

ROUNDA BOUT



THE COTTERIDGE CHURCH

Witnessing at the Heart of the Community

July 2014

From the Editors' Desk



Welcome to Roundabout. We bring you another bumper edition which includes two 'From The Vestry' items as Jacky and Nick reflect on their time with us.

Please let us have your items for the next issue no later than 4th September. You can put them in the 'W' pigeonhole in the Pennine Way or email them to marfleetwright@tiscali.co.uk.

Steve & Caroline

From the Vestry

Dear Friends,

Firstly, I want to thank you all for a wonderful send off last Sunday and for the very generous gift. The creativity of the folk of Cotteridge was shown at its best in the cake, which both looked and tasted great, and the in the cards, which the younger members of the congregation made. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and will miss you individually and collectively.



I have always enjoyed variety, which is what drew me to my three part role with the Cotteridge Church, Bournville URC and the URC Birmingham Area. Within that, I have found a wonderful diversity in the people, worship and outreach of the Cotteridge Church itself. This is something to be treasured and built on, because it reflects the amazing diversity of God's creation and of the variety of the gifts that the Spirit gives to each of us.

Doing justice to God's creativity is a challenge to us all. Firstly, in that we all need to offer ourselves and our gifts, as part of the fellowship, if it is to be as rich as possible. Secondly, in that it takes goodwill and hard work to make sure that the diversity produces harmony and not cacophony.

Part of that takes place within the disparate clergy team, which in itself models (or at least tries to) what the Cotteridge Church is about. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the team for contributing their own particular gifts so readily and for their

graciousness in our working together.

On Sunday, we recollected that the start of the Cotteridge Church was a meal where folk from three different traditions sat down to talk together. Others mentioned the wilderness years and the ‘anthem’ about moving and travelling on. I would ask you not to lose that journeying motif, because you will lose the Church’s special diversity, if it is not continually refreshed by new people and new ideas. That is not to decry the past, which is, of course, also part of who you are in the present, but it is to invite the future with the same openness that was there at the meal table all those years ago.

It is good to have a foundation story, but you also need a story for today – and that can be the same story – a story of openness to the other and a willingness to move and to change, whilst still retaining the essential ingredients of the Church and its service to the community. I was impressed when we looked at the Church’s Vision, by how united people were in wanting to pursue what is, in essence, the original vision, with renewed vigour in today’s world.

As Nick and I move on, you will have new ministry, to add to the melting pot that is the Cotteridge Church, in the shape of Mary the new Methodist Minister and, from September to June, Chris Dowd, an experienced URC student Minister. I know that they each have many gifts to offer – inevitably, and rightly so, new and different gifts from those of previous ministers. For the longer term, the process of looking for a new, URC Minister will begin in the autumn and whoever you call will be different again. All their gifts will further enrich the Cotteridge Church.

As you move into the next phase of your journey, I know that you will support one another, and that the Cotteridge Church will thrive as you work together, so I leave you with my prayers for the future, confident that, when next I visit, you will be recognisable as the Cotteridge Church, but in a new guise.

May God bless you all,

Jacky

Dear Friends,



It seems remarkable that I first wrote for Roundabout seven years ago as I began my ministry at Cotteridge. My seven years with you seem to have flown by, and here I am writing my goodbyes.

As I look back, it has been a rollercoaster ride. Of the Michael Blood, Paul Whittle and Roger Collins team that I became a part of, only Roger remains, and we have journeyed through two inter-regna together. We have also faced many interesting moments as we have shared in the life of this remarkable community church that has so much going on almost every hour of every day.

When the new Circuit came together three years ago and we were invited to take new appointments within the new area, I was the only minister who remained in a Church where they had already been working so I guess that the last three years have been something of a bonus.

As I move on to add Hall Green to my ever-growing portfolio of Churches where I have ministered in Birmingham I would like to pray every blessing for the future at Cotteridge.

However rough the road has been, I have never been swayed from my conviction that the three churches coming together as one in Ecumenical Partnership has enabled us to do so much more together than we could ever do apart. I also feel that the opportunities for mission that are so evident in the daily life of this remarkable place are a wonderful gift of God's grace to us.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you always."

Love, peace and every blessing,

Nick

Family & Friends

We are looking forward to the marriage of Lucy Dixon and David Taylor on 2 August. Congratulations to you both and the sun will shine!

Viv Meadows will be heading off to Bath University in September to study for a degree in Fine Arts. Good luck with your studies Viv and don't be a stranger!

Lang may yer lum reek!

We bade 'Godspeed' to Jacky after the morning service on 29 June. Helen Gale spoke on behalf of the Church:

"Jacky has been with us for five years. So perhaps we should celebrate five years together rather than focus on the leaving.



The symbol for five years - in terms of marriage anniversaries - is wood, and for us the tree of life, the communion table and the cross have been central to your ministry.

What do we hope you will remember us for?

- real mix of young and not so young, new and not so new members, male and female, black and white
- a willingness to try things out

What will we remember you for?

- innovation - tables in church - discussions with your neighbour.
- clarity of thought and desire for clear explanations.
- governance and attention to detail. Trying to make logical and reasoned decisions about governance, rather than letting emotion and entrenched history rule
- managing three different church annual meetings in one evening and dealing with the not-so-easy personnel issues of the last couple of years
- skills and concerns with figures.
- enthusiasm and participation in everything from Supper Club to Café Church
- sharing your family with us and your family very generously allowing us to share your time
- your hobbies, when you have time. Orienteering (and accidents!) and a house which has 15 canoes / kayaks stored, to say nothing of innumerable pairs of trainers.
- technology - enjoying the use of modern technology for encouraging inclusivity
- accessibility - both of yourself and of your language in leading worship
- intellect and depth of reading

Do we have any advice for you?

To quote a senior church manager well versed in giving advice to new clergy, “Be careful what you do in your first year, because by your second it will be, “But we’ve always done it this way.”

Jacky, Cotteridge and Bournville Churches wish you all the very best for the future. In the words of one familiar hymn, we hope you will be going where ‘Hills of the north rejoice’ and in the words of another very dear to Cotteridge as we realise the importance of continually reinventing ourselves and as you and we seek new challenges and see this as a beginning rather than an end:

Don’t get too set in your ways,’

the Lord said.

“Each step is only a phase,’

the Lord said.

“I’ll go before you and I shall be a sign
to guide my travelling, wandering race;
for we’re all the People of God”

Thank you, Jacky for your ministry here.

Thumbs Up For Stephen

On 30 May tens of thousands joined a "thunderclap" on Facebook and Twitter to commemorate the amazing achievements of 19 year-old Stephen Sutton MBE.

Stephen raised more than £4m for the Teenage Cancer Trust after being diagnosed with terminal cancer at the age of 15. His bravery and determination to live his life, however short, was inspirational. Hopefully, many of us will have taken a leaf out of his book and made our minds up to do more with our life after hearing of his exploits



At 11 o'clock people were asked to send the message #ThumbsUpForStephen on social media. All those present in The Cotteridge Church coffee bar joined the "thunderclap" and their "Thumbs Up" was winging around the globe within seconds.



Thanks to everyone who posed for the "thumbs up".

Babs Blay

Cashing in on the proceeds of crime



‘On Wednesday, 27th June, Bournville Neighbourhood Officers showed support for a local Church's community project by paying a visit to The Cotteridge Church to present them with a cheque that will help fund coach trips for elderly members of the community.

The Cotteridge Church was successful with a Police Property Act (PPA) funding bid application, a bid that has to have the support of local police officers.

The Cotteridge Church offers monthly discounted day trips for seniors from the local community. These trips provide safe

transport and social activities to those with limited finances and restricted mobility.

The money they received will go towards coach costs, entrance fees and meals.

Rita Sutton, a church organiser, said: “These trips are a great opportunity for community members to socialise with new people while experiencing new places.”

Police Property Act (PPA) funding comes from cash and assets such as cars and houses bought by criminals through the proceeds of their crimes. These funds are then provided to improve further asset recovery and for the benefit of local communities and charities.’

Birmingham Community Safety Partnership News

Café Calling

The volunteers that man the café week in week out on behalf of the church and its outreach into the community have hit a problem. The Saturday team is two volunteers down as a result of one of our loyal ladies having to give up for family reasons.

The commitment isn't great and it is disappointing that despite various appeals and approaches we have still not managed to fill the two Saturday shifts from any of our Church members. It doesn't even involve getting up early as the shifts required start at 12pm and finish at 2pm although in reality the volunteers are away by 1.30pm on most Saturdays. The Saturday café rota is arranged so that volunteers do the same shift every month so that they know exactly when they are required and it is easy to swap if you can't make your particular week.

The two shifts we need to fill are on the first and second Saturdays in the month, 12 to 2pm. Please give this some thought because it may be you who is able to give that small amount of time to keep the café functioning. At the moment we are using ever willing folk from other shifts to do extra and fill the gaps but we should not and cannot keep having to ask the same people all the time. The alternative is closure.

Speak to John Adams or Hazel Nash if you would like further information.

John Adams & Hazel Nash



Count your blessings!

When we come to Church on a Sunday, we can be certain that for each of the services, there will be a Minister or Lay Preacher to preach and lead our worship.

On holiday in Norfolk last week, we sought out the Methodist Church in a nearby market town. We were warmly welcomed before the service, and it was explained to us that they had neither minister nor lay preacher to lead worship, but that "Local arrangements" would apply!

We discovered subsequently that in the quarter, the Circuit was looking to fill 373 appointments and that 43 appointments remained unfilled.

Perhaps we should reflect on how richly we are resourced at Cotteridge.

PS "Local arrangements" turned out to be a very enjoyable Songs of Praise, albeit without a single Wesley hymn!

Norman Mann

The trials of a Christian Aid collector!

I must admit that collecting for Christian Aid week is not near the top of my favourite occupations. I had a particular round for about 15 years but, in the last few years, the pressure of work got to me and I (with some guilt!) opted out of the volunteer team of collectors.

So when I was approached by Laurie this year saying, "If I really can't find enough volunteers, could you do some collecting?" I really wanted to find a good excuse not to do it

..... but failed.

So, this year I was given a new round and more importantly, was joined by a novice collector, Neil Walters. This made it much more fun! Having introduced Neil to the intricacies of how to manage the Christian Aid bag, the Christian Aid badge, the Christian Aid envelopes, the Christian Aid “I’m sorry you weren’t here when I called” notices, and how to carry an umbrella at the same time, we sallied forth up Middleton Hall Road.

What really amused us, sadly, was the number of excuses we got for not giving. First of all, you would not believe the number of houses who swore blind that they had never received an envelope, that the dog had eaten it, that the husband/wife/children must have taken it or that it had been thrown out with the rubbish. Fortunately that ploy is very easily countered by offering the householder another envelope! What we didn’t expect was the person who took the newly proffered envelope, shut the door and then disappeared back into the depths of the house. We didn’t have the nerve to ring again!

There are, of course, a number of houses where there is no reply, despite there being four cars in the drive and a pair of recently vacated trainers on the doorstep. There are houses where you ring the bell, but have no idea whether it has actually rung, since you can’t hear it. You then have to make a strategic decision about whether to irritate the occupant by ringing again, trying a different tack of knocking on the door, or just fudging it and leaving an “I’m sorry you weren’t here” note.

Then there are the ones who answer the door, but brush you off with the “I haven’t got the time to do this now”, “I’m just putting the kids to bed” or “I’m just going out”. You can try, “Well, if you do find time later, please take the envelope to the Cotteridge Church”, but I somehow doubt if much comes from that. I didn’t know whether to be grateful or offended that no-one really wanted a doorstep discussion about the increasing inequalities in our society.

There was one response - new to me, of “I really would like to give, but I seem to have left my handbag at work”. There’s no response to that apart from saying you sympathise, although to do this woman credit, a bit later she came running up the road with the envelope saying that she had found her bag!

The excuse that most amused Neil was the, “Sorry, my wife deals with that sort of thing”, whatever ‘that sort of thing’ is! And then there was the Cotteridge Church member, who shall remain nameless but she knows who she is who still hadn’t filled her envelope.

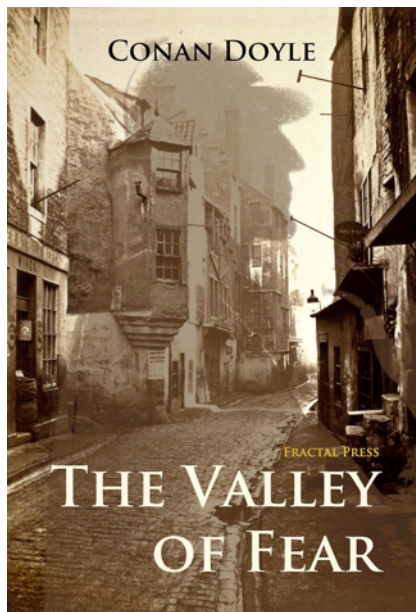
However, for all those avoiding giving, there were the occupants who smiled when they opened the door to us, handed us a filled envelope and had even filled in the Gift Aid slip!

So, next year, when Laurie or Lin or Doug or whoever has the unenviable job of finding volunteers for Christian Aid Week comes in your direction, find a friend and give up a couple of hours of your time to meet our community on their own doorsteps.



Helen Gale & Neil Walters

Book Club

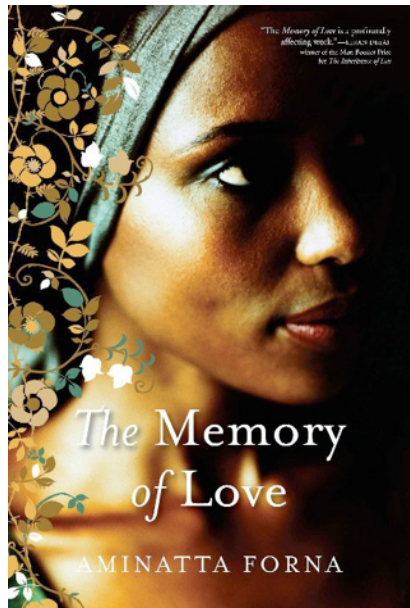


In early June we met to discuss Sherlock Holmes and in particular *The Valley of Fear*. This was one of Conan Doyle's last novels and it appears he was getting bored of his hero as he only features in the first half where a murder takes place. The rest of the novel is set in the USA in the late 19th century when the brotherhood of the Freemasons were ruling the coal fields with brute force. If you are new to Sherlock Holmes then this was not a typical one to start with but the volumes of short stories which we also talked about, are a good read.

June brings a move to the Second World War and the siege of Leningrad. Helen Dunmore's historical novel, *The Siege*, starts before the siege and shows an intimate family view of a horrific

part of history when six hundred thousand people died as a result of the Nazi's winter siege in 1941. Dunmore's skill as a writer is demonstrated by how she manages to show that love can survive amid the suffering.

We will be meeting to discuss this on Tuesday 22 July at Liz Larkin's house.

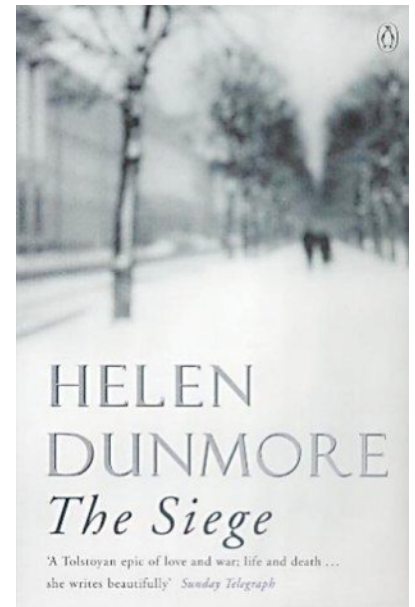


For the summer period we have chosen *Memory of Love* by Aminatta Forna which looks at how people survive the memory of

war and in particular the Sierra Leone civil war in the 1990's. This first novel for Aminatta Forna is a tale of passion and betrayal that starts with political unrest in the late 1960's through to the civil war in the 1990's. Our meeting to discuss this will be on Tuesday 9 September.

I think that by the end of 2014 we will be much better informed on world history and war in particular but it is exciting to see the different dimensions portrayed by the different authors. Adding to this the Birmingham Rep's productions of Michael Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful*, Sebastian Faulks' *Birdsong* and Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* I think that personally I have been on a pretty gruelling road. I just need to

read some of Rupert Brooke's poetry again.



Christine Adams

Day Centre



On 27 June, we celebrated the 100th birthday of member Irene Pugsley. Irene has been a member of the Day Centre for a number of years and has many friends here who all wanted to help her celebrate her Centenary. We also enjoyed the company of the local SWEET project whose members have been coming in once a month to share stories, recipes, photos etc. from World War One.



Boys' Brigade

The three lads who have been awarded the Queens Badge this year, Sam Morgan, James Hobson and Chris Butt, will officially receive their awards at the Botanical Gardens on the 5th July



The presentation is due to be held at 2.00pm.

The Battalion Athletics were held on the 21 June at Tudor Grange. 11 Company Section boys took part, winning 30 medals between them. For the second year running we finished in 2nd place. The Junior team came first in their age group while the Intermediates finished 3rd. The Senior team came 2nd. Thanks to all the boys who attended and a great result.



We also organised a football match with the 59th Company at The Futsal centre at Hockley. Again, everybody turned up and had an enjoyable night.



At the end of June we had our annual Peckwood weekend in the log cabins at Rowney Green. This year 25 boys and staff attended. As usual, the boys had a good time in the woods and playing the different games.

The Junior section have arranged a Cadbury World visit on Saturday 12th July. With the summer session finishing we are looking forward to our annual camp with the boys and girls from Quinton Methodist Church. This year we are camping at Stoke Gabriel near Paignton from 9-16 August – when, we are told, it is going to be dry and sunny.

Finally the company would like to thank Nick Jones for being our chaplain and wish him well for the future.

Bob Hotchkiss



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