

CONTACT



CHISLEHURST METHODIST CHURCH
CHRISTMAS 2011

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BREAKING NEWS

CAROL SINGING

On Saturday 10th, a hardy band of carollers sung their hearts out for Action for Children at Bond Street. They collected £1154.08. Sadie & William (seen here supervising John Sennett) collected almost 20% of the total!

THE QUIET DAY

Our Advent Quiet Day involved 20 people and here are the comments from one attendee:

"I attended the Quiet Day on 9th December at the Chislehurst Church. I am so glad that I did turn

up for this wonderful event. I am a recent attender at the New Eltham Church and had not previously seen the Chislehurst church and renovations. I got so much out of being contemplative and quiet (a nice change for me) in such a beautiful and serene setting with such a sense of harmony from the building and the participants and those leading the day. And lunch was terrific! And I left with a great sense of peace and tranquillity and walked home through the woods feeling thankful. I can't wait for the next one."

Carol Parris



QUEEN'S JUBILEE WEEKEND

Churches Together in Chislehurst and Bickley will be organising the Big Lunch on Sunday 3rd June 2012 from 12.30pm on Chislehurst Common, Manor Park Road.

The idea would be for each family to provide a main dish, side dish or pudding to serve 6 (plus their own cutlery and alcohol, if desired). Watch the notice sheet for more information.

LOOKING BACK WITH THANKSGIVING, MOVING FORWARD WITH HOPE

The last edition of Contact was a September Special celebrating the reopening of the church. Three and a half months later and there has been so much enthusiastic appreciation of the church as church members, friends and visitors alike wonder at its peace and beauty and comment on the very special spiritual atmosphere.

Our art exhibition ran for six weeks, 1300 visitors were welcomed by a wonderful team of 40 stewards. Everyone chipped in and played their part which all helped to make the exhibition such a wonderful experience. Entrance to the exhibition was free but donations, the sale of our own exhibition guide and other books and pamphlets contributed by church members, produce, catering and the Traidcraft stall led to a grand income of £4000 which easily covered the cost of hosting the exhibition.

The trustees of the Methodist Art Collection asked us to write a review of our experience. Here is the introductory section:

'It was in 2009 that the minister first suggested that we needed to think ahead and prepare for a major celebration to mark the reopening of the refurbished church. She proposed an exhibition from the Methodist Art Collection. The trustees of the Art Collection were contacted and a trustee, Rev'd Geoff Cornell, visited the church in the Autumn of 2009 to give approval. The dates for the exhibition were fixed for the Autumn of 2011. This gave us two years to complete our refurbishment project, which, at the time seemed ample.

In the Autumn of 2010 a small exhibition planning group was established: the minister, Jacqui Hicks and our church administrator Anthony Faulkner. In November 2010 the group established their aims and objectives.

Aim:

The aim of hosting the art collection is to attract as many visitors to the church as possible to enjoy and be inspired by the art on display and to celebrate the newly refurbished church as a beautiful, welcoming centre for spirituality and the creative arts.

Objectives:

- 1. to host individuals and groups eg schools, colleges, women's groups, art groups, church groups*
- 2. to provide workshops on the art work*
- 3. to provide a programme of the exhibition*
- 4. to provide fair trade refreshments*
- 5. to raise funds to finance the exhibition*
- 6. to support a project (eg MRDF or Christian Aid which uses art as a medium for healing traumatised victims of conflict)*
- 7. to seek partnerships with interested groups eg The Chislehurst Society/Farringtons School*
- 8. to be a major player in the Chislehurst festival – approx. same dates as our art exhibition.*
- 9. to sell resources*

It is gratifying to look back and recognise that the exhibition fulfilled our original aims and objectives. Many of our visitors expressed their appreciation in our comments book. Here is a selection of their comments:

‘Magnificent and thought provoking. Splendid to see the art works in your beautifully refurbished church. Love the warm labyrinth’

‘Stunning! We loved the exhibition and the thought that has gone into the planning. Another visit is a must!’

‘An excellent exhibition full of meaning and depth of feeling in a most Christ like atmosphere’

‘A fascinating exhibition, which would not have been appreciated without the booklet ‘Come and See’ which brought out some lovely thoughts’

‘Some beautiful paintings and I leave with a longing to possess the excellent ‘Christ walking on the water’ by Maggi Hambling!’

‘It has been a marvellous opportunity to see some major works of art...but it has also been unexpectedly inspiring to see how you have all adapted the space to provide a beautiful space for so many uses to involve the community. Thank you.’

‘A beautiful exhibition. Dhalit Madonna awesome! Well worth our journeys from Bedford and Oxford.’

From two young girls aged 9 and 11 years. ‘I love this art gallery. ‘My favourite is the Ascension.’ ‘I liked the pictures on the windows’.

‘My second visit to this wonderful exhibition. I discovered it quite by chance or Divine providence one afternoon a few weeks ago. What an unexpected surprise and joy.’

‘We are so delighted our friends brought us to see the Exhibition – everyone has a real significance and some a spiritual ‘high’. Thank you. ‘

‘Well done Chislehurst Methodists for providing this thought provoking exhibition.’

‘Beautiful and gets you thinking’ Isabelle aged 8.

Since the exhibition the foyer (named the Courtyard) has been completed. This too is beautiful and a delightful space for gathering. To finish the Courtyard we took out a loan of £175,000 from Methodist Chapel Aid. We decided to go ahead and finish the whole scheme in order that we might concentrate not on builders and plans for the premises but on taking forward the life of the church. We have great responsibilities resting upon us as we work together to repay our loan. In the New Year a reformed Strategy and Finance group (with a Fund Raising sub group) will be developing its plans. We are already delighted and greatly appreciative of peoples generous response to the Phase Two

Personal Fund raising appeal launched in the last edition of Contact. The appeal has reached three quarters of its target £100,000 target.

Our General Church meeting in March will focus on worship and what different styles of worship we would like to offer. Already this Christmas we have enjoyed a Quiet Day for Advent and a creative Nativity Service on Sunday 11th December. In this service we celebrated with a variety of workshops to suit everyone and we were also pleased that the Boys Brigade were there and presented their colours. In the New Year we are looking forward to the resumption of monthly Parade Services welcoming Rainbows, Boys Brigade, Brownies, Guides and Rangers on the third Sunday of the month, beginning 15 January. We were pleased to be able to offer a warm welcome to local schools who were delighted to be able to hold their nativity services and plays in the church. The physical warmth (the infants from St Nicks school performed barefoot – thanks to the under floor heating!) and comfort, the seating and Courtyard make the church ideal for schools and parents.

It hardly seems possible that only a year ago we were preparing to move out of the church and worship in the hall for eight months. Last year we held our last service in the 'old' church on Christmas Day. We did not know what the future would hold. How would we manage to worship for months in the hall? Would it all be finished in time for the Art Exhibition? Would we make the right decisions for the reordering of the church...the lighting...the floor...the furniture...and here we are... one year on!

In our Christmas services we will be hearing again the opening to John's gospel,

'In the beginning was the Word...'

In Jesus the written words of scripture come to life so this Christmas and through the coming year we seek to live in Jesus through the worship and life of the church.

As we look to the New Year we look to a future filled with exciting opportunities as we explore new ways to 'touch the hearts of all'. Remember, we have transformed the church from a private place of worship to a public sacred space.

Wishing you joy and peace at Christmas and a happy new year

Barbara

BOYS BRIGADE

Being in Company Section at Boys Brigade is really good. Since September we have been to a ten pin bowling competition with lots of other boys in the battalion. We didn't win but we had a great night out.

For the last three weeks in November we went skiing with five boys from the 4th Company from Hextable. Liam, William and I have been a couple of times before but the Hextable boys hadn't been at all. We started on the nursery slope with basics like how to make a snowplough shape and keeping your hands in front of you, we ended the first week by doing lots of sledging which was really fast. Liam looked like he was a one man bob sleigh! On the second week we were shown how to use the ski pulls with our skis on so that it could pull us up the slope. Once they knew we could do this and could ski safely down, we were allowed on the big slope. The third week we are on the big slope. It has been brilliant. The Hextable boys are already planning to meet up again to do more skiing and I think we will as well.

William and I went up to London at 7.30 in the morning on Remembrance Sunday to join in the parade past the Cenotaph. We represented the Boys Brigade from all over the UK. There were boys from Scotland and Northern Ireland there as well. There were only 20 boys and five officers so we felt very proud as we marched down Whitehall and past the Cenotaph. Mum, dad and Lucy and William's mum and dad were in the crowds clapping and clapping all the people going past. (I was number 10,910 in the parade) Then we marched round to Horse Guards Parade past Prince Charles as he was taking the salute. The bands were fantastic. And they kept playing until everyone had finished parading.

Finally on 19th November we entered in a badminton competition. There were nine companies represented. We were playing in the year 7 level. We had never played in a competition before. William came third and Liam won the year seven level, I came fourth, and then Liam and me won the doubles for the year sevens. Overall our Company came 2nd out of nine companies.

So this is just the going out stuff; as well as this we have really enjoyed making an animated film with Thomas about Easter and it's cool. We hope to show you in church one day.

Joe Hicks



WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER. FRIDAY 2ND MARCH 2012

Women's World Day of Prayer is a worldwide inter-denominational movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer on the first Friday in March every year. The Day of Prayer came into being at the turn of the last century as a Christian response to the deprivation experienced by so many of the world's women. Today more than 170 countries and islands take part, and the international order of service is translated into more than 60 languages and 1000 dialects.

The Day of Prayer begins on the International Dateline. The first service is held at dawn in Tonga. As the earth rotates a great 'Mexican Wave' of prayer rises through the Pacific and Asia, through Fiji, New Zealand, Japan, Philippines, Korea and Bangladesh to Africa; through the Middle East, Lebanon, Egypt and Cyprus to Europe east and west; across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, South, Central and North America, until the last service of the day is held on an island off the coast of Alaska.

Each year women from different countries prepare the service. This year it has been prepared by the women of Malaysia. The country is north of the equator in SE Asia and consists of two parts, West, or Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia which is comprised of Sabah and Sarawak. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Throughout its history it has attracted migrants from other parts of Asia and beyond and it is one of the wealthiest and most developed countries in South East Asia. Women have made important contributions to its social and economic development but, nevertheless, they still face discrimination and violence at all levels of society. Even today a girl child is seen as less valuable than a boy. Malaysia is now the most popular destination country in Asia for migrant workers and human trafficking has become a sophisticated and organised operation.

Although Malaysia's multi-ethnicity has added to the rich heritage of its land and people, it has also given rise to many problems. In the service those issues of concern are named and the women voice their hope for the future. Justice for all is their hope, and their prayer is "Let Justice Prevail".

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and **all are welcome to attend. The 2012 service in Chislehurst will be held at Christ Church, Lubbock Road at 10.30 a.m. on Friday 2nd March.** Please put the date in your diary.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CHISLEHURST+BICKLEY (CTC+B)

The CTC Charity shop at 66 High Street Chislehurst has been able to give away over £50,000 this year to many good causes overseas. This is because of the hard work of its many loyal volunteers who help either on the till or behind the scenes sorting the many black sacks donated by generous Chislehurst residents.

One of the Projects that has been helped this year is the Christian Care Foundation for Children with Disabilities (CCD) in Manoram Thailand. Manoram has been flooded this year and the £2,000 CTC Shop grant has enabled them to repair the building.



If you would like to help the CTC shop at 66 High Street Chislehurst BR7 5AQ please contact George Taylor on 467 7949 or Philippa Robinson: philipparobinson@sky.com

The shop particularly needs helpers for Saturday mornings / Saturday afternoons and also for people to be on the weekday reserve list for when regular volunteers are away. Or if you know of other small overseas charities that you would like the CTC Shop to consider giving a grant to, please write to Joan Ruthven at 66 High Street Chislehurst BR7 5AQ

In September, the Chislehurst Churches Together Shop for Overseas Aid gave a grant of £1000 to the Ngbotima trust. Karen and Keith Pusey are trustees of the trust and have sent in the following article...

The NGBOTIMA CHARITY TRUST - "Let us Help" - raises money for the education of 24 children in Sierre Leone, who are bright, ambitious and desperate to learn, but without our support would be denied adequate schooling.

The civil war in Sierra Leone (1991–2001) interrupted or stopped altogether the schooling of the majority of children, leaving a generation of 18-35 year olds with no more than 3 or 4 years of basic education.

Many families in Sierra Leone can only afford to send one child to school, while the siblings are forced to sell water, groundnut and coal on the streets to raise money for the family.

The pressure is even greater on the girls, who are expected to care for the rest of the family as soon as they are deemed old enough to look after babies. We are trying to change this process and increase the number of girl students - currently a minority in schools.

NGBOTIMA CHARITY TRUST only sponsors the education of children who are already living within a family unit (be it with blood relatives or guardians), in the belief that by supporting a child within a family we can do more. For example, by paying for the education of one child within the family, the parents can perhaps afford to send a second child to school.

We involve the parents and guardians or older siblings in all our decisions by holding meetings with them throughout the academic year, so that they are comfortable that they still have responsibility for their child and to ensure that the other children do not feel overlooked in the process – they know that our aim is to support and strengthen the families.

We aim to reinforce within the children the importance of helping each other and giving back, as well as receiving, help. We are pleased to report that one of our first students, Sylvester, has completed his schooling and is now mentoring other children while he waits to get a place in further education. The war in Sierra Leone has robbed its people of so much, not least the ability to trust others, so we want to rebuild confidence and hope in the future in those families whose lives we can help to support. If you want to donate or help in any other way please contact Keith and Karen Pusey at puseys@onetel.com.



The trustees of Ngbotima Trust and the children supported by the trust would like express their thanks for the kind donation from the Churches Together Charity Shop.

HOW GREEN IS OUR CHURCH?

Since the start of the Refurbishment project, we have made some very significant changes in the way the church operates as far as the environment is concerned. The church is now a much more sustainable place, but there remains work to do.

As part of the refurbishment, we have installed double glazing in the hall and in the Upper Room (where the Chislehurst Society has its office). Double glazing is now in all our rooms.

Within the church, the huge windows over the balcony have secondary glazing to assist against heat loss through this wall. The Upper Room roof has been insulated.

The lighting was originally provided by gas lights; the pipes and valves for these can still be seen on the walls in the church. It was in 1903 that electric lighting was installed. Now, in 2011, the kitchen, small halls/meeting rooms and all the new toilets have energy efficient lighting; the toilets have motion sensitive switches, to ensure the lights don't get left on. Even the church Christmas Tree is lit via a time switch.

Where possible throughout the church, energy efficient lighting has been fitted. The spot lights are low energy halogen lamps; the main lights in the church hanging in the chandeliers are fitted with super energy efficient and very long life white LED lights. The lighting system within the church is zoned and flexible so that only those lights needed should be on, rather than light the whole church up. As a result our electricity consumption in the church has reduced by 80%!

The lights surrounding the church, which light paths in the dark, are slowly being replaced by LED bulbs which are more efficient and last considerably longer.

An electric hand dryer has recently been fitted in the hall toilets. That will mean no more blue hand towels to go to landfill, or to store.

The new toilets were all fitted with low volume flushing cisterns to save water, and the drains were repaired to ensure these work. The wash basins have taps which deliver a certain amount of water before shutting off. The hand dryers also have timers on them.

The Church was originally heated with coal boilers and open fires. The halls and church now have new energy efficient condensing gas boilers, which also give off less green house gas as they extract heat from their exhausts and re-use some of the heat which is wasted on conventional boilers, making them up to 40% more efficient than conventional boilers. Rather than fit one large boiler we have four. It is more efficient to have a small boiler working at full capacity than it is to have a large boiler working at only partial capacity. The church and the Courtyard now have under floor heating, which is as much as 50% more efficient than radiator style heating. With the under floor heating system, 100mm thick heat reflective insulation boarding has been laid throughout the floor, in the church and Courtyard, under the 2.5km of floor heating pipes.

WHAT NEXT - RECLYCLING!!

We have already improved our recycling, with the new bins in the Inner Foyer. These will be upgraded in the New Year with improved storage facilities and the hall rubbish will be recycled where possible. The Village Nurseries will be including studies on recycling so the children can see the effect waste in landfill has, and the effect of recycling. Our recycling is almost a victim of its own success as we struggle sometimes to fit the waste into the containers we have. Many thanks to those who take some of the recycling waste away with them and add it to their own domestic collections.

In due course, when the hall roof is replaced we will be able to install new sky lights and added roof insulation. We will consider the possibility of secondary glazing in the church if it can be done tastefully.

In the meantime, do your bit by recycling and turning the lights off when not needed!

CREATIVE ARTS DAY Saturday 18th February

The day, which will take Creation as its theme and is to be run by ArtServe, will offer ideas and skills for participants to take back to their own churches.

We will look at the use of fabric and quilt making, audio-visual skills, *Singing the Faith* in action, and creative writing for praise and reflection.

We are fortunate to have a brilliant team from ArtServe coming from all over the country to lead the day on the Saturday and to join us in worship on the Sunday.

Rev Brian and Jackie Smith will be travelling from the Broads to lead psalm writing and a hands-on workshop using textiles in church. Jackie will be exhibiting some of her quilts depicting the seven days of Creation. We are really pleased to have, after quite some time a return visit by Valerie Ruddle from Sevenoaks who will be leading us in music and singing using the new hymn book.

Rob Newton comes to us from Loughborough to lead a fabulous workshop on using multimedia and technology in worship. David Grimwood, ArtServe's Business Development officer, Dudley Coates, ArtServe's Chairman, and Damian Boddy, the Delivery Group coordinator, will also join us to offer their skills in music and worship.

Our own Jacqui Hicks will prepare a Creation Contemplation for walking our labyrinth. The day will run from 10 until 4 with registration from 9.15. A light lunch is included in the price of £16. Payment with your booking please, to the church office.

NEW CHURCH GUIDE Come and See

In 2010 “I noticed the Church” and this statement may seem odd or peculiar. How could you miss a building as big as this? What I really mean is that I hadn’t noticed the beauty that is all around the church. Once you look, you will find it full of beauty and a few surprises including far off landscapes, byzantine symbols, exotic flowers and even a dragon slayer. There is not a part of our worship traditions and of the life of Christ which is not represented in some way within the walls and fabric of this amazing building. This Church building may well may keep the wind out or the rain off of us, but it is a special place, full of spirituality and fellowship.

What may be surprising to some is that this Victorian era church is full of ancient symbols. The great medieval churches were built and decorated to inspire and create awe to ensure people believed they had a heavenly experience when in church. In the early days of churches many people could not read, so symbols, carvings and pictures were used to tell stories from the bible or to explain theology. Some art and decoration in churches was to demonstrate power and ambition, but on the whole, the decoration was crafted out of a love of God and a deep faith. These craftsmen wove into the walls, messages from the gospels and wrapped their buildings in prayer and our Church is no different.

Some of the art and decoration within the church can be used in a very personal way to focus the mind and aid reflection, but the church is ultimately a community space to be shared and loved by all.

I have produced a two part document called “Come and See a visual guide to Chislehurst Methodist Church” which describes the art, design, and history of the building. This is available on the church website digitally <http://chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk/4.html> hard copies can be provided for a small donation to the refurbishment fund. The document comprises two books, one of circa 50 pages and the second of circa 70 pages, the first book is a text only guide to the church and the second book is a photographic companion, however the aim of the document is to encourage us and others to “Come and See” the church itself. Copies for use in church are in the Welcome Area.

Thomas G Cowie

FLOWER ROTA 2012

I will put up a list somewhere in the concourse for anyone who would like to put some flowers into the church this coming year. Things have changed a bit in the new order, the old font for instance being a new focal point. With the layout of the furniture being subject to change from time to time and different styles of worship, the traditional pedestal is not always appropriate.

There may be people out there who are willing to do the flowers which someone else pays for. If you are in one of those two groups, do let me know and I will introduce you to each other.

Ring me if helpful

Gillian Beecher Bryant 020 8467 6906

HOW THE METHODIST CHURCH WORKS (as much as can be said on a side of A5)

The basic unit is the local congregation. e.g. Chislehurst Methodist Church.

Local congregations are grouped together in what is called a 'circuit'.

e.g. The Orpington and Chislehurst Circuit.

An ordained minister is usually minister at more than one local church.

e.g. The minister at Chislehurst is also minister at New Eltham Methodist Church.

A minister is appointed ('stationed') to a circuit.

Within that circuit, a minister will normally serve those churches identified in their initial appointment (called 'stationing'). Sometimes, that arrangement will be altered, according to the changing needs of the circuit. e.g. The minister at Chislehurst was formerly also minister at Mottingham before this was changed to New Eltham.

Circuits are clustered into 'districts', which vary in size from say 12 to 30 or more circuits.

e.g. The Orpington and Chislehurst circuit is part of the London district, the largest of all the Districts in British Methodism.

There are about 30 districts in Britain, including one in Scotland and one in Wales.

Together, these districts form what is called 'the connexion'. e.g. the Connexion of the British Methodist Church.

The local church is governed by the Church Council, chaired by the minister of that church.

The Church Council is the managing trustees of the property. Most churches have a number of committees, such as mission, finance, pastoral, property, all of which report to the Church Council. Every local church has 'stewards' who consult regularly with the minister, exercise particular responsibility for worship, and are the recognised lay leaders of the church.

The circuit is governed by the circuit meeting, chair by the superintendent of the circuit.

e.g. The Rev'd David Gilmore is the superintendent of the Orpington and Chislehurst circuit.

The district is governed by the synod, chaired by the minister appointed as district chair.

e.g. London is a particularly large district, so there are three chairs. The chair for the southern part which includes the Orpington and Chislehurst circuit is the Rev'd Jenny Impey.

The districts, about 30 in number, together form the 'connexion' This is legally the governing body of the Methodist Church. The connexion has a number of officials (some lay, some ordained) responsible for various aspects of the life of the connexion (eg education, social responsibility, finance, mission, relations with other churches). The chief connexional officer is the general secretary.

The connexion is governed by the Conference which meets annually with representatives, lay and ordained, elected from districts (and therefore circuits and local churches). The general secretary is secretary of the conference, but the Conference is presided over by the President (a minister) and Vice-president (a lay person) each elected for one year only.

“WE NO LONGER KNEW WHETHER WE WERE IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH.”

David Calvert

When I enter our glorious church on a Sunday morning, or when I sit there quietly at some time during the week, I am reminded of the story of the beginning of the Orthodox Church in Russia.

In the tenth century, Vladimir, the Russian ruler, realized that one good way to unify his vast country, divided as it was with different groupings and many different ‘pagan’ religions, was for Russia to adopt a single monotheistic religion. Being ruler, he meant of course a religion which he himself chose and would impose on everyone else.

The story goes that he sent his envoys to all the neighbouring countries in search of the ‘best religion’ with which to unify Russia. They went south and encountered Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They reported to Vladimir on each encounter. Vladimir would not accept Judaism as it ‘had been abandoned by God’, by which he meant its temple been destroyed and it had been driven out of Jerusalem. He would not accept Islam, as he realized that it would be impossible to impose a ‘no alcohol rule’ on his people, let alone himself. They all needed something to keep them warm in the long winter!

The report he received on his envoys’ encounter with Christianity was different. Those whom he sent in search of the ideal religion went to the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople where they encountered Orthodox Christianity in all its glory. The Byzantine church there evidently put on the full works for the visitors in the hope of impressing them with their religion. The report back to Vladimir entirely persuaded him, and the Russian Orthodox Church, as it was later to become, came into being.

The words with which they described the worship in Hagia Sophia and which persuaded him without further hesitation were:

“We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth”.

Our refurbished church is uplifting, that is, it has the capacity to lift us up into heaven, especially in Sunday worship, but also whenever we reverently enter. For it is a place where God meets us and where we can meet God. And then we worship and are drawn into the presence of God, the God who is in heaven and on earth.

As Charles Wesley expressed it in his Christmas hymn:

“Let heaven and earth combine,
angels and all agree,
to praise in songs divine
the incarnate Deity,
our God contracted to a span,
incomprehensibly made man.” Singing the Faith, no 208.

HISTORY IS LOCAL

Did you know that there used to be a Methodist primary school in Chislehurst? It was located in Willow Grove, just round the corner from Sainsbury's where there is now a row of 1960s houses. It was pulled down some time in the early 1950s, but not before it had educated our very own Irene Cozens, together with her sister and three brothers.

There were three classrooms downstairs, separated only by partitions, and one upstairs. The playground extended almost all the way round the building. Irene remembers this only too well, because her naughty brothers were caught riding teacher Miss Pedley's bike round it. Next door was the Annunciation school, where Sainsbury's and its car park now stand.

Schooldays were happy for Irene. She remembers many of those little things which all add up to how things were. At break time, the teachers would put the tiny little bottles of milk on the radiators so the children didn't have to drink them cold. At lunchtime they took their packed lunches up to the lower pond and sat on the bank to eat it. Farringtons School threw a Christmas party for them, and at Easter the teachers brought in a big cardboard box full of Easter eggs. Nostalgia's not what it used to be.

The convulsing outside world soon broke into this village idyll, however. Suddenly, Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia arrived at school, speaking not a word of English, and then just as suddenly disappeared after a few weeks. And a landmine landed in the Rec, and blew out the school windows so that they had to have their lessons in a wooden hut. All three brothers were old enough to go to war, or, in Ken's case, into the mines. Thankfully, all survived.

And here's some connexions with our church. Myra Norman, who died at 17, was a classmate of Irene's. Our rose window was given by her parents in her memory. Mr Jolly, commemorated in what used to be our entrance porch, was the caretaker both of the church and of the school, and Irene's brother and sister used to help him with his work. And finally, bang up to date, Irene's sister is the mother of Rev'd Alex Terrell, who is a probationary minister in our circuit.

Peter Herriot

PERSONAL MESSAGES

Barbara Plummer would like to wish all friends at church a very peaceful and happy Christmas, also to thank everyone for their kindness over the past years.

Dorothy O'Hanlon would like to thank everyone involved in the wonderful Refurbishment Project and those involved in the running of the church for their excellent work.

Joan Clements has settled in nicely in her new home in Totnes and sends Christmas Greetings to all.

CREATIVE ARTS AT CHISLEHURST METHODIST CHURCH

Tuesday 20th December 7.30pm Premiere String Quartet

A Christmas Concert, to include: Corelli's Christmas Concerto, Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride and some surprise Christmas Medleys.

Sunday 1st January 3pm Premiere String Quartet

New Year's Day Concert of Viennese Walzes, includes: Die Fledermaus, Merry Widow, Blue Danube, Thunder and Lightning Polka.

Friday 13th January 7.30pm Premiere String Quartet

Mozart String Quartet in C K157, Giacomo Puccini Crisantemi, Beethoven Op 131 in C sharp minor

Friday 10th February 7.30pm String Trio

Boccherini String Trio Op 38 No2 , J.S Bach 3 part Inventions, J.S Bach art of fugue BWV1080, Sibelius Suite for String Trio in A major ,

Saturday 18th February 10.00am Creative Arts Day

The day, which will take Creation as its theme, will offer ideas and skills for participants to take back to their own churches.

We will look at the use of fabric and quilt making, audio-visual skills, *Singing the Faith* in action, and creative writing for praise and reflection.

The cost of the day will be £16.00, to include a light lunch.

Friday 9th March 7.30pm The Stankov Ensemble,

Violin and Voice. This acclaimed Bulgarian ensemble presents a mixture of classical works of the 19th and 20th Century programme to include: Gustav Holst - Four Songs for Voice and Violin, Vaughan Williams – Along the Field, Arthur Bliss - Sea Love, Darius Milhaud - Quatre Poemes de Cautille, Hector Villa-Lobos - Suite for Voice & Violin

Friday 13th April 7.30pm Jazz Trio

An evening of Jazz Standards Performed by the Adam Hughes Jazz Trio Programme to include: Autumn leaves, All the things you are, Fly me to the Moon, Take five, Misty, My funny valentine and many more

Saturday 28th April 7.30pm Impossible God A Passion Play

Performed by Mark Topping, Impossible God recreates the world of those who witnessed the passion. Palestine AD32 is brought to life as numerous characters relive their experience of the momentous events. This widely acclaimed and popular production is in Chislehurst for one night only.

Tickets for all these events are available from the church office:

020 8468 7695 chismch@talktalk.net chislehurstmethodistchurch.org.uk