

# moravian messenger

APRIL 2023



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## Christiansfeld 250th Anniversary

The Moravian Church (Brødremenigheden) in Christiansfeld is celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2023

Christiansfeld is located between Kolding and Haderslev in the southern part of the Jutland peninsula in the border area between Germany and Denmark. It is the only Moravian Congregation in Denmark and the first Moravian settlement to be nominated to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015, which declared that it displays the outstanding universal values (OUV) III and IV in the UNESCO valuation. Today, the congregation have approximately 350 members of which around 150 live in Christiansfeld. Many members of the congregation participate in and contribute to the life of the church all year round by participating in the Sunday worship service and by carrying out their different tasks.

### History

Count Zinzendorf had a special connection to Denmark, as he was related to the Danish royal house. In 1728 Zinzendorf visited the future King Christian VI of Denmark and Norway who was strongly influenced by pietism and again in 1731 for the coronation of the King. Therefore, the Moravian Church was already present in Denmark from about 1739, where the Fraternal Society was established in Copenhagen and other minor societies around Denmark as in Stepping, near the future Christiansfeld. In the middle of the 1740s, the activities of the Moravian Church sparked resistance within the Danish ecclesiastical community and two decrees were published, aiming at limiting the influence of the Moravian Church movement in Denmark.

In 1768, King Christian VII visited Zeist as a part of his tour of Europe. The King was impressed by the settlement, and he realised the commercial potential of a brethren settlement in

Denmark. The high-ranking Danish government officials C.A. Struensee and Lorenz Prætorius were the prime movers in the establishment of the settlement. L. Prætorius had established the Brethren Society in Copenhagen and contacted Herrnhut on behalf of the King. The negotiations were concluded in 1771 by the withdrawal of the two aforementioned decrees, and agreement of the King to a formal concession as a foundation for establishing a settlement. The content of the concession was mainly written by the Moravian authorities in Germany and Denmark. The estate at Tyrstrupgaard being Crown property, located between Kolding and Haderslev was purchased, and the precise location of the settlement was determined.

The concession of the settlement and the purchase of Tyrstrupgaard were finally confirmed on 11th June 1722.

Johannes Prætorius, the son of L. Prætorius, was deeply engaged in the negotiations between the Danish authorities and the Unity Elders Conference (UEC) in Herrnhut and Jonathan Briant, the chairman of the Brethren Society in Copenhagen were together tasked with establishing the town. Later on, J. Briant was named the first superintendent and L. Prætorius the first pastor of the developing settlement Christiansfeld.

The construction of the town plan was based on Herrnhag and Gnadau and by start of 1773, the whole town plan was laid out and building materials and workers were obtained for the start of construction of the settlement.

The foundation stone was laid for the first four houses on 1st April 1772. They included Lindegade 17, the first room for worship, Lindegade 26 (superintendent's house), Lindegade 28 (the vicarage) and the hotel (Gemeinlogi). The two private

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Holy Week is a harrowing time for Christians as we read through the narrative of the last week of our Saviour. We follow his betrayal by an erstwhile friend, illegal trial by the respectable religious authorities of the time, torture and then execution by the occupying army. The innocent man betrayed by his people, his faith background and the system. There was no restitution either for his family who were also victims of a regime that brutalised people and set their suffering at naught.

As Christians, we see him as the man who 'was despised, who took up our pain and bore our sufferings'. We believe 'he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities and by his wounds we are healed'. Somehow, in some way, this death bought us relief from our iniquities and failures, bringing healing and peace with God. The resurrection is a vindication of the words from Isaiah and our faith in the everlasting love of God.

However, this man, Jesus is also representative of innocent suffering people around the world. The innocent victims of war in Ukraine, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and more locally Northern Ireland. We have just marked the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the civil war in Syria has been going since 2011 and these, and all conflicts, leave non-combatants bereaved, maimed and traumatised. The hurt caused by trauma ripples through families and communities. Nothing is ever the same again, nor can it be!

As we commemorate the death and celebrate the resurrection of our innocent victim we should also remember the innocent suffering of so many across the world and in our own country. In the words of Janet Morley's wonderful Eucharistic prayer:

**As we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
we are proclaiming Christ's death until he comes.  
In the body broken and the blood poured out  
we restore to memory and hope  
the broken and unremembered victims  
of tyranny and sin.**

Christ entered fully into what is the human experience of desolation and cruelty for our sake.

This year we mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland. It bought peace, though not harmony to Northern Ireland, but victims and their concerns were largely side-lined. So, this Easter we need to remember and pray for victims, that their suffering will be relieved, and that justice and restitution will one day be theirs. For they have borne the suffering, been crushed by the iniquity of violence, and peace has been bought at the cost of their wounds.



**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Editorial Team

## Rev Shelagh Connor (1924-2023)

Shelagh Connor (née Allkins) was born in 1924 in Dukinfield. She went to Fairfield High School and gained a Social Sciences Certificate from the London School of Economics, (evacuated from London to Cambridge) and whilst there she coxed for the LSE women's rowing team. She was awarded a BA at Victoria University in Manchester in 1947. During her time at university, she also served as a volunteer fire watcher during the Manchester blitz.

She married Richard (Dick) Connor at Fairfield in 1948 who had entered Church Service as a missionary at Unyamwesi, in Tanganyika in the same year and Shelagh served as a teacher at Alliance Secondary School in Dodoma. In 1950 they moved to the Southern Highlands (Nyasa) where she served at the teacher training school in Rungwe until returning as a teacher to Alliance Secondary School in 1961. All five of Dick and Shelagh's children were born in Tanganyika (now Tanzania).

In 1965 Shelagh and Dick returned to England and moved when Dick was called to serve in Yorkshire at Lower Wyke, also covering Wellhouse and Horton for interregnum. In 1971 they moved to the Gomersal and Heckmondwike congregations. During that time Shelagh taught in primary schools in West Yorkshire then took on a school social work role in Manningham in Bradford

supporting Pakistani heritage families. During her time in Yorkshire, she learnt to speak Urdu.

In 1977 Dick was called to serve Hornsey congregation and Stoke Newington Society and they relocated to the manse on Warner Road in Hornsey. There Shelagh worked in Barnet supporting disabled children into mainstream nurseries and schools, after the Warnock reforms led to more inclusive education. She was never a traditional clergy wife but was deeply loved by the Hornsey congregation and great fun to be with.

On her retirement from education Shelagh trained for the ministry at St John's College Nottingham and was ordained as a deacon in September 1986. She then went to serve Bedford Queen's Park congregation, along with Kimbolton congregation until the latter closed in 1992.

In 1996 she and Dick retired to Littleport in Cambridgeshire where they were both active in the local parish church, St George's. Sadly Dick, her husband of 55 years, died in 2003.

Shelagh had a lifelong passion for learning and in her 80s went on to gain A' levels in German and Art. She



continued to travel and enjoyed time with friends and families. Then in 2017 she embarked on what she called 'one more adventure' and moved to Stromness in Orkney to be near one of her daughters and here she found friendships in faith at the

Church of Scotland. She died peacefully in her own home on 10th February 2023 just days short of her 99th birthday.

Shelagh was small in stature but huge in spirit with a wonderful sense of humour. She was deeply committed to her family, the Church and the wellbeing of society. All who remember her will remember her with love and admiration and give thanks for the legacy of service she leaves us. Our sympathies are with her children John, Anne, Daniel, Jane and Ruth and their families.

There will be a memorial service for Shelagh at Hornsey Moravian Church at 2pm on Saturday 29th April. Donations in memory of Shelagh can be made to 'Phone Credit for Refugees and Displaced Persons', see [www.PC4R.org.uk](http://www.PC4R.org.uk).

**Sr Sarah Groves**  
Editorial Team

*With grateful thanks for information from Shelagh's daughters Anne and Jane, and also Jackie Morten.*

# Easter - The Turning Point

Easter has started early in the shops, similar to Christmas. Chocolate Easter eggs and Easter bunnies are everywhere well before the feast. It's the same every year.

But of course, we know that Easter is much more than this. It's about God having broken the power of death. I know deep in my heart that this is a pillar of my and hopefully our faith, however, the little word 'but' creeps in easily.

But why do I see so little of death's power being broken?

I look to Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan and other places, and see so much destruction, devastation, pain and death. And I notice corrupted minds that are geared up for war.

I look to Turkey and Syria; recently I have met several members of the Turkish community who have lost loved ones in the earthquake that struck a few weeks ago. I struggled to find words.

I see people queuing up at the foodbank, and they tell me of exploitation, which is happening not only abroad, but often on our doorstep. I know what I notice is only the tip of the iceberg.

I visit hospitals and homes and see people fighting with illnesses and death, and those who do their best to help are completely overstretched.

I notice broken relationships, and how one person is despising another, not only 'in the world', but also in the church.

I can't overlook the pollution of the world in which we all share, and I worry not only about the distant future, but also about the near future, although I know that worrying doesn't change anything.

The list goes on, and I'm sure you, the reader, can add almost endlessly to it.

Sometime ago I read this: 'It is hope which makes the shipwrecked sailor strike out with his arms in the midst of the sea, though no land is in sight.' (Ovid).

Are we drowning in the disasters of this world and striking out with our arms? If we do, at least there must be a spark of hope! And that's good!

I open my eyes, my ears, and use all my senses in order to discover sparks of life and hope, and eventually I join in in the hymn:

**"Hands stretched out from many countries  
Seek our friendship, love and care;  
Different faces, many races,  
Friends and neighbours everywhere."**

(Moravian Hymn Book 524)

We do not have to be Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela in order to move our relationships and ways of life into the right direction. Each one of us can make a conscious effort and go beyond our comfort zone.

I have met and spoken to the nurse who goes above and beyond her duty to make the patient comfortable and keep in

communication with the relatives.

I cherish and encourage the pensioner who frequently lends an ear to the troubled neighbour.

I have seen the effort of the volunteer at the crisis café.

I thank God for the woman who - despite being severely ill herself - prays regularly for those who are in dire need, and who is also praying for the whole world.

There are not only sparks of hope, but sometimes flames of fire which bring hope and light and warmth to people.

I love the detail in the Easter story when - after Jesus' resurrection - Mary mistook him for the gardener (John 20:15), or when Jesus walked with the disciples on their way to Emmaus and they didn't recognise him (Luke 24). Maybe Jesus appears beside us more often than we think, and also beside the unloved neighbour!

I firmly believe that Jesus, having suffered tremendous pain and death (the accumulated pain and death of the world), has brought about a Turning Point. It's beautifully expressed in this verse: 'O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55). We quote it at every funeral. Death and grave are mocked in the face of indestructible life which God provides.

The fundamental battle has been fought. Life has conquered death. It's like the battle of Stalingrad in the Second World War: the battle was fierce, but whilst this battle was going on the outcome of the war was clear: Hitler and his people were bound to lose their destructive power.

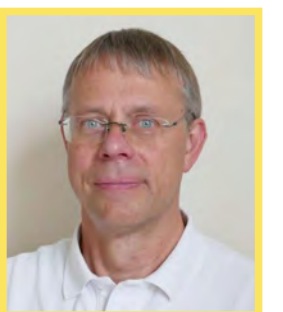
In the same way, we can be Easter people and sing even in the darkest night of life:

**'The strife is o'er, the battle done,  
The victory of life is won;  
The song of triumph has begun.  
Hallelujah!  
The powers of death have done their worst,  
By Christ their legions were dispersed:  
Let shouts of holy joy outburst.  
Hallelujah!  
The three sad days are quickly sped,  
Christ rises glorious from the dead:  
All glory to our risen Head!  
Hallelujah!  
He conquered hell,  
Its power defied  
The way to heaven he opened wide;  
Sing praise to him, the crucified,  
Hallelujah!'**

(Moravian Hymn Book 110)

**Br Joachim Kreusel**

Minister of Ockbrook and Leicester  
Moravian Congregations





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# South Asia Tour 2023



In early January Br Joachim Kreusel and I visited India and Nepal as representatives of the British Mission Board. We had a number of events to attend and objectives, and our time was well planned. Our first congregation visit was to Binnakandi in Assam, North India and we were met at Silchar airport by brothers Br Ebenezer (minister in Delhi) and Br Titus (Principle of the Binnakandi Institute). In Binnakandi we were greeted by the recently ordained Br Dimchui and the student ministers, Brs Nathaniel, Jacob and Levi. For me it was a wonderful moment to see these young student ministers in the flesh after so many months of greeting them on Zoom during our Study Group sessions. Preparations were well underway for a Memorial Service which would take place the following day. We had a tour of the Rongmei village where many of the congregation members live and shared a meal and good discussions.

The following morning, Sunday, we worshipped at 6:30am. The main event of the day was at 11:00am, a Memorial Service for Br Kagauchung Rongmei, known as Br Kabui, who founded the Moravian Church in Binnakandi in 1984. Br Kabui died three years ago and the service was a celebration of his life and ministry with worship and singing, dancing by the children from the Binnakandi Institute and testimony from people who had been influenced by Br Kabui. A memorial stone was unveiled in the church grounds. A huge feast followed serving about 300 people. Once the bulk of the guests had left the evening continued with informal singing and dancing amongst congregation members.

The following morning six of us went to the village of Haflong to visit the church there. It was a journey that took about four hours on a road that can only be described as 'under construction' - like driving through a quarry. We met Br Jacob's family and visited the Haflong Church which had been badly damaged

during flooding in 2022. The Church has been reconstructed and improved and is in full use. However, we did see evidence of houses badly damaged and even completely destroyed by the flooding. We also visited a site on which the congregation proposes developing a church hall and school when funding allows. We had the opportunity to visit the train station which had been badly damaged by the flooding and saw the reparative construction work in progress. The return journey was another four hours in the dark (I chose to sleep!).

On the Tuesday we travelled two hours to Latingkhal in the state of Manipur to visit the church there (much better road!). This required us to cross the border into Manipur and register at a checkpoint. It was an interesting experience, and we were quite anxious that they might turn us away, but by the time we returned we seemed to have made great friends with the authorities who were waiting to ensure we left the region. We visited the original church settlement at Laxhipur which is in a poor state of repair, but they have hopes to renovate it and develop the land, reviving the church. We were greeted in Latingkhal by Br Dimchui and his family (it is his home congregation) and Br Jacob's wife's family who live there. We had a long discussion in the church with the student ministers about their hopes following ordination and their plans for the future. When we returned, we spent the evening chatting around a fire outside. I share my room with a couple of small geckos (only slightly

nervous, but at least they ate the mosquitoes!).

On Wednesday we visited the Binnakandi Institute which is opposite the church. Br Titus (Br Kabui's son) is the principle and we attended the assembly and visited the classrooms where children aged 3-11 are educated. The school building is currently two storeys, however due to damage caused by termites they have a long-term plan to demolish the upper floor and renovate the ground floor classrooms. In the afternoon we visited one of the local tea plantations (after all we were in Assam!). In the evening we had a long and fruitful discussion with Br Jacob's wife, Sr Suaihiamlu Pamei who has been theologically trained and feels a strong call to ordained ministry. She is gifted in music, languages and writing and would be an amazing asset to the work in South Asia.

On Thursday we were accompanied by Br Jacob on a series of home visits to families in the Rongmei village. These visits followed a simple pattern of introductions and greetings, the serving of tea and requests for specific prayer. This day called for an early night as we had another event the following day.

On Friday we left early for Latingkhal to celebrate the wedding of Br Dimchui and Sr Denjeng. The ceremony was particularly special as it was conducted by Br Ebenezer, Br Jacob was the master of ceremonies and Br Nathaniel preached the sermon. It was a beautiful event and of course there was a feast including a buffalo!

On Saturday we met with the Church Committee and Elders. We discussed many things including the future of the South Asia Mission Province and the part that each congregation and member would have to play. It was refreshing to find that they have many systems in place which will support future independence. In the afternoon we met with the Women's Fellowship/Conference. They operate

many projects to support the local community including the members, church and school. It was an evening for goodbyes to our hosts and promises to return soon.

On Sunday we travelled from Silchar Airport to Kathmandu (via Kolkata) in Nepal where we were met by Br Shanti and Sr Vani Pradhan, ordained ministers and the principles of the Shristi Academy and International Kindergarten. We settled into the Hotel Greenwich Village before sharing a meal with Sr Kamaleswori Pradhan, the widow of the late Br Nagendra Pradhan, her son Br Joshua and Br Shanti and Sr Vani.

On Monday we visited the church at Khokana to assess the building ready for the ordination service on Saturday. We had a walking tour around the village with two committee members and were able to watch a Newari festival honouring the elderly in the community. Our evening was spent preparing the PowerPoint for the ordination service.

On Tuesday we visited the International Kindergarten and the Shristi Academy. These wonderful facilities were perfectly maintained and the staff and children



were so welcoming. We shared a meal there and then travelled to Khokana church for a meeting with the committees of the three churches of Khokana, Baneswor and Chyasikot. The meeting lasted four hours. This was partly due to the need for translation but also because the members had many questions about the process of ordained ministry. Br Joachim and I spent a long time explaining the process from call to training, ordination, consecration and definitions of service i.e., deacon, presbyter and bishop. Over time their culture and education has led them to hold a different idea of ministry and we worked hard to bring a view more in line with a Unity understanding which would be essential going forward towards a Mission Province. In the evening we shared a meal with all the student and ordained ministers hosted by Br Shanti

and Sr Vani.

Wednesday was a day for preparation; for Br Joachim preparing for the ordination service and for me preparing for worship on Saturday morning and for the conference. In the evening, as various delegates began to arrive for the conference, we shared a meal at the home of Sr Kamaleswori and Br Joshua accompanied by Br Thsespal Kundan from the Moravian Institute in Rajpur.

By Thursday morning most of the delegates had arrived. We began the Second South Asia Moravian Church Conference, and I led the opening devotions and a discussion bringing everyone up to date on what had happened during the past couple of years when, due to COVID-19, we had not been able to travel or meet. After lunch Sr Roberta Hoey, Chair of the Unity and Provincial Board and Br Jørgen Bøyter, Unity Board Administrator, arrived and we led a session, similar to the meeting at Khokana, outlining the process of ministry and Br Jørgen outlined the process required to become a Mission Province and how this would impact the region.

Br Thsespal Kundan presented an overview of the South Asia Book of Order which is based on the British Province Book of Order, with regional variations. Br Kundan and the Framework Committee were thanked for their work on bringing the document up to date.

Whilst the conference centre was providing breakfast and lunch we visited two restaurants over the evenings which were times of fellowship.

On Friday morning, after opening devotions by Sr Kamaleswori and Br Joachim, the first order of business was to elect an Interim Provincial Board (IPB). It was agreed that there would be five members of the IPB representing the four regions plus one other member. It was essential that one of those elected be a woman. The first election was for

the chairperson of the IPB and Br Thsespal Kundan was elected. The other members were elected by their own regions:

**Central Br Thsespal Kundan (Chair)**  
**Ladakh Br Samson Thangpa**  
**Nepal Br Simon Shankar**  
**Assam Br Titus Gangmei**  
**Woman Sr Vani Pradhan (Nepal)**

The delegates then moved into discussion groups according to their regions to identify areas of concern that they would prioritise as the Interim Provincial Board.

The final election was for the Chair of the first Provincial Synod to be held soon after Unity Synod in September. Br Joseph Kundan was elected.

A Memorandum of Understanding was then prepared outlining the order of business and the outcome of the election. All members of the Conference then signed the document. This was a historic and significant moment in the history of the Moravian Church in South Asia as it moves towards Mission Province status.

In Nepal Saturday is the day for religious services. There were three services held in the morning, one at 7:30am in Khokana and one at the same time in Chyasikot. The second was at 11:00am in Baneswor. Everyone attended at least one service. I preached at Khokana and Baneswor on the spirit of humility. After lunch everyone attended the Service of Ordination at Khokana. Br Joachim Kreusel led the service and the opportunity was taken to introduce the IPB to the congregations. The service was translated into Nepali and Newari. It was another historic and emotional moment as five student ministers were ordained as deacons, the first such ordination to take place in Nepal. Each of the candidates took the opportunity to give their thanks through music by singing or playing. After the service the congregation had prepared a meal which we all shared.

The visit ended on Sunday for most people as they made their way home. It had been a time of great blessing and it was a privilege to be present at such a time as history was made. There was a real sense that God was fully present in every aspect of our visit and that the people of South Asia will be guided by His love as they embark on this journey towards self-reliance and independence.



**Sr Jane Carter**  
 Chair, British Mission Board

# Christiansfeld 250th Anniversary *continued*

dwellings and the hotel were already ready for occupation in August 1773. The church room in Lindegade 17 was inaugurated at the Elder's Feast on 13th November 1773. Work on the God's Acre was also initiated in this period. During the next ten years, 30 buildings were erected, fully or partly, including choir houses: the Brothers' House in 1774, Sisters' House in 1776 and the Widows' House in 1779, and in 1777 the main wing of the present Saal House was completed, while the two adjacent wings were not added until 1796-1797 and a retail building (Gemein Laden) was built in 1778.

Christiansfeld was established on agricultural land. The town plan has two parallel streets (Lindegade and Nørregade) with a central square (Grev Zinzendorf Plads) surrounded by the Saal House, the Sisters' House, the Vicarage, the former Principal's House and the First House. God's Acre is situated in the Northeastern corner of the settlement. The buildings used by girls and women, as Sisters House, Widows House and Girls School are situated in the north side of the town and closest to the Sister's entrance door in the Saal House.

An important reason for the King to initiate the establishment of Christiansfeld was the desire to introduce more sophisticated and developed industrial production and commerce. The production of high-quality goods for sale and for their own use was the aim of the Moravian Church, and to support this the King had, through the concession, given favorable tax conditions for the first ten years as well as a financial subsidy to the construction of the buildings.

The aim was accomplished by the foundation of a wide variety of businesses during the first few years. In the Brothers' house a bakery, a tailoring shop and a weaving mill, a tannery, a shoemaker, a carpenter, a small smithy, a potter, a glazier and a goldsmith is mentioned already in 1776. Workshops in the Sisters' house were established in 1776 and a clothing industry was initiated.

The two enterprises for which Christiansfeld is famous for even today are the Christiansfeld Stoves and the Christiansfeld Gingerbread (honey cakes), both founded in these early years.

The town was prospering during the

period 1810-1820, when the choir houses were extended and both girls' and boys' boarding schools were established.

It was also in this period that most of the family houses were built, and the border of the original town was established.

Christiansfeld experienced financial decline later in the 19th Century, as both the end of the advantageous tax conditions given in the concession, as well as the financial and agricultural crises following the Napoleonic wars consequently meant a decrease in the building activity and the market prospects. In spite of this decline, some parts of the community thrived. Philipp Jacob Roentgen was called to Christiansfeld and became leader of the schools. In a few years he turned the decline to success with a rising number of pupils. Roentgen also engaged in very successful missionary work in Denmark and his work laid the foundation for the flourishing of interest in mission work and the later founding of Nordslesvigsk Missionsforening (North Schleswig Missionary Society), the predecessor of Brødremenighedens Danske Mission (Danish Moravian Mission) (B.D.M.), which is still very active.

Christiansfeld was under German rule from 1864 to 1920. The disruption between Danish-minded and German-minded Sisters and Brothers, caused tensions in the congregation, but the religious community was maintained.

During the inter-war period, the buildings that were owned by the Unity (The Deacony, the property managing arm of the Moravian Church based in Herrnhut) were taken over by the Congregation, except for Tyrstrupgaard and the Boys' school, which was sold. The Congregation still has ownership of about 35 properties in the town.

In recent years, major parts of the original town have undergone restoration with the help of grants received from larger private foundations, Ministry of Culture, the Municipality and by finance from the congregations as much as possible. The latest project completed was the



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renovation of God's Acre and that was accomplished in 2019. Currently the west wing of the Widows' House is undergoing major restoration in a project to transform the house to a beautiful new museum for the Moravian Church in Christiansfeld and the missionary work that originated in the town.

## Celebrations

Celebrations will take part during the whole of 2023 and include several activities. On 1st April (the foundational day of Christiansfeld), the whole congregation will assemble in the neighbouring romantic garden in Christinero, where there will be short speeches and celebrations. After a walk back to Christiansfeld there will be a short ceremony on Zinzendorf Plads, in front of the Church Hall. The congregation will host refreshments on the nearby Prætorius Torv.

On 13th August, Love Feast is held with invited guests from the Danish authorities and the Danish State Church, other denominations, the Moravian Church, the congregation, and friends of the Moravian Church.

Brødremenighedens Museum and the local museum, Museum Kolding, will join together in arranging an anniversary exhibition about the foundation of Christiansfeld and the history of the city. The exhibition will open on 20th June and display artifacts from the Christiansfeld Moravian Museum's collections.

More than 20 musical arrangements, both classical and modern music will take place and it is hoped to attract many people. The anniversary will be celebrated with an intriguing musical program, including diverse pieces such as Joseph Haydn's The Creation (08/10/2023), Bach's The Passion of John (31/03/2023) and a first performance of Magnoliakoret, a piece written by Olga Witte including elements from the Moravian history and



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a meeting of modern church music, experimental jazz and modern classical music (10/08/2023). During 2023 Juliane Ilgner, the organist in Christiansfeld, will arrange matinees on the last Saturday in the month at 11 o'clock.

The Union of Danish Amateur Choirs, Kor 72 will be performing a workshop with pieces from our rich collection of music from the archives in Christiansfeld and present the result in a concert in the Hall on Sunday 29th October, at 3.50pm. These and other concerts will mark the anniversary.

## Publication

In relation to the anniversary, Brødremenigheden and the local museum, Museum Kolding, has collaborated on a publication of a new anthology about the founding and early years of Christiansfeld. The book will, among others, contain chapters about the musical history, the first sisters, the foundation, and the predecessors to Christiansfeld in the area.

Brødremenigheden in Christiansfeld is pleased to publish the book of order for living in Christiansfeld, in German bearing the title: 'Der evangelischen Brüdergemeine zu Christiansfeld brüderliches Einverständnis über derselben Ordnungen' printed 1781. The book contains the original German text in extenso, a translation to Danish and a translation to modern Danish. The book will be distributed to the whole Christiansfeld Congregation.

Finally, we will be very happy to see any of you at the celebrations!

If you have questions about the arrangements, you are welcome to contact Jørgen Boytler, boytler@ebu.de or Käte Thomsen, broedremenigheden@christiansfeld.tv.

Lise Brock Andersen  
Christiansfeld



# Yorkshire District Spring Conference

**Br Dick Porter reports on the spring conference of Moravian Churches in the Yorkshire district**

Delegates at the spring district conference of Moravian Churches in Yorkshire stood in silence in memory of Br Paul Holdsworth, who died on 25th January.

Br Holdsworth was a serving minister and a member of the Provincial Board. He had served in the Eastern, Irish and Western districts and was preparing for a move to Lancashire with Sr Patsy Holdsworth in a joint ministry before his untimely death.

Plans for the Lancashire district will now be made later.

The conference, held at Horton, was told that Paul's funeral will be held at Lower Wyke Moravian Church on Monday 20th March at 2pm. This will follow cremation at Elland at 12.45pm.

Provincial Board member David Howarth told the meeting via Zoom that Paul's death had been a shocking and sad blow for everyone and asked congregations to give thanks for Paul and keep the family in their thoughts and prayers.

Br Howarth said Paul's death came on top of the loss of two other former ministers - Sr Shelagh Connor and Br Desmond Quaitte. Sr Connor was ordained in 1986 and served Bedford Queen's Park and Kimbolton and had been a missionary in Tanzania. Br Quaitte was ordained in 1968 and served in the Irish, Yorkshire and Western districts, as well as Jamaica.

Br Howarth said Sr Claire Maxwell was now serving the congregations of Lower Wyke and Horton, the first time for many years that the Yorkshire district had its full complement of ministers.

The meeting was told that Project 32, the 10-year focus on renewal and revival, had advertised for a programme co-ordinator. There had been no immediate response, but an interview was to be held shortly.

As this is the 75th anniversary year of the arrival of the ship Empire Windrush, a celebration is to be held, marking the arrival of Jamaicans to this country. A provincial service will be held on Sunday

24th June with the Leicester congregation at Wesley Hall Methodist Church.

Br Howarth called it 'a symbolic moment in the story of the black communities' contribution to this country'. He said: 'We would like to encourage broad attendance and some funds will be available for travel.' More details of the funding will follow.

The meeting was told that Gracehill Moravian Church in Northern Ireland had moved a step closer to seeking World Heritage Status. A formal submission has been made to UNESCO in conjunction with Bethlehem in Pennsylvania and Herrnhut, Germany.

The conference was told that Unity Synod, which occurs every seven years, is due to take place in September in Cape Town. The British Province will be represented by Sr Jane Carter, Br Philip Cooper and Br Edwin Quildan.

Fulneck and Baildon minister Br James Woolford was re-elected as chairman of the Yorkshire conference, with Wellhouse and Gomersal minister Br Philip Cooper as vice-chair. Sr Diane Thornton is the secretary again, with Br Bob Hopcroft as treasurer and myself as correspondent for the Moravian Messenger.



# Where is God when things go wrong?

Most people reading this will recall that before I retired, I was a doctor, my last twenty six years of practise being in Emergency Medicine (or Accident and Emergency Medicine or Casualty - the name changed over time). While at Alder Hey Children's hospital in Liverpool in the early 1990s I supported many families faced with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Only years later did I realise I was there at the peak of its incidence in the UK. As I consultant I can recall all those sixteen years old or under who died on my watch. I would like to share two cases with you that stand out even amongst each of these unique events.

A mother rushed in with a child of about a year old in her arms - he was very pale. We will call him Jamie. He had been taken repeatedly to the GP and out of hours service over the previous five days. He was certainly not well. We took him straight into the resuscitation room and began to work on him. The paediatricians and anaesthetists also came down but eventually Jamie passed on to higher service after I had explained to his mother that there was nothing further that could be done to help him. His father must have been a distance away when Jamie died and so was not present but came later.

The next day Jamie's father came and just sat quietly in our resuscitation room in the spot where his son had died. This was very important to him. I had learned by then that Jamie's dad was diabetic and that his parents had waited seven years before Jamie came along.

Eventually on the day Jamie died we took the routine specimens and swabs done after every child's death in case an infection was the cause. A couple of days later I got a call from the laboratory - yes, signs of overwhelming infection. This was good in a way as there was a cause found, but why oh why did no one spot it earlier, Jamie's parents must have thought. They might have been tempted to take this up with the primary care services, as a way of seeking solace. To my knowledge they did not.

Where was God in all this? Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3: 5 'our sufficiency is of God.' This would have been hard for his parents to understand in their time of grief. Several members of staff from the

hospital attended his funeral - a thing I did not often do, but somehow this one was different. It was heart breaking to see Jamie's dad carry his small white coffin to the grave in the large public cemetery and lay him to rest.

There our connection with the family ended or so we thought. However, a while later we learned that a new baby had been born to the couple: a little girl and we were invited to the christening. It was a joyous service - just the baptism - not part of another service and it was so good to see the family again in such different circumstances. Another girl followed we learned. No subsequent child can 'replace' one that is lost. I believe that we are never sent anything that we cannot cope with - it is just how we cope and how we let the Lord lead us in our journey of understanding. Psalm 27v 1 one says 'The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?'

The Lord works in mysterious ways as the hymn says. Another child I recall was the one that we resuscitated successfully initially. It was a 'perfect storm' of staff. She came in at the changeover of staff, so we had double of just about everyone. We needed them all and eventually she was transferred to the regional centre: three hours away if you or I did the drive. This child did not come home, but her heart lives on in another child. Somehow out of tragedy came the joy of a life continued.

Whilst on holiday in 2020 after the lockdown was lifted, I went to the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides. I walked round the causeway-joined island of Vatersay and stumbled across the burial ground. I was drawn to a grave on the edge and found it to be that of the 14-year-old girl from the island killed by the Manchester Arena bomb. That incident along with various people practising bagpipes outside their homes made me think of this young life ending so suddenly, and piped home to her beautiful island. Had she touched so many lives in her short time there and was that why she was called home? Her family must have had so many 'ifs': if only she had not got a ticket; if only the journey was delayed; if only she'd got

out a little before the end of the concert or lingered afterwards. I do hope they can take some solace from the joy she gave so many on that island.

The Bible has several examples of young people called to witness early in their life. In 1 Samuel 3 Samuel is called; in 1 Samuel 17 David defeats Goliath; in Jeremiah 1 Jeremiah says he is 'but a child'; and in 1 Timothy 4: 12 it is written 'let no man despise thy youth'. I believe that these young people taken from their families and communities at such a young age had witnessed in their youth and so had accomplished their God-given mission, however hard it was for their families and communities. As Paul writes in Romans 8 v 26 'Likewise the spirit also helps us in our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered'. I'm sure these families and many others have felt to be in this position. I hope with time and God's grace each may come to see the benefits that these seemingly short lives brought to this world.

Help is available for families affected by the loss of a child. One such charity is the Lullaby Trust which was initially the Foundation for the Study of Infant Death. It can be found at <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>. 08088026868 is the bereavement support line. Please contact them if you have been affected in anyway however long ago by a child's death and feel that you need help.

Finally, I'd like to share with you the glorious shaft of sunlight across the sea that ended the day when I wrote this and also some words from Elaine Hagenberg's song 'You do not Walk Alone':

*'May you see God's light on the path ahead when the road you walk is dark'.*

**Sr Claire Summers**



# Mission and Society Committee

## Who are we?

The Provincial Mission and Society Committee consists of the following members: myself, Sr Eunice Hoey, Br Alan Holdsworth and Br John Kilner (all members elected from Synod); Sr Sarah Groves (Bishop); Sr Lindsey Newens (Messenger Editorial Team); Brs Edwin Quildan and David Howarth and Sr Roberta Hoey (Provincial Board members). Since last Synod the committee have met four times. There had been an initial plan to meet at Church House face to face but unfortunately train strikes put paid to that and so we have met on Zoom mainly on a weekday evening at 7pm.

## What is the purpose of the Committee?

The Book of Order states that our purpose is to encourage the Church in carrying out the Five Marks of Mission namely:

- a) To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom.**
- b) To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.**
- c) To respond to human need by loving service.**
- d) To seek to transform unjust structures of society.**
- e) To safeguard the integrity of creation, sustaining and renewing the life of the earth.**

We are also instructed to 'publish information within the Province about the current work of the committee'.

## What does the Committee actually do?

As you can see from the statement above, the remit of the committee is very wide and can encompass almost anything. Members of the committee have their own particular reasons for joining and so we have put together our programme derived largely from committee members interests, concerns and knowledge.

Not surprisingly, the committee are interested in the issues which are (I believe) the burning issues affecting society today: Racial Justice, Family Poverty and the Environment. We have been exploring how our Church might play our part in bringing about positive change. The committee are looking at: a possible conference/meeting about family poverty; how we might celebrate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush; and how our congregations might become more environmentally friendly. Sr Sarah Groves regularly updates the committee on issues specific to Northern Ireland. We have also

discussed how we might raise the profile of the Moravian Church. One way we have considered is asking members to pass on editions of the Moravian Messenger to family, friends and colleagues. It is a free magazine so would involve no additional cost to the congregations. We have also discussed how we can encourage people to volunteer to serve on our Provincial Committees and how congregations could be better prepared to welcome those people living with dementia into our worship.

We spend a lot of time discussing and reflecting, but we aim to come up with actual actions to carry forward. We don't want to be a committee which just talks.

## Why did I join the Committee?

Part of the reason for writing this article is to encourage participation in Provincial Committees. I thought it might be helpful to explain why I volunteered to be on the Committee, perhaps it will encourage some of you to think about joining. On a regular basis, we pray using the Lord's Prayer during private prayer times and at public worship. Each time we pray using this prayer we say these words: 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' When we say these words we are asking God's Kingdom to be actually present here on earth now. I don't believe we can pray those words without actually doing something to bring about God's Kingdom here on earth now. I understand that His Kingdom will never be fully present until Christ himself returns to earth, but I believe that our time on earth matters. I believe therefore that the Mission and Society Committee is for everyone. You don't need a special understanding of anything to serve on this committee. You just need to be enthusiastic about demonstrating the love of God to the world.

If any of you would like to attend a meeting as an observer, please let me know and I can arrange for you to be sent the Zoom link. If any of you have anything you feel you would like to contribute to the topics mentioned above, again just contact me, preferably by email ([janet.cooper@moravian.org.uk](mailto:janet.cooper@moravian.org.uk)).

**Sr Janet Cooper**

*Chair of the Provincial Mission and Society Committee*



# 'What I Believe'

Moravian Messenger Editor Sr Sarah Groves interviews Sr Libby Mitchell

Sr Libby Mitchell is a past President of the Moravian Women's Association and in that position helped inaugurate the MWA Retreats. She served on Baildon Church Committee fulfilling various roles. She taught in Sunday School for 30 years and with her husband Charles was very involved in local Amateur Drama. According to Sr Sarah she baked the best bacon and egg pie known to humankind.

## Tell us about your background, early years, education, family

My mother was ill after I was born with what would be called 'post-natal depression'. For the first two years of my life, I was looked after by my paternal grandmother during the week and her sister, my great auntie Mary at the weekends. Although I have no recollection of this time, I have been told it would have had a big input into the woman I became. Eventually my Mum recovered and with my Father and two elder brothers we all moved into my grandparents' home in north Leeds then deep in farmland, so I became a 'country-child' with all the blessings that brings. The house was a magnet for all my cousins (eleven of them) and their friends, and although I was the youngest, I was always included. I can still hear my Mum's voice calling out 'Take Elizabeth with you!' Plenty of homegrown vegetables, milk straight from the cow, plain nutritious meals. No leaving anything on the side of the plate!

Sunday Worship at Crossgates Methodist Church every Sunday was a given and integral part of life.

All this changed on 3rd September 1939. Although I was only 10 years old, I have total recall of that day. My two brothers went straight into the army, both ending up with 'The Forgotten Army': the 14th Army in Burma, and my parents became immersed in 'war work'. I was taken away from Leeds Girls' High School and shunted off to Pudsey and Fulneck Girls' School as a boarder to be 'out of the way of the bombs'. I was there for seven years, my future life was mapped out!

## How and when did you come to faith?

'Habit' must have played a huge part, both at home and at Fulneck. The feeling of safety and familiarity. Maybe the yellow sweetsies Grannie popped into my mouth when I started to fidget. I think they were called 'gelatines'?

I was confirmed at Fulneck by Br Foy when I was 16 with my friends and all the time the little seed of faith must have been growing in me so that when I married very young at 20 years old and quickly had four children, I wanted to give them the same spiritual roots and comfort I had been given.

## Tell us briefly about your life and how you integrated your faith into it?

I did not have to have a paid job until I had finished with child rearing. Lucky me?! But I became very involved in all the voluntary

jobs that needed doing and enjoyed the work and meeting people. We moved into our family home in Saltaire and I discovered Baildon Moravian Church and was welcomed by Br Joe and Sr Edna Cooper and quickly became part of its family. The first job I volunteered for was cleaning the church and my partner was Sr Gladys Burn. I later learned that she had reported that 'that Mrs Mitchell's a fast worker'! My faith gradually grew and strengthened.



## What has been your greatest joy or greatest high highlight in your church life?

The friendships made. With ministers, with other members at Baildon, with members throughout our Province and worldwide.

## Have you ever been angry with God?

No ... but I'm sure he must have been angry with me.

## Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death? Do you believe in the resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?

No ... but I do not look forward to the manner of my death and hope it will be an easy passing. The few times I have had the

privilege of being close to death I have felt very strongly that there is more to come. Something beyond this life. Something we simply cannot imagine. A mystery?

## What can we learn from other Churches and Faiths?

That there is more than one way to travel and arrive at the same place. To be tolerant at all times.

## Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?

If only I had the answers to that question. One is that there are so many more options to fill our time nowadays. Ease of travel. Instant communications. Sport. The list is endless.

## Some personal preference - favourite book, film, music and why?

What a difficult question to answer.

Film: Laurence Olivier's Henry 5th, the 'Arrow' scene.

Book: 'The Uttermost Parts of the Earth' by E. Lucas Bridges. The true story of a Christian missionary family in Tierra del Fuego 'The Land of Fire' (Cape Horn). I have read it three times.

Music: hymn by Dorothy Connor 'Our Lamb has Conquered'.

## A place where you feel close to God?

In high places but also in my heart. Examples: the trig point on Baildon Moor, the top of 'Cat Bells', Derwentwater, Cumbria.

## What inscription on your gravestone or epitaph, if any?

Name and date ... and maybe 'She made a good bacon and egg pie'.

## Notices

### Summer Camp

This year we are trying to relaunch Summer Camp! We are inviting members to consider sending a donation towards the costing of summer camp. A donation of any kind, large or small is very welcome. To give an idea of costs, to pay for a child to attend summer camp is £130, £5 would pay for a meal or £15 would help pay towards an activity.

If you feel able to donate you can either send a BACS payment to CAF BANK Ltd, The Moravian Union, Account 00023436, Sort code 40 52 40, and label it 'Summer Camp donation'. When the BACS payment has been made please notify: lindsey.newens@moravian.org.uk.

## From Church House

### Special Synod of the British Province

The Provincial Board has made the decision to convene a Special Synod of the British Province, to be held online.

The Special Synod will take place on 17th June 2023 and will be online, beginning at 10.00am and concluding the same day. Following their election last year, we propose that the Chairing panel will be Br Philip Cooper (Chair) and Sr Jane Carter (Vice Chair).

The purpose of this meeting will be to elect a Provincial Board member to the vacant non stipendiary position following the death of Br Paul Holdsworth. The position is for a period of one year until the next regular Synod is held in July 2024. Blank nomination forms for this position will be available from early April. Completed nomination forms returned to Church House by 6th May 2023 will be distributed with the other Synod documentation. Any nomination forms received after this date and before 1pm on Friday 16th June 2023 will be distributed at the beginning of the Special Synod.

Congregations are asked to convene Council Meetings in due course to elect deputies per 2.1.a of the Book of Order and all ex-officio members of the Synod by virtue of office are asked to attend (2.1.b). Congregations with between 66 and 130 members are entitled to send two deputies and those with 131 or more members are entitled to send three deputies (as at 31st August 2022 and reported on the 2022 A form). Credential forms for deputies will be available from early April. Please provide notification of your attendance and return completed credential forms to Church House by 6th May 2023.

The agenda and other documentation will be sent out by 3rd June 2023. The agenda and business will be adopted at the beginning of the Special Synod.

### Provincial Service in June

A special Provincial service recognising 75 years of the Windrush anniversary will be held at Wesley Hall in Leicester on Sunday 25th June from 1pm. More details to follow.

### Provincial Diary for April

19-20	Provincial Board	(Church House)
20	Moravian Union AGM	(Church House)
27	LAMM (London Association of Moravian Missions)	(Church House)
27	British Mission Board	(Church House)

## Congregational Register

### Baptisms

5th Feb 2023	Remiah Coleman	Hall Green
5th March 2023	Teddy William Duncan	Gracehill
5th March 2023	Charlie Alexander Duncan	Gracehill

### Reception into Membership

5th March 2023	Trish Price	Hall Green
5th March 2023	Angela Gaynor	Hall Green
5th March 2023	Persis Franklin	Hall Green
5th March 2023	Raj Kumari	Hall Green
5th March 2023	Stella	Hall Green

### Deaths

16th Dec 2022	Margaret Neil	Hall Green
6th Feb 2023	Enid Allen	Hall Green
17th Feb 2023	William Johnston	Gracehill

2	Palm Sunday
2-8	Passion Week Readings
5	First Day of Passover - Jewish
7	Good Friday
9	Easter Sunday
10	Easter Monday
13	Last Day of Passover - Jewish
16	Orthodox Easter - Orthodox
18	Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power/Destiny) - Muslim
	World Heritage Day or International Day for Monuments and Sites
21	Ramadan ends Eid-ul-Fitr - Muslim
23	St George's Day
28	International Workers' Memorial Day ( <a href="http://28april.org/">http://28april.org/</a> )



# Fulneck Moravian Church



© Br Michael Newman

You could argue that Fulneck Church and its surrounding settlement was born out of a business arrangement. In footballing parlance, a free transfer of another church's congregation.

In the 1740s, Benjamin Ingham, an itinerant preacher based in Yorkshire's West Riding, had established a number of non-conformist 'societies'. He was fast becoming a victim of his own success and could no longer manage all of them. Ingham had already had a meeting with Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf - who'd established the first Moravian settlement on his estate at Herrnhut in Saxony - to discuss the possibility of the Moravians taking over some of Ingham's societies.

Zinzendorf was looking for ways to extend the Moravian Church's reach in the UK. He'd established a base in Halifax and installed Brother and Sister Guessenbauer at Ingham's Pudsey Society. In 1743, Zinzendorf was on his way from Halifax to Pudsey for a progress report. Following the packhorse route heading north, he came across the wide stretch of 'Fallneck' Valley. The story has it that he 'had such a sweet feeling and deep impression' that he immediately decided that it should be the site of the second Moravian settlement.

Timing is everything. Zinzendorf discovered that the 22-acre estate, owned by a farmer, William Moss, was on the market. He bargained Moss down from his original asking price of £1,130 to £905. Still a considerable outlay: in today's money well over £200,000. Originally renamed 'Lambshill', it wasn't long before a new name was adopted; one that reflected both the local name and the Moravian Church's heritage: Fulneck, after Fulnek in the Czech Republic.

The Church was consecrated in 1746, the building completed in 1748. Externally, the central porch and clock tower are later additions. On either side of the Church are houses (now flats) for the Single Sisters and Single Brethren. During the 18th century the roof above the Church was raised to accommodate dormitories for pupils at Fulneck School. Originally called 'Grace Hall', the Church's beautiful interior is of the Georgian period. Stained glass windows were installed in the 1930s.

Looking down on the pews, pulpit and communion table is Fulneck's magnificent Snetzler organ, built in 1748. Johannes Snetzler was Swiss and a highly regarded organ builder. The workings of the Snetzler organ are long gone, but the wonderful organ casing is original and, possibly, the only surviving Snetzler casing in the world. As well as being used for Sunday worship, regular organ recitals by notable local organists take place.

Outside, the south facing terrace which was gradually added to over the following two centuries is one of the longest continuous unbroken lines of buildings in Western Europe. At its eastern end is the burial ground, 'God's Acre'. Situated on a pleasantly

wooded south facing slope, it's a place of peace: for quiet contemplation and reflection amongst the many sisters and brethren who have gone before us.

The first pupils arrived at Fulneck School in 1753, the sons of Moravian ministers and missionaries whose parents moved around, not just from the UK but the world, spreading the Gospel message. The first girls arrived two years later. A notable development because in those days educating girls wasn't the norm. But things were different amongst the Moravians: pioneered by Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), the Moravian Bishop and educator, believed that all children should receive an education, regardless of their sex.

The School became a fee paying boarding school in 1804 and maintains an excellent reputation for the highest academic standards.

And what of the Fulneck settlement today? The beautiful green valley that so moved Count Zinzendorf all those years ago is still very much intact, part of it now occupied by a well-tended 18-hole golf course. The Church continues regular Sunday worship with Lovefeast and Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. There is also a Thursday morning prayer meeting.

Church groups include Bible Book Club and a Bible Study Group. In the past, Fulneck had a great reputation for lace making, and there is still a handicraft group that meet regularly. More recently, Soul Sisters was established to bring together women of the congregation and the wider settlement who support the Church. The Church's award winning Drama Group is nearing its centenary year and stages three carefully chosen and well supported productions a year at the Comenius Arts Centre Theatre.

The former village shop and post office is now a warm and welcoming tearoom and antique shop offering a fine selection of savouries and cakes. A more recent addition is the 'Oh Hello! Pottery' which is proving to be a popular spot for creative talents. And, of course, Fulneck's museum is open from April to October, manned by a team of enthusiastic volunteers. Based in the settlement's former butcher's shop, exhibits include Fulneck's 19th century fire engine and a working hand loom.

Famous names who've either attended Fulneck School or lived in the Settlement include: the actress, Dame Diana Rigg; the international cricketer, Sir Len Hutton; former Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith; suffragette, Elizabeth Wolstenholme; labour reformer, Richard Oastler and Benjamin La Trobe, architect of the White House.

*Br David Robins*

## 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.**

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editorialteam@moravian.org.uk

Contributions for the Messenger should reach the editorial team by the 7th day of the preceding month.

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