



Methodist Women
in Britain

Newsletter – Winter 2016



My letter for the autumn newsletter took us up to the World Assembly in Houston at the beginning of September. At the end of October many of us came together for the Connexional World Federation Day in Taunton. We heard reports from Texas, congratulated Alison Judd on her election to the role of President of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and looked ahead to the next Quinquennium.

In early November the MWiB executive officers gathered at a retreat centre in Devon to reflect, review and recoup energy. For those of us who were local to the venue the third objective was probably easier than for those who had long journeys! One of the features of our role as a voluntary team of women, drawn from across the Connexion, is the need to travel whenever we meet. Travelling time can be a gift, affording space and thinking time, or a chore, when journeys are disrupted and trains overcrowded.

As you will be aware, during this past year I was privileged to be able to visit refugees in Greece, with a group of eleven other women from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. We met people who had made journeys that they never expected to need to make, to places to which they did not want to travel. They travelled away from the safety of the countries and cultures which they had called home, often facing treacherous journeys, before landing in foreign places where they were at the mercy of the kindness of strangers — or not.



MWiB Executive members on retreat at beautiful Mill House in Devon



Encounters with some of the Syrian refugees now living in Greece.

In January I look forward to visiting the Methodist Church in Germany again and seeing more of their work with a changing population. I would encourage you if you can to support those who work with refugees, migrant people and asylum seekers however the opportunity presents in your locality or through charities such as *All We Can*.

At this time of year we are frequently encouraged by Christians via social media to 'keep Christ in Christmas'. This is about more than simply the freedom to call the season 'Christ-mas'. As one advert asks, 'Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies and do unto others as you would have done unto you.'

I hope that your Christmas is peaceful and blessed and full of Christ.

Anne

Welcome to our Winter newsletter. In this edition you'll find a report on the '*Taste of Texas*' day, some news from Mission Partner Angela Macquiban in Rome, news of the 2017 Writing Competition, and lots of information about forthcoming events. In future issues we look forward to hearing more about Anne's travels, and about Vice President Sandra Goodwin's planned trip to Bolivia. In the meantime, may I wish you peace and joy this Advent and Christmas-tide.

Jude

A Taste of Texas



by Carolyn Lawrence

On Saturday 29th October, around 80 people gathered at Rowbarton Methodist Church, Taunton to celebrate World Federation Day. The event is held each year, in different locations around the country, on the nearest Saturday to 26th October to mark the founding of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFM&UCW). The WFM&UCW is active in over 70 countries around the world, wherever there are national churches which are affiliated to the World Methodist Council. The theme for the day this year was 'A Taste of Texas', and the idea was to enable people who had not been able to attend the 13th World Assembly in Houston during the summer to find out a little of what went on and experience a flavour of the conference.



We were warmly welcomed by the local minister, Rev. Deborah Kirk (who also is the Methodist Forum rep for the Plymouth and Exeter District), along with her wonderful team of volunteers who made sure we were all fed and watered. Their hospitality included a themed lunch of burgers and delicious American-style desserts.

Anne Browse, President of Methodist Women in Britain, compered the day and led us in our morning worship based on 1 Peter 2:4—5. She reminded us that we are all being built into a holy house, even if we feel a little bit of an odd shaped brick, and used a bunch of bananas as a visual aid!



Rachel Allison, the British Helen Kim Memorial Scholar, described the leadership training she had received in Houston and spoke of how she and the other 17 Scholars from across the world worked together on their presentation to the Assembly. She also outlined some of her goals for the next five years, particularly her wish to raise awareness of gender issues such as Female Genital Mutilation.

Liz Marriott and Jude Simms, (the outgoing and incoming Communication Officers for MWIB) gave some reflections on the Texan experience, then Carolyn Lawrence, the new Area Vice President for the WFM&UCW presented a Bible study based on 1 Peter 2:9—10. These verses form the theme of the World Federation for the next five years, 'Chosen people, called to proclaim', and Carolyn talked about how special we are to God and how he has a unique calling on each of our lives.

The afternoon provided a taster of some of the workshops that had been on offer in Houston. Rev. Jenny Pathmarajah, the musical director at the World Assembly, led us in a thought-provoking music workshop, as well as blessing everyone with her leading of the singing at the opening and closing worship. Then, a choice of workshops, just three from the variety on offer at the Assembly, under the headings of Social Action, Worship, and Relationships. Gillian Womersley (MWIB Finance Officer) and Jennifer Jones led a workshop on 'Stop Hunger Now' including information about food banks in the UK; Jackie Smith demonstrated the making of Celtic prayer flags, with participants each making their own; and Jude Simms and Ruth Parrott led a Bible-based session on hospitality, including a short presentation on the remarkable hospitality shown by the Sandylands Methodist Church in last year's flooding in Kendal, Cumbria.



The day concluded with a report from Alison Judd, the new World President of the WFM&UCW, in which she outlined the action plan for the next five years as we look at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and seek to help bring about God's Kingdom on earth through the working out of the goals in practical ways. She then led us in our closing worship before everyone went their separate ways.

For those who had had the privilege of being at the World Assembly in Houston it was good to revisit some of the things learned, and for those who were not able to be in Texas the day gave a good overview of the conference and enabled everyone to share a little of the experience.

Photos: top—Rowbarton Methodist Church; middle—Rachel Allison; bottom—Alison Judd.



If you're interested in learning more about the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, you can visit their website: www.wfmucw.org. Or better still, why not consider joining us at one of these forthcoming events:

**World Federation Day
Joint Area Seminar**

Saturday 28 October 2017

June 2018, in Ireland

(*Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*)

The 14th World Assembly

August 2021, in Scandinavia

Look out for further details of all these events on the website and in future mailings. To receive MWiB mailings, which include the World Federation's Tree of Life magazine, sign up on our website www.mwib.org.uk, or email communications@mwib.org.uk, or write to the P.O. Box overleaf.



Meet a Mission Partner: **Our woman in Rome**

Angela Macquiban writes:

Before we came to Rome in 2014 people would ask "And what will *you* be doing?" I jokingly replied "Probably running a B&B!", little knowing how true that would prove to be. Apart from his role as minister of Ponte Sant' Angelo English-speaking Methodist Church with its international membership, Tim is Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome, which does involve providing a lot of hospitality!

People visit us from all over the world, often arranged but sometimes quite unexpected! Every week brings surprises and we can truly say we have entertained angels unawares. Our location with its views across the River Tiber to the castle and the Vatican proves quite an attraction!

Apart from the fortnightly church bible class and teaching in Sunday school I value my own ecumenical links with other English-speaking church groups and opportunities to attend courses at the Lay Centre (which doesn't help my Italian though).

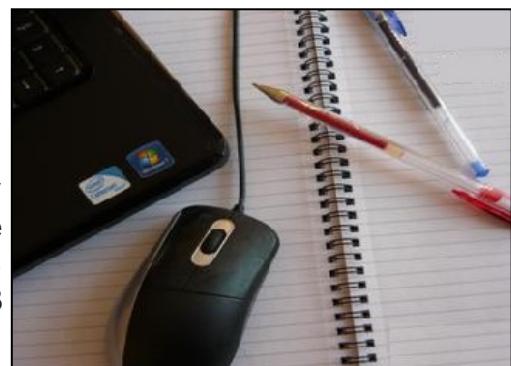
I do some volunteering with the Sant'Egidio Community, which supports the many migrants and needy people here. Representing our church on the World Day of Prayer committee does help exercise my Italian! It is a real privilege to host such a variety of people across the denominations in this wonderful city.



Angela [2nd from right] with members of the Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist congregation

Writing Competition 2017 **Stepping Out**

This year's writing competition, the second to be held in memory of Julie Hulme, is entitled '*Stepping Out*' Full details will be available in mid-January, and the closing date for entries is mid-April. The winning entries will be announced at the MWiB fringe event at the Methodist Conference in Birmingham on Friday 23 June 2017.



You can find the winning entries from the 2016 competition, '*From Deep Within*', on our website: www.mwib.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

The Five-Day Community for Spiritual Formation presents

Living lightly in today's world

Sunday 28th May – Friday 2nd June 2017

Drumalis Retreat Centre
Larne, Northern Ireland

To find out more or request a registration form contact: Jill Baker (Registrar)
by telephone: 0141 959 7951
by email: fivedaycsf@btinternet.com
or visit <https://5daycommunity.com/>

Swanwick Residential 2017

Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome

Friday 31 March—Sunday 2 April 2017

Keynote Speaker: Rosemarie Wenner, Bishop of the German United Methodist Church



Bookings now open

Booking forms available with this mailing, or to download at: www.mwib.org.uk

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Methodist Women in Britain



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Leaving the Familiar Creativity Day: Saturday 20 May 2017

The 2017 Creativity Day, which will take place in Liverpool*, will be jointly organised and led by MWiB and Shoreline Conversations.

In the morning you can choose either:

- to explore some of the history of this fascinating city by visiting the Liverpool Slavery Museum or the Liverpool Tate Art Gallery, seeking 'Street Wisdom', or taking photographs, or
- to learn about the art of facilitating spiritual conversations in groups, Shoreline Conversations-style.

You will have opportunity in the afternoon to consolidate and share together in groups your experiences of the morning, with sessions on Slavery and Refugees (Anne Browse), Shoreline Conversations (Mark Davis), creatively using your morning's photographs (Mark Howard) or creative writing (Jude Simms).

More details and booking forms will be available from mid-January 2017.

* NB: The venue has now changed from Warrington (as advertised in the Autumn newsletter) to Liverpool, as above.

Financial help is often available in Circuit and District MWiB groups, and from the Connexion, for women to attend a training event or conference that will encourage, enable and equip her to participate fully in the life of the Church and in society. Younger women and those who have never attended an event before are particularly welcome to apply.

Please contact your local MWiB officers, or email:
finance@mwib.org.uk