

AROUND THE DALE

The Newsletter of the Calderdale Methodist Circuit

Number 10

Spring 2016

Baqoun Dance Troupe from Bethlehem

In June this year the Anglican Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales will be welcoming and hosting a group of young Christians from Bethlehem who will be treating us to a series of remarkable events in a wide variety of locations.

The event will offer us an opportunity to learn more about Palestinian life and culture. A website has been created – www.baqoun.org

– that gives more information about the group.

There will be school visits, workshops and performances in public spaces. The centrepiece of Baqoun's UK visit will be celebration events at selected venues. These will combine dance, food, movement, celebration and drama in a wonderful time of entertainment and information.

In the Circuit, they will be performing at Central Methodist Church, Brighouse on Sunday 19th June at 3.00 pm.

Baqoun are a group of Palestinian Christians based in Beit Sahour, a small town close to Bethlehem. Baqoun started as a small group of young people who loved 'Dabke'. In 2007, they began presenting folklore dancing



in many events both inside the country and for visiting foreign guests.

Baqoun now have about 50 members

in the group – all are young people aged between 13 and 21, and most of the group are students at school or university.

The Circuit's World Church Group

will be holding their Annual Informal Meeting on Saturday 8th October at Cross Hills.

Everyone is welcome – 10 for 10.30am, starting with a cuppa!!

'The Praying Hole' in Ragley Wood

The May Morning Meetings by Glenda Gibson

In John Wesley's journal for Friday 26th August 1748, he writes:

“At 12 we came to Heptonstall Bank..... The place in which I preached was an oval spot of ground, surrounded with spreading trees, scooped out, as it were, in the side of the hill, which rose round like a theatre. The congregation was equal to that at Leeds; but such serious and earnest (sic) attention! It lifted up my hands so that I preached as I scarce did in my life.

About four I preached again to nearly the same congregation and God again caused the power of His love to be known.”

It is thought that the location that John Wesley preached at is 'The Praying Hole' in Ragley Wood as we now know it, though why the subsequent annual gatherings took place in May is less clear.

It is possible, maybe probable, that these May morning meetings pre-date the building of many of the local chapels, when groups met in each other's homes most Sundays of the year with the tradition of meeting outdoors on the first Sunday in May.

The tradition continued for many years after the chapels were built though fell by the way in the early part of the 20th century. At least, that is, until the 1930s when some of the older members who remembered the tradition in which they had participated in their youth decided

to revive it.

My dad, Vincent Collinge, was a young man at this time and was one who worked hard to revive the tradition and ensure the continuity of the annual outdoor meeting. I think this was somewhere between 1932 and 1938. He helped organise the meeting and arranged for it to become the responsibility of members of the chapels around the Colden Valley to take turns at organising the 'meeting' i.e. Highgate, Broadstones, Slack, Mount Zion. Later, more members from other chapels and other local churches took part.

Dad only missed attending one meeting when he was in the forces. We, as a family, used to attend every year. We would have a cup of tea or glass of milk and toast and put on our wellies and hats and coats and set off to attend the meeting, which used to start at 7.30am; it later was put back to 8am. Many of the meetings were attended by the Hebden Bridge band. On our return we would pick bluebells and beech leaves and put a bunch on Alice Longstaff's doorstep. I remember on a couple of occasions the bluebells weren't out so we just left a bunch of beech leaves. On our return home we would have a cooked breakfast before attending Sunday School.

The meeting is taking place again this year. Why not put it in your diaries:

8 a.m. 1st May 2016 @ 'The Praying Hole in Ragley Wood'. The meeting is about 30 minutes and is a special experience – you will be most welcome.



Dedication of New Bus

Sharon Lawrance

South Lakes 'Youth for Christ' ran a Bus Ministry in the Lake District. They advertised their bus to be gifted to another charity on United Christian Broadcasters Radio in August 2015, as they were winding down their ministry. We applied by putting in a letter of 'Intent for Use' and were successful over

40 other applicants!

Part of our bid was to pass our bus on to someone else if we were

successful. We then had to consider a number of applicants for our bus and it has gone to a new 'Churches Together' project in Rothwell.

The Revd Dr Roger Walton, Chair of District, very kindly dedicated the new bus at a service at Illingworth Moor in February - see picture.



The last few months

... have seen many changes!

The bus is regularly at the 'Food Drop In' at the New Ebenezer; working with 'Helping Young People' in Halifax and the Police at the Bus Station, Cafeoasis

and youth work around Calderdale. We spent several very successful Saturday evenings, leading up to Christmas, in Halifax town centre working in partnership with 'Street Angels' and the Police to provide a safe place for party goers etc. We plan to continue this work in the future.

We have also worked with Illingworth Moor Methodist Church by taking our Prayer Stations into Abbey Park Primary School to provide a prayer space for the children; this has been very well received and we are now looking to provide a prayer space for teachers on their Inset Day. We are hoping to extend this work with other primary schools in the area.

We are also looking to start a new project in schools called

'Open the Book' telling Bible stories through drama.

In February and March we have been working in Mytholmroyd to provide a space for the Calderdale MBC Youth

Service to help them get back up and running as their Community Centre and all their resources were lost in the Christmas floods.

Other exciting work started in March with a sports based project working again in partnership with the Police, Ovenden & Mixenden Initiative and Ovenden Sport & Community Area (OSCA) in north Halifax to address anti-social behaviour issues in the area.

Email: staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com

St. Paul's, Sowerby Bridge **Where Christmas Happens!**

So there we were in Brighthouse, it was coming up to Christmas 2014, and we were witnessing Central's display. Thought - maybe we should be more adventurous next year in Sowerby Bridge.

Thus it was that for Christmas 2015 we tried out a Live Nativity Stable. There are mobile farms that visit schools and other institutions in the summer months. They are able to provide suitable animals, out of season as it were, for Nativity events.

We created a "road" leading to the stable, using all the church ground floor. The contiguous garage area was converted to the stable itself. Along the road were various stalls with activities generally aimed at young people. We created an atmosphere by using small gazebos for the stalls, along with decorative Christmas lights.

Our intention was that this should be an act of Mission within our community. No charges (although we did have some collecting boxes for All We Can's Syrian appeal). Advertising was key – and we appointed a "Facebook rep.", since it seems a lot of information spreads that way nowadays.

We obtained various Nativity activities, Christmas booklets came from the usual Christian book sources. These are excellent for giving children the basics of the Nativity, and are age appropriate. In the event we handed out over 200!

Our upper floor had a couple more stalls, but was largely given over to refreshments. These were again free of charge, but we only offered mince pies and Christmas cake in addition to the usual Methodist tea and coffee.

We benefited from help and advice from many different sources, but the key person was Colin, who liaised with the mobile farm people, and constructed the stable itself. It really looked the part, with hessian "walls" and suitable lighting.

We had two mangers, one to be used as an animal feed holder, the other for the infant Jesus. (Children could then see what a manger really was used for.) The animal pens themselves were made up on the day by the farm personnel, who turned up with two donkeys, six goats, two sheep and several hens.

There was lots of dressing up. We had our own Mary, Joseph, shepherds and angels, but any youngster coming along could also dress up and take part for a while. We let parents take photos of their offspring.

We are planning to do it all again this year. So put December 17th down in your diaries!

It is hoped that Issue No. 11 of this Newsletter will come out shortly after the next Circuit Meeting. Please send material to graham.smith@methodist.org.uk by **Monday 4th July 2016**

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of the Methodist Church