

You will be aware that following interviews at the February Forum meeting, we were unable to appoint a new **Vice-President/President for 2018-2022**, and we are now re-advertising this role. Please use the flyer inserted herewith to advertise the role as widely as possible (via newsletters, websites, word of mouth, etc)—and of course, please give prayerful thought as to whether this might be your own calling.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I'm writing this letter at the beginning of May, looking out at the garden which is covered with a fine covering of frost. Spring was late in coming this year but, undaunted by the cold, the trees are festooned with blossom signalling the promise of warmer days to come.

These last few months have been a busy but rewarding time for me as I have travelled around the Districts from Cober Hill in Yorkshire to Tonbridge in Kent and various points in between. This opportunity to share experiences, fellowship and worship with so many different Groups of women I find both rewarding and uplifting, it is for me one of the main privileges of the role of President.



Collage made by participants at the Cober Hill residential weekend.



The Annual Residential Conference at Swanwick has certainly been the highlight of our year to date. The keynote speaker Rachel Lampard, leader of the *Joint Public Issues Team*, challenged and motivated us to participate in the mindful art of 'Craftivism', an effective method of protesting against injustice. There are many areas of injustice in our world, but our focus was on the rising poverty and hunger which is the reality for so many people across Britain today, evidenced by the steep rise in the need for Foodbanks since the introduction of the Universal Credit Scheme.

Pictured here is an example of 'craftivism', an embroidered napkin worked by Janice Clark and sent to her MP.

Other speakers included Ruth Dearnley, CEO of *Stop the Traffik*, who spoke passionately about ways of combating people trafficking using modern everyday technology, and Su Hallcroft, from the Hazel Twig Theatre Company, performed 'Chosen' her very moving interpretation of Mary, mother of Jesus.

Looking ahead, I look forward to sharing with our sisters from across Europe as we meet in Belfast for the World Federation Joint Area Seminar, hosted by Methodist Women in Ireland.

On June 29th we will be sharing in 'Story and Song' at our Methodist Conference Fringe Event in Nottingham. We will have the opportunity to experience and hear the story behind 'Signs for Worship' led by Colin Townsend, to hear of Anne's experiences during her time as President/Vice President, and to hear the results of this year's writing competition 'At The Heart'. Do come and join us; details can be found in the following pages of this newsletter and on the website.

I wish you all a relaxing summer.
With every blessing

Sandra

Empowerment gifts

Every year MWiB gives Empowerment Gifts totalling £10,000 to projects working to empower women and girls overseas by providing staff and training costs, or buying equipment to facilitate their work. The Forum meeting in September 2017 considered nine projects meeting the criteria, and unanimously agreed to give:

£2,000 to Pregnancy Twinning, Malawi and Nigeria



and £1,000 each to:

- ~ MCK Tharaka, Kenya
- ~ L'Programme de Santé Communautaire, Benin
- ~ Women: Faith, Family and Community, Haiti
- ~ Mother to Mother playgroups, Kenya
- ~ Family of Hope School, Uganda
- ~ Cervical Cancer Screening, Kenya
- ~ Wesleyan School Teacher Training, Pakistan
- ~ Dieu N'Oublie Personne, Togo

2018 Empowerment Gift application forms: download from the MWiB website, or telephone to request by post.



In May Anne Browse (MWiB Vice President) and Jude Simms (Communications Officer) travelled to northern Germany to attend the European Methodist Festival 'Staunen!' ('Be amazed!'). The five-day event brought together more than 800 Methodists from around 29 countries across Europe, including around 20 people from Britain, and together we joined in a programme of worship, Bible study, seminars, cultural trips and fun activities. We met friends made in Houston in 2016, and made new friends in fellowship in small groups and at mealtimes.

A full report and pictures of the Festival will be in the next newsletter and on the website.

Meet a Mission Partner

Our Woman in Zimbabwe

Isabel Hill talks about her day-to-day life in rural Zimbabwe:

Ordinarily I go to the rural areas to visit orphans and vulnerable children. However, whenever I am in the office there are often two to four people waiting for help in the form of food, counselling, or just an ear to listen. In doing this you have to get used to being let down by people and to letting people down yourself because its impossible to meet everyone's need. So breakdowns, fatigue and frustration are normal feelings even for the most seasoned person. As I deal with these cases I often experience a sense of helplessness and inadequacy.

My highest moment is on Friday after work, when I go for my Praise and Worship Team practice at Hillside Methodist Church, preparing for Sunday service. It's important to prepare ourselves and the congregation for worship and not just to entertain. When singing, our spirit should connect with God's for worship to begin.

It's Sunday morning. I wake up at 4.00am, have my morning devotions, and prepare for church. The Sunday service starts at 9.30am, and at 9.00am I am there. There are a few people inside, some praying, some chatting. I join those praying, asking God to help our team as we lead, requesting the Holy Spirit to anoint our lips, thoughts and words which we sing so as to evangelise in everyone's heart.

It is this time well spent in the presence of the Holy Spirit that replenishes my spirit and enables me to carry on day to day in the work that I do.

In this picture, I am third from the right, in my Manyano uniform, as the Praise and Worship Team opens in prayer at the beginning of the Sunday morning service.

Isabel Hill



South Africa: equipping, encouraging and empowering

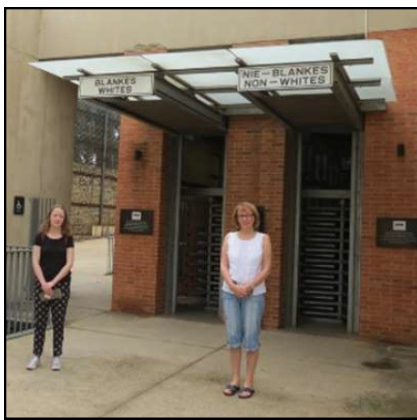
In February 2018 World Federation Officer Carolyn Lawrence and Helen Kim Scholar Rachel Allison visited South Africa on behalf of MWiB and the British Methodist Church. Carolyn writes:

I was particularly interested in the leadership programme for women written by our Mission Partner Revd Jane Day, and the MWiB Executive agreed this could be a useful connection and learning experience. Jane lives in Germiston, near Johannesburg, with husband Steve; they very graciously allowed us to stay with them in their home and it was great to be with them and learn about their life in South Africa.

The six-part 'Magnify' women's leadership programme takes its name and inspiration from the song of Mary in Luke Chapter 1, and aims to equip, encourage and empower women to serve God wherever they are in God's mission. Rachel and I attended a 'Magnify' day exploring spirituality at Enseni, a wonderful retreat centre set in beautiful gardens. We engaged with the theme of 'love' in three different ways – creativity, an awareness walk, and quiet prayer – before coming together to share Holy Communion.



Mission Partner Jane Day (l), with Carolyn (c) and Rachel (r)



We felt it was important to learn some of the nation's history, particularly the apartheid era, and we visited the Apartheid Museum which was opened in 2001. At the ticket office we were randomly given tickets classifying us as either 'white' or 'non-white'. Rachel had a 'white' ticket and mine was 'non-white', which meant we had to enter separately through different gates allocated to our race group *[picture left]*. In a very small way I experienced the uncertainty and vulnerability of being separated, and wondering if that meant I would be spending the day alone as it was not clear where and if we would meet up. The museum took us on a dark and difficult journey that ended in hopefulness for the future.

Rachel and I had the privilege of visiting the Connexional Office of the Methodist Church of South Africa, where Rachel led the staff devotions *[picture right]*, and we visited an amazing exhibition housed there which tells the history of Methodism in South Africa.



We visited the township church of Good Hope with Revd Steve Day who led the entire liturgy in Xhosa. The local people are amazed that a British man has gone to the trouble of learning their language and he has earned a lot of respect for that.

It was a great privilege to visit Steve and Jane and find out more about their lives and ministry and to learn about the nation of South Africa and its issues, and I am immensely grateful to have been given this opportunity. I pray as I follow up from this visit, that I will be able to enable others to gain an insight into this part of God's church and to inspire them to pray for South Africa and indeed our sister churches across the world.

Carolyn Lawrence,
February 2018

You can read Carolyn's full report on the MWiB website, and Carolyn and Rachel welcome speaking invitations—see back page for contact details.



Participants in the Magnify day



Worship at the church of Good Hope

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS: 20th June, 5th September and 21st November 2018

FORUM MEETINGS: 29th–30th September 2018 and 16th–17th February 2019

If you have any issues to raise or questions to ask, please speak to your Forum Rep.



MWiB / Touchstone Partnership Update



In her 'Letter from the President' in the last newsletter, Sandra spoke about a new and exciting partnership between MWiB and Touchstone in Bradford. Here is an update with further details.

Touchstone, which has worked alongside diverse communities for 25 years, is sponsored by the Methodist Church in Britain and is open to all. The Centre seeks to provide a safe space for people of different faiths and backgrounds to come together to:

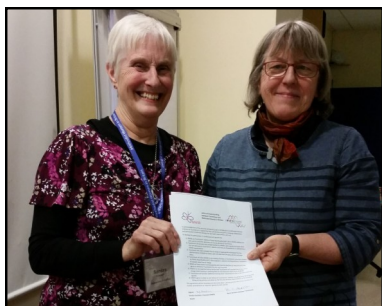
- ~ understand each other
- ~ take time to listen to the struggles and experiences people have
- ~ understand the relationship between England and Pakistan
- ~ learn to be confident about what Jesus means to us
- ~ be proud of West Yorkshire people and their heritage
- ~ have fun together doing creative activities whilst listening to stories

Touchstone is currently housed in a small corner-terrace house, with difficult exterior access and interior stairs, and little room for development of the work, and recently new premises have been acquired nearby.

After consultation with the Centre Manager Revd Barbara Glasson, and with advice from the Connexional Governance Officer for the Methodist Church, to ensure that the aims and objectives of the two organisations were sufficiently aligned to make partnership appropriate, the MWiB Forum which met in September 2017 unanimously agreed that MWiB advance £87,000 to Touchstone, to enable them to complete the refurbishment of their new premises, MacRory's, as a new and more suitable base. Pictured right is an artist's impression of what the new premises will look like when the work is complete.



(For more information on the project, visit their website: <http://www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk/Relocation>)



Touchstone are offering MWiB in exchange: to use MacRory's as our official address from which post can be forwarded, use of meeting rooms, training in listening skills and other training, and involvement in inter-faith work.

At the Forum meeting in February Barbara spoke of the history and current work of Touchstone and thanked MWiB for our financial support, and a letter of understanding was signed by Sandra on behalf of MWiB and Barbara on behalf of Touchstone (pictured left).

[The full article can be found on the MWiB website: www.mwib.org.uk]

Over the Rainbow

Following on from the successful 'Transforming the World from the Kitchen?' exhibition at Epworth Old Rectory in 2016 and 2017, which told the story of the different women's movements in the Methodist Church from the nineteenth century to the present day, a brand new and exciting exhibition has recently opened for the 2018 season.

'Over the Rainbow' is an exploration of one of Women's Network's earliest campaigns, in solidarity with the South African Black Sash movement of quiet, non-violent protest against apartheid, which was actively supported by many South African Methodists. The culmination of Network's awareness-raising in Britain was a rally at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, held in June 1990.

When Sarah Braidell asked for items for the Women's Collection in 2014, her call brought in about 20 banners made by Network groups in circuits and districts as part of this campaign, and further acquisitions included issues of Magnet magazine, press cuttings and photographs also linked to it. The resulting new exhibition is a bright and colourful celebration of this early work.

On Wednesday 21 March the annual Trustees Meeting was held at EOR, with members of the World Methodist Council present, and Curator Gillian Crawley invited Bishop Ivan Abrahams, the Council's General Secretary, to formally open the exhibition. At the short ceremony, the Bishop spoke very personally of his own experience growing up in a black family in South Africa under the apartheid regime, and paid tribute to the international support which helped bring an end to apartheid in the early 1990s.



*Bishop Ivan Abrahams
with volunteer Amy,
who created the display*

The exhibition is open Tuesday–Saturday, and Bank Holiday Mondays, from 10.00am–4.30pm

For further information, visit:

www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk

Swanwick Experience 2018

'Do you know what I want? I want justice - oceans of it. I want fairness - rivers of it.
That's what I want. That's all I want' Amos 5:24



Where can we begin to tell you all about another wonderful Swanwick week-end? There were 250 women from all over the British isles, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The amazing speaker was Rachel Lampard [pictured left] who works for the Methodist Church on the ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team. She has three young children and leads a very busy life and took for her theme 'Oceans of Justice, Rivers of Fairness' from the writings of the prophet Amos.

MWiB Connexional President, Sandra Goodwin welcomed everyone and spoke briefly of her visit to Bolivia and about Tabita House, a safe haven for women there.

Anne Browse then introduced Rev Dr Barbara Glasson of Touchstone in Bradford, where they make bread, teach English to foreign women and much more. They have acquired new premises which once belonged to the Dewhurst family of cotton mill fame. Their aim continues to be 'Meet. Eat, Listen and Go'. Barbara believes you can change the world with small steps that become great strides.

Rachel Lampard began her first session by speaking about the power of the ocean and the persistence of the river, about justice and injustice and how there are more than 2,000 texts in the Bible that speak about this. She pointed out how the Old Testament sets out rules that widows and orphans are to be cared for and how the prophets spoke out against people who didn't live by these guidelines. She told a story of a Church who commissioned a tapestry to be called 'Jesus in Glory'. When eventually it was unveiled there were lots of mutterings when it was noticed that Jesus had dirty feet. That surely was a true portrait of his life.

She went on to speak of so many injustices – the Windrush families, housing, homelessness, refugees, climate change and more. Statistics show that 1 in 4 mothers skip a meal in order to feed their children. She spoke at length about Universal Credit and what it is doing to families in genuine need who had been coping until the benefit system changed. She told real stories of the difficulties families were going through because of red tape, and challenged us all to make a "napkin" to give to our MP's asking for their help in making the Government see what they could do to make things change.

Another speaker was Ruth Dearnley, Chief Executive of 'Stop The Traffik' who told harrowing stories and challenged us all to be more aware.

Workshops were very varied and we were entertained on the Saturday evening by actress Su Hallcroft, who performed 'Chosen', the life of Mary from Jesus' birth to his resurrection. It was brilliantly performed and very moving – a definite highlight for us both.



Participant Jackie Hartrey
with her finished napkin

Glenys Smith and Olive Stearnes, (Written for the Tiverton and Wellington Circuit newsletter, and used with permission)

Swanwick Offerings

Bonanza for Belfast

Raising money to enable women from some of the poorer European countries to attend the World Federation seminar in Belfast in June, the butterfly bring and buy stall at Swanwick raised a total of £522.50 (including £16.00 from Gift Aid).



Tabita House

An amazing £1,586.89 was raised for the women's centre in Bolivia, of which £887.00 was Gift Aided giving another £220.00 to make a wonderful total of £1,806.89.

Swanwick 2019 Residential Weekend



Friday 5th—Sunday 7th April 2019

Keynote speaker Revd Val Ogden
(Currently Mission Partner in Fiji)

*Further information and booking form
available early November 2018*

Forthcoming Events



World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women

World Federation Day 2018



Life and Learning

Based on Sustainable Development Goal 4:
'inclusive and equitable quality education and
lifelong learning opportunities for all'

Saturday 27th October 2018
10.00am–4.00pm

Choice of two venues:

Truro Methodist Church, Cornwall
Union Place, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1EP

St. Paul's Methodist Church, Blackburn
Higher Audley St, Blackburn, Lancs BB1 1DH

Worship, Bible study, keynote presentation,
and information, activities, and resources on
different aspects of education .

Refreshments and hot lunch provided.
Suggested donation £10 per person.

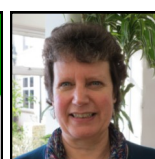
Information and booking form:
download from: www.mwib.org.uk
or email: communications@mwib.org.uk
or telephone: 0300 030 9873

Methodist Conference **MWiB Fringe Event** **Story and Song**

Friday 29th June 2018
7.45–9.00pm
(refreshments from 7.15pm)

Nightingale Hall, University of Nottingham
University Park, Nottingham NG7 2QS

~ 'Signs for Worship' with Colin Townsend ~
~ Anne Browse reflects on her Presidential term ~
~ 2018 Writing Competition winners announced ~



*This is an open invitation:
no tickets or booking required*



Come and say 'Hello'!

If you're visiting Cliff College Festival
(Spring Bank Holiday weekend)
we'd love to meet you and say hello
at our stand in the Market Village tent.

And if you're visiting the
Methodist Conference in Nottingham
(29th June–5th July)
come and see us in the Exhibition space.

Contact us:

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