

moravian messenger

JUNE 2021



Looking Ahead to Synod



Provincial Synod 2018 at Swanwick, Derbyshire

Having been privileged to serve as the Chair of Sessions at the last two British Provincial Synods, it is interesting to find myself looking ahead towards our next Synod as a member of the PEC. And this Synod will be intriguing for all of us, for this will be the first ever Synod to be held online and not in person, face to face. Our usual Synod can be demanding enough, with all the logistics and practicalities to be organised, but at least the delegates are all together in one venue, with important discussions taking place on the floor of Synod, as well as over dining tables or in the bar between official sessions. Sadly, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, it will not be possible for us to be together in this way at this upcoming Synod. Instead, all the sessions, debates and votes will have to be conducted over the internet and this

is certainly a challenge for those of us who are preparing for this momentous event and even more so for those who will be responsible for actually making this happen for us.

The decision to hold our Synod online was one that was not taken easily by the PEC, and in fact it was only reached after a long period of careful and prayerful consideration. We realised this could be very difficult goal to achieve and that some people could possibly be excluded from an online Synod because of technical issues. However, given the uncertainties arising from the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the fact that it is soon going to be three years since our last Provincial Synod, the PEC decided to go ahead and start planning an online Synod. Now, it has to be said that this was a leap of faith, so to speak, but,

having made the decision, the PEC put together a team of people. This group is made up of Br Michael Newman and Br Philip Cooper, the Chair and Vice Chair of Synod Sessions, who were elected in 2018. Others in this group included Sr Naomi Hancock, Sr Sally Ann Johnston, the Clerk, Br Joachim Kreusel, Sr Lorraine Shorten and the four PEC members. Over the last few months this group has met on Zoom many times, initially to ascertain whether the idea was feasible in the first place and then, when this course of action was agreed upon, the best way to proceed.

Follow up meetings gave us opportunities to share ideas, explore possibilities and to work on the practicalities of putting together an online Synod. This process involved investigating how other denominations, principally the Anglicans,

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As you read this our Provincial Synod will be almost ready to start. What you may not know is that this is the 100th Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church in Britain and Ireland. The first Synod, rather than just being Provincial Conferences, took place in 1853 at Fulneck Moravian Church and Settlement in Yorkshire.

1853, 168 years ago seems like another world, the potato famine in Ireland had run from 1845-1852 and had decimated the population of Ireland with death and emigration to escape death at home. The previous years in England had seen epidemics of influenza, smallpox, typhus and cholera. Yet it was also a time of great innovation, the industrial revolution was in full swing with the depopulation of the land and the growth of the cities. It was not a good time to be poor!

Things were also changing in the Moravian Church: the age of great evangelism and expansion had gone. British Moravians had for some time been seeking the creation of their own provincial Synod to administer the affairs of the Church in the United Kingdom and this was partially agreed at the Resolution at the 1848 General Synod (in Herrnhut). Full legislative power was granted to the British Province in 1857.

Somehow things change and things stay the same; we are in the grip not of an epidemic but of a pandemic and living in a time of great innovation and change; it is still not a great time to be poor! We are at a time of change for our Church too. We can't meet face to face at this 100th Synod but instead will this time meet via the medium of Zoom organised, not from Fulneck but from the Moravian Settlement at Ockbrook in Derbyshire.

As I write I do not know the agenda of this Synod and what decisions will have to be made. But my feeling is that there will be some major changes in direction. We, like so many of the 'traditional' Churches, have seen numbers fall and Churches close. I do not know of any instant fixes to this and neither do the other 'traditional' Churches. We need to work out what is essential for our existence as Christians with our own distinctive Moravian background and ethos and what we need to do to do both to protect and share it. We need to grasp how we serve the wider community in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hopefully at this Synod we will get positive direction for the future and be filled with encouragement and enthusiasm for new ways of living, worshipping and witnessing to our shared faith in Jesus Christ. Ideas can come from our PEC (Provincial Elders Conference) who manage our Province in the intersynodal periods but the work, commitment and prayers can only come from us.

The Old Testament text in the Watchwords for the day that Synod starts, Thursday 10th June is from Psalm 119:10: 'With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments'. We could commit to praying that prayer for Synod and for all who are attending it and working at it during the period of Synod, from the 10th-14th June. And when Synod ends we could begin praying that for the PEC, our provincial bodies and committees and our congregations but most of all for ourselves!

Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team



Looking Ahead to Synod

the Methodists and the United Reformed Church, had risen to the challenges of holding their own Synods and Conferences online. This helped us to fully appreciate that one of the main areas we needed to secure was technical support for this endeavour and it was eventually decided to go with Nottingham Audio Visual Services (NAV) to be our so-called 'Tech Guys'. It is hoped that they will be able to guide us through the whole process of presenting Synod online, especially with regard to how delegates will log on to, participate in and vote at the sessions. It was also agreed that a group of people considered vital to the running of Synod, such as the Clerk, the Chaining Panel and the current PEC, would meet for Synod at Ockbrook. This group will facilitate the functions of Synod and they will have back up from

the nearby NAV technical support. It is worth stating once again that this next Synod will be a challenge for those of us who will be taking part in it, either from the comfort of their own homes or at a safe distance from each other at Ockbrook. This is certainly a new adventure and a departure from what has been done before, but this will serve as a wonderful opportunity for the Moravian Church in our Province. We will be able to show that we can be flexible, that we can adapt and that we can still ensure that important and necessary activities such as Synod take place, even under trying and testing circumstances. And we have a lot to do at this Synod, including the launch of the UK Child Poverty Petition, and there will also be opportunities to discuss the future of the Moravian Church in our Province, The

Decade for Evangelism and Project 32. We also have to elect PEC members so that we can have a full Board without any gaps for the first time in three years. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we would be grateful if you would keep Synod 2021 in your thoughts and prayers, not only when it takes place between the 10th and 14th June, but also in the build up to it and the follow up afterwards. We are embarking upon a journey together and all we can do is put ourselves into the hands of our Chief Elder, Jesus Christ, and ask Him to guide all that we do together to further the work of His Kingdom and the glory of His Name.

Br Paul M Holdsworth
PEC



(MWA) Away Day

The sun was shining in Fairfield on Saturday 17th April. This is the usual weather which miraculously appears every year on the second Saturday after Easter, the day when the Moravian Women's Association (MWA) holds its annual MWA Day. On this Saturday a year ago, the national lockdown had begun just a few weeks before and I was walking around Fairfield for my daily exercise on a similar sunny morning. I was reflecting on the fact that Fairfield Settlement should soon have been filled with Sisters from all over the Province, preparing to worship together, to have fellowship with one another and to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of MWA. Little did I think that, twelve months later, we would still not have been able to meet with each other in person. It has been a gruelling twelve months for us all but especially for those who live alone and who have had to shield and protect themselves and others from this dreadful virus.

MWA's Executive Committee were determined that our organisation would meet one way or another. We had hoped to hold simultaneous District events but even this idea had to be abandoned in the light of ongoing restrictions so the decision was taken to hold a Zoom service

on our usual MWA Day. I confess to a certain amount of worrying about this - Would the technology work? Would people be able to join? Would my internet fail at a vital moment in the service?

Well as it turned out, I needn't have worried at all. The technology did work thanks to the skills of Sr Jane Dixon who put together a series of images interspersed with three hymns chosen by Executive. Everyone who needed to speak was able to join in at the correct moment and the service proceeded smoothly. Sr Sarah Groves delivered an inspirational address based on the current MWA theme: 'Wonder Women! - Then and Now' where she reminded us of the necessity and importance of telling the stories of women. Stories which are often hidden away and not heard, stories which are needed to inspire the wonder women of the future.

The people did join! We had almost 80 Sisters and Brothers at the service. As I admitted people to the Zoom service, it was wonderful to see loved and familiar faces appear before me, faces I have not seen in some cases for a year or even two. I confess that I felt a lump in my throat and happy tears pricking my eyes as I recognised Sisters but also saw the

joy in their faces as they saw Sisters they are used to meeting with on an annual basis. In fact, the noise before the service as people attempted to hold conversations with each other was not unlike the usual hubbub before our MWA Day starts.

A wonderful aspect of Zoom services is that there is an opportunity to connect with people who even in more normal times would not have been able to attend the service. We were joined by Brothers and Sisters from India and Br Tin Shwe from Myanmar - and I hope that joining with Christian friends in Britain helped inspire them in their endeavours. We were also joined by Sr Shelagh Connor from her home in the Orkneys!

And finally, my internet did not fail at a vital moment! It ran smoothly with no interruption for which I am very grateful. It was a lovely service. It brought people together from all over the world to share for a short while in our MWA community. Thanks be to God.

Sr Janet Cooper
MWA



Notice on Summer Camp 2021

At the most recent PYCC meeting the subject of Summer Camp 2021 came up as it has done for every meeting. In this uncertain time, we have continually tried to keep on top of the situation and provide this much loved and much needed resource for our young people in the safest and most effective manner possible. Last year, Summer Camp took place online and whilst it was reasonably well received by those attended, we felt it was unfair to our young people to expect them to invest yet more time 'virtually'. We have waited as long as it was possible and explored every feasible option available to us. The decision has been that we simply cannot guarantee the safety and wellbeing of both young people and volunteers if we meet in person over a week's long residency. Therefore, we have decided this year to do a series of Summer Camp Bitesize events. These will be three one day summer camp style sessions that will take place throughout the Province: in the South of England on 14th August and in the North of England on 21st August. Whilst a date for Northern Ireland has not been agreed (at time of press) there will be one

there as well. It is hoped that by making Summer Camp 'bitesize' we can not only do things more COVID secure but also open the fun and fellowship to others who may not have been able or willing to attend a traditional Summer Camp this year. Much more information will be available as soon as possible about these events.

This is not the end for Summer Camp, nor have we cancelled it. We are very much planning to have Summer Camp 2022 back in its fullest form. It remains a vital part of the mission of the church and we will do all we can do to safeguard its future. I hope that you are all able to support these events, in prayer or in volunteering or preferably both. In these uncertain times, thinking differently has become the norm. We look forward to continuing to support our children and young people with God's guidance and blessing.

Br James Woolford
PYCC

A problem within a problem

Part 5: Partition and the Birth of Northern Ireland

The last in the series about the background to the partition of Ireland in 1921 and the establishment of the Province of Northern Ireland.

The partition of Ireland came into effect following a parliamentary bill on 3rd May 1921. This established 'Southern Ireland' later to become the Irish Free State and 'Northern Ireland' with six out of the nine counties of Ulster.

On 22nd June 1921 King, George V, travelled to Belfast and in City Hall addressed the opening of the Northern Ireland parliament. However only the Unionist politicians were there as the Sinn Féin and nationalist MPs refused to take their seats in this new Parliament. His speech, reached out to all sides.

'Members of the Senate and of the House of Commons, For all who love Ireland, as I do with all my heart, this is a profoundly moving occasion in Irish history. My memories of the Irish people date back to the time when I spent many happy days in Ireland as a midshipman. My affection for the Irish people has been deepened by the successive visits since that time, and I have watched with constant sympathy the course of their affairs.'

I could not have allowed myself to give Ireland by deputy alone My earnest prayers and good wishes in the new era which opens with this ceremony, and I have therefore come in person, as the head of the Empire, to inaugurate this parliament on Irish soil. I inaugurate it with deep felt hope and I feel assured that you will do your utmost to make it an instrument of happiness and good government for all parts of the community which you represent.

This is a great and critical occasion in the history of the Six Counties - but not for the Six Counties alone, for everything which interests them touches Ireland, and everything which touches Ireland finds an echo in the remotest parts of the Empire. Few things are more earnestly desired throughout the English speaking world than a satisfactory solution of the age long Irish problems, which for generations embarrassed our forefathers,

as they now weigh heavily upon us ...

I am confident that the important matters entrusted to the control and guidance of the Northern Parliament will be managed with wisdom and with moderation, with fairness and due regard to every faith and interest, and with no abatement of that patriotic devotion to the Empire which you proved so gallantly in the Great War ... My hope is broader still. The eyes of the whole Empire are on Ireland today, that Empire in which so many nations and races have come together in spite of ancient feuds, and in which new nations have come to birth within the lifetime of the youngest in this Hall.

I am emboldened by that thought to look beyond the sorrow and the anxiety which have clouded of late My vision of Irish affairs. I speak from a full heart when ... I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and to forget, and to join in making for the land which they love a new era of peace, contentment, and goodwill ... For this the parliament of the United Kingdom has in the fullest measure provided the powers; for this the parliament of Ulster is pointing the way. The future lies in the hands of My Irish people themselves.

May this historic gathering be the prelude of a day in which the Irish people, North and South, under one parliament or two, as those parliaments may themselves decide, shall work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundations of mutual justice and respect.'

Just two days later on the 24th June the IRA mined a troop train carrying the King's escort of the 10th Royal Hussars back from the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament at Adavoyle railway station, near Bessbrook, Co. Armagh. Three soldiers, one railway guard and 80 horses were killed.

Elections had been held in the south to

establish a House of Commons for 'Southern Ireland'. These elections were uncontested because an electoral pact had agreed that no one but Sinn Féin would stand. So, they gained 124 seats out of the 128 seats available, the remaining 4 seats belonged to unionists from Trinity College, Dublin. So, the Sinn Féin MPs ignored the Southern Ireland House of Commons and regrouped as a second Dial.

Lloyd George now had to deal with an increasing lawless situation across the whole island with the South effectively out of control of Crown Forces. The IRA with a masterstroke crippled the British administration in Ireland by burning the Customs House in Dublin destroying all the records and paperwork and leaving the administration powerless. On the reverse side the IRA under Michael Collins were nearing the end of their military capabilities and public opinion in Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom wanted peace, really at any price.

A truce was agreed to come into effect on the 11th July 1921 but Lloyd George had already lost as 'rebel' leaders such as Collins now had to be treated as leaders of an effective second government. London realised that a military solution in Ireland would need up to 100,000 troops, not something that British public opinion would tolerate! While the 'Welsh Wizard' was forced to the conference table the Unionists in Belfast sat tight awaiting developments. The area under Protestant control would be discussed but the delegation from Dublin wanted the whole island to remain one political unit. However, they had badly misjudged the situation. The parliament in Belfast was in existence, albeit still a bit shaky, but it was unrealistic to expect them to give up what they had compromised so much for.

The Irish negotiating team lacked experience and clear objectives and had to deal with Lloyd George, Churchill and

F E Birkenhead, one of the finest legal brains of the time. James Craig, Viscount Craigavon and the Ulster Unionists hovered in the background awaiting developments. They were right to be wary as one proposal offered was that the six counties would be placed under a Dublin parliament as long as Ireland stayed within the Empire. Craig refused. A Boundary Commission was then proposed who could re-draw the border according to the wishes of the local people which was an idea derived from the 1919 Peace Treaty. Craig again refused but Lloyd George hoped to force his hand if the Irish Delegation agreed. The law that was drafted the Boundary Commission was fatally flawed as it did not require parties to attend only asking if they would nominate a representative. Craig refused to nominate anyone and the UK government had to put in a substitute which effectively made the whole process futile.

The Boundary Commission met from 1924-25 and travelled the border areas to try and draw up a new border but some of its findings made little practical sense. South Donegal had a Protestant majority and so should be in the Protestant 'Northern Ireland' but that left largely Catholic North Donegal isolated from Southern Ireland. In addition, South Armagh and South Down had large Nationalist majorities and would become Free State territory. However, the ideas of the Boundary Commission were not accepted and the existing border around the six counties was confirmed. The Northern nationalists were left, as were the southern Unionists, to an uncertain future. The words of George V on the 22nd June 1921 were lost in history!

Br Henry Wilson
Ballinderry Moravian
Church, Co Antrim



Update on the natural disaster of Uvira, Province of South Kivu in the eastern part of the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo)



On 17th April 2020 around one o'clock in the morning, while people were in full sleep, a torrential rain

beats on the city and territory of Uvira, causing significant damage to the city. Floods all over the city, the Mulongwe and Kavimvira rivers have washed away several neighborhoods and avenues of the city. According to the report drawn up by the mayor of the city, the results of these floods are as follows:

- Human damage: more than 50 dead and hundreds of missing so far not found;

- Other damage: more than 5,000 plots and houses washed away, and total destruction of the drinking water collection centre;

- Households: 75,000 people have been affected by this tragedy so far, many of them sleep under the stars, the others in churches and schools having completely lost their property. Despite the assistance we have given them, the needs are still enormous, there is still an urgent need to help them.

Best regards,

Br Jacques Bya'unda
Moravian Church Mission Area, Eastern Congo

BMB (British Mission Board) News in Brief

St Vincent & the Grenadines - Volcanic Eruption

The recent eruption of La Soufrière volcano in St. Vincent and the Grenadines which erupted on April 9 at 8:41 in the morning released a column of ashfall that drifted towards the Atlantic Ocean. Since then, subsequent eruptions continued to aggravate the situation. Approximately 20,000 people in St Vincent had to be evacuated and will not be able to return to their homes for at least three or four months. There has been a disruption in the drinking water supply to most of the island and the presence of smoke and ash has forced the closure of the airspace.

We are joining with our congregation Hall Green United Community Church, who are raising awareness and support for the impact of the eruption. If you would like to donate to their appeal, you can in the following ways:

Card payment: please telephone Church House on 020 8883 3409 who can take payment over the phone.

Cash: donations to your local congregation.

Cheques: should be made payable to Moravian Union Inc.

Bank transfer:
40-52-40 Acc # 00023436.
Please use reference: St Vincent.

India & wider South Asia - Surge in Coronavirus cases

Many of our congregations and schools in India have been impacted by the recent spike in cases of the Coronavirus and we are continuing to support are brothers and sisters where possible. Congregations and schools have had to shut down as a result of the heightened infection rates and we grieve with members and other families who have lost their lives in recent weeks. On Sunday 16th May 2021, we held a joint service online with participation from UK, Germany, India, Nepal and Myanmar. The sermon was preached by Br Bir Bahadur Rana, student pastor of Rajpur Moravian Congregation.



Great news for a Historic Building

deeply involved in the building of this Church. It is, as far as I am aware, the only building left that is associated with Cennick's preaching; all the other buildings having been rebuilt since Cennick's time.

The Kingswood Tabernacle was the first of George Whitfield's purpose-built Tabernacles and is the oldest existing memorial to his, and John Cennick's great share in the 18th revival.

The Tabernacle was enlarged in 1802. A very large new gothic style Church was constructed to the west of the Tabernacle in 1851 and the congregation moved into this building that became known as Masters Church after its architect Henry Masters. The congregation became part of the United Reformed Church in 1972. However, in 1983 Masters Church was closed and the congregation moved back into the original Tabernacle. Just a few years later

in 1992 it was clear that the Tabernacle needed major repairs beyond the scope of the congregation. So under the leadership of their minister, Br Basil Rogers, the congregation joined with the Kingswood Moravian Church and moved into the Kingswood Moravian Church premises. The congregation then became known as the United Church Kingswood.

In 2003 the Tabernacle featured in the BBC's Restoration series, as did Gracehill Old School. Sadly this tv series is not available on BBC iPlayer. We visited the Tabernacle in May 2018 as part of the Cennick Weekend and were horrified to see that it was roofless and completely derelict. The Tabernacle is now owned by the Whitfield Tabernacle Trust, who acquired the building in January 2019 and hope to convert it into a community facility for the area.

Sr Sarah Groves

The future of the Online content on the Moravian Church YouTube Channel

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Firstly, let me start by reflecting on the year we all had to go online. This year has been a year of transition, change and learning new skills. It has also been a year of opportunity. It has long been the case that many in our society spend a great deal of time online and, like Christ in His ministry, we needed to reach out to where the people were. Having our buildings closed has forced us to think about this and action it quicker than we perhaps would have otherwise. I am incredibly grateful to all of you who have taken part in producing aspects of our new online life. It has been a great source of comfort to many in our congregations who otherwise would have been left feeling more isolated from their church, which is for many, their lifeline. Throughout our online content we have continued to fulfil Christ's command to feed His sheep even in these unique and difficult times.

However, we are always looking at the nature of this content and making sure it finds the balance between what is needed and what can feasibly be offered by an increasingly busy and exhausted talent pool. We are now approaching a new stage in this pandemic, a stage of hope. From Easter Sunday the majority of our churches will have resumed physical worship inside, or outside, their buildings. I do realise that this will be a gradual process and many will take time

feeling comfortable returning. We will not be leaving those people abandoned but we will be reducing the amount of content produced.

I have been reviewing the viewing figures for the YouTube page and whilst the lighthouse and Monday morning prayers attract decent numbers (the highest viewed lighthouse over the last 90 days received 60 views and Monday Morning Prayers got 57 over the same period), Worship on the Web has always been the most popular with a high of 325. This shows how important Worship on the Web has been.

Therefore, in consultation with Sr Lorraine and the PEC we have devised a new plan for the coming weeks and months. This means all the mid-week videos will stop and we will instead focus on Worship on the Web and integrate aspects of the Lighthouse and Monday Prayers as part of that. We want to keep the Worship on the Web to a maximum of 30 minutes long to reflect that they offer something different to a usual service and online content needs to be more condensed and bitesize in nature. Whilst there will be freedom to create for those participating, we would suggest a template of:

Opening hymn	Prayer
Reading	Message
Hymn	Blessing

This way people are still having a time in

prayer, singing hymns, and hearing a reflection or talk and it should be relatively easy to keep this to under 30mins.

We will also be offering a monthly time of group prayer on the first Tuesday of every month via Zoom so we can keep the aspect of intercessory prayer active.

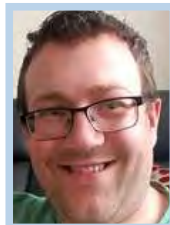
I will continue to offer any technical support needed including recording hymns and editing the services together and they will continue to be uploaded at 9am on a Sunday morning onto the YouTube page and shared on our social media. It is hoped that this will help support those who have been accessing the material and are unable to attend worship physically whilst also providing extra sustenance for those who are back in physical worship.

We will still need volunteers for this of course, currently we are covered until the end of April. So please do get in touch if you are willing to help. To those who already have please bear these new guidelines in mind.

Once again, thank you for all you have done to help keep our Brothers and Sisters faith in Christ and hope in God alive throughout this most challenging of times.

Yours in God's service,

Br James Woolford



Back in Upton Manor

I read with interest the recent account of Harold Road congregation by Br Michael O'Sullivan, which has its roots in the Upton Manor church that preceded it in West Ham. There are some further thoughts that I would like to share. First, the early provision for ministry seems to have overlooked the two names that cover the early years pretty much from the beginning into the thirties: Andrew Wickes, who seems to have covered the years up into the 1930s before accepting the call to Baltonsborough in Somerset, a village near Glastonbury. His successor at Upton Manor was Edgar Brown whose death brings us up to the late 1950s. He lived in his own house close by Harold Road Methodist Church. Hence there had been no need for a manse.

In 1958 I finished my four-year course in Fairfield College/Manchester University, and my first Call to Church Service was to London to be Manager of the Moravian Mission Agency Ltd (at Church House, Muswell Hill) and Lay Assistant to the Hornsey minister for the work at Upton Manor. The retiring manager at the MMA was Br Willie Pennington (born in Dukinfield) whose service went back to the 1930s and who had an interesting photo of himself and others on the deck of the last Mission Ship, the 'Harmony', taken at Tilbury Dock, Essex. This was quite a handy experience over-all as it turned out later in my ministry. I wasn't too keen on the job at first, but came to see the Hand of God guiding me, in spite of myself, to four happy years in London and also through my ensuing ministry.

In November 1959 I was ordained at Upton Manor by Bishop Herbert Connor (known to me as Uncle Bert when the Gubi and Connor families were colleagues in Barbados). I was then Minister-in-charge at Upton Manor plus my continuing work at Church House. Kirby and Mollie Spencer, and Jamie, had kindly made me welcome in the Hornsey manse, to which they had come in 1958. Following ordination, I decided to live in East London and eventually ended up at Victor Launder's grandmother's house almost next to our church in Plashet Road. This was around the time and place in which 'Call the Midwife' is set. The folk were a friendly lot, and in age the congregation was the youngest group I have had. As well as being my first congregation, and the place where I was ordained, this was also where I met my wife and where we were married 60 years ago in May 1961. Walking along Plashet Road people greeted me by name or 'Hello vicar', sometimes just 'Vic'!

My wife Maureen's sister gave birth (on my birthday), and Auntie Maureen came from Bedford to see the new-born nephew, and as Godmother also attended the Baptism on Easter Sunday 1960. It was my first Baptism service and there were two babies, the second was from a Jamaican family called Johnson. Mrs Johnson was a cousin of Ashton McIntosh. Two or three Jamaican families had moved into the neighbourhood and some weddings and baptisms and confirmations began to follow. One day as I came past the church some sad individual had chalked the words 'N****r Church' across the pavement with an arrow pointing at the gate.

Back at Church House later in 1960, Miss Fisher, who was chief clerk in the Book Room, came into my office with a letter to ask me if I would like to deal with it. This was a request for a music version of the hymn book from Br Charlesworth Joseph, an Antiguan Moravian at a Birmingham address. In the summer of 1958 I wrote a letter to the 'Messenger' drawing attention to the intake of many West Indians in the 'Windrush' etc. and asking what our Province intended doing as many Moravians were among these numbers who were settling in several big cities where there was no Moravian congregation. While staying with the Spencers, I became aware of an exercise book in the church entrance at Hornsey left there by Kirby's predecessor, Gerald Farrar, in which many West Indian visitors were invited to leave their name and contact details. This was already a growing challenge just in London. In responding to Br Joseph's request, I asked if there were many more Moravians in Birmingham, to which the reply was 'Many'. As Kirby had plenty to do in London, I felt something needed to be done and arranged to visit Birmingham with the help also of the minister at Sparkhill Methodist. This was a new building which included a small side chapel where eight of us met with the Methodist minister and were made welcome to hold a monthly service. I still have the old diary I used as a notebook which has the signatures of those attending that initial meeting. My father (on furlough at the time) was no stranger to several from Antigua, St Kitts and Barbados, and he and I officiated at our first Birmingham Moravian Holy Communion service. The point of this is to mention that the Upton Manor Church Committee willingly gave me their support, freeing me to go to Birmingham on one Sunday per month. I was doing this off my own bat and at my own expense. Br Wilfred Smith of the PEC regularly called in my office on a Monday morning to ask how things were going at Upton Manor and on such a visit he said he had to give me a ticking-off on behalf of PEC for not seeking their permission re Birmingham, and then he said 'But well done' and wished me well with the project.

After my wife and I left London for Lower Wyke in 1962, Kirby took on his role as the Province's Minister to Moravians from Overseas. Many of the Upton Manor congregation moved out of London to new towns like Basildon in Essex. Olaf Andersen succeeded me as minister briefly before he moved to the USA. Small as it was in numbers, two Upton Manor members went on to become Moravian ministers: Vic Launder and Paul Baker. Add Wickes and Brown and also Robert Burr, and that is not a bad contribution to the Church's ministry over the years from Upton Manor. I look back on my association there with considerable affection and thanksgiving to God, and wish the Harold Road congregation of today every blessing.

Br Paul Gubi
Bath Weston



The Journey to World Heritage

Gracehill is one of a number of similar historic Moravian Settlements scattered around the Globe and since 2003 we have been actively involved with an international network known as the Christiansfeld Initiative. Christiansfeld is a Moravian Settlement in Denmark and it was here that in 2003 the first international network conference took place. The second conference took place in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 2004 and subsequent conferences were arranged in Cape Agulhas, South Africa in 2006 and here in Gracehill, in 2007. (This was generously supported by the then Ballymena Borough Council).

Subsequently, Gracehill Old School Trust (GhOST) submitted an application on behalf of the village to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) in London and in March 2011 following assessment the UK expert panel commented as follows:

'Gracehill provides excellent evidence of a socio-religious system - the Moravians - which, unusually for its time was highly tolerant. The international importance of the Moravians is high and there is potential for a transnational nomination of Moravian sites. This site was judged not to have the potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) on its own. The Government should consider adding Gracehill to this Tentative List in the future if firm proposals for a transnational nomination should be developed, provided that it can be demonstrated that the site could make a substantial contribution to the OUV of the series as a whole.'

Significant research and international comparisons were subsequently led by Christiansfeld, and these early efforts came to fruition when it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2015. The inscription document for Christiansfeld made a number of recommendations including:

'that the State Party, in cooperation with other States Parties which envisage participation in a larger serial nomination and with the assistance of ICOMOS in the context of the Upstream Process, develops a concept for a transnational serial nomination and prepares an overall composition of the future potential serial property and its nomination phases and integrate Christiansfeld into such a potential transnational serial property during its initial nomination phase.'

Since 2015, the Settlements of Herrnhut, Germany (the first Moravian Settlement) and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania along with representatives from Gracehill have worked to progress our case for a

transnational serial nomination to the World Heritage List. Representatives from Herrnhut and also the Government of Saxony have visited Gracehill and we have made presentations in Herrnhut.

Gracehill is of historic importance and contemporary relevance not only because of its values, authenticity and integrity but also as a result of the readiness and ability of the community to maintain and share the historic Settlement over so many years.

Gracehill demonstrates OUV in that as an eighteenth century Irish Settlement it remains intact with a well-preserved collection of buildings and an active Moravian Community. The Irish perspective gives the Moravian Settlement here unique historical, cultural, social, educational and religious features. For example, as far back as 1798 Gracehill was seen as 'a place of refuge' for all sides during the United Irishmen's Rebellion.

The intention is that Bethlehem will begin the process of preparing their nomination within the framework of a joint nomination with Herrnhut. In parallel the US Government Department responsible for World Heritage will proceed with the formal process to allow Bethlehem to be able to officially move forward when ready. Gracehill's inclusion in this bid has now been endorsed by Bethlehem, Christiansfeld and Herrnhut and an official invitation has now been issued to Gracehill in the form of a letter to the Minister for Communities in the Northern Ireland Executive.

This is a very significant and exciting step forward along the road to achieving World Heritage status and a unique opportunity to achieve something of lasting significance that we can all be proud of and share in.

Timeline:

2003 Gracehill joins the 'Christiansfeld Initiative' This involved working with international partners in Europe, USA and South Africa. Christiansfeld is a Settlement in Denmark.

2004 International conference Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. (Ballymena Borough Council sent council representative)

2006 International conference Cape Agulhas, South Africa. (Ballymena Borough Council sent council representative and representative from Gracehill)

2007 International conference Gracehill. (This was generously supported by

Ballymena Borough Council)

2011 Gracehill Old School Trust (GhOST) submitted an application on behalf of the village to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) in London and following assessment the UK expert panel comment that Gracehill has potential and suggest the UK Government should consider adding Gracehill to the Tentative List if certain conditions can be met.

2015 Christiansfeld inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2015 following significant research over previous years and an independent international comparative study. This study also involved Gracehill and ranked Gracehill as one of the Settlements which best fulfilled the requirements for world heritage status.

2017 Government of Saxony, Germany on behalf of Herrnhut commission a publication of European Settlements and send representatives to Gracehill.

2018 International conference Herrnhut, Germany. (Speakers from Gracehill invited to address conference. Herrnhut exploring opportunities for a joint bid with Bethlehem, USA to extend Christiansfeld inscription. It was suggested that the addition of another Settlement would strengthen the bid and Gracehill was suggested as a potential partner.

2019 Book launch, Gracehill, in the presence of the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and a number of elected representatives. The guest speaker was Rev Dr Jørgen Bøytler from Denmark who gave the keynote address entitled 'Partnerships on the Journey to World Heritage'. Dr Bøytler is General Secretary of the worldwide Unity Board of the Moravian Church and also spearheaded the successful Christiansfeld bid for World Heritage status. Guests also included Ms Friederike Hansell the Coordinator for World Heritage, Ministry of the Interior, Saxony State Government and Mr Barry Gamble, an Independent World Heritage Consultant (UK) who has been commissioned by the Saxony State Government and now Bethlehem to act as Coordinator for the 'extension' of Christiansfeld World heritage listing.

2021 Gracehill formally invited to join the UNESCO World Heritage bid in partnership with Herrnhut, Germany and led by Bethlehem, USA.

Sr Sarah Groves
Minister of Gracehill
congregation



CONGREGATION NEWS

Rebuilding Back Better: News from Holy Family Church in Blackbird Leys, Oxford

Many of you will have travelled to our Church over the years since the Moravian Church joined our local LEP (Local Ecumenical Partnerships). We are one of England's few LEPs with five denominations, meeting together in a single service, Anglicans, Methodists, URC, Baptists and Moravians. Bishop Beth Torkington's consecration was held here, and we have also hosted a Men's Fellowship Day, and Western District Rallies. During my time at Blackbird Leys, Br David Newman was a regular preacher, and both Sr Jan Mullin and Br Thom Stapleton came for Western District Pulpit Swaps.

Those of you who have visited will know just how amazing our space was. It was a 1960s creative and innovative build, built in the shape of a heart and with a strap line of being 'the heartbeat of the community'. Sadly, though it was never really watertight! It started to leak early in the 1970s and by the 1980s it was needing constant attention - the then vicar thought it should have been demolished and is delighted with the news that we are finally about to!

In 1990 the roof was replaced, only for the leaks to start again five or six years later. When I arrived in 2012 fundraising and plans were already afoot to recover the roof. Investigations began to show that once again this would be more expense into the ever widening 'black hole'. Responsible stewardship had to face the possibilities of a possible complete rebuild. This met with much heartache for a much-loved building. We talked, we prayed, we thought, we prayed ... we continued to mop, patch and repair. When the contractors said they could do no more, Denise and I went up and continued to patch and make watertight. Ministry training should always include an element of DIY training!

Estimated costs for a repair and or replacement came in at around £2m and every avenue we explored for funding were unenthusiastic about funding a project for a roof that would still be fundamentally flawed and would need further repairs ten years later.

For three summers we met with local people at the Ley's Fair with competitions and questionnaires on what people would like to see in a new build. We wrote up detailed project proposals, looking at what a church needs in the 21st century. Then the crunch came. It was too far gone to continue, and we had to accept that we needed to find a new way forward. With the roof finally being declared unsafe, two weeks before Christmas 2018, we moved into the church hall.

Oxford City Council had also been doing some rethinking about other buildings around the church, that were also in need of replacement. It made sense for our architects and theirs, to join together in the design planning. Although the two plans were to remain separate and independently financed as stand-alone projects. In our plan we had plans for a new church, vicarage, 20 local housing units and community infrastructure on the site



© Sr Heather Carter

- including incubator space for young entrepreneurs, a community hall/creche and café, credit union and citizen's advice bureau. Once again, we wanted the church to be 'The heartbeat of the Community' and something much more than a Sunday building: one that was buzzing seven days a week, bringing church into everyday life, both as a building, with its café, Debt Advice Centre, and start up spaces and as a community of people.

In August 2019, the roof had collapsed, with significant collateral damage to the building, but Historic England, at the request of the 20th Century Society, gave the Church a Grade II listing. This delayed planning permission as we then had to have further talks with specialists on how we might possibly move forwards with this given the limitations Grade II listings imposed. A major question was would a repair even be possible as specialist contractors could not give us a guarantee that the roof would stay up if repaired! No grand Moravian hymn singing to raise the roof would be allowed!

This month, April 2021, four years after our Planning Application journey started, we have been awarded permission by the City Council to:

- a. demolish a listed building - a rarity in itself; and
- b. to develop the land. The Secretary of State for Sport and Culture now has 28 days to finally give the go ahead.

The total build cost for our plans is around £7.5m. However, the sale of the housing stock and gifts so far pledged means we still have around £2m. We are about to start the major fundraising push, which we were unable to launch until planning permission was granted. Obviously, we have hopes that some major donors will be found among entrepreneurs and businesses as well as our own fundraising efforts among the denominations and our own friends and families. As one leading supermarket says, 'Every little helps'. Or in the perhaps better words of the children's chorus: 'Our God is a great big God ... and He holds us in His hands.'

Sr Heather Carter
Vicar Holy Family Church, Blackbird Leys



Gracehill, County Antrim

We have all felt the need over this past long and tiresome year to have a focus, particularly during this past lockdown. So, thanks to one of our members, Mrs Julie Barr, at last we had just what we all needed, a challenge, with her great idea of 'March into Spring'. The challenge was to get outside and walk 100 miles over the month of March. With our popular new Bishop's Walk, this was an ideal, enjoyable and easy way to build up the miles while enjoying the sights and sounds of Spring. Julie willingly took on the task of logging people's miles every evening along with lots of encouragement along the way. Everyone was asked to donate to Friends of the Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital, a great charity which helps fund patient care and comfort, as well as life changing projects. Over 100 people took part, and Julie was amazed at the enthusiasm shown. By the end of the month over £2,500 was raised!

Easter is such an important time in our Church calendar and thankfully we were able to have our Easter Sunday Service in the Burial Ground as usual. Sr Sarah had created a very moving walk using a series of very powerful Holy Week paintings and texts depicting Christ's journey in the days leading up to the Crucifixion. These were placed along our new walk so everyone could see them, and she also placed a hanging basket full of our Easter Crosses for anyone to take with them along the walk. Such a spiritually moving experience in this time of lockdown.

Gracehill is one of a number of similar historic Moravian



© Sr Sarah Groves

Settlements scattered around the globe and since 2003 we have been actively involved with an international network known as the Christiansfeld Initiative. In that year the first international network conference took place in Christianfeld, followed by those held in Bethlehem in 2004, South Africa in 2006 and Gracehill in 2007. Since 2015 the various settlements of Herrnhut, Bethlehem and Gracehill have worked to progress a case for a transnational serial nomination to the World Heritage List. We here have unique historical, cultural, social, educational and religious features. During the United Irishmen's Rebellion in 1798, Gracehill was seen as a 'place of refuge' for all sides.

So now in 2021, Gracehill has been formally invited to join the World Heritage bid in partnership with Herrnhut and Bethlehem!

Sr Roberta Gray

Cliftonville, Belfast

Cliftonville shared in the Holy Week Readings on Zoom with University Road congregation, it was good to be joined by Caribbean Moravians. We were happy to be back in Cliftonville Church on Maundy Thursday for the Readings and Holy Communion and for the Easter Sunday service and each weekend since. Due to social distancing the usual group of ladies were unable to be involved in decorating the floral cross, so John and Olga Cooper prepared it alone. After the Easter morning service, it was attached to the front of the church where it indicated we were once again in residence on the Oldpark Road; the roses remained remarkably fresh for two more weeks.

We appreciated Pastor David McMillan and Brn Derick Woods and Mark Kernohan being willing to take the services on recent occasions. Demi Walker was grateful for the support of friends at church when she did a Race for Life to help to beat Cancer and raised £335.

The Cooper family welcomed Yazmin Layla, born to Yolanda and Matthew on 10th April. A sister for Jaxx.

Sr Edna Cooper



© The Walker Family

Tytherton, Wiltshire

What a strange twelve months it has been since I last wrote with news from East Tytherton.

However, we were able to hold a Harvest Festival on the 25th October. We were delighted to welcome Sue Groves, who delivered a lovely service based on the theme, 'A celebration of God's world', supported by several poems, an extract of 'A Tree' by Albert Schweitzer and hymns all about the beauty of the world, its plants and flowers. We had generous donations of tins and dry products, which we offered to those in need through a local food bank. We were able to comply with regulations and have some fresh produce using my weekly food shop!

Although the church was closed over the Christmas period, apart from a short midnight service on Christmas Eve, Lynda and I put up decorations and each evening I turned on our Advent Star. It radiated through the windows as a sign of hope for passers-by.

In early February our tree surgeon, Paul Marshall, came to check our poplars and give them their three yearly check and trim. They were declared safe and in reasonably good health in spite of their great age.

Although our doors have been closed we have taken advantage of the situation to carry out some necessary structural repairs and deal with damp issues in the church, together with the final



© Sr Anne Waldron

stage of refurbishing the bell tower. Iain Elliot, our builder, has done a great job. He found two dates carved in lead up in the bell tower, 'H.N. 1816' and 'D.L. 1829', obviously other builders in times gone by. Iain says he has come across this before.

On a personal note, I have to offer a huge 'thank you' to Iain, who has responded to my cries for help over the past year, either with the property itself, drains or work needing to be done for our tenants. I could not have coped without him.

Also, a big thank you to Lynda Gulwell for her support and Tessa McWhirter for her help in the burial ground.

Sr Anne Waldron

From Church House

Provincial Diary for June

3 Synod Training Session (Online)
10-13 100th British Provincial Synod

Congregational Register

Deaths

24th April 2021 Gordon Murdock Gracehill

5	World Environment Day (www.worldenvironmentday.global) Environment Sunday (www.arochoa.org.uk - no reference to it on that website)
14-20	Refugee Week (www.refugeeweek.org.uk)
17	Renewal of the Brethren's Church: beginning of the building of Herrnhut by the immigrants from Moravia in 1722
20	Father's Day
21	Summer Solstice
22	Windrush Day
26	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday/)

Dates to remember!

Notices

Worship on the Web by the Provincial Men's Fellowship - Sunday 27th June 2021

It was with a heavy heart that it was decided to postpone the annual Provincial Men's Fellowship Day set for Leominster on Saturday 26th June 2021 for a further twelve months due to the continuing COVID-19 restrictions. This has been done reluctantly and with the wellbeing of all those who would attend is at the forefront of our consideration and prayers but look forward to seeing you on Saturday 25th June 2022 in Leominster.

In the meantime, the Provincial Men's Fellowship will be leading Worship on the Web on Sunday 27th June 2021 as a means of trying to remain connected with the brethren of the Church.

The theme will be 'Choices' linked to giving and equality. Br David Howarth will lead the service and talk about some of the projects we have supported over recent years, Br Graham Mallinson will lead us in prayer, Br Edwin Quldan will bring the readings and the address will be given by Br Kenneth Evans. We are hoping to have some singing to accompany our hymns, and we invite the Province to join with the Brethren as they come together in Fellowship for this alternative to their annual get-together. The service will be available for all to view on the Moravian Church British Province YouTube channel.

Ballinderry Moravian Church

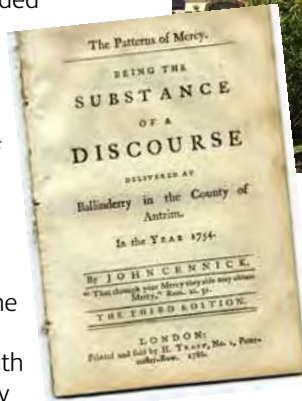
Dropping down into the village from the main road the Georgian style Moravian Church and Manse at Ballinderry still dominate the crossroads. Looking out over God's Acre and surrounded by stately trees it is the visual core of the community. One of the churches founded in Ireland by John Cennick, its site was previously the site of the village cock-fighting pit. The area was then heavily populated and Cennick was able to draw crowds of over 1,000 when he preached in the area. By March 1751 he had formed a Moravian Society with 230 names registered and by Christmas Day, with Cennick himself helping with the building work, the Chapel as it was then called opened for worship at 5am - yes am not pm.

A major fire on Easter Sunday in 1835 reduced all to ashes, but showing their drive and commitment, a restored building was opened on 19th May 1836. Bare by today's standards with only an earth floor and benches but over the years improvements were made with a gallery, heating and an organ being added. The latter, made in Dublin, is a rare survivor from the period and still leads our worship. 1901 saw a major internal re-organisation with a larger pulpit and decorative plasterwork.

Externally little has changed with the church buildings, although constant care is required as we are a listed building. Some of the original glass still survives in the windows with its spun effect rather than the later plate glass.

When the church was built the area had a large population, but it suffered like many rural areas from a drift away from the land with the population falling by a least a half. Ballinderry became a small rural town and it did not even obtain an electrical supply until after the war. However, many people moving to Belfast helped found the two city congregations of Cliftonville and University Road.

Our aim is to re-establish the church as the 'village' church as there has been



poverty not only covers physical needs but facilities that town people take for granted.

New young families, children and especially teenagers have no focus within the village and we are trying to address this. We have a fruitful connection with the local primary school who always lead off our Christmas celebrations each year. Each child on leaving school is presented with an inscribed Bible gifted by the Church at a special leavers' assembly.

We meet for worship on a Sunday morning and the congregation enjoy Bible Study, prayer sessions and our MWA is very active. Our minister has introduced a regular film night to encourage the local teenagers to engage with the church and we had a drive in Film Night this Christmas!! We hope to use the field in front of the church for more community work in the future especially as it is the only green space among all the new housing. We support the local Food Bank and collect donations which are used to give vouchers for fresh food for families to offset the amount of processed food that has had to be used in the past.

Remembrance Sunday was restricted by the virus last year to a Zoom service. However, a special display was mounted on the Communion table using barbed wire from the Somme, military badges and poppies and the bell was tolled as it was for VJ day in memory of those who fought and died in the Far East - the

extensive building of new estates of houses in the village. Unfortunately, the planners have made no provision for social amenities with no public places or facilities. Rural

'forgotten Armies'.

In past years we have opened for the Heritage Weekend in September and this has always brought in many visitors. Christmas always sees more intense connection with the community and despite COVID-19 restrictions we had a full programme last year. Working with the local police unit, gift packs were distributed in the village which also contained notes about personal and home security.

While we had to forego our usual Christingle, we gave each person attending a service in December a (Terry's) chocolate orange and a candle decorated with a red ribbon. Other chocolate oranges were given out to people unable to attend the service. We joined the Mayor's Toy Appeal shaking the bucket in Lisburn, our nearest town. An old trick was used, a tin of sweets was purchased, well shaken at people passing and we raised £160. We still provide clothing for the homeless and immigrants helping a unit in Belfast.

While the church building was closed the congregation continued to witness with even small things being appreciated. The church bell has still rung out every Sunday with a special 100 rings on Foundation day. As this is written we are still conducting our services on Zoom. A combination of traditional worship and new electronics may be the way to progress. Ballinderry has seen many changes and will no doubt have to make more but as the large banner currently in front of the building reads 'Hope' so we will hope to work and witness for many years to come.

Br Jared Stephens

The Moravian Messenger

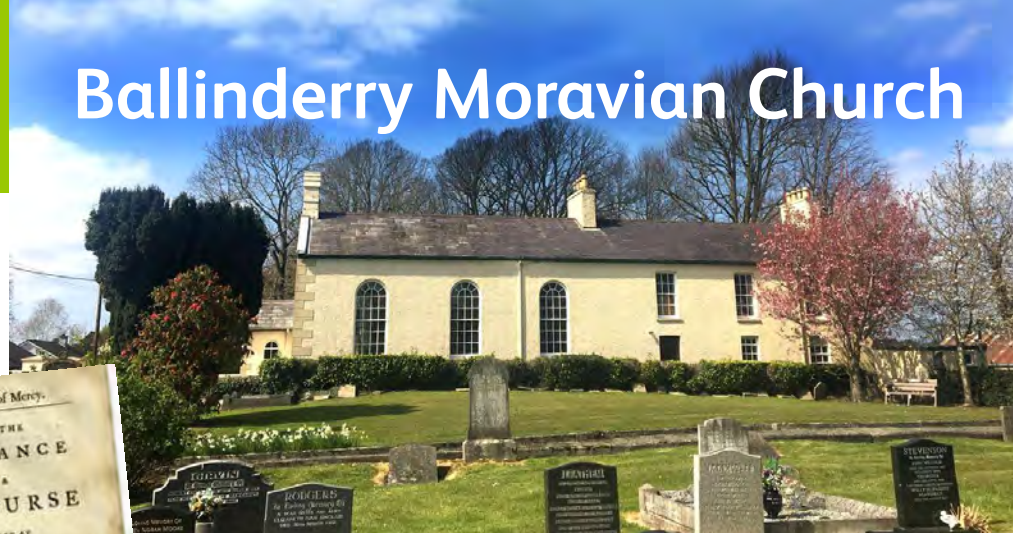
Official Journal of the Moravian Church in the British Province. Published monthly by the authority of the Provincial Synod.

Advertisements and all communications concerning distribution and supply should be sent to the Editorial Team.

Editorial Team, Church House, 5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ
editorialteam@moravian.org.uk
Contributions for the Messenger should reach the editorial team by the 7th day of the preceding month.

Design & Artwork
David Bull
dave@redragdesign.co.uk

Printing & Distribution
G. R. Walkden
Tel 01253 681338



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