

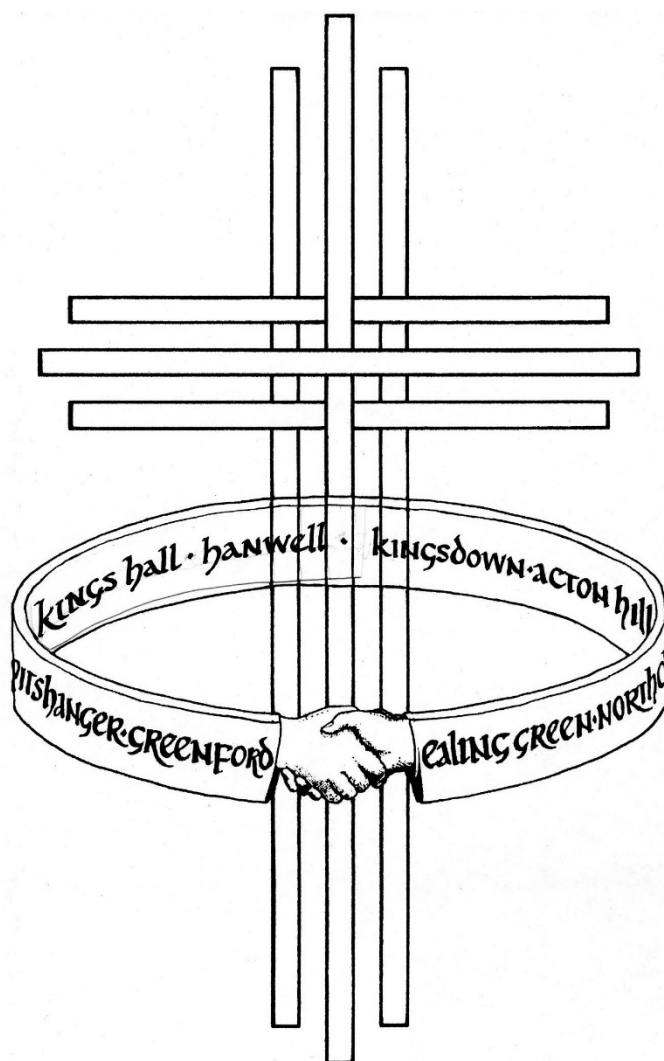
# In-touch

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No 90

December 2019 – February 2020



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The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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**Circuit website: [www.ealingtrinity.org.uk](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk)**

## **Urgently Required: Circuit Safeguarding Officer**

Could you serve the Circuit by offering to become Circuit Safeguarding Officer? The post has been vacant for some time and urgently needs filling. Please speak to Rev Rachel Bending if you are interested.

*Front Cover designed by Marion Narain*

## From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

When was the last time you told a story? My guess is that it was today or at least yesterday. It may have been the story of a trip to the doctors or something you'd seen in the street or maybe a story told in despair of the exploits of politicians or leaders. It may have been a story told with humour or anger, joy, interest or sorrow. Stories fill our lives and help us make sense of them.

As we journey towards Christmas we once again tell our stories of a God who not only creates each one of us uniquely in God's image but also loves us all so much that God came as one of us and pitched his tent amongst us (as John's Gospel puts it) or as the Message paraphrases it 'moved into the neighbourhood'. This story matters because it tells of a God who doesn't tinker or experiment from afar but who loves each one of us intimately and closely as we work as God's partners in creation.

It's a story that should not only shape how we view God but also how we view and relate to the whole creation and every creature and person within it. All are God's creation and beloved of God. This should affect how we discuss our politics and shape social justice in our national life. It should also shape our personal relationships and how we discuss things that we care deeply about but disagree profoundly upon. If we recognise each person as God's creation, as 'holy ground' then the ways in which we disagree should change as we seek to hear God's voice in theirs and see God's image within them.

In February and March we will have conversations together as a Circuit about the Methodist Conference report 'God in love unites us' – please see the 'Forthcoming Events' section on the back page of this edition of In-touch. This report thinks carefully about the full range of our relationships and our identities including issues of marriage and sexual identity. It is a painstaking, careful and prayerful piece of work done by a small group of people with very different views and backgrounds on behalf of the Methodist Church. As we talk about this together, I pray that we will do so with compassion and care not just for those present in the conversations but for all people. Our judgements of others so often mean that we fail to see God's image within them and so can often cause much harm. May we all take every care to remember that each person is 'holy ground'.

Wishing you every blessing through the Christmas season and throughout the coming year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel".

## Circuit and Ecumenical United Services

During the coming quarter there will be two Circuit Services:

On 1<sup>st</sup> December at 6.30pm there will be a Circuit Advent Carol and Healing Service at Greenford.

On 29<sup>th</sup> December at 11.00am we will come together for a Circuit Service at Acton Hill.

In addition, on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> of January at 4.00pm Kingsdown will host an Ecumenical United Service on behalf of Churches Together in Central Ealing.

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## Circuit Conversations on ‘God in Love Unites Us’

There will be an opportunity to discuss the Methodist Conference report on marriage and relationships on:

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm – venue to be confirmed

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00am at Northolt

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 8.00pm – venue to be confirmed.

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## Christian Aid Iraq and Lebanon Project

A number of our churches have arranged events to raise funds towards the Circuit’s overall target of raising £5,000 by the end of December 2020 and good progress has already been made towards meeting it. At the time of writing the position was as follows:

Acton Hill (2 events)	£1,277
Greenford International Evening	£598
Hanwell	£330
Kingsdown/Ealing Green Quiz	£320
Northolt Harvest Auction	£400
Rachel’s Garden Party	£850
<b>Total so far</b>	<b>£3,775</b>

So, to date the Circuit is 75% of the way towards meeting its target. With further events in the pipeline, including a Circuit Barn Dance next Spring, a comedy day on 15<sup>th</sup> February and a concert by the Apollo Choir on 14<sup>th</sup> June at 4.00pm both at Ealing Green, the Circuit should easily reach, if not exceed the target. However, there’s still a way to go, so we should not rest on our laurels!

Our fundraising will be matched 6:1 by the US charity Bread for the World, so our target of £5,000 will be turned into a total of £35,000 for the Christian Aid Iraq and Lebanon Project. These funds will primarily go to support young people (aged 18 – 35) in Iraq into employment through vocational skills training and to two centres in Lebanon supporting around 800 children and their carers.

## Food Bank Use Jumps 18.8% in a Year

The Trussell Trust has announced that its Food Banks across the country distributed **1.584 million** 3-day emergency food parcels during the year ending March 2019. That's an increase of **18.8%** over the previous year.

The Trussell Trust runs **1,200** food banks across the country. There are, however at least **805** independent food banks in addition to those operated by the Trussell Trust. Total food bank use in the UK is therefore clearly considerably higher than the Trust's figures indicate. Indeed, research by the Independent Foodbank Network and Menu for Change indicates that 84 independent food banks in Scotland give out a similar number of emergency food parcels as the Trussell Trust's network of 137 food banks.

Doing some rather simple extrapolations from the data, the results of which must therefore be taken with a large pinch of salt:-

If independent food banks give out parcels at the same rate as the Trussell Trust's foodbanks, the total number of parcels given out in 2018-19 would be about **2.640 million**. The Trussell Trust indicates that on average food bank users need 2 parcels per annum.

Based on that average, the **number of people** receiving food parcels in 2018-19 would be about **1.3 million**. That's about 2% of the total UK population and, put another way is equivalent to almost 4 times the population of the Borough of Ealing.

For a rich country like the UK, that's embarrassing.

*Nb An 'emergency food parcel' is defined as a 3-day supply of food for one person.*

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## Kingsdown Diamond Jubilee

Kingsdown will be celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 9<sup>th</sup> December with a special service followed by a bring-and-share lunch. People who have had connections with the church over the years including former members and people who were baptised or married at the church are being invited to share in the celebration.

Although Kingsdown as we know it today dates back 60 years to the summer of 1959, its antecedents go back as far as 1878. Kingsdown was formed by the merger of the former Ealing Dean Primitive Methodist Chapel (subsequently known as West Ealing Primitive Methodist Chapel) and the Moullin Memorial Methodist Church which was aligned with 'Wesleyan' Methodism. The Ealing Dean chapel was first built in 1879 on a site at the corner of Bedford Rd and Uxbridge Rd. The halls at the back of the building can still be seen on Bedford Rd.

Methodism in Northfields dates from 1905 when open-air services were held at the corner of Cranmer Avenue. A permanent chapel was opened on Kingsdown's

current site in March 1908. This was a rather makeshift building and by the 1920's it was clear that it was no longer fit for purpose. Through the generosity of the Moullin family, wealthy members of the Ealing Broadway Methodist Church who had made their money in insurance, a new building was erected and opened in July 1928. The new church was named the 'Moullin Memorial Methodist Church' in recognition of the family's generosity in paying for the new building.

During the later 1950's, a decision was taken to amalgamate the two churches and they formally came together as Kingsdown Methodist Church in August 1959. The final service at the West Ealing Chapel took place on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1959. The week after, both churches began worshipping together as a single church family. Following that, the old 'Moullin Memorial' building was quite extensively re-modelled and was finally reopened and rededicated in February 1963.

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## **Acton Hill Church – Gospel Chorale Concert**

For many September 14<sup>th</sup> was the last night of the greatest music festival on earth – the Proms at the Albert Hall, but for Acton Hill Church it was the date of the annual Gospel Chorale concert. The evening was a non-stop show of energy and enthusiasm with choral items, solos (by Josie Moise, Ethelca Brand, Sylvia Murray, Trudy Bango, Francis Kenny and Julie Gwayu-Kyem) and dancing, wonderfully compered by the Rev. Joseph Vidal in his inimical way of joyously encouraging, praising and supporting.

This year, the Gospel Chorale went for backing tracks rather than straight keyboard accompaniments which enabled their accompanist, Francis, to be part of the choir (he also arranged all the backing tracks). Everyone's talent was shown to the best advantage and under the musical directorship of Josie Moise the choir outdid themselves.

The Gospel Chorale has been a main stay of Acton Hill Church for at least the last twenty years and is the backbone of the church's outreach and witness in the community as they frequently perform at local residential homes and hospitals. Last night's event was in aid of Meadow House, Ealing. Not only was the music captivating and had people dancing in their seats but the church looked resplendent with floral arrangements at each window designed and made by Trudy Bango and spectacular pedestal arrangements on the platform and pulpit by Sylvia Jones. There was an eco-friendly set of prizes of fruits, vegetables and comestibles for the draw. Other staunch helpers included David Bowater at the door, Charles Wiredu managing the computer screen and Flavio Gwayu-Kyem monitoring the sound systems.

During the interval freshly made fish cakes, samosas and sandwiches were for the taking giving everyone the energy to dance in the aisles after the last number led by foot-tapping Julie and Trudy. It was a night of praise and worship and everyone left with raised spirits knowing that our God is awesome and when our rock, Jesus, says yes, no-one can say no.

# **Greenford Methodist Church: Sound & Projection System 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

*Yvonne Hill, Greenford*

Yvonne Hill wishes to acknowledge and celebrate the success of the sound system at Greenford Methodist Church and to give thanks and praise for the loyalty and commitment of the team who, over the past 10 years, have ensured services are always incorporated into the system.

The original project was the inspiration of Rev Kip Bennett whose vision and dedication resulted in the excellent system we have in place today. Installation took place during 2009 and Ealing Trinity Circuit notified preachers and minsters that the technology would be available for use in services from 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

Looking back, we celebrate that the sound and projection system has been a great success and an enhancement to our worship and praise. We join with Yvonne in expressing our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the devoted team for their skills and willingness which greatly enriches our worship.

We are abundantly blessed by the following dedicated people:

Janet Malamah-Thomas, Elizabeth Burke, Gill Borg and Michael Brown.

Looking ahead to the next year the operators will be enhanced by the support of Samuel Daniel who has joined them. We also especially wish to thank Elizabeth who has recently stepped down from the role.

Yvonne also wishes to acknowledge all our organists and ministers for their continuing dedication which enriches our lives.

May almighty God continue to nurture your skills which you share, so that together we can say:

*'With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing, thine Lord we are.  
Wonders of Grace to God belong  
Repeat his mercies in your song.'*

## **Urgently Required: Circuit Safeguarding Officer**

Could you serve the Circuit by offering to become Circuit Safeguarding Officer? The post has been vacant for some time and urgently needs filling. Please speak to Rev Rachel Bending if you are interested.

## From the Circuit Meeting

The most recent Circuit Meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> September at Pitshanger.

Opening the meeting, our Superintendent Minister, Rev Rachel Bending gave an overview of the Circuit's vision for the coming year. As well as growing the membership and attendance at our churches, we also need to grow our churches spiritually ensuring that we remain open to the Holy Spirit. At the same time there is an urgent need to balance the Circuit's budget as well as engage with new projects and those already in hand. As we move through a time of uncertainty, now was not the time for fears – that we have too few committed members or that one or two of our churches may close. Focussing our resources where they can be used to best advantage is paramount even if that means that some activities must be given up as no longer serving their original purpose.

Members of the meeting were asked to consider and discuss with others in their churches about what should be the priorities for our ordained ministers and invited people to send their responses and comments to the Circuit Office.

Over the course of the coming year, the Methodist Church will be discussing and consulting on the report presented to Conference by the Marriage and Relationships Task Group 2019. The report represented considerable careful and prayerful work on a wide range of topics, though some at Conference had felt that time constraints had limited a full consideration of the single Christian life. The report had a Biblical basis in our traditional Methodist broad understanding of how we use the Bible, and built on previous work on these topics. The Circuit's staff will consider arrangements for discussions on the report. Rev Rachel Bending hoped that the same loving-kindness and compassion that had been displayed in the Conference debate would be echoed in our discussions in the Circuit.

As readers of In-touch will be aware, our Deacon, Lemia Nkwelah will be leaving the Circuit at the end of this connexional year. A profile for a replacement deacon to continue the work started by Lemia was approved by the meeting. Work to appoint a deacon will go ahead through the Circuit Invitations Committee.

The meeting was also informed that Rev Yemi Jaiyesimi has asked to leave the Circuit one year early at the end of this connexional year. Because of the financial position of the Circuit and the general shortage of presbyters in the Methodist Church nationally, the Circuit would not be seeking a replacement. However, no church would be left without a minister as a result of Yemi's early departure. Rachel Bending's request that churches consider priorities for our ordained ministers (see above) reflects the need to take time to consider how best to respond to this new situation.

The meeting was asked to note that Rev Shirlyn Toppin would be on sabbatical for three months in Trinidad and Tobago during the course of 2021/22.



The Circuit Treasurer, Stephen Sears presented a draft budget to the meeting. This reflected the Circuit's current financial position with income at around £334,000 and expenditure at £458,000 leading to a budgeted deficit of £124,000. Yemi's departure at the end of the connexional year will go some way towards addressing the deficit for the following year, but Stephen reiterated the need for significant further savings over the short to medium term.

Regarding King's Hall, the meeting was presented with details of two bids for the redevelopment of the site. Pocket Living was confirmed as the preferred bidder with a prospective date for the opening of the redeveloped building in 2023. Pocket Living specialise in developing affordable residential units targeted at workers such as nurses and teachers. The scheme will involve Pocket developing residential units along with new church space and some residential units for letting by the church. From the Circuit's perspective, the scheme will be 'self-financing' in that the costs of providing the new church space will be met by Pocket Living as part of the overall deal.

In addition to the King's Hall development, there are major developments under consideration at Northolt and Greenford. Like King's Hall, both schemes as they emerge would follow similar financing models.

Approval was given for the King's Hall Class Meeting to reduce the number of services they hold. Their services will now take place on the first, third and fifth Sunday of each month.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February at Acton Hill starting at 7.30pm.

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## Trip of a Lifetime – Bosnia

*Derek Nicholls, Acton Hill and former Circuit Steward*

### **Editor's Note:**

*As most readers of In-touch will remember, in the early 1990's Yugoslavia fell apart under the strain of nationalist tensions between its five constituent parts. The breakup began when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991. In February the following year Bosnia and Herzegovina also declared independence following a referendum which had been boycotted by the country's Serbs who made up around a third of the population. Tragically, the situation descended into a vicious and brutal armed conflict in a war which lasted from 1992 until it was ended by the Dayton Accords in 1995. Although the fighting stopped almost 25 years ago, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a fragile country where there is little agreement between its two main components, the Republika Srpska (Serb) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Croat and Bosniak) on how to take the country forward.*

*As nationalism and populism rise across various countries in Europe including our own, it is worth remembering what took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina to remind ourselves of what can happen as these forces drive divisions between people, often within the same country.*

*Some time ago Derek Nicholls told me how in 1993 he had volunteered to co-drive a truck of aid supplies to Bosnia for Novi-Most, a Christian charity which still continues to provide pioneering youth work in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

*Volunteering to drive a truck into a war zone struck me as a quite exceptional, and inspiring thing to do and I have long wanted to include his story in In-touch. So, this is the story he wrote of his trip.*

### **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July 1993**

Picked up lorry from TLS at Feltham, Middlesex and drove to Novi-Most's office at Chesham. Met Paul and Sue Brooks and James and Gill Rowell. Had briefing on the trip and then went to warehouse to load up. With truck loaded James and I set off around 13.00 for Dover using the M25 and M20. After going through Customs etc we boarded the ferry for the 19.45 crossing to Calais. Having enjoyed a good meal in Routiers Restaurant and after changing money we arrived at Calais.

On leaving the ferry we drove through France and onto Mons, a small town in Belgium where we stayed the night.

(Distance: 399km plus ferry)

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**

Following a good night's sleep and breakfast we journeyed on through Germany, stopping at one or two service stations for refreshments. Finally at around 11.30 we arrived at the German/Austrian border (although the actual border no longer exists). We pulled into a truck stop and bedded down for the night.

(Distance: 968km)

### **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July**

Following a slightly disturbed night sleeping in the truck we had 3 eggs and 3 slices of ham for breakfast – Austrian style – and then journeyed on. We travelled through the magnificent sights of Austria driving over the Alps as the Brenner Pass was shut and on through small towns stopping only to take photos. When we reached the Austrian/Slovenian border we experienced our first minor hitch at Customs. We went over into 'no man's land', only a short distance to the Slovenian/Croatian border where again, Customs proved a problem.

By this time it was about 18.00. We started to see the devastation to houses from mortar shells, bullets and shrapnel. Houses that had bullet holes spattered across the front and sides that contrasted sharply with those that had not been touched – it was then that it started to sink in what these people had been going through.

At about 21.00 we decided to stop and have our evening meal. We started our journey but had to take a huge detour as trucks and lorries were not allowed to travel through the Croatian National Park. We eventually stopped in a lay-by for a well-earned rest at 00.30.  
(Distance: 663km)

## **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> July**

We continued through Croatia where we had our first sightings of the peacekeeping forces and United Nations personnel. By 11.45 we were climbing through the hills and came across a long convoy of stationary trucks – we had found the end of the queue waiting to pass through the border into Bosnia. After a wait of 5½ hours we finally crossed into Bosnia. As we drove on we came across a magnificent lake that was in complete contrast to what we had seen. It seemed to stretch for miles. Finally, after we had climbed through the hills we saw our destination ahead – Mostar. Dropping down a winding road we had at last arrived (at 19.30). We arranged to meet our contact, Mark Francis about half an hour later and decided to take a quick look around without venturing too far. The devastation was unbelievable. There were blocks of flats covered with bullet holes and mortar damage.

We met Mark and drove down to Container Village – yes it was literally as the name suggests. We were introduced to a Christian family who were playing host to a Kosovar family who had had to leave their home as it had been bombed. We left the truck in their front garden and went to Mark's place where we spent the night. We met Clare who, along with Mark was a 1-year volunteer in Bosnia.  
(Distance: 291km)

## **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July**

Following a good night's sleep, shower and breakfast we went to pick up the truck and drove to the Customs House. We waited about 2½ hours for the customs officials to inspect our load and give us permission to unload. At about 11.30 we got clearance. We were unable to get the truck down the side road to the church where our load was to be stored before distribution, so we parked in a lay-by on the main road and waited for volunteers to arrive with a smaller truck. While we waited my son Graeme met us. This was a welcome surprise. He had already been in Bosnia for four weeks at the Novi-Most Camp Rio on the Adriatic coast.

Once the truck had been unloaded we went down to the church and were shown around the buildings. It was even more unbelievable – shell holes, bullet holes, windows blown out. Re-building had started with the church being first. We saw the basketball court in Novi-Most Sports Centre that would give enjoyment to everyone. We then went to the bungalow to freshen up and then went with Mark and Graeme into the old part of Mostar crossing the, once divisional, bridge between east and west. We had a nice meal then returned to the bungalow and said our 'goodbyes' before travelling to Camp Rio with Graeme.

Camp Rio was just across the road from the Adriatic Sea. We met the camp director, Mike Robinson and members of the team. It was worship time and we heard the children belting out choruses – it was absolutely overwhelming. As we looked around we saw 30 tents and caravans across the campsite. That particular week was for children and young people from Sarajevo and Bilac and the team was making sure they were enjoying every moment of it. About 22.00, although we were feeling very tired, we could not resist crossing the road and dipping our toes in the Adriatic. Then it was off to bed for a good night's rest  
(Distance: 76km)

### **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July**

Up bright and early and in for breakfast – we met more of the team – introductions seemed to go on for ages with Graeme saying, “This is my Dad.” Phoebe, the daughter of my travelling companion had been out there for 3 weeks and Gill, his wife works for Novi-Most. This was special to both of us. Following breakfast and prayers it was time to say ‘goodbye’. Quite sadly we drove out of the camp but knowing all the drive hours of driving had been worth it.

We drove back along the coast road – an unbelievable sight – that part of Croatia was untouched. On the outskirts of Split we turned inland leaving the beautiful Adriatic behind us. We headed back through Croatia and through the borders and into Slovenia where we stopped for a meal at 21.00. We went on to the service station where we spent the night.  
(Distance: 747km)

### **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July**

After a good night's sleep and a wash and brush-up we were on our way again quickly passing through the borders that were now empty. Once again we had to drive over the Alps as the Brenner Pass was still not open, then on through the small towns and villages back into Germany. There was a lot of traffic on the Autobahn – rather like the M25 – stop, start. We decided to try an alternative route via Stuttgart and Strasbourg towards Luxembourg stopping *en route* for our evening meal. On we drove towards Belgium but we had to stop as we hadn't realised it was already 00.30, so we pulled up at a service station.  
(Distance: 933km)

### **Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July**

After another good night's sleep and breakfast we continued on our way through Belgium and into France. We made our way to the quayside to await the arrival of the ferry. We boarded at 13.45 and began our return to Britain. As we had a meal and changed our currency back into sterling it was not long before we arrived at Dover.

We headed back to Chesham and arrived at 17.00. After dropping off the pallets we drove to Novi-Most's HQ and had a de-briefing session with Sue Brooks. I dropped

James home and then went on my way back home but not before a last few photos were taken by James' daughter Phoebe.

(Distance: 579km plus ferry crossing)

## **Conclusion**

This was the most memorable week of both James' and my life. Very tiring, but well worth it. Given the opportunity both of us would do it again.

According to the lorry's tachograph the total distance travelled was 2,910km plus ferry crossings.

*You can find out more about Novi-Most and its ongoing work in Bosnia and Herzegovina by going to [www.novimost.org](http://www.novimost.org).*

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## **UK Loses its 'Measles Free' Status with the WHO**

*Blossom Jackson, Kingsdown*

It was with some dismay that I saw in the news last week that the UK had lost its status as a 'measles free' country with the World Health Organisation. This status was conferred on the UK in 1996 after three years during which there had been limited spread of the disease because of high vaccination rates.

The measles vaccination has been available to all children since 1968 and was later combined with vaccinations against mumps and rubella – the MMR vaccine, introduced in 1988 and given to infants. Before the 1960's, most children throughout the world had this infectious disease. Many of them must have had a number of complications that have not been quantified. Amongst others, these include encephalitis - inflammation of the brain, resulting in life long, deleterious conditions.

More recently, it has been in the news that those young people in the UK who had measles leading to complications were never immunized. More startling is the fact that there were more than 230 cases of measles reported in the UK during the first quarter of 2019.

Because of the lost 'measles free' status, the government is now urging urgent action to improve the uptake of this vaccine which has been freely available since 1968 for infants, children and young adults if they had not been immunized against the disease previously.

I consider that it is noteworthy that the statistics reveal that since measles immunization was introduced in the UK in 1968, it is estimated that 20 million cases of measles and 4,500 deaths have been avoided. This has been achieved despite

some parents' decisions to refuse consent to have their children being vaccinated because of the influence of small lobby that is dead set against the immunization programme for a number of reasons.

My interest and concern stems from my disappointment about the UK's loss of the 'measles free' status, despite the hard work that was done in the 1960's by the researchers, clinicians, doctors, and 'foot soldiers', including practicing health visitors like myself, not to mention those parents who had given their consent during the trials. All of this provided the evidence to produce an effective vaccine. The result of this coordinated approach led to the introduction of the immunization programme against the disease in 1968.

If I remember rightly, during the trials parents who gave their consent for the Medical Research Council (MRC) programme of research, were carefully prepared by professionals, who furnished them relevant information and answered their questions beforehand. Thus, those children who had any medical contra-indications were excluded and the groups in the cohort were followed up over a number of months during the trials. As part of the trials one group of infants - the 'control group', was not given any vaccination, whilst another was given an attenuated dose (where the virus effects were lessened). The results were then recorded on special forms and sent back to the MRC for analysis. The positive results from the trials led to the decision to offer immunization against measles.

Safeguards were put in place, such as storage of the vaccine in a fridge at the correct temperature and taking careful note of the expiry date for every batch of the vaccine before the vaccine was administered. Most importantly, however all parents in the survey had open access to all health visitors in case they had any matters of concern.

Whilst I am on this point, I can share some advice I used to give to my health visitor students in my subsequent role as lecturer, that they should advise parents to keep their child's health record, including details of their immunizations in a safe place so that it can be given to their children when they leave home.

So, you can imagine how disappointed I am, as a retired Health Visitor, about the news of the UK's loss of its 'measles free' status. I therefore hope that parents will consider having their children immunised, if they have not done so before and that the UK can return to its 'measles free' status before long.

*For reference, the complete routine immunization schedule for the UK can be downloaded as a pdf file by going to:*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-complete-routine-immunisation-schedule>*

# Norwegian Contrasts

*Gerald Barton, Editor*

During late August we spent a week and a half or so travelling around Norway. Starting in Oslo we travelled up to Trondheim before sailing around the coast to Bergen. From there we followed a route known as 'Norway in a Nutshell' in order to sail through some spectacular fjords before finally returning to Oslo.



Auerlandsfjord from Flåm

Generally speaking, we went to Norway to see something of the spectacular scenery and the fjords in particular.

Whilst we didn't see many churches on our travels, we were struck by not just the contrasts between them, but also by the differences in décor reflecting the way the Reformation developed in Norway compared to Britain.

Christianity first came to Norway in the 10<sup>th</sup> century but it was slow to take root. The Norwegians were not inclined to give up their pagan gods along with the feasting and drinking that went with them. It was only with the death of King Olav Haraldson at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030 whilst attempting to regain his kingdom that Christianity found a focus. He was buried in sandy ground near the river at Nidaros (modern day Trondheim), but when miracles began to happen his body was moved to the town's only church. Then, according to the legend, a spring began to flow near his first grave and 'men were healed of their ills by the waters'. Olav was declared a saint and martyr in 1164. His nephew, Olav Kyrre built a stone church near the place where St Olav's body had lain. This became the first Nidaros cathedral.



Trondheim: Nidaros Cathedral west front

Nidaros cathedral was expanded and rebuilt over the years in the gothic style but was also subject to successive fires. As a result, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century much of the nave had stood in ruins for some considerable time. Eventually as a statement of national pride and confidence as Norway moved towards independence from Sweden, the decision was taken to rebuild and restore the cathedral giving us the great building we can see today. The church authorities

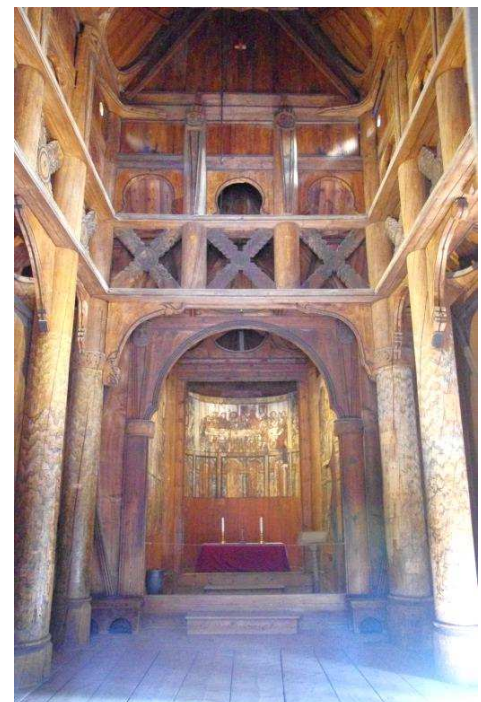


chose how they wanted the cathedral to look. The inspiration for the west front came from Lincoln cathedral with, to my eyes a touch of French gothic as well.

Beautiful though it is, Nidaros cathedral seemed to me a little out of place in Trondheim. It is like no other church in Norway and seemed a bit like it had been transplanted from England or France. However, that's just me.



In very great contrast is the traditional Norwegian wooden 'stave' church. There used to be a considerable number of these but there are now only about 28 left. We saw a fine example in the Folk Museum in Oslo which brings together historic buildings from across Norway. Built entirely of wood, these churches show many decorative features derived from pre-Christian times. In form they are somewhat similar to wooden churches found in north Russia being broadly square in plan and tall in relation to their base.



Top: Stave church in Oslo's Folk Museum  
Right: Interior looking towards the altar  
Left: Last Supper behind the altar

The Reformation came to Norway in 1537 and the Catholic Church was gradually pushed out by Protestant Lutheranism. Whereas in Britain the Reformation saw most figurative decoration in churches removed, painted over or destroyed, churches remained decorated in Norway. In particular, wall paintings in a traditional style remained common – hence the depiction of the Last Supper behind the altar in the church in Oslo's Folk Museum. Some churches have very elaborate



decorative features which would seem to British eyes rather more at home in a baroque Catholic church than a Lutheran Protestant church. There are some fine examples in St Mary's church in Bergen, where photography was, alas not allowed,

but also in Oslo cathedral, where it is. The ceiling of Oslo cathedral is covered in a cycle of paintings by Hugo Lous Mohrs which took over 14 years to complete but which are now sadly in need of restoration. There is also a highly elaborate pulpit and an altarpiece with a fine Crucifixion and Last Supper surmounted by a figure of Christ resurrected.



**Oslo Cathedral**

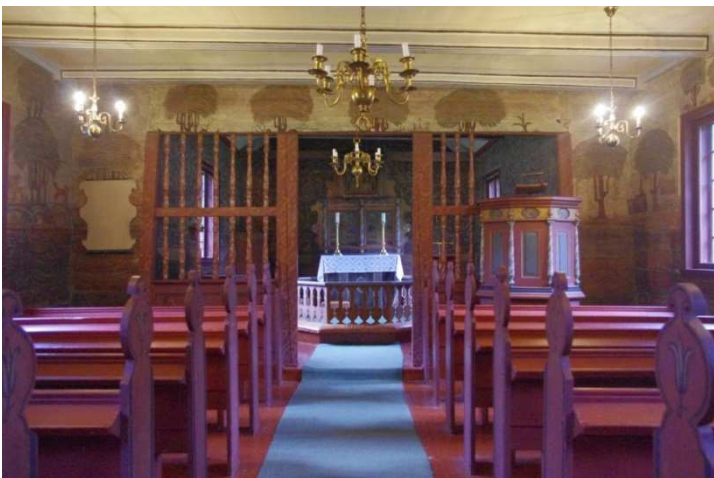
- Top: The choir
- Right The altarpiece
- Middle: Adoration of the Magi
- Bottom: Last Supper from the altarpiece

We visited Oslo cathedral on a Friday afternoon after the evening service. Interestingly, the cathedral was going to remain open throughout the night perhaps for people seeking respite from Oslo's vibrant night-life.





Perhaps our favourite church was the one we saw in the hamlet of Lunden near Flåm. Having arrived there by boat during the early afternoon we decided to walk up the valley following the scenic Flåm – Myrdal railway. After a couple of miles or so we came to the centre of the village with its delightful parish church. This tiny church was built in 1670 and stands close to the river that runs down the valley. A bit too close in fact because in 2014 it was damaged by flooding and had to be raised 35cm to protect it from further floods.



Top: Flåm Church  
Above: Interior  
Right: Wall painting in the nave



The interior is richly decorated with wall paintings dating from the very early 1700's. In the nave of the church these are all in a delightfully naïve style. However, just to show that not everyone was happy with highly decorated churches, in 1870 the wall paintings were painted over because the vicar did not approve of the congregation looking at the figures on the walls rather than paying attention to his sermons. Perhaps he should have considered that the problem may have been his sermons rather than the paintings. Happily, they were restored in 1967.

Norway is a fascinating, if rather expensive country to travel around. It may also be one of the first countries to go largely 'cash-less' since you could pay for almost anything by card. Some surprising things could only be paid for by card, including use of the public toilets at Bergen railway station. Nonetheless, we enjoyed our visit hugely, not just for the fjords and the scenery, but the churches as well.

*All photos in this article ©Gerald Barton*

# Christmas and New Year Services around the Circuit

## Acton Hill

24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	7.30pm	United Service at Hanwell
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.30am	Christmas Morning Worship
29 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11.00am	Circuit Service
31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10.45pm	Watchnight Service

## Ealing Green

24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12.45pm	Christmas Eve Holy Communion
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Christmas Morning Worship

## Greenford

24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4.00pm	Worship for Christmas Eve
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11.15pm	Midnight Holy Communion
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.00am	United Service at Northolt
31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10.30pm	United Watchnight Service at Greenford Baptist Church

## Hanwell

24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	7.30pm	Holy Communion for Christmas Eve
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11.00am	Christmas Morning Worship

## Kingsdown

15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6.00pm	Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11.15pm	Midnight Holy Communion
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.30am	Christmas Morning Worship

## King's Hall (Urdu/Hindi)

15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.00pm – 6.00pm	Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4.00pm	Witness outside King's Hall
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	1.00pm	Holy Communion for Christmas Day
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	1.00pm	Worship for New Year's Day

## Northolt

Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	at 4.00pm	Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11.15pm	United Service at Greenford
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.00am	Christmas Morning Worship

## Pitshanger

25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.30am	Christmas Morning Worship
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## Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

### December

1<sup>st</sup> Sun 6.30pm **Circuit Advent Carols and Healing Service at Greenford**

29<sup>th</sup> Sun 11.00am **Circuit Service at Acton Hill**

### January

5<sup>th</sup> Sun 6.30pm **Circuit Healing Service with Holy Communion at Greenford**

16<sup>th</sup> Thurs 7.30pm **Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting**

19<sup>th</sup> Sun 4.00pm **Churches Together in Central Ealing**  
Ecumenical United Service at Kingsdown

23<sup>rd</sup> Thurs 7.30pm **Circuit Leadership Team Meeting at Kingsdown**

### February

2<sup>nd</sup> Sun 6.30pm **Circuit Healing Service at Greenford**

8<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.00am **Advanced Level Creating Safer Space Training at Ealing Green**

20<sup>th</sup> Thurs 7.30pm **Circuit Meeting**

27<sup>th</sup> Thurs 8.00pm **'God in Love Unites Us'** – Circuit Conversation – *venue tba*

### March

7<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.00am **'God in Love Unites Us'** – Circuit Conversation at Northolt

7<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.30am **42<sup>nd</sup> Ealing Animal Charities Fair at Hanwell**  
4.00pm  
*Many participating societies. Great guest speakers.  
Live music. Admission FREE. [www.ealinganimalsfair.london](http://www.ealinganimalsfair.london).*

16<sup>th</sup> Mon 8.00pm **'God in Love Unites Us'** – Circuit Conversation – *venue tba*

28<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.00am **Circuit Retreat for Lent**  
led by Rachel Bending and Alan Poole, *More details to follow*

Articles for **'In-touch' Issue No 91 (March - May)** should be sent by e-mail headed **'In-touch'** to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

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**Deadline for next issue: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020**