



The Methodist Church
THAMES VALLEY
CIRCUIT



Andrew's Circuit walk, September 2010
11 miles walked ... welcome break at Ledger's Road ... 15 ½ miles to go!

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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Websites

Circuit:	www.methodistthamesvalley.org.uk
High Street Maidenhead:	www.methodistmaidenhead.org.uk
St Andrew's Slough:	www.methodist-slough-standrews.org.uk
St Mark's Crescent:	www.stmarksmaidenhead.org.uk
Windsor:	www.windsormethodistchurch.org.uk

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Introduction and Overview

The circuit has welcomed two families into the ministry team this year and three families have moved away from the circuit. Phil and Irene Morse, Ken and Maggie Blake, Dave and Alison Tomlin have left their mark on the lives of men and women, boys and girls in this circuit, as they have exercised ministry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I pay tribute to the year spent in the Thames Valley by Dave and Alison: their courage, resourcefulness and leadership had a profound impact on the life of the circuit. We thank God for those, who have offered themselves as God's servants during the past year.

Gary and Vicky came with their daughter Sarah from the Ashford (Kent) circuit and they are offering enthusiastic, wise and gracious ministry, based in the Maidenhead section of the circuit. Vicky has been appointed as the family worker in the High Street Church, and her gifts have already been in evidence. Jill and I came to the circuit with our two sons, Tim (at Sheffield University studying English) and Peter (at Strode's Sixth Form College in Egham). We are glad to be here and have enjoyed sharing in the last few months of the year with you, even though the Christmas celebrations were rather hampered by the snow.

Naveela Asif, the wife of a URC minister, was appointed as the circuit administrator before we arrived, and she has been working to understand the mechanics of a Methodist Circuit, so that presbyters may do their work more effectively. I hope that you will make yourself known to Naveela, as she operates at the hub of the circuit, using the office at St Andrew's as her base.

As we reflect in this report on the past year, we rejoice in the "green shoots". Versions of "Messy Church" are springing up around the circuit. "Open the book", which involves the church sharing the Bible stories with primary schools thrives in some of the communities. There are some very good relationships with other churches and faiths around the circuit. There is a desire for participation in vibrant, relevant worship and a willingness to discover God involved in every part of life. Congregations are taking the opportunity to offer food in their community as a sign of hospitality. We are thinking how our buildings can be a resource for God's mission. There are many signs of hope.

I have found a warm, caring spirit at work in the leadership of the circuit and assure you that the leadership team is committed to serve and to listen for the Spirit of God as we start another year, in which we are called to be faithful to the God, who persists with his reaching out to us, that we might respond and be co-workers in God's mission. Abiding in the vine comes to mind – so that we bear fruit.

A life of prayer, Scripture, fellowship and worship – abiding in the vine – will produce the fruit, seen in a mission-orientated church.

As we celebrate the God, who was faithful in 2010, we know that we are only on the edge of what God has for God's world. Let the Spirit catch us!

Andrew Baker, Superintendent Minister

Ministers

Rev Andrew Baker

I arrived in the Thames Valley circuit to be the Superintendent Minister in September 2010. My family and I have appreciated the concern for our well-being in the months before our arrival and during the first four months of our time here. My wife, Jill, and our younger son, Peter are happy in our new home and we are joined occasionally by our elder son, Tim, who is in his third year reading English at Sheffield University.

We moved here from Stoke-on-Trent, where we spent nine years, at the beginning of August, and have enjoyed getting to know this area and have made a number of visits into London to enjoy the music and theatre there.

My style of ministry was also shaped by the eight years we spent in the Caribbean – in St Vincent and Grenada. We have enjoyed being involved in a diverse congregation at St Andrew's and the warm welcome of people from congregations round the circuit. I am looking forward to joining with you in ministry in the years, which lie ahead.

Rev Dr Emmanuel Jacob

1981 - Minister, Blyth Valley Circuit, Northumberland; 1984 - PhD Research, Bristol; Jan 1988 - Senior Methodist Tutor at United Theological College, Harare, Zimbabwe; 1991 - Lecturer at Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa + Chair of Joint Diploma Board of SA for 2 years; 1994 - Minister in Lincoln South Circuit, Lincolnshire + Part time Senior Methodist Tutor at Lincoln Theological College for a year; 1997 - Senior Methodist Tutor, United College of the Ascension, Birmingham, & Connexional Team member for Formation in World Mission; September 2003 - Thames Valley Circuit (also, 2005-7: Assistant Chair, SE District).

The folk at Burnham are very grateful to Rev Mervyn Eden for his continuing care and for his leading of worship. As always, Rev John Newton is ever ready to offer cover in Burnham and Slough, and we are particularly grateful to him for covering this year when he had so much else to cope with. Bless you, John. Lynn and I thank God for the faith-love and prayers of so many who have held us up in the last 12 months.

Rev Barbara McIntivey

At the February 2010 Circuit Meeting, a proposal for me to change appointment within the circuit was accepted. This meant that the new incoming minister, Rev Gary Homewood, was able to look after both High Street and St Mark's Crescent Methodist Churches in Maidenhead. My new appointment consists of the pastoral care of Windsor, Eton Wick and Old Windsor Methodist churches and Colnbrook and Poyle United Church which is a joint URC/Methodist congregation. I was due to retire in the summer of 2011 but requested an extension for a year because the change for only one year would not have been good for the congregations, for making future staffing decisions or for me. I was sad to leave Maidenhead and the three congregations where I had ministered happily for six years but Dave and I are now settled and enjoying living in Windsor.

Rev Gary Homewood

In August 2010 my family and I transferred to the Thames Valley Circuit from the Ashford (Kent) Circuit, where we had lived and worked for just two years.

In the Ashford Circuit – based in Tenterden – I had pastoral charge of six small rural churches, and an additional congregational remnant that was still feeling the pain of losing its chapel home. The challenges and obstacles to rural ministry often outweighed the opportunities, and, given the Circuit's size, a large slice of each day was spent at the wheel of a slow-moving car (because following a tractor to any and every destination in Kent was mandatory).

My principal achievement, looking back, was to challenge the Circuit to ring-fence the funds accruing from several closed and sold-off chapel buildings in order to finance the building of a new generation of Minster-style churches that were better suited to the demands of the 21st Century, (which basically means starting with the car park and working backwards!). I will watch their progress in future years with keen and prayerful interest.

Moving to Maidenhead (with wife, daughter and two chickens) meant facing a quite new challenge in becoming the Minister of two large and successful town churches

which had not shared one Minister before. Gone are the tractors and the long, slow cross-country car rides (unless, of course, you simply must venture onto the M4), and gone, too, is the D.I.Y. version of ministry in which nothing ever happens unless the Minister does it. Both High Street and St Mark's Crescent Methodist Churches have a highly efficient system of church administration in place, and both buildings hum to the sound of almost daily activity. The new challenge, then, is to build upon what already exists (and works well) with care and sensitivity, seeking to enhance, expand and re-energize the role that each Church Family already performs in the community.

We have felt at home almost since the day of our arrival in Maidenhead, and the great surge of loving and compassionate support that we have received during a protracted time of family bereavement has deepened our relationship with our new friends and colleagues.

We look to the future with great and God-given hope and confidence – and excitement!

Supernumerary Ministers

Rev John C. Newton

My ability to offer cover for ministerial absences was severely curtailed this year by my wife's illness. We have been grateful for all the support and prayers we have received during this period. I have continued, however, to conduct Sunday worship on a regular basis in this, and other Circuits. I hope it will be possible to undertake more duties again during the coming year.

Rev John Hugh Roberts

I was born in Holyhead, Anglesey in 1926. Between 1946 – 1948.

I was in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps at Portsmouth where I experienced Methodism for the first time and was accepted into the Ministry. Between 1948-1950 I was at the Newbury circuit where I ministered to thirteen churches with the help of one bicycle. Between 1950 -1953 I was at Headingley College and then spent a year on the Beverley circuit.

In 1954, I married Doreen and sailed out to Southern Rhodesia via South Africa and my circuit comprised thirty churches and twenty-three schools.

I have four children scattered around the world in England, Scotland, the Emirates and Chile, and eight grandchildren, including Hazel Cook, who is a Methodist Minister in the Glossop circuit where she has been stationed for twenty years!

In 1967 we left Southern Rhodesia and were banned from re-entering the country for political reasons. If only they had listened to me and many others!

I have served in Middlesbrough, Bradford and Ealing and retired to Bourne End. My interests include family, sport, politics and the New Testament - especially Paul.

Rev David Smith

2010 was a year when on the health front little changed. I am still unable to preach which I find immensely disappointing. However I do lead the fortnightly Bible study at Windsor which I enjoy very much. This year we are studying Matthew's Gospel using the study books published by Alive Publishing Ltd, entitled "take & read". The books are of excellent quality, moderate scholarship with superb pictures and photographs. The questions at the end of each session are very perceptive. I thoroughly recommend these studies. They are priced at £10 (a year's study) or £35 for the four gospels. I occasionally contribute to the Wesley Guild programme which I also enjoy very much.

Two great occasions for me and Pat. On Advent Sunday we went to Bath Abbey for Candlelight Service, it was wonderful service. The worship was glorious and the music sublime. The second great occasion was an invitation to the Consecration of the Bishop of Southampton at St Paul's Cathedral. In his early days the new Bishop was a member of the Youth fellowship at Surbiton Hill Methodist Church. I was privileged to receive Jonathan into membership and start him off on his studies for a Methodist Local Preacher. During his time at University he was accepted into the Anglican Priesthood and after a time at Guildford Cathedral, he was consecrated Bishop. Two sadnesses: one was that the weather and health did not allow us to get to St Paul's and second that the Methodist Recorder, despite receiving all the details, showed no interest whatsoever in this wonderful story and what can happen within the Anglican/Methodist covenant.

Ministers Residing in the Circuit

Rev Dr Malcolm White

The past year has seen significant changes in the development of fresh expression in worship especially with the younger generation in mind and this is attracting more people to worship. After our Carol Service which attracted 2300 people we had to move out of the great Hall for the restoration of the Organ. So we cannot use the Hall for three months as it is full of scaffolding. We are worshipping in the Library, with a band instead of the organ.

The Family Centre has been developed to give extra space for their work among needy families. Our work in Parliament continues, although the number of Methodist MPs was reduced after the General Election. On January 10th I led the Annual Covenant Service in Parliament for the MPs, Peers, Staff and invited guests with about 110 attending.

The work of the Prayer and Healing Ministry continues. The Healing Service on the first Sunday evening of the month is now the best attended of all the evening Services. The monthly lunchtime Healing Service continues to meet the needs of those who work in London. Our weekly broadcast through Premier on the theme "God's Healing Love" continues to have a good response.

Please continue to pray for the work as we seek to bring the Gospel to the heart of London.

Rev Heather Noel-Smith

I have discovered slightly more of the circuit churches this year and have now visited nearly all of them to share in leading worship and I have been really warmed by the fellowship on every occasion. I find it much harder to learn people's names now that I am an occasional visitor - either that or it is middle age with a vengeance! So if I seem to have forgotten please just remind me! I have also been able to help with just a few tasks relating to local preaching and have enjoyed being part of the music group which we are working on forming at High Street and playing side by side with our Slough counterparts at the circuit service in September - next time we might even get to play together or be really ambitious and have a circuit group!

Otherwise I have been much further afield and have been running training events for our circuit in Gibraltar, and teaching mentors in Cambridge and supervising at

the superintendents' meeting, and together with Sarah Middleton (our district training officer) running a vocations day in Bromley at which we were delighted to have more than 25 potential candidates for presbyteral and diaconal ministry. I have also been preaching in a North London circuit not too far away so have been out and about almost every other week - struggling to remember both sets of names !

I am very grateful to good friends from High Street and Woodlands Park for lifts and assistance in various ways through the year and to all the stewards, etc, who transport me!

And I still am very happy living down on the river - or almost. If you are walking through the town to the river don't forget that tea and coffee are often available - this is a detour of merely 5 minutes!

Rev Linda Hillier

FAITH AND WORK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

This year has seen an increase in working with individuals in the town centre, the police and the farming community. Being strategically placed in the town centre, and spending time in Church Street café brings me into contact with many people, generating much pastoral work. Once again I was invited to be chaplain to the mayor of Slough, Councillor Grewell, so have had the privilege to serve for consecutive years in that capacity, and the civic service was combined with a harvest celebration supporting Slough Homeless our Concern (SHOC).

A training conference with the police, and attendance at Faith and the Future of the Countryside have developed my understanding of many issues affecting Slough and its environs.

Interfaith week generated work in producing an exhibition on the Prodigal Son and preparing and setting up a Christian Labyrinth, enjoyed by people of other faiths as well as Christians.

The town centre ministers' meeting is beginning to bear fruit, as we explore the possibilities of setting up a weekly soup run and a "Street Angels" scheme, alongside creating opportunities to worship together. Long term we hope to run an "Olympic Festival", a variety of fun, community events in different locations. This will generate much work in the coming 18 months, but will I hope be an initiative in which many people will choose to participate.

Churches

Burnham

Membership 11

Attendance at worship continues to be good.

Community groups catering for various age groups continue to use church premises, but we have fewer lettings. The “Well at Lent Rise” (St Mary’s Anglican Church project) continues to use our premises for its work. Burnham Lighthouse, the Christian holiday programme for children and young people, is still a major annual feature. Our members take an interest, and a few are actively involved. We value these links with children and young people.

Challenges remain. We would like to have an active Sunday School but are not able to do so at present. Some have expressed anxieties about the future, and emphasised the need to explore ways of being a more effective Christian presence and serving the community better. However, the substantial hospitality we offer through social and lunch groups and the small steps we have taken over the year offer some encouragement - more welcoming premises, enhanced worship area, attempts to connect with a local school. We thank God that we are still here “at the Crossroads”, are willing to do the best we can with the resources we have, and seek the best for the future. We will miss Betty Downs, a faithful member of our Church Council, who is now in glory. Thank you, Betty. We celebrate the baptism of Aurora Jean Ursula, the warm fellowship after church, the warm hospitality enjoyed in groups during the week, the faithfulness of our congregation, and the added dimension of the occasional “Come Taste and Sing” events.

Colnbrook and Poyle

Membership 14

Others for whom the church has pastoral responsibility 7

Children and youth activities 0

Average congregation: 17 – with one or two children on occasion

Colnbrook and Poyle United Church is in the Chiltern Area of the Thames North United Reformed Church Synod. The church, which is situated in the middle of the village, has a loyal congregation which comes from the local area and neighbouring Langley. Members and other friends meet on the first Tuesday afternoon of each

month for a Fellowship Meeting to which all are welcome. There is a rota for chairmanship of the meeting with the minister usually providing a message. Two from the Colnbrook congregation have joined in the fortnightly Bible Study held on the second and fourth Tuesday afternoons of the month at Old Windsor. Regular united services take place together with the Colnbrook Church of England Parish Church of St Thomas. In the absence of a village library, the church vestibule has library books which are available for anyone to borrow and return. Space on the premises is let several days a week for "Sure Start" activities.

Cookham Rise

Membership 33

Average attendance at morning worship has stayed at around 25 while evening services (on the second and fourth Sundays of each month) are attended by 5-12 people, some of whom are from St Mark's and High Street on the evenings when there is no service at those churches. There were four baptisms this year and one funeral.

We are still shorter of children than we would like to be, but it is a joy to have the two under-fives of a church couple in our midst, together with occasional visits from another member's grandchildren. In 2010 we held our usual two children's workshops at Easter and Christmas, both of which were well-attended by 5-12-year-olds from the local community. At the Christmas one, we decided to extend the morning to cover an early lunch, and the children made their own pizzas, which were enjoyed and washed down by jelly and ice-cream. A new venture for the church was a "Messy Church" session on Harvest Saturday where the theme was the feeding of the five thousand. Although only two non-church families came along, we were not discouraged, as many of our own church members had an excellent morning and there was a great feeling of fellowship and warmth. We aim to repeat the experiment on Palm Sunday 2011.

The church-sponsored Rainbow Pre-school meets every weekday on the premises, and is always full and meeting a high standard; a Toddler session takes place once a week and Rainbow Guides meet weekly on the premises. There is also an excellent jazz band which practises regularly in the hall and which occasionally treats us to concerts. Our monthly coffee mornings/cake stalls continue, and have become a welcome meeting-place for church members and friends plus others from the community as well as raising money for a variety of charities. Also monthly are our church Sunday lunches, which are normally attended by between twenty and thirty members and friends and elderly people who live alone: the faithful band of cooks turn out some excellent food, especially since we replaced the cooker with a larger, better one.

As usual we had a Prayer Vigil at Easter, on the evening of Good Friday and the morning of Easter Saturday. Church members took it in turns to be there, watching and praying, and many people, from within the church and from other churches in the village, expressed their thanks that they were able to come and spend time in the beautiful surroundings of the church in prayer, with the assistance of the prayer stations. Some church members also joined with St Elizabeth's RC church for a "Stations of the Cross" service on the Wednesday of Holy Week. While on spiritual matters, the church Fellowship Group, which has met every month continuously for over twenty years, has decided to change tack and will now meet for short "series" of meetings: we began in Advent 2010 with weekly sessions looking at the gifts the wise men brought to the infant Jesus. We are also delighted that Kathy Rickman is exploring a call to preach.

The church continues to raise money for Action for Children every year and for a chosen charity for six months of each year. 2009-2010 saw us raising funds for a project in Bethlehem, while in 2010-2011 we are supporting ecumenical fund-raising for a project in Burkina Faso. In addition we collect clothes, food, etc, for Whitechapel Mission and some of our members go up to Whitechapel occasionally to help with cooking and serving breakfast.

The people of Cookham Rise Methodist Church continue to serve in the village community and the wider local community, being involved in youth organisations, St Elizabeth's Day Centre, Street Angels, an ecumenical team presenting "Open the Book" sessions weekly in Cookham Rise Primary School and the Christians in Cookham Bible studies and Social Action Committee meetings.

Eton Wick

Membership: 18 Pastoral others: 42
Congregation about 10 – 12 adults morning and evening

There has been one infant Baptism during the year and the death of a much respected member who had served as senior church steward for many years before his final illness. One member moved away and one member has been received by transfer.

The membership of Eton Wick may be small but there is much activity which takes place on the premises which serves the surrounding community, including a popular Wednesday Lunch Club, a small weekly Toddlers group on Thursday mornings and a Fellowship meeting on Thursday afternoons. The Bible Study Group, which is pleased to have Methodists from Burnham and also Anglicans from the local Parish Church attending, meets fortnightly on a Tuesday evening, with the

Ladies' Club meeting on the alternate week. On the last Saturday morning of each month the church is used for a Community Care coffee morning.

Hampshire Avenue

Membership 69

Worship continues to be a special time for us, with both young and old leading it whenever possible. Our refurbished worship area (which now includes new chairs) provides a light, warm, and uplifting atmosphere, and our new hall and ancillary facilities offer a welcoming and pleasant place for varied activities. There is a positive and grateful spirit in the air. Our young people continue to be regularly involved in leading worship, under the able guidance of Sunday School leaders.

Relationships within the Local Ecumenical Partnership with St John's and St Michael's are a blessing, with good support for most of our joint events. Our LEP Covenant Service was held at Ledger's Road in January 2010. It was so good to share this service with the folk at Ledger's Road who hosted us so well for this event. It was a blessing for many.

Our building project was completed in September 2009, except for the installation of our new front doors. Our Dedication Service was held on 6th December 2009. The service led by Revs Emmanuel Jacob and John Newton was well attended, and the Mayor of Slough, Councillor Joginder Singh Bal, opened the new hall and ancillary facilities. It was a very special day for us. In April 2010 our minister was invited by Veolia Environmental Trust, a major donor, to attend a lunch reception at the House of Lords celebrating Veolia's achievements. A photograph of folk attending a joint church council held in our new hall appears in the Trust's Annual Report.

There have been a few low moments since then, but we put our trust in the Lord and moved forward in faith, always giving thanks to God for his wonderful blessings ("The God of Hampshire Avenue", as one member put it during our annual thanksgiving service). We are grateful for the support we received from churches and individuals in our circuit, and from the Circuit Meeting. We continue with fundraising so that we can provide resources for work with children and young people, and meet other needs. As we come to the end of one year we turn our attention and most of our energy to worship, fellowship, learning, caring, and witness and service to the community. We know that there will be more to celebrate.

Today we celebrate the positive spirit in our community and the new people that God has brought into membership. To God be the glory!

High Street Maidenhead

Membership 163

Others for whom the Church has pastoral responsibility 340

The Church at the top of the High Street has had a year of changes. In July we sadly said farewell to Rev Philip Morse who has now settled in Gloucester and although amazed by the size of the District there, has found compensation in being close to the County Rugby ground and the County Cricket ground.

The exterior stonework was completed and the interior church decorated, giving us a splendid building to use for the benefit of the community and the furtherance of our mission in Maidenhead.

We welcomed Rev Gary Homewood and his wife Vicky and delightful daughter Sarah in September and have learnt to share Gary's ministry with St Mark's church. We look forward to further and closer collaboration with our neighbours. We were fortunate to be able to recruit Vicky as our Youth and Family Worker and our fund raising project HUG (Help Us Grow) to finance that work is on-going.

We have been excited and challenged by new forms of worship with greater variety including services to encourage our growing young church. We have an air of hope and expectancy amongst the church family which we aim to nurture as we plan for future growth.

Ledger's Road

Membership 60

Another amazing Caribbean concert in 2010, complete with steel band too! Thanks again to Evan Richardson and Dorothy Connor. The Ladies continue to make a major contribution all round. We are ever grateful to Meg Few who has been the chief organiser and encourager for decades, and now offers support as needed. Evan and his Sunday School Team do a marvellous job, with the able support of Anne Broome. Anne is an excellent music co-ordinator and organiser and does a splendid job involving adults and young people in worship and other activities. It is so good to see young people take an active part in worship. The evening carol service was a treat, even though it had to be held a few days later than planned because of snow and ice.

Members are keenly aware of the need to energise worship, strengthen fellowship, add to our numbers (young and old), and serve the community. We decided to move forward in faith and make our premises safer, more adequate, and suitable, and to try and use our resources to meet the discipleship and mission challenges that we face. Fundraising for our property project – major repairs and modifications - is off to a very good start with everyone pulling together to ensure we succeed. Our young people are making their own special effort to raised funds. How fortunate we are!

Joint Church Councils with Hampshire Avenue and occasional joint services provide opportunities for mutual encouragement and friendship. On 19-20 March 2011 we celebrate our 110th Anniversary, and look forward to a great weekend. The year ahead will be demanding, but it will bring blessings too. We walk by faith. A few of our faithful have gone to be with our Lord, and we give thanks for them.

Old Windsor

Membership: 15

Pastoral others: 49

Average congregation: 16 - with 1 or 2 children on occasion

The congregation at Old Windsor has been delighted to welcome some new worshippers during the year including Isabella Simpson who has come with her parents since she was a few weeks old and who was baptised with great rejoicing in September aged nearly 7 months.

The regular Tuesday coffee mornings continue to be popular with church members and village folk as do the Saturday Brunches held in March in aid of Missions and recently a Christmas one for church funds. Hearty teas are also a speciality and these features at the two monthly “Travellers Tales” meetings and the “Come Taste and Sing” events, one held in June and a Harvest themed one in September. A monthly Thursday afternoon Fellowship Group meets under the care of Nicola Shaw, and the minister leads a fortnightly Tuesday afternoon Bible Study Group to which the Colnbrook and Poyle congregation are invited. Despite cold and slippery weather conditions plenty of local folk attended the annual “Carols by Candlelight” service on Christmas Eve and all enjoyed hearing Rebekah Shaw sing a solo verse from one of the carols. Members of the church are involved in the Old Windsor United Churches’ Action Group.

Anne Haggarty has been recommended to the circuit and accepted for training as a Worship Leader and together with David Alexander has shared in leading several Local Arrangements.

St Andrew's English & Urdu

(in English)

Membership 142

Others for whom the church has pastoral responsibility 99

Children and youth activities 95

(in Urdu)

Membership 18

Others for whom the church has pastoral responsibility 10

Children and youth activities 8

What an exciting year for St Andrew's! In some ways it has been like the White Rabbit of Alice fame. The church having just had time to say hello to Dave and Alison, it was time to say goodbye and hello Andrew, Jill and the boys.

The church premises are used by numerous people during the week for a variety of activities, some church based, others not. Allowing our rooms to be used in this way brings people into Christian premises and it may be their first or only encounter with a Christian environment.

During the year part of the sanctuary has been re-carpeted and slip-resistant flooring installed in the female toilets. As part of our continuing commitment to providing a safe environment, a fire alarm system has been fitted and commissioned during December. This will give protection for the caretaker and his family should an emergency arise particularly during the night. In addition a new bathroom has been fitted in the caretaker's flat.

St Andrew's people come from all sorts of backgrounds and nationalities bringing gifts and talents which make church life sparkle. The vibrancy and the enhancement to our worship brought by our Ghanaian members as they sing in their own language, the Sunday morning pre-church bible study and the Zimbabwean fellowship meeting most Sundays, are examples which deepen the church's commitment to allow all to worship Jesus as Lord.

In early spring Alison Tomlin led a workshop on prayer at Colnbrook called, "Teddy Bears and Icons" which was attended by about 30 members and friends and broadened the church's appreciation of the different aspects of prayer and encouraged us to deepen our prayer life. During the year the sacrament of communion has been celebrated at lunchtimes fortnightly on Thursdays followed by heartening soup and a roll and then the Network meeting in the afternoon.

With the departure of the Tomlins and the disposal of the existing manse, we welcomed the Baker family. They quickly opened the new manse with a series of open house evenings in September and October, where we could meet the new minister, tell our stories and also allow Andrew to meet and get to know some of the congregation in an informal setting.

A vigorous social life thrives at St Andrew's with various social activities for all ages. Notable was the Summer Fair and the fish and chip barn dance, where 50 or so enjoyed a hearty fish and chip supper sandwiched between several dance sets.

A regular prayer meeting has started on Wednesday evenings and before Christmas over 30 people attended house groups. On Boxing Day we welcomed into the church a baby whose family had come all the way from Texas to be baptised at St Andrew's.

We have become involved with the Food Bank which is an ecumenical project to provide food for the needy in Slough. We have also been working with other Town Centre churches on a "Slough at Night" project with the aim to set up Street Angels and a soup run in the town centre.

It gave us great joy and we thank God that Henry Brown has successfully completed his Faith and Worship studies and we look forward to his local preacher recognition service. We also give thanks for all our local preachers who serve us and the other churches within our circuit. During the year Dave Tottingham moved from being on note to on trial and Kay MacKenzie continued with her local preacher studies.

God's spirit is moving amongst His people here at St Andrew's and the challenge for us in 2011 is how to respond to God's love towards us as we seek to serve him and the people of Slough.

The Asian congregation meets on Sunday afternoons at St Andrew's and they are a congregation within the circuit. They have a small Sunday School and meet for fellowship, tea and cakes after their service. This is a supportive group of Christians, whose Christian lives are enriched by worshipping in Urdu, their mother-tongue.

St Mark's Crescent

Membership 64

Others for whom the church has pastoral responsibility 150

St Mark's continues to thrive, providing a hub of varied activities to the Church family and the local community.

Staff changes have seen the departure of Rev Barbara McIntivey to Windsor and the arrival of Rev Gary Homewood at Maidenhead.

Sunday morning worship continues to be attended by an average of 50 people, and evening services (1st and 3rd Sundays) alternate with those at High Street.

One regret is that our Young Church does not meet at the moment (but we live in hope of new beginnings), but our "F10" family-friendly opening to morning worship is a popular innovation, starting the service with a song, a story and a short prayer. So, too, is "Messy Church", which is popular with young and old alike, and has now become a regular feature of our worship life.

We are delighted by the arrival of our new organ, new sound equipment, and, as always, by our bright, warm and welcoming sanctuary.

2010 saw busy preparations for our biannual pantomime, "Dick Whittington", which was a great success in January 2011. The core of this production, Allsorts Drama Group, continues to meet on alternate Mondays and is a popular meeting point for children and young people.

Young and not-so-young alike continue to play and worship in our building, with Boys Brigade, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides causing almost as much mayhem as the Badminton group, or the ladies and gentlemen of Wednesday Fellowship! Birdwood private pre-school and CATS (Children on the Autistic Spectrum) continue to meet on the premises.

Our monthly Saturday coffee mornings are a popular local event, and the Spring and Christmas Bazaars are expanded coffee mornings, which raise substantial contributions for our chosen charities.

We are delighted that the wedding which took place at St Mark's in 2010 is to be followed by four more weddings – and a baptism – in 2011, but we would add that only one of our brides to be intends to arrive in a Fire Engine!

As always, our busy church building and its resident family of friends is well served by a devoted group of Church Officers who give so much time and energy to the on-going life of St Mark's in its many different guises. We thank them all for their Christian service, and we look forward to greeting you whenever you call by.

Windsor

Membership: 132

Pastoral others: 49

Average morning congregation: 75 adults + 10 children

Average evening congregation: 18.

During the year there have been 2 infant and 1 adult Baptisms; 1 Wedding and 3 Marriage Blessings; 2 members received by Transfer and 1 by Confirmation and the death of a well loved church member.

Windsor Church has a good number of children and young people coming into the building including a lively Sunday School with 30 children on the register and a thriving weekly Toddler Group with a waiting list – it is so popular! There is also a Brownie Guide pack and during the week the premises are hired out for part of three days to a teacher of pre-school music education called “Music with Mummy”. Once a fortnight the Wesley Guild meets on a Wednesday evening and also fortnightly there are two Bible Study Fellowship Groups, an afternoon one and an evening one, which both meet at the church. Every Saturday morning 10.30 am – 12 noon a coffee morning is held. There is an active Outreach Committee which organizes concerts and events to raise money for various charities and good causes and is a forum for thinking about all aspects of mission. Members of the church are involved in Churches Together in Windsor which supports a Homeless Project providing meals, help and advice two lunchtimes and one evening a week, and also shower facilities at the Baptist Church in Victoria Road.

On Mondays at 7 am there is an ecumenical silent prayer meeting lasting half an hour and on a Friday evening once a month a church prayer meeting. The small chapel, which re-opened last year, and is now open during the day, is appreciated by members and visitors who find it a welcome place for reflection and prayer. The upgraded audiovisual system in both church and hall offers many possibilities for usage which have yet to be explored fully. Worthy of note at Windsor Church are the beautiful floral decorations which enhance the entrance and worship areas and which are provided by a skilled team of flower arrangers. The Windsor Church website continues to be enlarged and improved by an enthusiastic webmaster.

Woodlands Park

Membership 26

Others for whom the church has pastoral responsibility 100

Sunday morning attendance at worship numbers about 12 - 18.

It was good to welcome two adults confirmed into membership recently.

There is an afternoon Bible study group held in a member's home. The church's First Steps Pre-School meets every morning, and the Toddlers group one afternoon each week and a Rainbow pack and one Brownie pack also meet on the premises. A Kenyan girl's secondary education continues to be sponsored through a project called Omwabini promoted by Rev Mary Austin. A small change collection gathered after Sunday services by one of the members has raised considerable amounts for charity.

Members of the church are part of an ecumenical team which, since September 2008, goes weekly into Woodlands Park Primary School to share Bible stories through the "Open the Book" programme. It is fun and worthwhile for both the team and particularly for the children, who look forward each week to taking part in the stories.

We were sorry to see Barbara and Dave leave us in September in the interests of the wider mission of the Circuit as Barbara moved over to the pastoral care of a group of churches in the Windsor Area. At the same time it has been pleasing to welcome Andrew and Jill amongst us and we are looking forward to the future and the special gifts Andrew will share with us.

Reports

Circuit Stewards' Report

It is with relief (although pressed for time as usual) that, for the first time, I write this report for the calendar year 2010, as opposed to the "Methodist" year. Although this will no doubt put a bit of a strain on the system, due to tight deadlines, I am sure that we can cope and I am sure that the majority of people expect an "annual" report to be so.

The main event of the early part of the year was, in my opinion, the appointment of Chris Wren as Circuit Treasurer with Imran Daniel as his assistant; icing on this particular cake would have been success in finding a replacement for Ian Haggarty (Circuit Meeting Secretary) but alas this was not so; Ian kindly volunteered to stay

for a second “final” year until the new Superintendent Minister (Andrew Baker) had settled in. At the same time the CLT (Circuit Leadership Team) was endeavoring to carry out the Circuit Meeting’s instructions to put flesh onto the bones of the initial reorganisation of the Circuit which would be inevitable following the reduction, in Summer, of the Circuit staff from five Presbyters to four.

As if this wasn’t enough we then embarked on selling 3 Merton Road and finding a new manse for Andrew’s arrival!

The year also began with my climbing aboard my hobby horse named “Communication” and I then went on, during the rest of the year, to ensure that everyone was aware of my desire to see that every member of the Circuit should be able, relatively easily, to find out what was agreed and discussed at Circuit Meetings and, although not within my remit, Church Councils. This remains one of my “hobby horses” so please let me know if you have any ideas to improve matters.

In August 2010, Dave & Alison Tomlin, our co-Superintendents, completed their one year’s appointment as Superintendent Minister and we said farewell to them as Dave “retired” for the second time and Alison took up the less stressful position as President of the Methodist Conference. I personally learnt a great deal from them as, I am sure, did many others in the Circuit. We also said farewell to Ken and Maggie Blake and Phil and Irene Morse as Ken retired whilst Phil moved back to his beloved West Country.

We then welcomed Andrew and Jill Baker together with Gary and Vicky Homewood as the Circuit’s new ministers; we also “welcomed” Barbara McIntivey as she moved from Maidenhead to Windsor, having kindly agreed to extend her service by a year, thereby giving the proposed new Circuit Organisation time to settle down before yours truly has to dip his toe into the Stationing process.

The process of seeking replacement Ministers commenced with the Circuit Meeting appointing and empowering the Circuit Invitation Committee to act on its behalf. Contrary to popular belief, the fact that we only managed two replacements was not forced upon the Circuit by financial constraints but by the number of Ministers seeking new appointments being approximately 80% of the number of vacant posts arising. This together with the ratio of members per Minister, in the Circuit, being one of the lowest outside London precluded any hope of “securing” three Ministers this time round or for the immediate future. For these appointments, the membership of the committee comprised Circuit Staff, Circuit Stewards and the Circuit Meeting Secretary.

Following the “success” of attracting two Presbyters, it then became imperative that we create and staff the post of Circuit Administrator. This process resulted in the appointment; on 1st September 2010 of Mrs Naveela Asif who is now well on the way to understanding the peculiarities of the Methodist Church in general and the Thames Valley in particular.

As you now know, we met with success in both the “Superintendent” and “Presbyter” Stationing Rounds and welcomed Andrew Baker as our new Superintendent and Gary Homewood as the “new” Minister in Maidenhead as they joined our Circuit on 1st September 2010.

In anticipation of this reduction in staff and the need therefore for a reallocation of pastoral charge of our churches; the CLT, after long and difficult thoughts and debates, produced a “plan A” for consideration of the Circuit Meeting, with the proviso that this would be reconsidered and modified, if necessary, after one year. This was accepted by the Circuit Meeting and the Circuit Stewards will commence seeking feedback from the February Church Councils onwards; initially feedback will be sought through Church Councils so please make your views known to their members. However, individual feedback is welcomed and should be addressed to Phil Clack.

Circuit Stewards

In case there is any doubt as to whom your Circuit Stewards are and what their particular responsibilities are, I detail them below:

Phil Mount: Senior Circuit Steward and still Circuit Property Steward; responsible for annoying the Chair of the District, leading the “Stationing” procedure, care of Priesthaus, Maidenhead, member of High Street, St Andrew’s (English) and Ledgers Road Church Councils. Responsible also for Legal - Fire, Health and Safety - and dealing with anything that nobody else on the CLT wishes to touch!

Phil Clack: Leader of the “feedback” process together with care of manse at Clarence Road, Windsor; member of Circuit Mission Development Fund Committee; member of the Smaller Churches Support Group; member of Church Councils at Old Windsor, Hampshire Avenue and Windsor.

Ruth James: Care of manse at Salt Hill Drive, Slough; member of Burnham and Eton Wick Church Councils.

Anne Haggarty: Care of manse at Upton Road, Slough; member of the Smaller Churches Support Group; member of Church Councils at St Andrew’s (Urdu) and Colnbrook & Poyle; Circuit Prayer Co-ordinator with District.

Paul Newton: Care of manse at St Mark's Road; member of Church Councils at St Mark's and Cookham Rise and Woodlands Park.

Chris Wren: Circuit Treasurer

Imran Daniel: Assistant Circuit Treasurer

The Circuit Stewards are there to help; please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate Steward.

The Future

The first matter, in my mundane opinion, is that both Ian Haggarty (Circuit Meeting Secretary) and Phil Clack (Circuit Steward) step down at the end of August 2011; replacements must be found and are currently being sought. Please do not turn your back on members of the CLT as they perform this quest

Equally important is that we give all the support we can to the Smaller Churches Support Group.

Next comes yet another quest, but this time for two Ministers! Barbara McIntivey will be retiring at the end of August 2012, and Mannie will be seeking new challenges, so the Stationing procedure will commence, with a District briefing meeting towards the end of May 2011.

The vexed question of "What are adequate reserves" continues to take up time that could probably be better spent; I have set up a small working group to see if we can lay this subject to rest for once and for all.

Finally, I can see "green shoots" – please do not tread on them but nurture and protect them!

Phil Mount

Action for Children

This year has seen the sale of the Highbury site which, after 85 years as home to the charity, simply wasn't sustainable. They have moved to a new base in Watford, although there is still a London office in Great Queen Street and a Horsham office at Roffery Park Institute which hosts Supporter Days.

Possibly because of this, there has not been a great deal of news from the local offices and it is to be hoped this will improve now that things have settled down.

We continue to try our best to raise funds in the Thames Valley Circuit.

The Windsor group had its best Racecourse collection ever, raising £720.

As usual all the income from Christmas events is given to Action for Children. The Maidenhead group went carol singing in the town.

Can I again stress the tremendous amount that is raised for the charity from Home Collection boxes and thank all those who have one.

My grateful thanks to all the loyal helpers who work so hard to raise funds.

Evelyn Thomson

Circuit Mission Committee

This committee continues to meet to promote an awareness of mission issues around the circuit. The committee organises an annual circuit quiz in aid of the Mission in Britain Fund and a strawberry tea to fundraise for the World Mission Fund. In October 2010, the Annual Circuit Missions Service (which alternates between focussing on Mission in Britain and Overseas) was held at Burnham and led by the Rev Linda Hillier who spoke movingly about her work as Faith and Work Development Officer in Slough.

The members of the committee wish to pay tribute to Neville Thorman, who died in September, was for many years both Circuit Home Missions treasurer and secretary of the Mission Committee.

Barbara McIntivey

Disciple 2 Course

The DISCIPLE 2 Group made up of people from around the circuit (St Andrew's, Colnbrook, High Street, Woodlands Park and Cookham), which met fortnightly at St Mark's in Maidenhead, completed the course in July 2009. The DISCIPLE 2 course entitled: Into the Word – Into the World concentrates on Genesis, Exodus, Luke and Acts. During the course one of the members of the group, Linda Shoemith, sadly died. Three other members suffered family bereavements and several were absent at times because of prolonged illness. However despite all these problems the group valued getting to know God's word better as well as each other.

Barbara McIntivey

Education and Youth Committee

This committee recently held its first meeting for some years. In reviewing the work among young people in the Circuit, it became obvious that some Churches are involving a significant number of youngsters and are doing valuable youth work. However, other churches have little or no work with young people, due either to lack of children or to lack of leaders. The size of the Church does not appear to be a factor in this situation.

Our mission to young people must not be overlooked. It is a long time since the Circuit as a whole had an event with young people at the heart of it. The Committee proposes that we hold a Circuit Family Fun Day at St Mark's on Bank Holiday Monday, 2nd May 2011.

Anne Haggarty

Fairtrade

Thames Valley is a Fair Trade Circuit and all churches use fair trade products in serving the congregations and communities.

Some churches in the circuit provide the opportunity for members of the congregations to purchase fair trade goods at various times during the month.

In 2010 Windsor Methodist Church were fortunate to host an inspiring evening with Vinay Devaiah, the Deputy Manager of Thiashola Tea Estate, who told us:

“We were keen to join Fairtrade as a means of giving something back to our workers. The Fairtrade premium is a means of empowering workers and is considered a goodwill gesture to strengthen the good relationship that exists.”

Fairtrade Fortnight 2011 has the theme “Get loud and proud about Fairtrade”. RBWM Fairtrade Group welcomes new members to help raise awareness and increase the volume of Fairtrade goods bought in UK.

Contact Sue Trout 01753 853939 if you would like to know more about how you could be involved with fair trade in the circuit.

Sue Trout

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

There are currently 33 accredited local preachers in the Thames Valley Circuit, of whom 23 are available to lead worship in any quarter. In addition both Patie Crockett and Henry Brown have completed the Faith & Worship course and the necessary interviews and services required by the Connexion. The Circuit Meeting has agreed that Patie should be accredited, and her admission service is being held on 30th January 2011 at Colnbrook. The Local Preachers' Meeting has recommended that Henry too be accredited, and with the agreement of the Circuit Meeting, Henry will be admitted on 17th April 2011 at St Andrew's. It is a great joy for the local preachers to see Patie and Henry, both of whom have worked very hard to reach this point, come to the culmination of their studies, and we give thanks to God for them and pray that they may continue to be led by the Holy Spirit as they lead worship.

We are also pleased that we now have three local preachers on trial – Kay MacKenzie continues her studies and has been joined by Dave Tottingham from St Andrew's and Kathy Rickman from Cookham Rise: it is encouraging to know that God still calls people to this vital work. At the other end of the scale, long-service certificates were presented this year to Richard Hall and John Long who have completed 50 and 60 years respectively as preachers. We are also fortunate to have Jill Baker on our preaching plan since she and Andrew came to the Circuit, and we hope that Vicky Homewood will be able to return to preaching too, once baby Sarah becomes a little older. The Circuit lost a worthy preacher and a true friend with the death of Neville Thorman earlier this year. At his funeral service at Slough Crematorium there was standing room only – a tribute to the preacher and the man!

In March 2010 we were given an insight into the new Methodist hymn resource "Singing the Faith" when Rev Ian Howarth came to talk (and sing!) us through some of the good things it will contain. We look forward to being able to use this extra resource when it is published later in 2011. In May 2011 Rev Gary Homewood is to lead our study day as we consider "All-age worship".

There are now seven worship leaders in the Circuit (Eileen Chislett at St Mark's having been commissioned this year), another three who have recently completed their training (Kieron Shaw at St Mark's and Jon and Rosemary Garde at Windsor), and one who is awaiting training (Anne Haggarty at Old Windsor). We thank God that these people have heard the call to assist in worship in this way.

Connie Jeffery

Methodist Homes

75% of churches have already contributed to the work of Methodist Homes in the year which ends on 31st March 2011. If your church council meets before then, we hope there will be two items of business:

- 1 – Donation to Methodist Homes
- 2 – Appointment of a church representative for Methodist Homes.

The Total raised to the end of 2010 was £1,566.59 and a further £84.44 was recovered from Gift Aided donations from congregations on Methodist Homes on Sunday. We are extremely grateful for this generous support.

The Charity is currently privileged to care for 12,500 older people, and need a great deal of money over and above the contribution made by its “clients”. Some of the charitable income raised enables Methodist Homes to offer a wide range of activities and experience, so that older people can gain the most from their later years. For example, three residents at Collin Court, Chester are regulars at the local swimming pool. Volunteers help 70 year old Derek and 88 year old Bill to try swimming again, and Connie who is 91 does some exercise in water. All three say how well they sleep at night after an evening at the pool.

We are very pleased that the Wesley Guild at Windsor has included in its 2010/2011 programme a visit by the Chaplain of “Woodbank”, the Methodist Home in Woking. Rev Bob Snedden has chosen as his subject “Methodist Homes – Past, Present & Future”. There will be an opportunity to donate to the charity.

Daphne Hogg

Prayer Diary

In everything make your requests known to God in prayer, and petition with thanksgiving. Philippians 4 v 6 (REV)

The quarterly Prayer Diary continues to be a source of help and inspiration to all members of the Circuit. It helps us to focus on a particular Church for a whole week, and to recognise, in the section which asks for God’s help, the different problems facing our Churches. The other section offers prayers of thanks, and it is good to be able to share in joyful thanksgiving with all our Churches.

Paper copies are available in all Churches, and the electronic version on the Circuit website has the same prayers. A picture of each Church is included at least once a year. This version is also published on the District website along with any special prayers.

Anne Haggarty

Property and Health and Safety

This report covers only matters of “interest” to the Circuit and only touches on those matters which are properly within the remit of Church Councils if they are likely to require support from the Circuit. The “collection” of Schedules A continues at the same pace as in previous years but I am glad to report that “accounts” should now be sent to the Circuit Treasurer who is far more likely to understand them than am I.

The main change this year is that from 1st January 2010, we will need to use the Property Consents website to apply for District consent for proposed property projects.

The paper schedules previously used under the Approvals process have now been replaced by a web based Consents process. Managing trustees will be able to create new projects, and progress projects through the website, from church to circuit to district. The District Consent Giving Body will be the one body required to give final consent to property projects.

All sales, purchases and leases of Methodist property will need to be referred to TMCP (the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes) to ensure the legal and charity law obligations of the trustees have been fulfilled before they will “pass” the Consents Process.

Churches

Hampshire Avenue’s building scheme is now, to all intents and purposes, complete.

High Street’s fairly wide ranging refurbishment has been completed as far as it was initially intended to go.

Ledger’s Road has now taken the first few steps on the road to an essential rebuild and refurbishment of their church; please give them all the help that you can.

Manses

Merton Road has been sold and our new Super, and his family, are very happy in its replacement on Upton Road. Priesthaus has had some long needed repairs and renovations carried out and we have a tenant firmly ensconced in St Mark’s Road.

Quinquennial Inspections

These continue to be carried out by N A Barr of Daniel Lelliott Krauze, although there has been some slippage due to my having to wear two "Circuit Hats"; I am hoping, with the help of Phil Clack, to catch up with this in the near future.

Health and Safety

I continue to include this topic in the hope that more members will read this report than the minutes of Circuit Meetings as this is a subject that will never go away. Responsibility for H & S is clearly laid on the shoulders of individual Church Councils (with regard to their "own" churches) as Managing Trustees of Model Trust Property. Lots of advice is available from the Health & Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk, Methodist Church itself www.methodist.org.uk and Methodist Insurance under their "Church Shield" Policy www.methodist-insurance.co.uk. Please avail yourself of these sources of information but please also remember that it is the wish of the HSE that "risk management" is practiced not "risk aversion".

List of "Approved" Tradespeople & Professionals

For the seventh year the response has been completely underwhelming so much so that I continue to take solace in the fact that I am not the only one who is capable of masterful inactivity, although I do actually read these reports before doing nothing about them.

Phil Mount

Safeguarding

Another very successful Safeguarding Training was held on May 22nd. It was attended by fifteen people. Janet Rose again gave us comprehensive guidance from her years of experience as a Social Worker in Child Protection and a trainer, and again none of us were left in any doubt about our responsibilities for safeguarding children and the vulnerable and what steps we need to take to carry out our roles as those working with children and young people in our churches. There probably needs to be another course to ensure that at least one person from each church has received the training and that there is an opportunity for Ministers and Local Preachers and stewards to attend training. There will be a meeting for all Church Safeguarding Officers on March 1st, details to be circulated.

I was invited to, and attended a very useful meeting held by the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board. It was for safeguarding representatives of the faith groups and there was an opportunity to share what we are all doing to safeguard children, and to ask questions and be given answers by

people very experienced in this field. I have a Safeguarding Children Toolkit to which to refer.

The establishment of an Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has been put on hold as has the Vetting and Barring initiative. We are still waiting to hear what the procedures will be. In the meantime the CRB forms have a new format as from last July. I can obtain these and can also verify them along with Ministers. The Methodist Church has published a new Safeguarding handbook with very detailed guidance. A copy will be purchased for the Circuit initially and then a decision made about obtaining copies for each church. This is a good resource and supplements the above Toolkit.

The Superintendent Minister has responsibility for Safeguarding and there is a District Safeguarding Officer to whom we can refer and with whom I liaise about the Safeguarding training that has been given in the Circuit. I am available to answer any queries about procedures – if I do not know the answer I can contact people who do!

In November safeguarding was on the agenda for the Circuit Meeting on Hospitality. It is vital that our churches are welcoming places where all feel safe – children, young people and adults.

Kathy Rickman

Slough Faith Partnership

During the year I have continued to represent the Methodist Church in the Partnership as it seeks to give itself a formal basis. The Circuit is now officially signed up as a member body. We await elections for the new management committee.

A successful series of events was organised for the second national Inter-Faith Week in November. These were centred around an exhibition at The Centre. Using a neutral venue was a distinct advantage, although not as accessible as one might have liked.

Many strong personal relationships have been established, but it is not at all easy to involve more than a small minority of the members of the main faith communities. Below the surface there are some very big issues to be faced.

John C. Newton

Slough Religious Study Centre

I have continued as a Trustee of this body, which is about to be wound up. In recent years usage of the centre has greatly diminished as schools have developed their own resource base, and teachers make more use of the Internet. Sadly we decided that the level of usage no longer justified the expense involved.

Resources which are still being of use will in future be available at other local centres. Primary School materials have gone to St Mary's School in Upton; Secondary materials have gone to St Bernard's Grammar School; and Church materials to Cornerstone in Burnham. Office equipment is going to the Food Bank scheme.

We are grateful for support which the Circuit has given over the years.

John C. Newton

Smaller Churches Support Group

This group has continued to meet throughout 2010, encouraging the smaller Churches of the Circuit to attract people into their buildings, services and activities. All six Churches which come under the banner of the Smaller Churches' Group have held various events. Although some have continued with the "Come, Taste and Sing" format, adapted to their particular situation, at least one has tried a "Messy Church" format.

All Churches reported that the activities undertaken had been very enjoyable, though hard work for the organisers. Favourable comments have come from the "visitors".

My thanks go to all those who have helped in any way during the last year to make the work of all those connected to the Smaller Churches Support Group a success.

We look forward to another year of making the churches in our communities a visible presence of Jesus, and also of supporting each other.

Anne Haggarty

Website and Publicity

Website

The Circuit website, www.MethodistThamesValley.org.uk, was designed and developed in the 2008-9 Church year, and went live in March 2009.

Phase 2 went live in September 2010, with the introduction of extra features such as NEWS, the Superintendent's daily BLOG, a PHOTO GALLERY and special features such as Here and There, an Advent Calendar written by Jill Baker, with a page of reflections from two cultures added each day during Advent.

Access to the site has continued to grow, and in the two months of November and December 2010 there were over 4,400 visitors. We regularly have visitors from overseas, including, within a few days, access from France, Hungary, Switzerland, New Zealand and Japan. The three most popular pages are Andrew's BLOG, the NEWS page and the PREACHING PLAN (with 1850, 450 and 370 accesses respectively in those two months).

It is not unusual for over 50 events to be listed in the DIARY, and at one point it included posters from no fewer than 8 churches. Please do continue to send items for the NEWS, DIARY and PICTURE GALLERY. Remember: Out-of-date information is useless; if the details given for your Church change, please ensure that the Circuit Webmaster is informed.

Our very grateful thanks go to everyone who supplies information!
If you haven't seen the site yet, why not have a look?

Publicity

When your church puts on a special event, is it for your members only, or are you seeking to attract others? If the latter, remember that the Circuit has two media in place for spreading the news circuit-wide and further a field:

Hard Copy. The Circuit What's On news-sheet is published monthly and distributed to every Church for displaying on its notice board.

Electronically. The Circuit Website's Diary.

You are invited to send details of "open" events to the Editor or Circuit Webmaster (names and contact details are in the Circuit Directory). Contacting either is sufficient for your event to be included in both media.

Ian Haggarty

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum

The Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum (WAMCF) is a local community forum that brings together people from all faiths and communities to promote community cohesion and to value diversity.

Events during 2010:

- Cohesion Conference in June at the Berkshire College of Agriculture on Communication and Bridging the Generation Gap which involved 9 local schools and members from various faith traditions.
- Sports and picnic day for families in July
- Christians v Sikhs Interfaith cricket match at Boyne Hill Cricket Club in September
- Diversity Day Event in October
- Interfaith Dinner in November

The WAMCF Women's Interfaith Group has met regularly throughout 2010 usually on the third Monday evening of every second month at 7.30pm. This group is open to ladies of all faiths and none.

- January – Maidenhead Synagogue for a tour and presentation about Jewish faith and worship
- March – High Street Methodist Church – demonstration and discussion about producing a cloth book on the theme Women of Faith – also to see the newly refurbished worship space and hear about the history of the church
- May – a tour, presentation and discussion at the Maidenhead Mosque in Holmanlease
- July – at the Sikh Temple in Maidenhead to progress the Women of Faith cloth book
- September – tour and presentation at Maidenhead Sikh Temple
- November at Maidenhead Synagogue to discuss future meetings and view the nearly complete cloth book which was later presented to WAMCF at the Interfaith service led by Mike Bruton at High Street Methodist Church on 21st November.

The aim of the book is to affirm the influence and role of women in all faiths; it is available for individuals or women's groups to borrow.

Barbara McIntivey

(WAMCF Trustee and convenor of the Women's Group)

Women's Network

In 2011, at the Methodist Conference in Southport, the Movement for Methodist Women in Britain will be launched, and the name of Network will cease to be.

Jill Baker is to be the first National President of the Movement. The appointment, which Jill has agreed to accept for two years, will be a demanding one, and we offer Jill our support and prayers as she undertakes this task.

Since our last report Mrs Jean Plant has resigned as the Convenor for our section of the District, and so far there is no replacement for her.

In the Circuit the year began with a well supported Retreat Day entitled "Time for God". This was led by Rev Barbara McIntivey and provided time for both quiet and thought-provoking discussion.

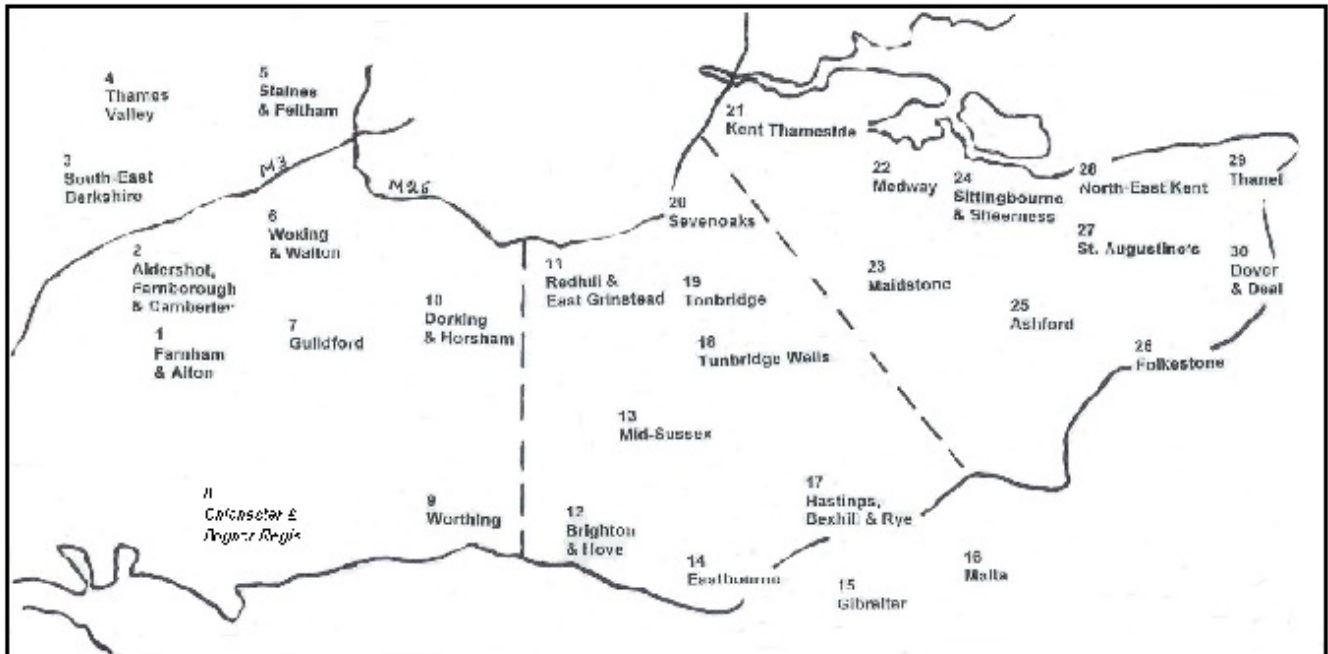
The Easter Offering Service and tea was held at St Andrew's. Rev Alison Tomlin gave the address and spoke of the need for companions on the way.

After a Coffee Morning in August, a final donation was sent to the South East District Dementia Project, completing a total sum of £425 sent from the Circuit.

The first event in 2011 will be a Retreat Day at Eton Wick on 12th April; this will be led by Jill Baker and all are welcome.

Ann Hardiment

The Methodist Church South-East District - Chair: Rev John Hellyer



The South East District of the Methodist Church covers Kent, East and West Sussex, Surrey, North-East Hampshire, East Berkshire, Malta and Gibraltar.

It has 29 circuits and 230 Churches with its administrative centre in Crawley, West Sussex