

Clean your outdoor space this autumn

🍂 clean driveway and patio. Remove moss by sprinkling soda crystals;

🍂 clean gutters and drainpipes (MMHS will reimburse one annual clean of gutters and drain gullies, contact MMHS first);

🍂 sweep up leaves. Take to your local council dump. That way, you get rid of some harmful insects that may damage plants;

🍂 prune shrubs and trees. There is an annual FSPD gardening grant for MMHS

residents (contact us for an application form);

🍂 apply for the state's attendance allowance, if health and mobility issues significantly prevent you from keeping on top of maintenance.

🍂 refer to Resident's Handbook for more information or email property@mmhs.org.uk

roof 'n' roots

The Newsletter of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society • Autumn 2024

The end justifies the jeans

Photo: Clive Price



GARDEN GURU: Revd Doreen Hare has made an impact in the worlds of preaching, planting and pruning

REVD DOREEN HARE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS SINCE HER ORDINATION, JUST AS THE METHODIST CHURCH MARKS 50 YEARS OF ORDAINING WOMEN AS PRESBYTERS

Doreen Hare caused a stir with one of her first sermons – not because of her discourse but because of her denim.

This was the 1970s. When the incident was reported to a supervisory gathering

of local preachers, well-known minister Revd Frank Thewlis retorted, 'All I have to say is, did the end justify the jeans?'

The answer proved to be a resounding 'yes'. Doreen qualified as a local preacher and became part of the first wave of women ordained by the Methodist Church. Her sisters Diane and Jackie also became ordained ministers at different times.

Now an MMHS resident, Doreen celebrates 40 years since her ordination, during the same year that the Church marks its 50th anniversary of ordaining

women as presbyters. The jeans came on again when she totally renovated her garden, this time causing a stir on Facebook!

Sheffield born and bred, Doreen led churches at Darlington, Manchester, London, Nottingham and Birmingham.

Her sense of mission compelled her to befriend punk rockers, persuading them to sing 'Fisherfolk' worship songs in churches. When her spikey-haired friends were snubbed by some as 'ruffians', Doreen responded, 'How can you expect them to learn about the Gospel if you're so judgemental?'

She became known as a radical who helped the hurt, hungry and homeless. Her compassionate projects brought her into contact with the likes of Princess Anne and Princess Diana.

Doreen contributed to a study that revealed how women were largely excluded from the Church's patriarchal system. The paper wasn't accepted.

Still, her work blossomed – particularly on the horticultural scene. Photos of her garden have received a fanfare on Facebook.

Stunning images show a curved path through leisurely lawns. The pictures recently scooped 1200 'likes' and hundreds of positive comments on the 'Loving your garden' page.

A message from Mairi



We've arrived at the season of 'mists and mellow fruitfulness', as John Keats described autumn.

Autumn is often used as a metaphor for the later years of life. It can be a time of life when we reflect on what we have accumulated and perhaps focus on what matters. We can find new ways to reimagine ourselves. As another writer put it, 'during this season, we become the alchemist of our own change'.

Methodist ministers, health and circumstances permitting, don't really retire! They continue to serve but it's great when that combines with change. New skills, hobbies, adventures – the pushing of boundaries.

This edition of *Roof 'n' Roots* features one person who designs outdoor space and another who writes books. We never cease to be amazed at the creativity of our residents.

I hope your autumn is inspiring and life-changing.

Mairi



FAN POWER: Rev Robert Davies captures the thrill of football in his new book



MMHS RESIDENT REVD ROBERT DAVIES PLAYS HIS PART IN THE BEAUTIFUL GAME – BY WRITING A BOOK ABOUT HIS FAVOURITE FOOTBALL TEAM WREXHAM AFC

Hollywood stars Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney may have put Wrexham AFC on the map – but an MMHS resident has written an A-Z about the famous club.

The rollicking 40-page *Wrexham Is The Name!* is a brand new compilation of footballing thoughts by Revd Robert Davies. He's lived in an MMHS property in Lancashire for 15 years, which means travelling further to see his team play at the Racecourse ground in Wales.

Photo: Gemma Thomas/Wrexham AFC does not imply endorsement



STAR SYSTEM: American actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney represent a new chapter in Wrexham's story, but the A-Z is penned by club fan and MMHS resident Revd Robert Davies

Now 84, Bob has been attending matches there before the club's famous owners were born. As far back as the 50s, Bob would join other young lads in the famous 'Boys Pen' – after paying the modest admission fee of 9d.

'Those were the days,' he recalls in his book, 'when, especially for international matches between Wales and Ireland, the Racecourse took on the atmosphere of a miniature Wembley!' Bob's publication is full of snapshot stories like that. It's such an entertaining read, even if you're not a

Wrexham fan, you might end up as one. These magical memories were first published in the club's *Red Passion* fanzine. Under 'E is for Excitement', Bob remarks, 'Who will ever forget our win over Arsenal?' Under 'H is for Hughes', Bob remembers 'a very windy day in the 1950s' when newcomer Glyn Hughes scored direct from a corner.

Why bring a book out now? 'It's the thing I intended to do,' said Bob. 'When Wrexham got out of the National League, I thought that was the time to do

it.' Son Peter – who launched *Red Passion* – wrote the foreword. Another son, Martin, supplied the epilogue.

'Peter got me writing for *Red Passion* every month,' Bob remembered. 'So I wrote some of those little articles and then I did the A to Z. Peter would ring me and say "Dad, I want your article by Tuesday" or whatever. That kept me going.'

Wrexham Is The Name! is a labour of love. Bob has been giving away copies from his modest print run of 100. As well as working in his local circuit, Bob runs his own publishing operation, Church In The Market Place Publications.

Bob's enterprise has helped authors with their first book. Some have gone on to write for bigger publishers. His book of pandemic experiences – *Lockdown: Lexicon & Legacy* – featured in the winter 2020 edition of *Roof 'n' Roots*.

If you would like a copy of Bob's book, email robertdavies123@btinternet.com

What does he think of his team's bosses and their contributions – as shown in the TV docu-series *Welcome To Wrexham?* 'Manchester United, City and so on, they've got the billions,' said Bob. 'Isn't it good that money has been put into a little club?'

The end justifies the jeans

But the space had looked 'like a football field' when she moved into her MMHS house in East Yorkshire in 2018. She planned out her dream garden while MMHS refurbished her new home.

With a spade she cut a meandering path to reflect the mysterious knotwork and spirals of Celtic spirituality, in which she finds much inspiration. Doreen added flower and vegetable beds, mostly grown from seeds she gathered. She had a greenhouse and summer house built, to complete the rural idyll.

Doreen found time to construct a prayer garden at Driffeld Methodist Church with fellow MMHS resident Hazel Senior. Their carefully crafted creation has been registered with the Labyrinth Society and Quiet Garden Movement, drawing visitors from all over.



SOCIAL SPLENDOUR: Doreen's garden made an impact on Facebook

'I see the prayer garden as a ministry,' said Doreen, 'and something we can offer not just to the congregation but to local people.'

Gazing on her magnificent home garden, as the sun set over the trees, this young radical of 72 said, 'It's been my place of wellbeing and therapy – it's where I find the beauty of God!'

Photo: Doreen Here

Making way for Derek

FORMER MMHS RESIDENT DEREK BEDFORD HAS BEEN HONOURED WITH A STREET SIGN

It's a 'fitting tribute' as a new road is named after former trailblazing MMHS resident Revd Derek Bedford.

His 89-year-old widow Meryl – who still lives in their MMHS property – attended the recent unveiling of the Bedford Way road sign in Ross-on-Wye.

'It was wonderful,' Meryl told us, 'really lovely! We stood by the sign and pictures were taken for the newspapers. It was so nice.'

The town clerk had phoned Meryl with the idea of a tribute to Derek, in remembrance of his service to the community as a councillor and mayor.

They'd discussed the idea of naming a road after him on a new development on the south side of the town,' Meryl recalled. 'I was in tears. I was just so moved by that.'

Meryl was invited to the opening, which took place this spring, after the houses

SIGNING IN: Meryl Bedford attends the opening of Bedford Way in honour of her late husband



Photo: Barratt Developments South Wales

had been built and finished. 'The builders were there, the man in charge of the site, and the mayor and councillors – they all came,' she said. 'It was a wonderful occasion.'

Present Town Mayor, Louis Stark, paid tribute to Derek during the ceremony. 'I

Making way for Derek

► knew Derek in his role as a leading light in the town for several years,' Louis told the *Ross Gazette* and *News From Wales*, who both reported on the opening.

'He was always engaging and willing to provide advice on local matters — with the best interests of Ross at the heart of everything he did. This is an extremely fitting tribute to a man who gave so much to his town.'

Richard Lawson, divisional sales director for David Wilson Homes who led the ceremony, said, 'It is a great honour for us to have played a part in preserving the memory of such a loved figure in Ross-on-Wye. We are extremely grateful to Mrs Bedford and Mayor Stark for joining us today to unveil this tribute'.

Since the ceremony, Meryl's daughter, two sons and grandson have all visited the Bedford Way sign and also had their photos taken next to it. 'My grandson said, "Oh Grandma, I'd quite like a Bedford Way sign in my bedroom,"' Meryl laughed.

Meryl featured in the summer 2020 edition of *Roof 'n' Roots* after she had found a way through lockdown loneliness. She made her way through her church directory and phoned other people to see how they were coping with the pandemic.

Her story became part of the *Best Of Roof 'n' Roots Volume Two*, for the MMHS 75th anniversary. Meryl was also interviewed for an MMHS video and took part in a Christmas campaign run by the Methodist Church.

Derek and Meryl had moved to Ross-on-Wye in 1992. Derek worked as a town councillor for two decades, and he and Meryl went on to serve as Mayor and Mayoress of Ross in 2001 and 2007.

An active Methodist minister for 28 years, Derek was a major figure in the local church community. He set up a number of new churches across the UK, including the nation's first-ever 'shared' Anglican-Methodist church — seen as a daring experiment at the time. Derek died in 2020. 🏠

Turn over a new leaf in your home

AS THE DAYS GROW SHORTER AND THE CRISP AIR OF AUTUMN SETS IN, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO TIDY AND PREPARE FOR WINTER. AMY GOODWIN FROM DECIDE TO DECLUTTER SHARES SOME TIPS

Thinking of a clear-out? It might sound overwhelming, but many people find the process more enjoyable than they anticipated. They're often amazed by the transformation a bit of focused effort can achieve.

★ UNDERSTAND YOUR SPACE

First, understand the space you have to work with. Everyone's storage situation is different. Some people may have two large wardrobes. Others might only have a few drawers. It's important to work within your limitations and avoid overcrowding your storage areas.

★ SCHEDULE TIME TO DECLUTTER

Set aside dedicated time for decluttering, even just a couple of hours. It's often more effective to approach the task gradually than tackle everything in a day or two. Consistency is key.

★ EMPTY THE AREA

Begin by choosing a manageable area to declutter, such as a cupboard, drawer, or shelf. Empty the space entirely so you can see everything you're working with. This will make it easier to sort through your belongings in a methodical way.

★ CATEGORISE YOUR ITEMS

Group items into categories. You may have lots of books. You may also come across magazines and journals. Straightaway you've got categories, which help make the decluttering process less chaotic.

You may also encounter items that have become so familiar, you barely notice them anymore, like worn summer bedding or pillows losing their shape.



Amy Goodwin is an award-winning professional organiser based in southern England. She wants to improve people's lives by supporting them on their decluttering journey in a compassionate, skilled and intuitive way. She offers a free initial consultation. If you would like to work with Amy in person or virtually, fill in the contact form on her website – decidetodeclutter.co.uk

Consider whether you'll need extra space for guests over the winter – now is the time to make that room.

★ SORT USING THE BOX METHOD

Label three boxes: dump, charity, and keep. Hold each item in your hand and ask yourself, if I walked into a shop, would I buy this again? Each item you keep, should reflect who you are today. Create a memory box for any precious items from the past.

★ GIVE EVERYTHING A HOME

Once you've decided what to keep, ensure everything has a designated place. Use storage boxes, old suitcases, or shelves. Label them to make retrieval easy. Allow enough space for items so maintaining order is simple.

By catching the rhythm of decluttering, you'll find not only your home becoming more organised but also a sense of mental clarity and freedom. Your possessions should enhance your life— not weigh you down. 🏠



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