm	Church Council Meeting
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	All Age Service led by Gemma Player
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Remembrance Day Service Led by Phil Slaney
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by TBA
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Hilary Taylor LBA Small Church Enabler
	11.30am	Church Members meeting and AGM

## **December**

Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	All Age Service led by Jason Close
	3 pm	Bereavement Service arranged by Churches Together in Highams Park
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by TBA

*Refreshments are served after the Morning Service every Sunday.*