

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat – Olton

June 2018 Newsletter

Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you.

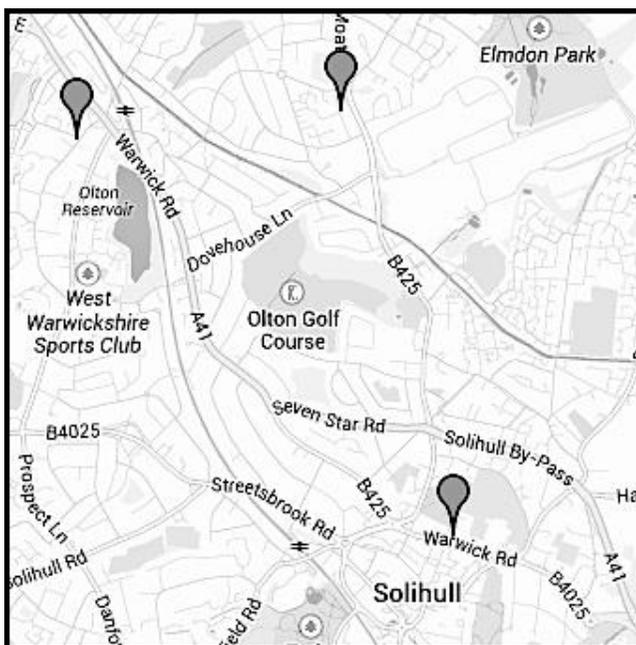
All things pass. God does not change.

Patience achieves everything. Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people.

Saint Theresa of Avila (1515-82)





SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

A single fellowship of Christian people, our history leads us to offer our witness in three neighbourhoods (central Solihull, Hobs Moat and Olton). Our worship on a Sunday is focused at Christ Church, but is also offered at different times in a number of care homes and in our other premises.

We share our mission with other Churches and seek partnerships with others in the community. We invite you to join us as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

www.solihullurc.org.uk

“Not the Mama!” - Mark wonders who is?!

Originating in a cartoon puppet show on children’s TV, our grandsons will point at people and in a gruff dinosaur-like voice declare “Not the Mama!”. Please don’t ask me what it is all about, but it has caused me to reflect more broadly on “Who is the responsible adult here?” and how this plays out in our relationship with God.

Recently I made the journey to see my Mother in Dorset in order to arrange some regular Carer visits. These are a necessity from the viewpoint of my brother and myself, but have not been viewed as such by my Mother who, not unnaturally, wishes to maintain her independence. The long car journey afforded much time to reflect on the changing dynamic through the ageing process between the responsible adult and the dependent one. Grandson Arthur cannot really shout “Not the Mama!” to his Mum, but things are very different for my Mother and I, as the arranging of Carers and the sorting of Power of Attorney for financial matters means she is no longer the responsible adult who brought me into the world, fed, clothed and cared for me through to the time I left home for college. But she is still my Mum!

What then of God our heavenly Father? He is and remains the responsible adult in our relationship with him, doesn’t he? Creation continues, he knows far more than we might ever, he feeds and clothes and cares, he loves and forgives, picking us up and giving us another chance. God desires the best for us and gives us the gifts for a rich and fulfilling life. We depend on him and are more than ready to make him the responsible one when things go wrong! Yet, God allows us to stand on our own feet, to make our own choices and decisions. He gives us the gifts we need to take the role of ‘responsible adult’ ourselves and we discover that he is, in many ways, dependent on us to fulfil his purposes and life. But he is still God!

In our family relationships we all experience the dependent-responsible-dependent transition, however difficult it might be, and there we can find some understanding for our relationship with God. There are times when we will wish to be “Not the Mama!” and allow God to bear the weight of responsibility, but we must also acknowledge that out of his love and through his Holy Spirit God gives us all we need to responsibly fulfil his purposes in us.

DIARY FOR JUNE

Sunday 3rd, 10am: Holy Communion @ Christ Church - Mark Fisher

Monday 4th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10:30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 5th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Worship @ St Francis Lodge

Thursday 7th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Saturday 9th, 2pm: Pleasant Saturday Afternoon @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 10th, 10am: Sunday Worship – Gordon Justham

Monday 11th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10:30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 12th, 11am: Holy Communion @ Hampton House

Wednesday 13th, 12pm: SCAH Open Lunch Meeting in the Meeting Place

2pm: Hob Moat Wednesday Club

6:45pm: Churches Together in Central Solihull in the

Meeting Place

Thursday 14th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 17th, 10am: Sunday Worship for Father’s Day - Mark Fisher

11:45am: Worship @ Star & Garter

Monday 18th, 10am: Moments Cafe

10:30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Tuesday 19th, 10:30am: Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat

11am: Holy Communion @ Tudor Lodge

Wednesday 20th, 10am: Fellowship Prayers @ Hobs Moat
Worship @ The Grove

Thursday 21st, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 24th, 10am: Café Church

2pm: EducAid Africa Garden Party - Barston

Monday 25th, 10am: Moments Cafe @ Christ Church

10:30am: Job Advice @ Christ Church

Wednesday 27th, 2pm: Hobs Moat Wednesday Club

Thursday 28th, 10am: Tots & Tales @ Christ Church

2pm: Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

Sunday 1st July, 10am: Holy Communion – Mark Fisher

11:30am: Church Volunteers Meeting & Lunch

JOB ADVICE

Every Monday morning from 10.30am @ Christ Church (Story Room). If you know anyone in need of support or advice with CVs etc. let them know about this or speak to Trixie Harman.

‘I HAVE A NAME’ SMC CHURCH PROJECT DATES 2018

Solihull Methodist Church, Blossomfield Road, in aid of SCAH

June 30th 7pm – “Grand Finale” – The return of ‘The Choir With No Name’ for a night that promises to raise the roof!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The Assembly will be meeting this summer. As its deliberations and decisions shape the life of our denomination you may be interested in what will be happening this year. There is a 'briefing' event to which all are invited.

Monday 25th June @ Emmanuel Ecumenical Centre, Redditch

Refreshments served from 7pm, Briefing 7:15pm – 9pm.

CHURCH AWAY DAY

We are hoping to have another Away-Day on **Saturday 29th September** for which plans are being made. Please put the date in your diaries. We will be celebrating Harvest Festival on Sunday 30th September.

The AGM will give opportunity for us to share any hopes we may have for an Away-Day.

HOBBS MOAT COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for Diary section re Tuesday Coffee Morning at Hobbs Moat.

- Tuesday 5th June
- Tuesday 19th June

Many thanks, **Annette Williams**

FLOWERS

Everyone enjoys the flowers which are on the communion table every week but someone has to provide them. There is a calendar on the noticeboard at the back of the church inviting folk to select a date when they can provide the flowers. If you are not happy with arranging flowers that does not matter as someone else will do that for you but you might like to make a donation instead.

We would encourage anyone visiting someone to take some flowers from church, they are always appreciated and there is paper and gift cards to go with the flowers, if you are unsure of where to find anything please have a word with a member of the flower committee. Now that the church is always locked it is a shame to leave them in situ where no-one will see them. **Judith Kembery**

HOBBS MOAT WEDNESDAY CLUB PROGRAMME

June 13th - Jewellery, handbags etc. Sale with Kim.

June 27th - Allan Cooper .Songs from the 50s 60s and 70s.

July 11th - Growing up in an orphanage. A talk by Betty Foster.

July 25th - Read your favourite poems etc.

August 8th - Linda Williams, singer.

August 22nd - Phil Sayer singing and playing the keyboard.

September 5th - Our A.G.M. An opportunity to have your say.

All start at 2pm. **Jeanne Brown**

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS & CHURCH LIFE

The new GDPR became active in law on 25th May. They will have some significant impact on aspects of our church life, which we will need to re-think in creative ways as they do not allow any personal information to be recorded/kept/published without consent.

As a church we are producing a 'Privacy Notice' which outlines all the personal data that we hold, why and how we hold it, along with the rights of individuals to ask what information we may hold relating to them. The Privacy Notice which covers basic data will be displayed in the Church and in the Nattery. Consents will be obtained for some particular data, such as photo permissions, medical matters (Moments Dementia Cafe), children (Tots & Tales, Messy Church).

Church life means that we are used to naturally sharing personal information quite readily. The GDPR persuade us to be more careful in

the way we do this. We will be finding new ways to communicate pastoral news as this cannot be published in the Newsletter or posted on the Prayer Tree. The importance of 'word of mouth' will probably have fresh emphasis, but we must be careful that 'gossip' does not take over. For those who use email there is encouragement, when sending to a long list of people, to not put addresses in the 'To:' box, but rather put them in 'Bcc:' (blind copy) which makes them invisible to recipients.

If you have concerns or questions about any of this, please speak to Gordon Justham or Mark.

HOSTING GUESTS TO OUR PREMISES

Each week we welcome around 40 different community groups into our premises either in Hobs Moat or Christ Church. It is a privilege, enabled by simply having the premises, and it is an opportunity to have a share in groups that support people through health, artistic, social and charitable activities. What we would like to do is to express our support in a more personal way. This has been modelled by Marcia and Judy as they have managed our lettings over recent years. We are now seeking volunteers who would be willing to 'pop in' to group meetings from time to time, to express interest and to be a personal link with the church and ensure that we serve groups in the best way possible. Hosts would also be the initial point of contact (by phone) if groups wish to raise matters with the church, although for practical matters this would be passed on for the appropriate person to respond. If you feel able to have responsibility for one session of a week (morning, afternoon, or evening), willing to occasionally visit or make contact with the groups who meet at that particular time, please sign up on the sheet at the back of church.

MY SACRED SPACE - PRAYER!

For us all prayer is an opportunity to be with God – just Him and you! Of course when we are in church together this is done with others but at home in my sacred space [which you all know about by now!] I like nothing better than to sit and talk to God in prayer.

‘What do you say to Him Carol?’ people have sometimes asked me. Until recently I haven’t said any set or formal prayers to God, as I just tell him what is in my heart to say. He is my heavenly father after all – and yours – so there is no need for formality. He knows all our thoughts and actions – our deeds and thoughts, good and bad. He knows all our fears and cares – and all about our joys and our sadness. He knows everything about us in fact – so why tell Him? Because He wants us to, that’s why!

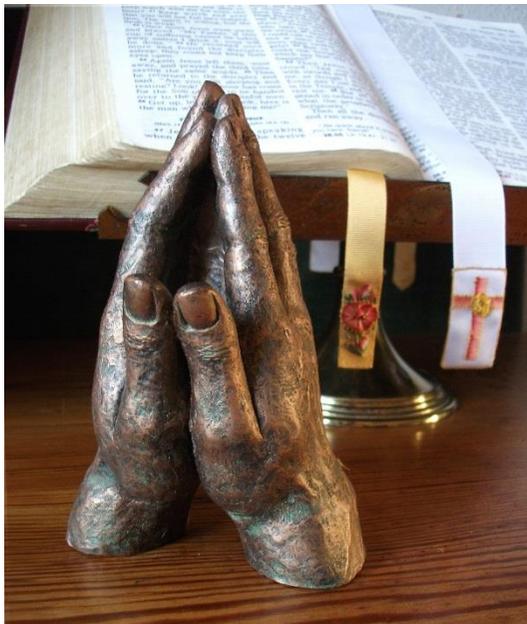
Our human relationships flounder if we don’t talk about what is dear to our hearts – if we don’t share our concerns. And it is just the same with our relationship with God. Yes indeed He does know exactly what we are thinking and doing – and what we have done or not done. We cannot hide away from Him ever – either in thoughts or deeds. But we are safe in the knowledge that He loves every one of us. It is up to us to make that relationship with God special and meaningful – and the only way to do that is through prayer.

For many years I only said the ‘Our Father’ pattern prayer in church. What a confession! At home I talked to God in prayer of course - but I never said formal prayers. I spoke to Our Lord as my friend – just as I’d speak to you in the same sort of informal words. However recently I have found the ‘Our Father’ pattern prayer to be very useful and a great comfort. I sing it to Him first thing in the morning with my guitar – to the lovely tune written by Martin Bates. I sing it as a ballad – slowly – meaningfully – and I hope it is acceptable to Him. Of course you don’t need to sing it – music is just an essential part of me – so that way is right for me but you may prefer just to say the words instead. And first thing in the morning is a good time – it starts the day in a good way!

Through the day, if events happen that are of concern, I turn to God in prayer. If I am in the house I go to my sacred space – often I'll put my hand on the much loved open Bible, then close my eyes and pray. If I am out and about and meet a friend or stranger who is in need I'll pray – either with them or afterwards for them. Ideally I like to sit and pray, so I can close my eyes – but there are plenty of benches in Acock's Green where I shop – or Solihull. Don't feel self-conscious – just do it – sit and pray – out there - on your front line!

Last thing at night is my absolute favourite time with God in my sacred space at home. I sit and talk to Him, tell him about things I am sure I've done wrong in the day – and things which I hopefully have done right! I thank my heavenly Father for all He has done for me and given to me during the day, including food – and I remember friends and strangers who need his love and healing. Then I go to bed happy and relaxed, knowing that God and his angels will watch over me in the night. Who could ask for more?

God bless you all, **Carol**



PRACTICAL HOSTS

Occasionally we host groups for one-off events. For such groups there are additional requirements - opening up, explanation of heating and kitchen facilities, provision of audio visual equipment etc. These have mostly been serviced by Judy and Mark in recent years and there is now a need for others to fulfil this. Again, if you feel able to offer this on an occasional basis, according to your availability, please sign up on the sheet at the back of church.

More information about any of this can be had by speaking to Judy.

SATURDAY CAFÉ URGENT REQUEST

We've had an excellent response for volunteers over the last 3 years which has meant that we each helped on a Saturday morning for between 3.5-4 hours approximately once every 6 weeks. We have found it very rewarding, in enabling us to have conversations with those who use the café and building relationships.

Unfortunately four of our volunteers have come off the rota which leaves us short especially if anyone is on holiday or unable to cover. If you are able to come and join us and help to keep the café open please contact me and I will talk to you about the details. I look forward to speaking to you.

Many thanks, **Elaine Jones**

COACH TRIPPERS UNITED
HAMPTON COURT CASTLE AND GARDENS, HEREFORD

21st June 2018

The oldest parts of Hampton Castle including the Chapel go back to 1427 when Henry 1V gave it to Sir Richard Lenthail. It passed through the hands of various members of the aristocracy before being bought by Sir Richard Arkwright son of the inventor in the late 19th century.



The Arkwright family remained there until 1912 when it was sold on, losing most of its original furniture. Eventually it was rescued by an American millionaire in the 1990 s who refurnished the interior according to his interpretation of how an English castle should look.

In the gardens there is a maze, herbaceous borders, water features and a river walk offering views of the castle from across the ha-ha wall. The orangery café serves home-made cakes and food cooked from ingredients from the vegetable garden and local suppliers. The Conservatory designed by Joseph Paxton in 1846 - 6 years before he designed the Crystal Palace- opens directly onto the south lawn. For your further delight there is an ice cream parlour in the courtyard.

The coach will leave from our new departure point THE WEST WARWICKS SPORT CLUB, GRANGE ROAD, SOLIHULL, B91 1DA at our usual time of 8.30am. As agreed at the AGM the revised charge will be £20 a person excluding any entry fees but including a tip for the driver. May I respectfully remind you of the cancellation guide and that you should ring Val on 706 9687 to book at least 10 days before the event.

DAVID ARGALL (CHAIR)

BARNSDALE, RUTLAND WATER WITH BOAT TRIP

19th July 2018

From 1984 until his death in 1996 Barnsdale Gardens was the base from which Geoff Hamilton presented BBC2's Gardeners' World. Originally a Victorian farmhouse with 5 acres of pastureland Hamilton was interested in making gardening affordable by offering practical ideas for gardeners to recreate in their own home. Barnsdale is home to Britain's largest collection of individually designed gardens. The Chelsea Gold Medal winning plant nursery sells a wide range of choice and unusual garden plants. There is a rose garden, Japanese garden, rock garden, knot garden, kitchen garden, bog garden and orchard.



There is a Tea Room with garden and a gift shop. This will be followed in the afternoon by a cruise on the nearby scenic Rutland Water, a reservoir created in 1976.

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DAVID ARGALL (CHAIR)

PENTECOST – THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR TODAY

Then Moses said to [God], ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here... What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?’ Exodus 33 v15&16b

What is it that distinguishes you from all the other people on the face of the earth? As a Christian it is supposed to be that the Presence of God is with us. Does the Presence of God go with you? We can all do many nice things to show love to our neighbours, but you don’t need to be a Christian to do that. It is the Presence of God that makes what we do something that has eternal value and is not just a vanity project. Psalm 127 v1 famously says,

Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labour in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.

We are all growing in our faith (I hope) and haven't succeeded in having everything worked out yet, but do we hunger and thirst for the Presence of God to fill and overflow from our thoughts, words and actions? Do we linger in private worship and prayer? Do we delight to join together in prayer and worship because we feel and know the Presence of God in our midst? Do we go to God to ask Him what we should do today? Do we ask Him who we should talk to today? Does everything, EVERYTHING, begin and end saturated with the Presence of God? What else will distinguish us from all the other people on the face of the earth? Absolutely nothing. Being nice isn’t enough. We are to build the Kingdom. That Kingdom is all about eternity and centres around God. Let us find a new focus today that everything we do flows out from our faith and is powered by the Presence of God.

Linda Faber

REMEMBERING PAM

I feel very privileged to have been asked to write about our friend Pam Tovey.

I first got to know Pam when I went to work with Ken Newborough at Olton church so have known her for several years and always enjoyed meeting her and chatting to her. She was a great support to the church and always offered her services and help in any way that she could. Over the years we got to know each other very well. Pam was a family person and as we shared together I felt I got to know her family too as she gave me the latest news of her children and grandchildren and latterly her great grandchild, she was always so proud of them all. And wanted to know about my family as well and I felt we had a lot in common as we shared together.

When Ken Newborough left I was on my own and Pam was a real comfort and source of help to me – she didn't really do anything but she was just there and after services she would always thank me and ask me how I was managing. On occasions she would say "You don't look very well today, don't do too much, perhaps you need to rest" I think all ministers need these people in their congregation!!

Later when I was on my own again when the next minister moved I felt so supported and encouraged again just by her presence. When I came out to lead worship I would see her in the congregation and it lifted me for I knew she was praying for me and supporting me. And I know that the church members and the congregation felt supported in the same way. She was a great asset to the congregation caring and being interested in everyone and she was valued by us all. One member of the congregation has described her as a spiritual, genteel lady which is a very apt picture.

When the cell groups started Elaine and I were leaders of the one that Pam attended. She always came and sat quietly not saying very much

but when she did her remarks were so thoughtful and penetrating and she made a great contribution.

Pam astounded many of us in the way that she coped when things went wrong which of course they do from time to time. We all remember when she had trouble with the subsidence in her house and had to move out and be rehoused for several weeks – it was very difficult for her and for Ken her husband. Many of us were amazed at the way she just accepted this and moved on. One of the hardest things she did was to admit that she could no longer care for Ken and that he needed special care. She just felt she was letting him down and this upset her, we all did what we could to reassure her but it was so hard for her. They were a lovely, friendly couple and although Ken was a member of the Salvation Army he always came to special events at Olton and it was good to see them both together.

I always found it a pleasure to visit her and enjoyed seeing the way she adapted to her move to Tudor Lodge becoming so involved in the activities there even enabling worship services for some of the residents. We were all sorry when she had to leave her home there and go to Olton Grange because she needed more care due to her illness which she faced courageously. I was fortunate in my visits to her when she was ill because I always seemed to go on a good day. When I opened her door she would look up and say “Irene how nice to see you” and then she would always ask me how Peter, my husband was. I treasured those last visits when we shared and prayed together. Sadly Pam is no longer with us and will be sorely missed by many – her family, her many friends and acquaintances but we remember her with gratitude and thank God for her faith and her fortitude and the assurance that she is now in His loving care.

Irene Bound



**HOBS MOAT SINGING FOR PLEASURE GROUP
INVITE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TO A
PLEASANT SATURDAY AFTERNOON
Saturday 9th JUNE at 2.30pm
at HOBS MOAT CHURCH**

There will be another opportunity to enjoy home-spun entertainment of the highest quality provided by you yourselves! So start polishing up your party pieces. You can sing a song, play an instrument, read a poem or tell a funny story.

However you can just enjoy yourself listening. All followed by tea and cakes. There will be a retiring collection for a chosen charity. **Janet**

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Sincere thanks to those folk that helped me with the bookstall, also to those who donated books and attended the Methodist Church fund raising event. We raised in excess of £100.00. I am also grateful to my helpers with the door to door collections, well done all of you shall let you know your collecting amounts as soon as possible. **Bridget**

OLTON PARK LIFE

The community of Olton supported by Solihull council, Olton residents' association, Olton U3A, Olton Schools and Churches are organising this entry free fun day on Saturday, 7th July from 12.00 – 4.00 at Langley Hall Park. Activities include – Fun Dog show, Food and ice creams, 'Wildside' Animal experience, Treasure Hunt, Bike activities, Beer tent, swing Band, Local crafts, stalls, Bouncy Castle and Rides, Allotment produce, DJ, entertainment and more, plus a Picnic if you bring one.

The Olton churches are having a marquee and many additional activities. They would welcome your support to what promises to be a very successful day.

Parking will be at the Langley Hall School on Kineton Green Road.

SPONSORING REQUEST

Sam Mills is taking part in the Pretty Muddy 5k Race for Life event, at Stoneleigh Park in Coventry. This is in aid of Cancer Research UK. Sam is looking for sponsorship to raise money towards the charity. If anyone wishes to sponsor Sam, please speak to her or to Stuart Mills. Thank you. **Stuart**

VOLUNTEERS WITH CHILDREN OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

Last year, as a church, we adopted a new set of policies with respect to working with children and vulnerable adults. These policies lay out requirements and best practice for those working as volunteers or paid staff in these areas in our church. We made a commitment to ensuring that all regular volunteers know and understand the policies and that they have some safeguarding training every year. This being the case we are going to hold a training event on Sunday 1st July after church and including lunch. We should be finished by 2pm at the latest (hopefully earlier).

Everyone working regularly with children or vulnerable adults in our church should make every effort to attend. I understand that it might not be possible for a few people and so I will arrange an alternative date for those few—we have chosen that everyone regularly working with children or vulnerable adults needs to have completed this training. This session will present information (written copies will be distributed), there will be some discussion, and opportunities will be given to ask questions as we go along.

Linda Faber

MY DAY AT THE PALACE

Imagine my surprise when, last November an official looking envelope landed on my doormat. Was it a bill? Was it a circular? No it was a letter informing me that I was being recommended to receive the MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to young people in Solihull! This was exciting news but the letter informed me that I had to keep it a secret and that I had to inform them whether I was happy to receive it. Christmas was spent with the family and I dared not breathe a word about it. Shortly before New Year's Eve I got a text from a friend congratulating me on my award – he had seen it in one of the newspapers. Quickly I had to ring around the family and close friends to give them the good news before they found out from other sources.

I was contacted by the Solihull Observer and interviewed over the phone about my connections with schools past and present, Scouting and EducAid Africa. An hour later a photographer arrived at the house and took photographs of me with the letter in one hand and a bottle of champagne in the other. As the news spread I was overwhelmed by the number of messages and cards that I received – many from ex-pupils – some now in their fifties and even one who is now living in New Zealand! I felt very humbled over the comments that I received.

About a month later, another letter arrived, announcing that I was invited to Buckingham Palace on 2nd March to receive my award and that I could take three guests along with me, who could be friends and/or family. There was also a form that needed to be returned, and a briefing with all the relevant information necessary to ensure complete peace of mind on the forthcoming onerous, if exciting, day – date, time, place and, most important of all, what to wear for this very special occasion. So I decided to hire a Morning Suit for the occasion. Again I had to reply that I was happy to attend.

On the 1st March, along with two friends, I travelled from Solihull to Marylebone on the train and from there in a taxi to a hotel that I had

booked in the Victoria area of London. After settling in, we went across the road to a nearby pub where we enjoyed a meal. At about 11pm my niece, who had travelled there from Harrogate by train and taxi, arrived and I showed her the room in which she was to stay.

The 2nd March was the day when all the schools in Solihull, Birmingham and area were closed because of the heavy snow. Fortunately the snow was not quite so severe in London and we were taken to Buckingham Palace in a taxi – the ladies resplendent in their outfits complete with fascinators and I in my morning suit. After thoroughly checking the taxi, the police allowed us to travel through the gates of the Palace and then through the archway to the special entrance, complete with red carpet. A uniformed official opened the door for us and we walked through into the Palace itself. We were then shown to cloakrooms where we were asked to leave our coats, phones and cameras. This is where my guests and I were separated – they went into the Ball Room whilst I was ushered into a smaller room with the other recipients.

My guests then slowly climbed the Grand Staircase which was flanked by troopers of the Household Cavalry resplendent in their finery but so motionless they could have been taken for waxworks! This sweeping marble staircase has a sumptuous gilt bronze balustrade embellished with rich Grecian foliage that is reflected in the design and the plaster string-course around the walls. Everywhere there were vast paintings and extravagant gilt mouldings. On entering the Ballroom they were met by the cheerful sound of a small orchestra playing above them, in the Minstrels' Gallery, a repertoire of light classical music and Viennese Waltzes adding to the graceful ambience.

My guests were able to witness the whole ceremony live here. They had been briefed as to the procedure and waited expectantly for the Prince to arrive. On the dot of 11am they were asked to stand as Prince

William entered the room and, after the playing of the National Anthem, bid them sit.

In one of the other very royal rooms, we recipients gathered to have a glass of water or apple juice before being briefed as to what would be expected of us. On a television screen in the room we had witnessed the entry of the Yeoman of the Guard followed by Prince William. The first people to be honoured were the three who were to be knighted and then the other awards, CBE, OBE and MBE.

Eventually it was my turn to walk to the Ball Room, crossing the back of the room and then lining up ready to enter from the left. During this time I noticed the ladies practising their curtsy and the men their bowing. When the man preceding me was called forward to the Prince I moved to stand by a steward until I heard my name called out. Sure enough I heard announced, "Mr Ian Carnell for services to young people in Solihull." That was my cue and I walked forward, faced the Prince, bowed and then walked forward to the edge of the mat on which he was standing. He then attached my medal to my jacket. He had been briefed that I had been a Head Teacher and commented to me that he had presented some awards to representatives of Ofsted! I replied, "Oh!" at which he smiled and I then proceeded to inform him that during my time as a Head I had had the privilege to meet both his mother and his father at two separate occasions and what very pleasant and caring people they had been. I also told him that I am involved in the Scouting Movement and he commented on how pleased his wife would be. (She too is a member of the Scouting movement). He then smiled and shook my hand which was the signal that our conversation was over. I took two paces backwards, bowed again and then exited at the right.

Here I was met by a man who unhooked my medal, took the small metal bar out of my jacket lapel and put the medal in its case and returned it to me. After chatting briefly with a very pleasant lady who

gave me the programme with the list of names in it, I returned to the back of the Ballroom where I sat to the rear of the Guests and witnessed the remainder of the presentations. We stood again for the National Anthem and remained standing whilst the Prince and the Yeoman of the Guard exited the room.

I was then able to re-join my three guests and together we exited the room and walked along the grand corridors before reclaiming our coats and phones from the cloakroom. From there we joined the queue to exit into the Quadrangle where we were photographed (in the bitter cold!). The weather was so freezing that even the police had scarves around their faces to protect them from the bitter wind. We then walked through the arch into the main area in front of the Palace and proceeded through the Palace Gates where, despite the weather, many people were standing looking through the bars of the Palace railings.

We had been warned that it would be very difficult to get a taxi there so I had organised lunch in a very pleasant Hotel just up Buckingham Palace Road which was in easy walking distance. Entering, we appreciated being back in the warmth, one of the waiters took our coats and we were shown to our table in the sumptuous dining room. We revived ourselves with glasses of Prosecco before ordering and devouring a delicious 3-course lunch. It was lovely to be in no rush and to discuss the morning's experience. After coffee in the bar, some more photographs with a fellow recipient from the Channel Islands and more conversations we got the concierge to hail us a taxi. We then returned to the hotel where we had stayed the night and where we were able to change out of our special clothes and collect our suitcases.

As train travel was uncertain due to the wintry weather, we took yet another taxi to King's Cross where we ascertained that a train would be available for my niece to return to Yorkshire. Luckily there was, so the three of us headed off to Marylebone Station where we were able to

catch a train back to Solihull. After a half hour delay at Leamington due to a point's failure at Hatton, we eventually arrived back at Solihull Station. Here the problem was that there were no taxis available and any cars travelling along the station approach were skidding – how were we to get back home complete with suitcases!?!? Luck was with us as a Number 37 Double Decker came along and we were able to be dropped off in Olton and we all got home safely.

So ended my day at the Palace and a wonderful experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. I do sincerely thank those who made the experience happen, to all the many very kind people who sent such lovely messages of congratulations and to the Mayor who entertained me to tea in his parlour some weeks later. It was a great privilege to be chosen to receive this award but it has been an even greater privilege to have been able to serve the young people of Solihull.

Ian Carnell



KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

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Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings in Hobs Moat or Christ Church - details are on the website.

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationssolihull.org.uk generationssolihull@icloud.com

Moments - a dementia cafe

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Christ Church
Details from Mark Fisher - contacts above

JULY/AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Material for the July/August edition

Is due to Stuart Mills: 07931 614393

stuartkmills@gmail.com

by Sunday 17th June please.