



WINTER 2018

# ROOF 'N' ROOTS

The Newsletter of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society



## 'DOUBLE ACT' CELEBRATE OUR 70TH!

### How did your MMHS 70th anniversary service come about?

I always felt there was a need for the Society to connect with the grassroots of Methodism. The 70th anniversary was the ideal opportunity for this. My wife Joyce and I organised the service as joint senior stewards at Wrexham Methodist Church.

### You used our worship resource, adding your own material. How did that work?

Joyce prepared the service with material by Board member Revd Glynn Lister and former Board member Revd John Harrod. We sang the new anniversary hymn by Andrew Pratt, and Society resident Revd Neville Pugh led the prayers.

### More than 60 people attended. What was their feedback?

People were delighted to hear about the Society's work!

### Wrexham sounds an interesting church. Can you share briefly about its work?

It's a modern town-centre 'church in the sky' sited above the shops. You arrive by lift from the busiest shopping street in town. In membership terms, it's the largest Methodist church in Wales and is

### DAVID MILLINGTON MBE STEPS DOWN IN FEBRUARY AFTER SIX YEARS ON OUR BOARD. WITH HIS WIFE JOYCE, HE RECENTLY LED A SERVICE TO CELEBRATE OUR ANNIVERSARY. WE ASKED HIM TO SHARE HIS STORY...

in use every day for community and mission. We work with the homeless and migrant people of our inner-urban population.

### How would you describe your own spiritual journey?

My spiritual journey in Methodism started in the 50s through a Methodist sponsored scout group. We were a bunch of working class lads. I was drawn to the Christian faith through the influence of scout master Colin Greensmith, who only passed away last year. My wife and I met at Ilkley on a youth weekend. We went for a walk on the moors and I caught

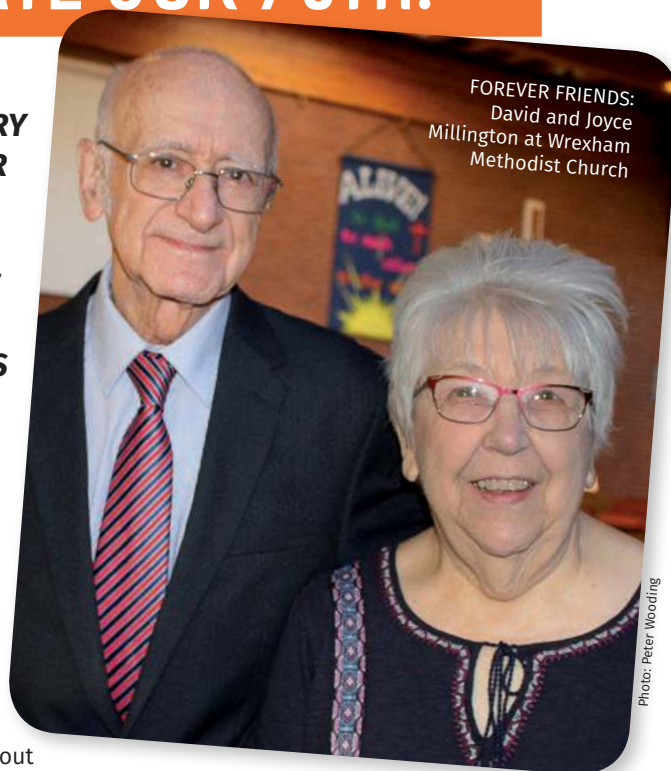


Photo: Peter Wooding

a stinking cold! We've been involved in Methodism as a 'double act' ever since.

### What is your professional background? How did that lead up to your MBE?

As a chartered surveyor, my professional background is property, as director of a large commercial consultancy, and I've also held a directorship of a building ..... ➔



SNOW BUSINESS: Engineers are on call whatever the weather

## NEW NUMBER FOR GAS REPAIRS

A new phone number for all your gas repairs has been issued by British Gas.

The number – **0333 202 9797** –

replaces the existing one for gas call-outs that has featured on our website and in the *Tenants' Handbook*. And it remains a 24-hour line.

The Society has a contract with British Gas to carry out such essential tasks as safety checks and boiler servicing. It is also an unlimited calls contract, so please report any problems directly to British Gas on 0333 202 9797 and they will send an engineer.

According to Ofcom, calls to 03 numbers cost no more than calls to geographic numbers (01 or 02) and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages. ●

## A MESSAGE FROM MAIRI



significant milestone in the life of the Society this year - our 70th anniversary. We've enjoyed marking it in creative ways, from a specially commissioned hymn to a splendid cake, from big and bold balloons to a Celtic booklet of prayers. If, in reading this, you suddenly feel you'd like to do something to mark the year before it ends, here's a suggestion. Send me a story of how MMHS has been a blessing to you. I would love to hear from you.

I often return to a recurring theme in the history of MMHS - generosity. That prompts in me, the desire to say 'thank you' as often as possible! Being generous is not just about giving financially, hugely important though that is. It's also about being ready and willing to give time. To share expertise. To expect the best in the other person. MMHS has enjoyed the full panoply of generosity. Again, I say, 'Thank you'.

Happy Christmas when it comes!

● **Mairi Johnstone** CEO

Life without celebrations would be pretty dull - can you imagine it? Anniversaries, community achievements, those first faltering steps as a toddler - the range is huge. Celebrations offer us opportunities to share, reflect and lift up others in praise and admiration.

As you know, we celebrated a

## LISTER'S LITURGY FOR LIFE

### MEET THE MAN WHO CRAFTED WORSHIP MATERIALS FOR OUR 70TH ANNIVERSARY

His surname sounds almost like a famous Hungarian composer. So maybe it's expected that MMHS resident and Board member Revd Glynn Lister would be a most musical fellow.

He is a key part of the team behind our 70th anniversary worship resource. Glynn compiled the act of worship and thanksgiving - 'wanting to produce something simple and accessible' - as he put it.

'Hymns and readings were chosen, and prayers written, to remind us of where we came from, to give thanks for all involved then and now.'

Brought up in a Methodist family in Swindon, Glynn became a local preacher just after his 17th birthday. He was studying accountancy but became convinced of 'a call to ordained ministry'.

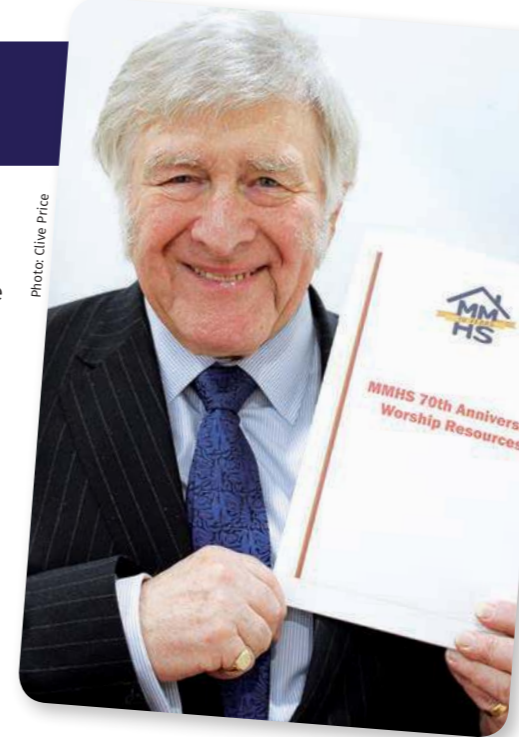
He offered as a candidate in 1965 and trained at Didsbury College, Bristol. Glynn married Margaret, a teacher, in 1966. 'We moved the date to avoid the World Cup final,' he smiled.

Glynn was happy for Methodism to 'send me wherever' and in the 70s took on other roles such as hospital chaplain. There were poignant moments. 'I shall not forget the time I conducted a wedding at the bedside of the bride on a Maundy Thursday and then took her funeral service ten days later,' said Glynn.

In 1975 he was ministering to nine churches in a circuit with a large army camp nearby. He became chaplain to a group of young recruits. 'A 6am Easter Sunday service in a snowy training camp for the whole regiment is an unforgettable moment.'

***The Society was good. We found a house and we've been extremely happy here***

Photo: Clive Price



Becoming a magistrate in 1983 also produced some interesting situations. 'For many years I was kept off the licensing bench,' Glynn recalled, 'as it was thought the public would assume a Methodist minister was bound to refuse a licence!'

Glynn retired in 2006 and moved with

ART FOR HEART'S SAKE:  
MMHS resident and Board member Glynn Lister

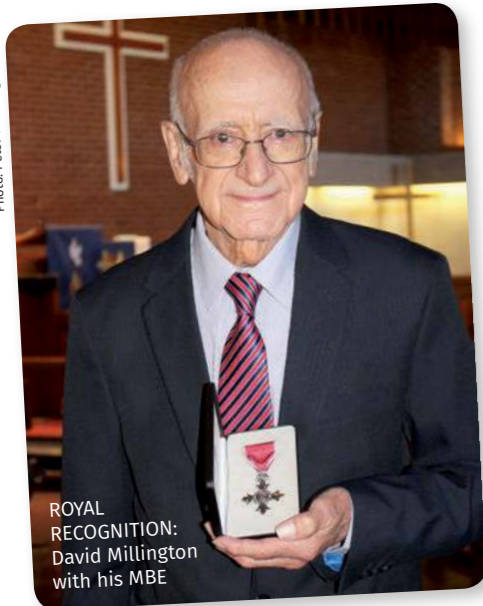
Margaret into an MMHS property in north-east England. 'The Society was good,' said Glynn, 'we found a house and we've been extremely happy here ever since.'

He joined the Board in 2016. 'I hope I understand what is important to residents,' he said. His financial background also helps him to contribute to the wider financial picture.

As ever, retirement brings more opportunities. Glynn often leads worship on Sundays, is a church treasurer, sings in a male voice choir, plays the bassoon and is a rugby fan. 'I watch Newcastle Falcons and England home and sometimes away,' he said.

So how would our in-house liturgist advise those wanting to write their own worship material? Glynn's response paints the picture of a worshipping community. 'Look for it to be simple and focused,' he said, 'with each part adding to the rest and making a whole.' ●

## 'DOUBLE ACT' CELEBRATE OUR 70TH!



ROYAL RECOGNITION: David Millington with his MBE

society. In a voluntary sense I was involved in further education in Salford for many years. That led to an amazing occasion. I featured on the Queen's birthday honours list in 2013, along with the likes of Aled Jones and Adele! I saw artist Grayson Perry and TV presenter Julia Somerville at the ceremony. My MBE was presented by Prince Charles, who thanked me for chairing the merger of three colleges. I was stunned how he knew it all.

### What are your favourite memories of working with MMHS?

I've seen great progress in the quality of the Society's offering over the last six years. We now provide a higher level of property maintenance than the 'Decent Homes' standard. We're also applying a much wider leeway in locational and financial criteria. All this reinforces our policy of treating retirees as residents not tenants. I'm very happy with the Society, but I've done six years and it's good to make way for new Board members.

### You seem like someone who always has a project going. What's next?

I think the answer is an increasing involvement in the local church and circuit. My wife and I have taken on seven new roles. There are many challenges in maintaining the church's mission in Wrexham. And we'll carry on enjoying our collection of Victorian memorabilia. ●

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## ELECTRICAL TESTS ARE CURRENT

Electrical testing of our properties is still underway - so if you get a call from our contractors, there is no need for concern.

Henderson Electrical Services are established contractors serving homes and businesses across the country. They are carrying out the five-year testing programme on our behalf, and will always phone you first to

make the initial appointment.

A family run business, Henderson's understand traditional values and service. They pride themselves in 'the personal touch'. We've been working with them for 15 years. When they phone, don't be afraid to ask questions, and when a technician calls, ask for their ID. ●



PERSONAL TOUCH: The Hendersons will all be there - looking after your electrics



## SURVEY FORMS ARE FLYING IN

More than 800 people have responded to our recent residents' survey on mobility, independence and computers - but there's room for more!

Covering a range of issues from wellbeing to web use, the questionnaire winged its way to your door with the 70th anniversary edition of *Roof 'n' Roots* - plus a copy of *The Home Blessing Prayer Book*.

Some of you completed the survey

online. Most of you sent the completed form by post. There is probably a number outstanding, so please keep going with your responses. It's never too late to return a questionnaire.

We are still collating the information. If you included any urgent issues in your questionnaire, please let us know in the usual way. We look forward to sharing more about our survey next year. ●

Photo: Peter Wooding

Photo: Veleri



Photo: BBC

METHODIST HERO: Rosa Parks played by Vinette Robinson in *Doctor Who*

## METHODISM IN OUR MADNESS

### ARTS AND CULTURE BY CLIVE PRICE

As Methodist civil rights icon scooped the storyline in a recent episode of BBC TV's smash hit sci-fi series *Doctor Who*.

Rosa Parks – known as the mother of the freedom movement in 1950s America – was the focus of the classic TV show. And the programme has been praised for highlighting her achievement.

People commented on Twitter, thanking the episode's writers for featuring the history-making moment when Rosa refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery city bus.

The show treated it like this – *Doctor Who* and her friends went back to 50s Alabama and stopped a rogue racist time traveller from meddling with that epic confrontation. The Tardis team met Rosa and experienced the divisions of the Deep South. The programme became a glowing tribute to the young black woman, a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

When Rosa was convicted of violating segregation laws, leaders of the local black community organised a bus boycott. Protestors were led by Revd Dr Martin Luther King Jr – who also featured in the episode.

Rosa's brave stand on public transport on 1st December 1955 helped launch the civil rights movement in the USA. She is remembered on that date each year. Rosa died, aged 92, on 24th October 2005. ●

# HOME TRUTHS

## REFLECTION BY REVD WARREN BARDSLEY

On the threshold of winter, William Blake wrote, pessimistically, 'No flowers, no fruit, November'.

In our global society when strawberries and roses are available all year round, those words are no longer relevant. Even so, as we grow older, we tend to face the coming of winter, its short days, long nights and freezing temperatures with apprehension. In January, winter can seem never-ending and spring far away!

In early 2016 I suffered a breakdown, later diagnosed as clinical depression. I was totally unprepared. At age 77, I'd never experienced anything like it. For almost six months I was in denial, refusing to admit my condition was anything other than exhaustion and that rest, a temporary withdrawal from my commitments, the support of friends and personal faith would solve the problem.

I was wrong. It was only when I was prepared to admit I was mentally ill and sought medical advice that my slow progress to recovery began. Part of that journey was being able to write about it. But the book I wrote turned out to be the shortest, yet most difficult I have written. It was done in the hope that it may be of help to others struggling with this devastating condition. It can be helpful to write about your experience – even in a personal journal – though we all find different ways of coping.

***It was only when I was prepared to admit I was mentally ill and sought medical advice that my slow progress to recovery began***

I discovered that one in four people in Britain experience a form of this illness at some stage of their lives. It can strike at any time. Recent statistics reveal an alarming number of children and young people to be victims of depression.

In one of my bleakest periods I wrote, 'I'm learning a lot about myself and the sense that God is present in this darkness, that God *does* spread a table in the wilderness, and I have known



Author and MMHS resident Revd Warren Bardsley

those occasional, unexpected moments of sheer grace...they encourage hope when there seems to be little light in, or at the end of, this long tunnel'.

Around that time someone sent me a card with a picture of a blackbird. Above it were the words, 'Faith is a bird which senses the dawn and sings though it is not yet light'.

***'Faith is a bird which senses the dawn and sings though it is not yet light'***

It reminded me of a time when I was away with the family in a cottage on the Staffordshire moorlands. It was the day after the clocks go back, marking the end of British summer time. Waking unexpectedly before dawn, I'd forgotten how slowly light begins to address darkness in the northern hemisphere as night turns to day. I saw the first faint pinprick of light through my bedroom window. For about ten minutes, a kind of struggle ensued between light and darkness. At one point it seemed as if night was about to be victorious. Then, slowly, inexorably, the light of dawn pushed back the dark as birdsong hailed the beginning of a new day.

I learned there is a way *through* the darkness to a place of healing, hope and new beginnings. Yes, winter can feel never-ending, but spring is on its way. ●

Revd Warren Bardsley is an MMHS resident. His new book *Wilderness: A Journey Through Depression* is published by Church in the Market Place at £6. Copies available from [w.bardsley@btinternet.com](mailto:w.bardsley@btinternet.com)

