

Cyfarchion o Gymru

Brian Reardon, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, visited Torbay earlier in the year and sends us greetings. *When I come to Torbay on holiday with my wife, Anne, we attend Goodrington Methodist Church and are grateful to worship with like-minded Christians. I am minister of eight separate churches in mid-Wales, all very rural with small congregations, including Newchurch Chapel in Central Radnorshire (pictured right) that has no toilets or running water. Situated on Offa's Dyke, walkers visit to pray and rest even sleeping on the pews overnight if they wish. I am also a hospital chaplain and a member of the Order of St Luke, a healing ministry. May God grant you all peace and joy with your worship team in Torbay.*



In our new Methodist Prayer Handbook, Responding to the Gospel, we pray for Wales on Day 8 of the month.

Brixham Concerts

The Summer Lunchtime Concerts in Brixham went really well. Audiences enjoyed a varied programme through the weeks, ranging from *The Big Noise Chorus*, to beautiful music played on the harp by Sonia Mistely (pictured right). Sonia, an osteopath, came across the harp while on a course to help support people with cancer. Shortly after that Teignmouth staged its first harp festival and she was hooked. She has been playing for eight years. David and Audrey Taylor gave a fun rendition of



the songs of Flanders and Swan. Lunches were served and over £700 was raised for charity, including National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society, Devon Air Ambulance and Youth Genesis. An excellent summer experience - and we're all looking forward to next year.



The Methodist Church

CONNECTED

Newsletter of the Torbay Methodist Circuit—Issue 12 September 2019

“Many parts form one body” (1 Cor. 12:12)

...and we are thankful!

Autumn is a lovely time of year in the countryside, as the colours change and the shorter days and cooler weather remind us that it is time to start preparing for the winter. In schools and churches it is also time for Harvest Festivals – tables are decorated with fruit and vegetables and, mindful of the needs of others, many gifts these days are in tins and packets so that they can be given to food banks and community larders.

The tradition of celebrating Harvest Festival in churches as we know it today began in 1843, when the eccentric Reverend Robert Hawker, Vicar of Morwenstow in North Cornwall, invited his people to a special thanksgiving service for the harvest at his church. Harvest Festivals tend to be held in September near the autumn equinox, the Sunday of the harvest moon or Michaelmas Day (29 September).

Another important yet neglected theme of harvest is judgment. These days we tend to be more reticent about judgment but should that be the case? Perhaps if we spoke about ‘responsibility’ or ‘accountability’ it would sound a bit more contemporary. As we look out on the world, locally through our own eyes, and nationally and internationally through the eyes of the TV cameras, can any of us really be against the ideas of responsibility and accountability?



Roller at Cockington

More than half the population of Great Britain believe in God or a higher power but perhaps not so many believe that each of us will be required to give an account of ourselves to God. Does this all sound rather gloomy? Well, it could do ... but for one thing. The Christian hope is that whatever we may or may not have done, we can know forgiveness because Jesus has died for us. That's the essence of the message of the cross of Jesus Christ – and we are thankful!

Revd John Haley
Superintendent Minister

Harvest of the Sea at Brixham

While tourism is an important part of the life of Torbay, at Brixham fishing is also an important industry. Traditional Brixham trawlers had distinctive coloured sails which had been coated with local red ochre for protection. Today's trawler fleet is much reduced from the 300 boats of a century ago but there are still working fishing boats in the harbour. Consequently, Brixham Methodist Church celebrates two Harvest Festivals. The first is a more conventional service in September, but then, as one of the biggest fishing ports in the country, Harvest of the Sea is



celebrated in October. The church is decorated throughout with objects from the fishing industry, including burgees (pennant-shaped flags) from historic Brixham trawlers. The traditional Harvest of the Sea services are enhanced by a male voice choir. Before the evening service, there is communal hymn-singing for about 20 minutes – everyone is welcome!

Harvest of the Sea, Sunday 13 October, 10.30 am & 6.30 pm, Brixham Methodist Church, Fore Street, Brixham.



Brixham Methodist Church



Traditional Brixham trawler with ochre sails



Brixham Methodist Church (interior)



Responding to the Gospel



The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Each September, the Methodist Church of Great Britain produces a prayer handbook. The contents are arranged as a monthly cycle, which takes the reader around Great Britain and Ireland by Methodist Districts and around the world. We pray for the Plymouth and Exeter District on Day 24 of the month. If you did not pre-order a copy of the Prayer Handbook and would like one please ask your minister or contact the circuit office – they cost £3.95 (that's less than 8p/week). Large print editions are available at no extra cost.

Please send good news stories of worship, fellowship, mission and evangelism to Torbay Methodist Circuit Office by no later than

7 November 2019 to be considered for inclusion in the next issue of *Connected*.

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Don't Lose What You Love

The Torbay Circuit Missions Group have put together an environmental event, *Don't Lose What You Love*. We greet one another over a hot drink as we arrive and start building a display of gifts for Factory Row (Torquay), Torquay Community Larder, Paignton Community Larder and Brixham Food Bank. These will be arranged around a wheatsheaf loaf baked by members of our church at Palace Avenue (Paignton). There will be various stalls and displays including *Traidcraft*, *Friends of the Earth*, *Tor 2*, *Suttons Seeds*, *Bees*, and notice-boards on which to write ideas and questions. The afternoon will start more formally with a short act of worship followed by an illustrated talk *Caring for God's Acre*, which will be given by David Curry, Environmental Officer for the Diocese of Exeter. There will be a time of questions and answers, when we can also share our own ideas and challenges. The afternoon will end with a buffet tea. **Central Church, Torquay Saturday 5 October, 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm (come for all or part of the time).**



Factory Row (Torquay): Rough sleeping continues to increase across England and in Torquay. Mental health problems are associated with rough sleeping so that it should not be considered a 'lifestyle choice'. Most rough sleepers want stability; a decent life, to work, to have a family and to be loved. Gifts that are particularly welcome are ready meals (tins or packets), soup, stew, curry, pasta, instant mashed potato, boil in the bag rice, noodles.

Torquay Community Larder: An initiative of Churches Together in Torquay, suggested donations include tinned food of most kinds (especially those requiring little or no preparation before cooking), sugar, tea/coffee, biscuits, toiletries.

Paignton Community Larder: Started by Central Paignton Churches, since it opened two years ago more than 2,500 parcels (60,000 meals) have been distributed. Most people who call on the larder for help do so just once, when they are really at the end of their tether. Tinned and packet foods with a long life are welcome, as are new or unused toiletries of every kind.

Brixham Food Bank: Tucked away behind Brixham Library, the Food Bank has collections boxes in shops and churches. Anything easy to cook, toiletries and small more luxurious items are welcome, including seasonal gifts, especially at Christmas.

Methodist Churches across the Torbay Circuit support all these deserving projects – they are pleased to receive food, toiletries and monetary donations either directly or through your local church.



Sister Eleanor Hopewell

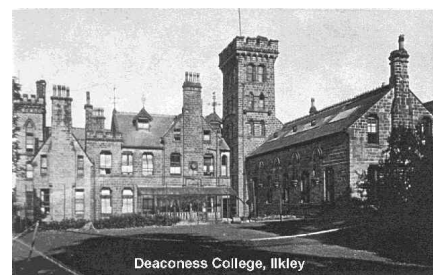
Revd John Haley was rummaging around in the register safe at Victoria Park Church and found Sister Nellie's diaconal badges. This prompted him to do some research and he has written the following information:

Born in Burton on Trent on 14 July 1897, as a young woman, Eleanor or 'Nellie', as she was affectionately known, managed a sewing machine shop. She was accepted for Deaconess training in 1925 and, after studying at Ilkley, she was sent to a student appointment in Poplar & Bow (Bow Common), to the Leysian Mission and Birmingham Islington Circuits. She was consecrated to the order in May 1929. Sister Nellie continued serving in Birmingham before moving to the following circuits: Liverpool County Road, Sunderland Mission (Sans Street), Douglas Isle of Man (Pulrose), Manchester & Salford Mission (Victoria Hall) and Reading (Whitley). She retired from 'active work' in 1961 but continued both to work and travel. In Devon she

worked in the Totnes Circuit at Harbertonford before settling at Victoria Park, Torquay, where she became a familiar figure on her bicycle, visiting the sick and lonely and preaching throughout the circuit.

Sister Eleanor died on 10 May 1984. Although she had no living relatives, her funeral service, at Victoria Park Methodist Church, was attended by a large congregation of people who had become her 'family'.

As part of a service, Revd Graham Thompson, Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District will dedicate framed tribute to Sister Nellie at **Victoria Park Methodist Church, Torquay on Sunday 22 September at 10.30am.**



Deaconess College, Ilkley

Sharing with Bulgaria



In July we welcomed Revd Ivan and Mrs Anna Morunov from Bulgaria to the circuit for the second time. This year they were joined by their daughter, Denica. Ivan is minister of two United Methodist Churches in the north of Bulgaria. During their week in Torbay, our Bulgarian visitors shared in services at Southfield, Victoria Park and Goodrington. These were special times. They enjoyed fish and chips at the *Beefeater*, White Rock; French cakes at *Liberty*, Brixham; the all-day breakfast at *Ocombe Farm*, Paignton; and curry at *Bay Spice Restaurant*, just 200 yards up the road from our Victoria Park Church, as well as meals in the churches and in member's homes. This gave an opportunity for Ivan, Anna and Denica to meet members and guests and to share in conversation and testimony. Sharing the good news with Jesus.

As part of the partnership between the United Methodist Churches at Veliko Tarnovo and Lyaskovets, Revd John and Mrs Janet Haley visited the churches during the first week of August. Bulgaria has a long and checkered history. In its present form it owes its origins to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and the formation of the Third Bulgarian State. After the Second World War, Bulgaria became part of the Soviet-led Eastern Bloc and only in 1989 did the Communist Party relinquish power. Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007 and since then there has been a marked decrease in population.



Young and professional people have moved to the west. Sadly, widespread corruption is still a big issue. In 2018 Bulgaria was rated as the most corrupt country in the European Union.

With 29 churches, just over 1,100 members and 20 ministers, Methodism in Bulgaria, which was founded in 1857, is not strong. During the communist years, church buildings were confiscated and the church struggled to survive. Today the Orthodox Church is the predominant Christian denomination but Christianity among those who would say they were Orthodox is, in fact, only nominal. Veliko Tarnovo (population c. 70,000) was formerly the Bulgarian Capital. Situated on the Yantra River, it is a city of unique architecture. Neighbouring Lyaskovets (population c. 15,000) is six miles north-east of Veliko Tarnovo. Much of the town was extensively damaged in 1913 by an earthquake. The United Methodist Church here runs an after school club and meal service for children mainly from poor Roma families.

John's preaching at the two churches was ably translated by Denica Morunova and there were several opportunities to meet the members over traditional Bulgarian food. John shared in two services of believer's baptism for new converts. Although it was the school holidays, John and Janet were able to visit the premises at Lyaskovets where 25 Roma children have

afternoon classes and are given a hot meal - often their only meal of the day. A donation of £4,000 from our Goodrington and Victoria Park Churches will help support that work in the coming year.

While blessed with mountain and coastal views, Bulgaria is in general a poor country and there were pockets of great poverty in both towns. Many of the towns also have extensive areas of former industrial units and factories that are now closed - a mark of the transition from the labour-intensive working practices of the communist era. John and Janet were kindly hosted for lunch at Varna by Revd Daniel Topalski, superintendent minister for Bulgaria.

Who are the Roma Children?

On a baking-hot afternoon, John and Janet Haley were being guided through the small town of Lyaskovets, Bulgaria, by Denica Morunova. Several children greeted Denica – they know her as their friend and their teacher from the Children's Centre at the nearby United Methodist Church. Passing through a small park there were several children playing but in another really rather nicer park there were no children playing. 'Roma children are not allowed to play in this park,' Denica explained. Born and raised in Europe without a birth certificate, officially stateless and

often denied access to hospitals, schools and basic public services, the Roma people are Europe's largest, poorest and most persecuted ethnic minority. In European countries,

including Bulgaria, 'Roma' was a term introduced in 1971 to refer to people who might formerly have been known as 'gypsies'. These are actually a diverse group that include both nomadic and non-nomadic people, who lack a common language, religion or defined cultural identity. However, Roma people do share things in common – discrimination, exclusion and poverty.

