

The **Methodist** Church in Scotland



# In Touch

Issue 3 Summer 2015

Edinburgh &  
Forth

Strathclyde

Ayrshire &  
Renfrewshire

Central

North of  
Scotland

Angus Dundee  
& Perthshire

Inverness

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the No. 3 of our newsletter! I have been pleased to receive a number of appreciative comments about the previous two issues. Bearing in mind budgeting constraints, if you have any comments or suggestions about its content or layout please don't hesitate to contact me or Fiona at the District Office. We would also be pleased to receive any short contributions. You will see that this edition includes, for the first time, a book review and also a report on the visit by the President of Conference. As my name appears under too many articles in the issue, I will leave my introduction there and wish you happy reading.

Kindest regards,  
David Easton

**Welcome!**

We are delighted to welcome to Scotland the following Superintendents:

John Beadle and his wife Kate to Inverness; Nick Baker and Petra and their children, to Angus, Dundee & Perthshire; Andrew Baker and Jill to Strathclyde.

Stephanie Njeru will be beginning her ministry as a Probationer in the Edinburgh & Forth Circuit in the Livingstone Ecumenical Parish. She comes with her husband Zak and son Elisha.

We also remember Mary Patterson and Adrian as she moves from ADP to be Superintendent in Ayrshire & Renfrewshire.

Please also remember in your prayers and with gratitude Nigel and Kim Rodgers who have moved from Inverness to Teddington and Alan Anderson and Sheila and Chris Foxon, all remaining in Scotland following retirement along with Liz Adam who is going Without Appointment – although we are delighted and grateful for the part that both Chris and Alan will continue to play in the District.

The Rev'd. Dr. Helen Jenkins was due to take up the post of Synod Secretary this autumn but she and Colin are now expecting their second child and so she will be on maternity leave from this October. We have agreed, therefore, that her appointment will be postponed for a year and are grateful to Alan Anderson who has agreed to continue as Presbyteral Synod Secretary for a further year and also act as the Secretary of the Representative Session of Synod.

## Solas Festival 2015

### Scotland Learning and Development Officers and District volunteers participated in the Solas Festival

Do you ever feel boxed in? Caught in a rut? Unable to be everything you could be? Is it time to break out of what's holding you back so you can be everything you can be? So what is it that is stopping you? Is it how you view God, the world or the future? Or is it more personal? Perhaps how you view yourself or others?

At the Solas Festival held at the Bield (near Perth) in June the Methodist Church in Scotland asked hundreds of people these questions. Drawing on the inspiration of the Northern Soul music movement, and against a backdrop of vinyl records, we encouraged people to think about breaking out of whatever is holding them back.



Our popular and inclusive tent was full of people participating in all kinds of ways: chatting; reflectively thinking; drawing and painting; sewing; and planting pots for the future. And there was a lot of fun and laughter. A snapshot might see about twenty people in and around the tent at any one time – a group of young lads on one table painting and planting, a mixed group of women from twelve to eighty on another creating bunting of things they are planning to do to change the world, and a few people standing about talking about life, the universe and what the bands were like last night.

Terry Wright, a minister from the Strathclyde circuit, bought a group along. “For me, Solas really is a rich broth of belief and spiritual expression,” he said. “Over the weekend, music, smiles and hugs intertwine as people of all ages find a space to relax or reflect on the deeper things of life.

“The Methodist tent was once again brilliant, offering a quiet space where in different creative ways people were invited to think how they might ‘break out’ of what we normally do or how we look at the world.



“We brought along a group of folks on the fringe of our church community and they came away feeling they were part of something very positive on which we can build. One person said, ‘I knew God was there even though no one Bible bashed me! Thanks.’

The Solas Festival is often referred to as ‘The Greenbelt of Scotland’. By comparison, it is tiny – perhaps 1,500 people on a beautiful Perthshire site. We think almost every one of those people would have been aware that the Methodist Church was there (the reviewer from one major Scottish newspaper certainly thought so!), with many of them using our contribution to encourage and energise them to live their life to the full.

This year we also offered workshops for Lay Employees in the Methodist Church and for those who were exploring next steps in their discipleship and everyone seemed to agree that it was a relaxed and creative place to gather together to learn together.

Thanks go to many people for making this happen. A particular note of thanks to all our volunteers for their fantastic assistance and to the young people from Livingston Ecumenical Parish who created a great photo booth to capture people's views about the world to feed into 3Generate. And who was it who ordered the sunshine? Thanks for that as well.

<http://www.meetpraylove.co.uk/19-what-s-on/106-memories-of-solas-2016>

Sally Robertson

## Conference 2015 – Southport

When I was asked if I would like a nomination to go to Conference I was delighted and said 'Yes please'. When I was elected (actually there was no election as there were the right number of nominations received!) – I felt proud and privileged to be able to represent Scotland at Conference.

What I had not bargained on was just how much 'fun' it was and how enriching the experience would be in terms of meeting people, being part of the decision making body of the Methodist Church and coming to a greater understanding of what connexionalism is all about.

The mountain of paperwork that I received prior to going meant little to start with – it was hard to believe that the two thick volumes that we were sent actually WERE the agenda but it did not take long for me to get into my stride and keep track of the agenda items, reports, memorials and daily papers so that I could follow what was going on. It was amazing to be able to put faces, names and voices together of people I had heard about, seen pictures of and read about in the Methodist Recorder. It was also a really good feeling to know that the decisions made were talked about, debated, discussed and prayerfully considered - albeit quite quickly in some cases! I suppose there was also a great sense of being able to make a difference in being able to vote and know that this was part of a great big democratic process that shapes the direction of the Methodist church – even if a whole lot of

decisions to be made were sent in the direction of Methodist Council!

I came away with a huge sense of being 'connected' – of being part of a greater body of people who – though diverse in their roots, the area they are living in and the views that they hold – share a common faith, fellowship and a secure knowledge of being loved by God – and for all the differences that did come out – the love was definitely there in abundance.

I became a Methodist in my late 20s when married, with a family and so my whole Methodist experience has been in Scotland. I have gradually grown from having my focus in the local church through to Circuit and District involvement. Meeting fellow Methodists from across the connexion enabled me to share the Scottish experience, including describing driving an 84 mile round trip to preach on Sunday but also to learn from others of how many and how active the churches are in their area and to be inspired by some of the things I heard about.

The fringe events were varied and I tried to look in on several different events and if I had to make a criticism – it was that there were so many things on at the same time that we were torn about which event to attend. This meant that some events were not as well attended as they might have been, which was unfortunate for those who had organised them.

I didn't speak - though I did have my 'First Time Speaker' card at the ready – just in case. I am afraid I cheated a bit and when I had a point to make – I scribbled it on a piece of paper and passed it along the table to our Chairman – who made the point for me when he got up to speak. I have promised that I will speak next time – indeed I would argue that you need to go a second time because by then you know the procedure and realise that many people had their speeches written out in advance, having read through the agenda and the various reports.

Last but not least – the weather!! What a time to have a heatwave. Actually I think we

were lucky because at least the 9 Scotland reps can say they have experienced a 'summer' this year unlike the rest of the country!

Thank you for the opportunity to attend Conference and please can I go again!

Sue Marshall-Jennings



### Matters from Conference

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see a report on Conference by Sue Marshall-Jennings. If you go to the Methodist website you can access the agenda and download the debates as they were live-streamed. As usual, there are matters arising from Conference that the Districts and Circuits have been asked to consider; among them the following.

As part of the on-going debate in all the Churches, following recent Scottish and Westminster legislation regarding same-sex marriage and a wider discussion of human relationships, the circuits and districts have been asked to discuss and make a response to the following question:

'Should the Methodist Church revisit its understanding of Christian marriage?' Following discussion in the Circuits, each District has been asked to come to mind on this matter and report its findings by the middle of February. Following a very helpful discussion at our May Synod led by friends from the United Reformed Church in Scotland. We have agreed that our Circuits will be asked to discuss this at their Circuit Meetings this Autumn and that the Synod will make its decision when it meets on November 21<sup>st</sup>. The District Policy Committee and Synod dates have been swapped to allow for this timetable. Following this Connexion-wide consultation, a report will be brought to next year's Conference. **Please note:** At this stage we are not being asked to decide whether or not we are in favour of same-sex marriage, rather whether we feel that the matter should or should not be considered by the Church. As well as the

above, Churches and circuits are being asked to address the issues of homophobia and also how we can live together with contradictory convictions – for example about our understanding of the Bible. Study material for this is available.

One of the major reports this year was on the Past Cases Review which had looked at cases of abuse in Church over a sixty year period. This report made a number of recommendations, many of them relating to the keeping of adequate records and ministerial accountability. A pilot scheme will begin the process of rolling out these and other recommendations.

Following a 'Memorial' (a Conference term for a resolution) from the Basingstoke Circuit to a previous Conference, a report called *Positive Working Together* considered the issues of bullying and managing conflict within the Church. Conference directed that guidelines called *Guidelines for promoting good working relationships and managing conflict within the Church* be promoted in appropriate ways.

District Policy Committees have been asked to review Youth participation in the life of the districts and circuits. This is a pertinent question for us here in Scotland where we have relatively few young people in our Churches.

Rev David Easton



### Visit of the President of Conference

In August, the Rev'd. Steven Wild made one of his first official visits as President to Scotland. He stayed with David Easton whom he has known for over 25 years – they both served in the Cornwall District where he is now Chair. Anyone who has met Steven will not be surprised to learn that he fired on all cylinders from first thing in the morning to last thing at night: he goes for a run each day at 7 am. David managed to avoid the temptation to join him!

A Sunday service at Perth attended by folk from across the Circuit was followed by a 'Meet the President' gathering at Wallacestone and an open-air service and District Picnic. Towards the end of a terrible summer, the sun shone – as it did for most of the visit.

Steven wanted to meet with one of our smaller congregations. Along with the Minister and Superintendent we met in the vestry of Armadale Church and listened to members of the congregation tell their story and describe their hopes and challenges. At the end of the time, Steven knelt on the floor and prayed for them. The folk there were grateful and moved that the head of the Methodist Church had taken time to hear their story and to pray with them. The Wallacestone Church has a growing link with an Action for Children project giving residential respite to children and young people with severe disabilities. At fairly short notice the staff shared their lunch with us and gave us a tour of the centre before the next group of children arrived that afternoon.

One of Scotland's major industries is tourism and a visit to the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies (Scotland's equivalent to the Angel of the North, perhaps) served as reminder of how this major engineering feat and the sculpture have helped to regenerate the local economy and provide world-class attractions.

Our Shettleston Church serves one of the neediest parts of Glasgow and is in the process of revamping the church to make this more possible. Lunches are served through the week, and Steven's visit marked the launch of a welcoming space where coffee and refreshments are served for the community including the homeless and asylum seekers and the lonely. All this and more has been achieved by the small and quite elderly congregation with the support of their minister and a lay worker. The local MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) had been inverted and was as impressed as Steven by what he saw. A visit to another Glasgow Church at Pollokshaws gave an opportunity to visit their Jobs Club which gives help and training to help people improve their computer skills and develop their CVs. Steven shared in the soup lunch

that is provided each week as part of the session. In the twelve months since its launch, this project that is run in partnership with CAP (Christians against Poverty) has attracted a growing number of people and has helped over thirty to find permanent employment.

Auchlochan was MHA's first Retirement Village. This community of about three hundred people in Lanarkshire provides a range of facilities for people over the age of sixty. We were welcomed for tea in the home of one of the active Methodist residents. A range of privately owned houses and flats, warden-assisted or sheltered housing as well as nursing and dementia care provide a range of facilities for this remarkable community set in beautiful grounds, including a wonderful walled garden that is open to the public and which would put many a National Trust property to shame.

We arrived in Edinburgh in the middle of the Festival and Steven was able to exercise some of his street theatre skills with the famous Clarence, as well as attending a Fringe play 'The Gambit' at City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, following a lunchtime meeting with Circuit staff.. But Scotland's capital is not all about the Fringe and the Concerts. It is also a city with need. In nearby Leith the Methodist Church is in partnership with the YMCA in a former Methodist Central Hall. Here a range of services are provided for children, families, a women's group and many more.

But, aware of the President's year-long busy schedule, he was given some time to relax, including visiting Linlithgow Palace, the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots and a tour of beautiful Perthshire where we came across by chance a village highland show in Killin and were delighted to be part of this special annual community event.

In all of these visits Steven was unfailingly enthusiastic and engaged and demonstrated his very great ability to get alongside people both within and outwith the Church family. As someone remarked 'He has the ability to make everyone feel special.'

Rev David Easton





## THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

Does history matter? That is, who cares who Scotland's Methodists were in years gone by?

Margaret Batty wrote a well-researched and thoughtful book 'SCOTLAND'S METHODISTS 1750-2000' [Birlinn 2010]; so is there anything else to be said on the subject? That is beyond observing that there used to be rather more Methodists around in Scotland than there are now!

Since the 1970s however there has been considerable research by a few dedicated folks into just who we were over those 250 years, and why we chose to be identified as a part of John Wesley's 'People called Methodist'. That research is largely contained within the published Bulletins of the Society in Scotland. After all, there was never any shortage of 'Churches' in Scotland to which we could have attached ourselves. It was not even as if in this country we could lay claim to any great leadership role in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Evangelical Revival. If any Methodist could even remotely aspire to such, it was probably George Whitfield anyway. And yet, including

his first brief visit to Scotland in 1751, Wesley was to make twenty two visits to what he largely referred to as 'North Britain'. His mission to bring 'Scriptural Holiness' to the people of Britain fully embraced Scotland. This was a place to which he knew there was a calling to bring his unique understanding of the Christian Gospel.

However, in a contemporary Methodism of immense change, there is as great a need as ever for us to know upon whose shoulders we stand. Methodist societies are changing, even quietly slipping away from the communities of which they have long been a part. In a world where it sometimes seems that a large proportion of the population want will entail me going to Shetland two or three times a year. They will retain a seat on the Methodist Council and Conference.

to know who their ancestors were, it beholds us to be able to identify and remember the stories of those courageous souls who were our 'Methodist ancestors in Christ'. There remains work to be done.

I have not actually been an enormously successful successor to my precious predecessors in this office – largely overtaken by the urgencies of Methodism today. I still however wish to see the study, understanding and publishing of our heritage, creatively undertaken. Immediately I suggest that a wider group of people should become involved as activists within a revived Society in Scotland. Could you be one of these people? If we can establish a 'Wesley Historical Society Group' under the chairmanship of our Chair of District, the Rev.Dr.David Easton, then perhaps we could agree upon how the tasks be apportioned amongst us.

If you are interested in such an involvement, please contact either David Easton, or myself.

DAVID COWLING

Secretary Email: [david@chapelden.co.uk](mailto:david@chapelden.co.uk)



## Shetland and Scotland Methodist Districts

Conference agreed a proposal from the Shetland District that, following the retirement of their current Chair, Jeremy Dare, in 2016, they should share a Chair with Scotland, and that a Deputy Chair should be appointed to serve on Shetland and also be Superintendent of this one-circuit District of two full-time ministers. Shetland will be the only District with a Deputy Chair, although Assistant Chairs are often wrongly termed thus.

This means that I will be Chair of both Districts and be responsible for representing Shetland at Connexional level and be responsible for the stationing of ministers. It

Although several people seems to think otherwise, this does not mean that Shetland

is going to become part of the Scotland District, nor that the Deputy Chair of Shetland will also be Deputy Chair of our District. In light of its size and the amount of time that Jeremy – unlike me, a full-time circuit superintendent – has to be away from Shetland, this seems a really good way forward. Please pray for the Shetland District as it and the Connexion seek to appoint the first Deputy Chair this autumn.

Rev David Easton

### Missing Methodists and Churchless Christians

As part of his desire that we should be a Church that encourages people to explore becoming followers of Jesus, the Chair has come across two sets of statistics that have inspired him, the Policy Committee and Synod to explore ways of establishing new work across Scotland. The 2011 Census revealed that 10,979 people in Scotland said they were Methodists. Including Shetland we have about 2,400 members. Many of the additional people are active in other churches, or none.

Some research carried out by the Church of Scotland suggests that in the Highlands and Islands there are possibly 130,000 Christians who do not attend Church for various reasons, many because they are looking for a more inclusive congregation or one open to questions of faith and belief.

Wesley encouraged his people to attend their parish churches and also to be part of a Methodist small-group movement. In the belief that this offers a tremendous opportunity for our Church – perhaps going back to those early Methodist roots – the District is in the process of applying for a Connexional grant to enable us to appoint someone whose job will be to establish links and groups among these people. Meanwhile, and eventually working alongside anyone appointed, we are also looking for people who would be interested in beginning this process. If you think that that might include you, please get in touch with David Easton.

### Homeless Sunday 24 January 2016

Homeless Sunday is coming up – **24 January 2016**. It is an opportunity for church congregations to listen to what God has to say about homelessness and consider what action we can take. This is summed up in the 2016 theme of **connect, challenge and commit**.

Homelessness has an impact across the country and affects people of all ages – from the ex-serviceman who can't adjust to civvy life, to the kids in families wrecked by domestic violence. We encourage churches to hear these stories – and do more, through reflection and action to challenge homelessness.

Find out more at [www.homeless-sunday.uk](http://www.homeless-sunday.uk), and 'like' our [Facebook page](#). Worship materials and other resources will be available free online from October 2015.

Homeless Sunday across Great Britain engages hundreds of churches. It has the support of all the main denominations and is celebrated in a wide range of congregations: make yours one of them!

### Odds and Ends

#### **Prayer Handbook**

If you are not doing so already, please make *Pilgrims on a Journey*, this year's Methodist Prayer Handbook, part of your prayer life.

#### **Spill the beans**

is a worship and learning resource for all ages and describes itself as 'a lectionary-based resource with a Scottish flavour, for Sunday Schools, Junior Church and Worship Leaders'

It's only available online:

[www.spillbeans.org.uk](http://www.spillbeans.org.uk)

## Odds and Ends

### *Called to Serve?*

The Methodist church is looking for people who feel that they might be being called to serve the Church abroad. 'We need people who feel called to cross-cultural mission overseas' Might that be you? For details contact:

The Methodist Church, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR Tel: 020 7486 5502  
[wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:wcr.admin@methodistchurch.org.uk); [www.methodistchurch.org.uk/mission/world-church](http://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/mission/world-church)

*The Julius Project*, part of the work of Scottish churches Housing Action, is looking for volunteers to befriend homeless people.

Scottish Churches Housing Action, 44 Hanover St., Edinburgh, EH2 2DR., Tel: 0131 477 4500  
[info@churches-housing.org](mailto:info@churches-housing.org) [www.churches-housing.org](http://www.churches-housing.org)

## District Dates 2015

Month	Date	Event
September	12	District Policy Meeting (Dunblane)
	15	Ministers' Day (The Bield)
	15 -16	Superintendents' Day (The Bield)
	22 – 23	ACTS Members meeting
	24	Regional Learning & Development Forum 4.00 7.00pm (Partick MC, Glasgow)
	26	LCISO & Ministers Safeguarding Support Day (Stirling MC)
	28 – 29	District Chairs & Connexional Leader's Forum (Northampton)
October	10	MWiB (Scotland) District Day, Methodist Church 11.00am Speaker Linda Crossley Connexional MWIB Vice President (Armadale MC)
	12 - 13	Methodist Council
	14	Ecumenical Stakeholders Meeting (London)
	15	Probationers Committee (Dunblane)
	20	Regional Stationing (Newcastle)
	21	Ecumenical Forum (Stirling)
	21	Family Ministry Event Methodist event in partnership with ACTS 10.30am – 12.30pm (St Silas Episcopal Church, Glasgow)
	22	District Executive Meeting (Dunblane)
	24	Circuit Treasurers meeting (Dunblane)
	24	MWiB - Scotland District meeting 11.00am (Armadale MC)
29	DAF Meeting 2.00 – 4.00pm (Dunblane)	
November	2 - 5	Stationing Matching Group 1 (Northampton)
	12	Regional Probationers Day (Shepherd's Dean)
	21	Autumn Synod (Clydebank MC)
	20 – 22	3 Generate Methodist Youth and Children's Event (PGL Adventure Centre, near Swindon in Wiltshire)
	30 – 1	Stationing Matching Group 2 (Northampton)
December	10	District Executive Meeting (Stirling)

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue of "In Touch"  
 If you would like to submit an article to the Autumn/Winter issue, please send to Fiona Inglis at  
[fiona@methodistchurch.plus.com](mailto:fiona@methodistchurch.plus.com) by 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015  
 Please continue to check our website for updates [www.methodistchurchinScotland.net/](http://www.methodistchurchinScotland.net/)