

NEW SERVICE FOR GAS CONCERNS

MMHS has enlisted the services of a nationwide agency 'gas-elec' to look after our network of properties. That means options when calling us have changed for all your gas needs.

For enquiries during office hours, MMHS residents should continue to phone **020 3848 6020** – but press option 1 for gas. For enquiries outside office hours, MMHS residents should

continue to phone the same number and, again, choose option 1 for gas emergencies.

On choosing the gas option, each call is automatically directed to 'gas-elec's' call centre. For non-emergencies, callers can choose option 2 to leave a message. Our normal office opening hours are 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays.



Photo: Shutterstock

roof 'n' roots

The Newsletter of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society • Summer 2023

'He taught me how to rock and roll!'

chest bass and washboard. 'We all went to the same youth club. We were only 16, 17 year-old, if that,' Trevor remembered.

Their hero wasn't American boy Elvis, but British lad Lonnie Donegan. The Sapphires sang Lonnie's tunes, like *Rock Island Line*. 'We did that at a breakneck pace,' laughed Trevor, 'started off slow, but at the end we were out of breath!'

Two of The Sapphires have since passed away, and Trevor's skiffle days are over. But still, he loves using music in church. 'We're restarting our "power praise" singing once a month,' he said.

Even more life-changing was when Trevor rolled up on his James motorbike to impress young Jenny. A Cliff Richard fan, Jenny knew nothing of skiffle, but her heart skipped to a new rhythm – particularly when Trevor took her dancing. 'He taught me how to rock and roll,' smiled Jenny, now 78.

The couple married on Boxing Day 1963. They celebrate their Diamond Wedding during this, MMHS's 75th anniversary year.

Jenny and Trevor later had two children, Jonathan and Rachael. Jonathan was diagnosed with leukaemia at age four. 'We were devastated,' Jenny recalled, 'and I remember most vividly going into the ladies' toilet and crying my eyes out.' A ▶



ROCK SOLID: Jenny and Trevor are happy with their MMHS home. Inset: Trevor (far right) and The Sapphires



JENNY AND TREVOR MARK THEIR DIAMOND WEDDING IN OUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR

You might not see his name in lights. But MMHS resident Revd Trevor Haigh has played his part at the forefront of cultural change.

Like The Beatles' John Lennon, Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones, and The Who's Roger Daltrey, Trevor was part of a skiffle group in the 50s. Called The Sapphires, they played a regular Saturday night spot at a local venue and won a skiffle

championship in Yorkshire. 'We were number one in our street,' Trevor smiled.

Skiffle emerged from early 50s jazz clubs as a British expression of American folk and blues. It gave young people their own exciting sound, amid the dull dreary days of rationing. 'It's folk music, played with a jazz beat,' said Trevor, 82.

The Sapphires were among thousands of skiffle groups active at the time. Singer-songwriter Billy Bragg describes it as a grassroots explosion, like 70s punk. Trevor and his friends played guitars, tea-

Catch our anniversary news at mmhs.org.uk/75th

A message from Mairi



As you often find in life, sometimes it takes just one individual to instigate significant change.

In our case it was one exceptional woman, Mrs Mary F Hoult, who donated a manor house to provide for ministers in retirement.

Coming out of World War II, it was recognised that many Methodist presbyters didn't have a property to which they could retire. Some just kept working, often into their 70s.

Mrs Hoult responded to that need by gifting her land and property. Her far-sightedness led to MMHS being formed in 1948. Others joined her and our history is one of mission-hearted giving on a scale that is truly humbling.

That journey has now led to our celebrating 75 years of providing homes for retired presbyters, and deacons, too.

Thank you to all those reading this copy of *Roof 'n' Roots* who have stood with us in prayer as well as financial support.

Join us as we cherish the past and embrace the future.

Mairi

Spring into our 75th celebrations!

IT WAS A GRAND DAY OUT AS WE BEGAN OUR BIRTHDAY BONANZA

We provide more than a house – we provide a home. That's our message as we launch our 75th anniversary celebrations.

We kicked off our festivities at the recent Daffodil Day rally – which drew 600 people to Methodist Central Hall, Westminster (MCHW). We had been invited as guests to this 'spring festival for Christian encouragement and renewal'.

MCHW presented a spectacular mix of powerful choral music, joyous gospel songs and inspiring operatic solos. Amid this packed programme, our Chief Executive Mairi Johnstone gave a video address to mark our anniversary. Chair of our Board Revd Alan Taylor was interviewed on stage by *Songs Of Praise* presenter Pam Rhodes.

'We provide much more than a house – we provide a home,' Mairi said. 'Your home is your sanctuary.' Mairi shared plans for the anniversary, including – an online service, celebration event and a specially written song.



CENTRE STAGE: Chair of our Board Revd Alan Taylor is interviewed by *Songs Of Praise* presenter Pam Rhodes

In the three-minute video, Mairi spoke of how MMHS appreciates people's gifts, legacies and bequests, which all help support the work of housing ministers in their retirement. Mairi said residents express their gratitude in personal notes on

Christmas cards. 'Christmas comes into its own,' she added. 'I would encourage our ministerial residents to keep on sending in those Christmas cards – you've no idea how important they are!'

Alan said MMHS accommodate 700 presbyters and deacons in houses and flats – 'spread all the way across the UK on every point of the compass'. He added, 'The needs can be diverse, but we have a small team that go the extra mile to meet those needs'.

Both Mairi and Alan spoke about the history of MMHS – founded at the same time as the NHS and the Welfare State – and the future challenges the charity face.

MCHW Superintendent Minister and Team Leader Revd Tony Miles thanked us for taking part. 'The work you do is so essential,' he told our Communications Manager Clive Price. 'It's a joy for me as an active minister to be able to visit some of those ministers in homes you've provided. So thank you and God bless you in the work that you do.'

Also taking part in the rally were – Neresa Maye of the London Community Gospel Choir, international tenor Anando Mukerjee, Lord Mayor of Westminster Hamza Taouzzale, Methodist Conference Vice President Anthony Boateng, London District Chair Revd Nigel Cowgill and President of Methodist Women in Britain Ruth Parrott.

MMHS is over the Moon with new tune

A chart-topping, award-winning composer whose music has travelled to the Moon is helping MMHS's 75th anniversary to take off, too.

Popular singer-songwriter Paul Field – who will be well known to many Methodists – has written a contemporary hymn in a classic Wesleyan style to boost our celebrations.

Titled *Christ Is The Cornerstone*, the new composition is based on a Bible passage proposed by MMHS Chief Executive Mairi Johnstone.

'The second chapter of Ephesians has lots of building imagery,' said Mairi. 'I was imagining a song that could be sung by people in every decade of life in all corners of the Church.'

The result is a haunting tune with deep words about the foundations of faith, set against the concerns of our day such as immigration and sectarianism – with the potential for reconciliation.

'There are no strangers here, no barricades or walls,' say Paul's lyrics. 'In Christ there is no east or west, One Saviour for us all.'

The hymn will be presented to this year's Methodist Conference and

promoted from the MMHS exhibition stand at the event. The hope is that churches will incorporate it into their regular worship.

Paul Field has worked as a songwriter, composer, producer and performer in the UK and around the world since 1976.

He has received an Ivor Novello Award from the British Academy of Songwriters and Composers and a Dove Award – and two nominations – from GMA in Nashville along with numerous other awards from ASCAP in the USA.

He has had number one chart success with his songs in the UK, USA, Holland, South Africa and Germany – and has received many Platinum and Gold records for his compositions.

His songs have been recorded by many international artists including – Sir Cliff Richard, Elkie Brooks, Tammy Wynette and Katie Melua. Paul has worked with many different artists live and in the studio including Rick Wakeman, David and Carrie Grant and Chris Rea.

Among the organisations and events who've used Paul's music are Methodist churches and events, the BBC, Christian Aid – and even American Apollo astronauts orbiting the moon.

◀ 'He taught me how to rock and roll!'



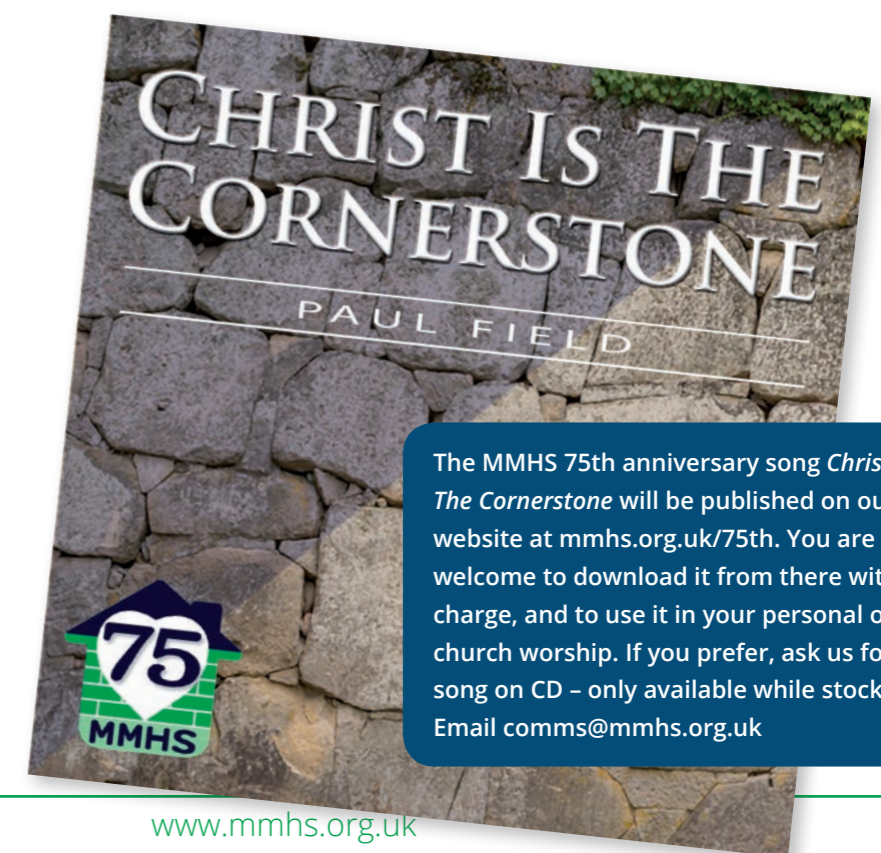
SPINNING TRACKS: Trevor may not be a rock god on a tour bus, but he's a minister of God with a model train layout

stranger at the hospital offered to pray. Jonathan went into remission, grew up without further issues and became a Methodist minister. 'We always say he was like John Wesley, a brand plucked from the burning,' said Jenny. 'He was saved for a reason.'

In 1984 Trevor studied for the Methodist ministry at Cliff College. Two years' pastoral work in Northern Ireland

propelled them further into ministry. Jenny became a local preacher in 1995, also studying at Cliff.

On retiring, the couple moved into an MMHS property in 2008 – and still preach. They have a view of the sea and Trevor's put a model train layout in the garage. 'We had no problems,' Jenny said of their home. 'MMHS see to everything. We're very, very happy!'



The MMHS 75th anniversary song *Christ Is The Cornerstone* will be published on our website at mmhs.org.uk/75th. You are welcome to download it from there without charge, and to use it in your personal or church worship. If you prefer, ask us for the song on CD – only available while stocks last! Email comms@mmhs.org.uk

Contemplate the ordinary

SUMMER REFLECTION
BY MARY FLEESON

Contemplation has always been a valued part of the Christian spiritual journey. In Luke 12:27, Jesus encourages his followers to 'consider how the wild flowers grow', and to 'consider the ravens'.

His instruction has many layers of help for us. He wants us to be comforted and reminds us that God cares for his creation, that care extends to the smallest, most overlooked bug and the flower that blooms unseen. So how much more is his care for us, his children?

He is giving us great life advice – don't worry! It's easier said than done. But when it follows hot on the tails of 'love God' and 'love one another', we are offered a recipe for good living.

Jesus also gives us a way to grow spiritually by considering God's creation, contemplating what he has done, what he can do and what he will do.

Almost anything can provide an inspiration for contemplation. There's a nice hot cup of coffee sitting next to me as I write. It's comforting. It's in a favourite mug that reminds me of a happy event. The mug rests safely

within reach, and I'm reminded of those whose lives are in turmoil, for whom a simple cup of something warm and comforting would be a luxury.

The contemplation could stop there, with a deliberate intent to be more aware of my surroundings and my place in it. But the natural progression from contemplation is prayer.

So I could thank God for the simple pleasures of life. I could ask God to bless the friends and family who shared the event commemorated on the mug. I could pray for those in difficult situations and ask God to inspire me to help a particular place, people or person.

Why not take a moment now to consider something simple and part

of your everyday life, which could take you on a journey of contemplation?

When you begin your journey of contemplation, remember the story of Deborah (Judges 4 and 5). She was an ordinary person who obeyed God's call and did great things in his name. When your contemplation leads into prayer, you may have the opportunity to obey God and make a positive difference.

D – Dedicate your time to God, offer that time in humility and without agenda.

E – Expect that God will be with you.

B – Be comfortable. If the Spirit leads, you may be in the same place for a while. 🏠



Mary Fleeson comes from a Methodist background, and now lives on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

With husband Mark, she runs Lindisfarne Scriptorium, taking spiritual and visual inspiration from the work of the monks who created wonderful books like the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells. Their inspiration is drawn from the rich Celtic spirituality of Northumbria, their Christian faith and the beautiful environment of Holy Island.

The couple aim to follow the great monastic scriptorium tradition of producing pieces of artwork that give glory to God and help his people to worship. Mark and Mary have helped produce MMHS prayer and worship resources over the years.

How we arrived at 75

A brand new motif has been created to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society.

Of course, these things don't just happen. Designing a logo is a journey.

We cast our thinking wide, and looked at lots of possibilities that captured

celebration and service.

Eventually, using our familiar house shape, we settled on a bright and cheerful 'bricks and mortar' theme. At the centre, we placed a heart.

We feel the logo represents who we are – a creative and caring organisation. 🏠



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For more news, visit www.mmhs.org.uk