

# CULCHETH METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



**JULY - AUGUST  
2020**

# People at Culcheth Methodist Church

Minister	Rev Vivienne Smith <i>vivienne.smith@methodist.org.uk</i>	01942665654
Lay Pastoral Assistant	Viv Briney <i>vivbriney@hotmail.com</i>	01925764249
Authorised for Extended Communion	Viv Briney David Ogilvy	01925764249 01925762138
Stewards	Amy Driver Elizabeth Soehren David Ogilvy Viv Briney Dave Briney	01925766550 (Amy) 01925762138 (David O)
Property Steward	Roddy Marr	01925762187
Treasurer Book Keeper	Elsbeth Brighton Julie Mainwaring	01925763002 01925765150
Room Bookings	Linda Bloomfield (temporary) <i>lindajbloomfield@yahoo.co.uk</i>	01925765875
Notice Sheet Coordinator	Amy Driver <i>culchethmethodist@gmail.com</i>	01925766550
Magazine Editor	Christine Pathmarajah <i>cmcnews57@gmail.com</i>	01925822610
Worship Leaders	Linda Bloomfield David Ogilvy Irene Fatimilehin Dave Soehren Ashley Hutchinson Brenda Litton Roddy Marr	

**Culcheth Methodist Church is part of the Leigh & Hindley Circuit  
which in turn is part of the Bolton & Rochdale District**

Circuit Website - [www.leighandhindley.org.uk](http://www.leighandhindley.org.uk)

District Website - [www.barmd.org.uk](http://www.barmd.org.uk)

Superintendent Minister:

Rev Vivienne Smith 01942665654 [vivienne.smith@methodist.org.uk](mailto:vivienne.smith@methodist.org.uk)

District Chair:

Rev Paul Martin 01204843302 [revpm@me.com](mailto:revpm@me.com)

# Services at Culcheth

9.45 am Morning Worship

6.30 pm Evening Worship

*(On-line worship events available - see circuit website for further information and ideas [www.leighandhindley.org.uk](http://www.leighandhindley.org.uk))*

## Regular Activities at Culcheth

**(Suspended at the moment due to COVID-19)**

Mon	9.30 - 10.00 am	Open Prayers
	10.00 - 12.30 pm	Open Doors Coffee & Chat
Tues	10.00 - 11.30 am	Tuesday Tots
Wed	8.00 - 9.30 pm	Choir
Thur	2.00 pm (Fortnightly)	Meeting Point
	2.00 pm (Alt fortnights)	Home Group (at the Bushby's)
Thur	7.00 - 9.00 pm	Hearts & Hands Craft Group
Fri	10.00 - 12.00 am	Coffee & More
Sat	10.00 - 12.00 am	Open Doors Tea & Coffee
Sun	7.30 - 9.15 pm	Explore (Y7s and above)
	(Fortnightly)	



## When can we go back to Church?

Churches are now allowed to open for private prayer. However, the Methodist church will not be issuing any revised guidance until after Conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, and so no decisions will be made by any local churches until after that. Our churches will remain closed for the time being.

For your information, Newchurch Parish Church will open from 21<sup>st</sup> June on Sunday mornings 10.30-12 noon and Wed evenings 7-8 pm for private prayer.

The Church Council have agreed an exciting proposal that we will begin our re-opening, when appropriate, with small “bubble” groups, that can share fellowship and worship through the week, while maintaining our Sunday dial in service. It is hoped that everyone will join one of these groups, and a small team of Alex Laing, David Ogilvy, Linda Bloomfield and Phil Harrison are working out the details of how this will work. If you have any thoughts about this, please contact them, or one of the stewards.

## Message from Rev Katharine Bland

Greetings to you all,



I cannot tell you how long I have been mulling over writing this newsletter! Since my husband Paul and I visited the Leigh & Hindley Circuit in November last year, I have been thinking of all the different ways and places that we would be able to meet you and say hello.

Fellowship is the great starting place, it embraces hospitality, sharing stories, laughter and tears, learning and growing together; where a smile brightens up the room and can speak a thousand words, a hand on the shoulder or a hug speaks love, and the chatter and laughter of all ages together overwhelms us and prompts us to give thanks to God.

And here we are, I cannot remember what week of lockdown we are on now. Government guidelines are beginning to offer some relaxing of rules so long as we strictly observe the health and safety procedures which are regularly updated. But for now, our church doors remain closed as discussions start to take place over what needs to be done when the time is safe and right to begin to open our doors.

There are lots of conversations, particularly in the media, about what the 'new normal' will look like. While I cannot answer that, what I do know is that 'our' new normal will not look the same as it did before lockdown began in March. For starters, you will have a new minister and we will be living in a new home! As I write this, we are preparing to move house, and it does seem strange, having been in the Preston Ribble Circuit for 10 years, to leave without being able to share worship and fellowship together. It will feel equally strange to arrive in a new circuit and not have a welcome service in place. Although, having said that, arrangements may well be different by September.

I'll leave off telling you my life story for now. I'll share my stories with you when we're together, which, hopefully, won't be too long. But I do leave you with one of my favourite Bible verses:

Jeremiah 29: 31

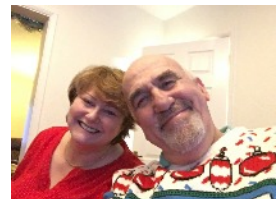
*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*

We are people of great hope because we are people of a great God.

I look forward to journeying alongside you,

Stay safe and God Bless,

Love Katharine



## Goodbye Message from Rev Viv.

Dear Friends,

I hope you're all keeping well and safe.

As you know you have a new minister coming in September. Reverend Katharine will be starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September and we remember her and Paul her husband in our prayers at this stressful time. Moving is never easy!

So, this is my last magazine article. So what should I say?

I want to start by saying a huge thank you. You have blessed me in more ways than you can possibly imagine. When I first came to minister at Culcheth, there was a great deal of pain and confusion, understandably so, but you came with me and I really feel that we have walked together over the last few months. You are a wonderful congregation – never forget that! Your commitment to Christ's Church and to the community at large is awesome. Your willingness to finish meetings early is transformative! You certainly know how to laugh! You're never afraid to try anything new. Your commitment to prayer makes all the difference in the world! Your pastoral care is second to none. Your knitting abilities are world class! Your organists, worship leaders and preachers are inspirational. Your stewards have been a constant source of support and encouragement to me, and to many others too. You are an amazing church. It's been a real privilege being your minister. If you support Katharine as you have supported me she will be fine.

So that's that. I know you'll go from strength to strength, and my prayer will be that you will continue to grow in Christ.

Oh, I do need to say one more thing...I've felt sorry for Elspeth and Linda. Please, if you could relieve them of their jobs, do so! They deserve a break.

God bless,

*Rev. Viv*

### **Who Needs Committees?**

A committee is a group of the unprepared,  
appointed by the unwilling,  
to do the unnecessary.

(Fred Allen, American Comedian 1894 - 1956)

Church committees consist of three types of people....  
those who make things happen,  
those who watch things happen  
and those who haven't a clue what's happening!

## Five Minutes with ..... Alex Laing



### **When did you start coming to this church and why?**

My husband, Guy, and I, with our two children Gabe and Maya, moved back to England from the Isle of Man in 2009, to be close to my dad. We moved in the July and I started attending CMC in the August with the children, and have never looked back!

The reason for this church was because of Rev Philip Berry. In the 90s my mum was poorly with cancer, and she eventually died from it. She was Roman Catholic but did attend the occasional service at CMC. When Rev Philip found out she was no longer able to leave the house, he came to visit her. Mum wasn't a member of church, nor a Methodist, but Rev Philip's visits showed her that she mattered and was loved by God.

### **What is your favourite Bible reading and why?**

Currently it is Romans 12:1-2. I'm particularly drawn to the 'renewing of your mind'. We can change the way we feel by changing our thoughts, particularly about ourselves. I find I marry what I've learned from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with John Wesley's theology of grace.

### **What is your favourite Hymn and why?**

StF 645 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life. At the very basic level, we cannot do things in our own strength, but only through God's (Philippians 4:13). This hymn teaches us that whatever we must face, Jesus is the anchor that will stop us becoming lost at sea. Living on the Isle of Man meant living very closely with the sea. If the boat couldn't dock due to the weather, the supermarket would have empty shelves. Of course, Manx produce is fantastic, particularly the meat and cheese, but if you want something from off the island, it may not arrive daily in the winter. The IoM is known locally as the Rock, and those storms keep the RNLI busy, so the chorus makes me think of my island home.

### **What is your favourite film and why?**

My absolute favourite film is Babe. It still makes me cry even though I have seen it hundreds of times. It is the story of a pig, Babe, who believes himself to be a sheep-dog, and because the farmer completely believes in him too, Babe is trained up to become a fine sheep-pig. You could see it as an analogy. God has made us in his image, so let's surprise others by becoming who God has made us to be, even if we don't conform to what we 'should' look like or be like!

### **What is your favourite novel and why?**

Anything by Lee Childs. Jack Reacher is my ideal man (sorry Guy!)

## What is your favourite city and why?

I'm not a city person. Large numbers of people make me anxious. Give me wide open spaces, preferably with a view of the sea!



## A personal message from the President of the Methodist Conference - Revd Dr Barbara Glasson

It is with outrage and deep sorrow that we have witnessed the recent brutal killing of George Floyd in the United States.

But outrage and sorrow are not a sufficient response to racism and inequality in society. How to begin a process of change? It starts with self-examination and listening to the people whose lives are affected by discrimination and hate.

This week I received these words from a Methodist living in south London:

“The young people whom I have worked with for over the last 15 years have felt the impact of racism in every institution they have been part of from schools, to university, to various work places, and other than local support and informal church networks they have not found the Methodist Church as a place that speaks up for them.”

As your President, I start by saying I am sorry. Sorry for being silent when we should have spoken out against the everyday injustices that affect BAME communities. I am sorry that, despite our efforts, we have not done enough for those who feel excluded and we need to do better. We know this includes people of all ages from the Windrush generation to the very young. I am sorry when we have not listened carefully enough and not challenged the assumptions of white privilege and bias.

Repentance can lead us to change, to embody a gracious, loving spirit of inclusion and understanding. There is no excuse for racism. All people are made in God's image. We are one body in Christ Jesus.

I hope we can listen more carefully to the voices of BAME members, especially younger people, who face racism, discrimination and violence on a daily basis. Then our Church must be brave, speak out, speak up and challenge racism wherever we find it, especially when we find it in ourselves.

I have been in contact with the Vice-President who joins me in supporting this statement.

## Senior Steward's Report 2019/20

Normally this report would be presented at the General Church Meeting, which has not been possible this year, so it is included here for everyone to read.

And what a year that has been! I have just read my report from last year. The end of that report read:

*We are called to share the love God has for us with each other, we don't need a job title for that. This is at the core of everything we do, and everything we should do.*

*We don't always agree on everything, and sometimes we misunderstand each other, or rub each other up the wrong way, but if we want to "Transform the World by meeting the needs of our community as God's people", we start from this, loving each other.*

I never dreamed that we would need to love each other through a global pandemic and an international lockdown!

The news I hear about phone calls and socially distanced end-of-the-garden chats, lots of praying, crafting and other mutual support fills me with gratitude and shows how strong our community is, and how much love we are surrounded by. Our building may be closed, but our congregation and community continues regardless.

As well as supporting each other, we have reached out through our banner and "Yourneighbour" helpline, connecting with the "Helping Hands" group and providing the biggest collection of items the community hub at Warrington have received, all co-ordinated by Viv Briney.

Technology has enabled us to continue to communicate via email, Rev Viv to create the brilliant daily podcasts that have been so encouraging for us, and for us to hold our weekly phone-in Sunday service, which gets around 180 households calling in each week from the Leigh & Hindley and Liverpool North circuits. There have been Zoom calls, and a new Facebook group with 62 members, many of whom are not part of our Sunday morning congregation in "normal" times. All of these have been a blessing.

Thank you to everyone who has made phone calls, visited and supported each other. It has not been an easy time, and not being together has been very hard. In particular, thanks go to our wonderful pastoral team led by Viv Briney; Janette Hutchinson, Jane Bushby, John Gregson, David Ogilvy, Elizabeth Marr, Irene Healey, Julie Marriot, Mary Bardsley and Daphne Eastburn. I thank Janette especially for all her work in the first weeks after lockdown in making sure everyone was connected. The support we have received from Rev Mary Jones and Eileen Groves has also been wonderful, many thanks to them as well.

But our response to Covid-19 is only a part of the story of our past year, there is so much more to celebrate!

In what feels like another lifetime, this time last year we were anticipating the start of the building work. As is usual with these things, it wasn't without its challenges, and took longer than we expected (including the fire exit which is



being created as I write). So, much thanks to Roddy Marr, and Elizabeth, for the incredible amount of work they put into managing the project, at the same time as building work was going on at their house.

And what a result we have! “The Welcome Space” is a wonderful transformation of our church. It has given us a lovely meeting spot, used by church and other user groups, and opened up our church. Anyone entering our building can immediately see that we are welcoming and open, and that God is at the centre of everything we do. Our Harvest service, when we created our “God Is...” Cross together, was a wonderful celebration and the cross now hangs on the wall in the Welcome Space, dedicated by Rev Viv in January on our open weekend. I know that many of us were uncertain about the work before it was complete, but it seems to be much loved now. The finishing touch was to get the new projector installed, after I think about 18 months without one.

The community garden idea was not able to get going, due to the building work, and then Covid, but it is still in the pipeline and I hope it will become a reality in this next year.

September saw us welcome Hannah, our Youth Worker. She has been a gift to us, working at the High School and creating a weekly “Fresh” group of girls who have continued to meet via Zoom during the lockdown. The High School are very enthusiastic about her input, and she is also providing some mentoring. Another example of how we can use our resources to pour love into our community. Alongside providing helpers for MADCulcheth youth club, and our partnership with the Scouts and Guides, it continues our long-standing priority of supporting young people in the area.

Over recent times, our financial position has been worsening. The building work and youth work has been well supported by grants, but our underlying “business as usual” funds were reducing. Our gift day resulted in some significant donations and increases in regular giving, and we are in a better position than we were. Thank you to those who contributed. Covid-19 has had a negative impact on our finances, and on the circuit and district finances too, so we will continue to need additional fundraising. It is very fortunate that we have been able to take advantage of the government scheme to furlough our cleaners.

In 2018/19 David O & I were the sole Stewards, but last year’s General Church meeting saw more people coming forward to help in the management of the church. Thank you to:

- Viv & Dave Briney, Elizabeth Soehren and David Ogilvy for your support this year as Stewards
- Elspeth for continuing as interim treasurer, and particularly for managing the Covid situation
- Linda for standing in as interim secretary & continuing in the lettings role
- Phil Harrison for stepping into the F&P team
- All the members of the church council for their time, commitment and support

Last year I said I needed to find more balance, which has been possible thanks to everyone who has stepped up and taken on various activities. You may not have an “official” role, but if you have encouraged or supported someone who does this year, thank you. I continue to feel very much supported by you all, and I thank you personally for that.

This next year finding a new treasurer is a non-negotiable. I know we have been asking for a long time, but if you think you *could* be able to take this role on, perhaps you could consider it and speak to one of the stewards? Linda is also very keen to hand on the lettings role, can anyone do that?

We have sadly lost some of our members and friends. Founder member Joyce Brown, David Scattergood who played our organ for over 30 years, David Memmott, Joyce Blair and Beryl Watson. We miss them all, and I know it makes me all the more determined to ensure our church community flourishes in the future as their legacy.

September will bring us happier comings and goings. Alex Laing will be leaving our congregation to begin her training for ordination as a Presbyterian. She is the latest in a line of people going on to ministry from our congregation, and we wish her well – I know we all think she’s going to be a real asset to the Methodist Church, as she has been throughout her time at Culcheth.

Rev Katharine Bland will be joining us as our minister and will be moving into the manse with her husband Paul. I look forward to welcoming her in whatever way we can by then, and to working with her over the coming months and years to develop our vision of “Transforming the World by meeting the needs of our community as God’s people”

This next few months are still uncertain, and we are not sure what we will be able to do or when we will be able to do it. The Church Council last week adopted a proposal to create small worship and fellowship groups that will meet throughout the week, allowing us all to share our faith and build each other up, in a safe way. I hope that these groups will include everyone in our congregation, and people in our wider community. We may not be able to go back to “normal”, at least not yet, but this could become a “new normal” and give us an exciting opportunity to really get to know each other and build ourselves up – early Methodism was built around small groups or cells, and if faith spreads person-to-person, a bit like a virus, this could be “infectious”.

As I said last year, we are called to share the love God has for us with each other, we don’t need a job title for that – we are part of Wesley’s ministry of all believers. We have seen how important sharing that love is over the last few months, and I am looking forward to seeing where that takes us in the coming years. Keep on going!

With love,



*Amy Driver, Senior Steward*

## SECOND WORLD WAR ARCTIC CONVOYS

By Les Hill



[Les was in the Royal Navy during the Second World War and, as he describes, experienced 'the worst journey in the world' to take vital supplies to Russia – something that the Russians have never forgotten.]

In the last four gruelling years of the Second World War the Western Allies supplied arms, ammunition and other supplies to Soviet Russia. These supplies were essential to the Russian war effort and so the Germans were determined to cut them off. Allied merchant ships ran the gauntlet of the icy Barents Sea, outflanked by German bases in Norway from where bombers, surface warships and U-boats could attack without warning. Each delivery of arms was an epic achievement. An eminent British historian described it as 'undertaking the impossible'.

Under pressure from Stalin and Roosevelt, Churchill compelled the hard-pressed British navy to fight convoy after convoy to Murmansk and Archangel. With considerable losses. It was a theatre dominated by the weather – fog, storm-force winds, snow and ice, and the ever-present numbing cold. Accretions of ice could, and did, deprive ships of their stability and cause them to capsize. Little wonder that Winston Churchill rightly called the convoys 'the worst journey in the world,' and extraordinary even among acts that were regarded as being beyond the call of duty. The Russian Ambassador underlined this in 2014 when presenting the Ushakov medal to Russian and British seamen who took part. The Winston Churchill phrase was included in the Russian citation for the award of the medal.

Thousands of British and Allied seamen lost their lives as British ships sailed the arctic waters under the constant threat of being attacked. Anyone unlucky enough to find themselves in the water would survive for only one or two minutes. The Ambassador went on to say, "our heroism will always be remembered in Russia and Britain. Your deeds will continue to serve as the supreme expression of bravery and a high point in human spirit."

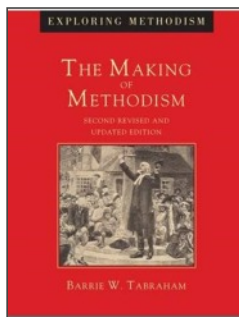
In June 2019 the President of the Russian Federation, by decree, awarded a commemorative medal on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1940 -1945 to all personnel who took part in the Arctic Convoys.

I served in an escort destroyer as a signalman. My post on duty was on the bridge, giving no cover. It was not the most comfortable place to be! Neither was there any really comfortable place on board in which to try for any semblance of normal life.

After trying for many years to formulate an answer to the most asked question, "What was it like?" I arrived at the following.

REMORSELESS COLD; FEAR AND PROXIMITY OF  
MINDLESS, SENSELESS DEATH, MIXED WITH SHEER  
DEGRADATION OF LIFE IN A SMALL, BATTERED WARSHIP.

# Book Review



## ***The Making of Methodism*, Barrie W. Tabraham**

(second revised and updated edition London: Epworth, 2010)

Knowing our history and background allows for deeper understanding of who we are today. So it is with Methodism. *The Making of Methodism* takes the reader from 1700s to 2009, from the early life of John and Charles Wesley, through their theology, their formative experiences, and the development of Methodism as we have come to know it. If that sounds dry, think again.

Tabraham has revised and updated this book to make it accessible and friendly, but this does not mean it lacks depth. The chapters on John Wesley's theology of the

means of grace, for example, are thorough but not off-putting. Extracts of primary sources are included on almost every page, and Tabraham draws out the salient parts of these so that the reader becomes involved in the telling of Methodist history. There is a helpful glossary, especially useful for those who do not speak Methodist jargon, and suggestions for further reading. I will be reading Wakefield's *Methodist Spirituality* in the same 'Exploring Methodism' series.

Tabraham presents a rounded picture of the Wesleys; he does not shy away from their human characteristics. I found this enabled me to understand how John Wesley had come to his way of thinking, and it made me question why we tend to present founders as perfect. Reading extracts from letters, sermons, hymns and diaries, I came to know Wesley as a person, rather than a historical figure. I also had not appreciated the number of splits and controversies after his death and why the Deed of Union was so needed.

Having read this book, I feel I know who I am as a Methodist. This is a book to which I will keep coming back.

*Alex Laing*

**But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. *Matthew 5:44***

Pray for those who are hungry.  
Pray harder for those who will not feed them.

Pray for those who are homeless.  
Pray harder for those who deny them shelter.

Pray for those who cry out for dignity.  
Pray harder for those who will not listen.

Pray for those who bear the yoke of prejudice.  
Pray harder for those who discriminate against them.

Pray for those whose basic needs are denied.  
Pray harder for public officials who cater to the greedy  
and ignore those bound unjustly.



*Amen*

# THE SEPHTONS OF SPRINGFIELD

Kath Graham & Marlene Nolan

Doctor Richard Sephton, a local GP in Culcheth, built Springfield House as a home for himself and his first wife Caroline and their ever-growing family but also as his surgery. The house was to retain its identity as a surgery until at least 1943, when Doctor Kennedy had his practice there. It was a very impressive building fronted by a stone portico rumored to have been brought from another building. It has been speculated that the building was Atherton Hall, the family seat of the Atherton family but this is unlikely as Atherton Hall was demolished in 1824 and Springfield not built until 1865. Doctor Sephton had lived in Culcheth since his appointment as Medical Officer to the Leigh Union in 1858 and had married his first wife, Caroline Mapei in Liverpool in 1859. Caroline was the daughter of John Bamford Burrows, a doctor and prominent Methodist in Liverpool, and the widow of Camillo Mapei, a former Roman Catholic priest who had died in Dublin in 1853 during one of his lecture tours. The couple had two children, the eldest, Luigi Vincenzo Mapei was born in Liverpool in 1846. He does not appear to have lived with his mother and may have been raised in Liverpool by his maternal grandfather. He became a much respected and much loved general practitioner in Golborne where he resided until his death in 1913. Caroline's second son, Ramiro Carlo Alberto was born in May 1848 but unfortunately died four months later.

Caroline's second marriage produced two sons, John William Burrows Sephton, who took the names of his maternal and paternal grandfathers, and was born in 1860 but died before he was a year old and Richard Burrows Sephton who was born in 1871 and was destined to train as doctor and join his father's practice in Culcheth until his death in 1936. The couple also had three daughters Jane Elizabeth born 1862, Harriet born 1864 who died as a twelve-year-old, and Caroline Louisa born 1867 and died the same year. All the children were born in Culcheth and were living in Hob Hey Lane in 1861. With the prospect of a growing family, in 1864 Dr Sephton advertised for tenders in the local press for the building of a "dwelling house and outbuildings to be erected at Twiss



Green Culcheth". The residence, named "Springfield", by the Sephton family would probably have been completed by late 1865 or early 1866 which meant that the two youngest children Caroline and Richard would have been born in this house. Richard's wife Caroline would die there in the late summer of 1872 at the young age of 49. Most of the family, including the doctor and his two wives, plus two daughters who had died as children and their son, also Richard Sephton,

who died in 1936 were interred in the family vault at Newchurch Parish Church.

Richard wasn't to remain alone for long however, he married Lucy Ann Buckland, the daughter of a retired prison officer in Newchurch three years later. From marrying a woman ten years his senior he was now marrying a woman fifteen years his junior. Their only child, a daughter, Caroline Florence Buckland Sephton was baptised at Newchurch in 1878. She married in 1915 in Ceylon to Arthur Le Conroy Carson, an engineer, son of a local clergyman and lived abroad for most of the rest of her life. She was with her half-sister, Jane Elizabeth Sephton (Lillie) at the Hotel des Alpes, Bourg d'Oisons, Isere, France when Jane Elizabeth died in 1944. Lille was buried in a temporary grave in the Bourg d'Oisons Cemetery.

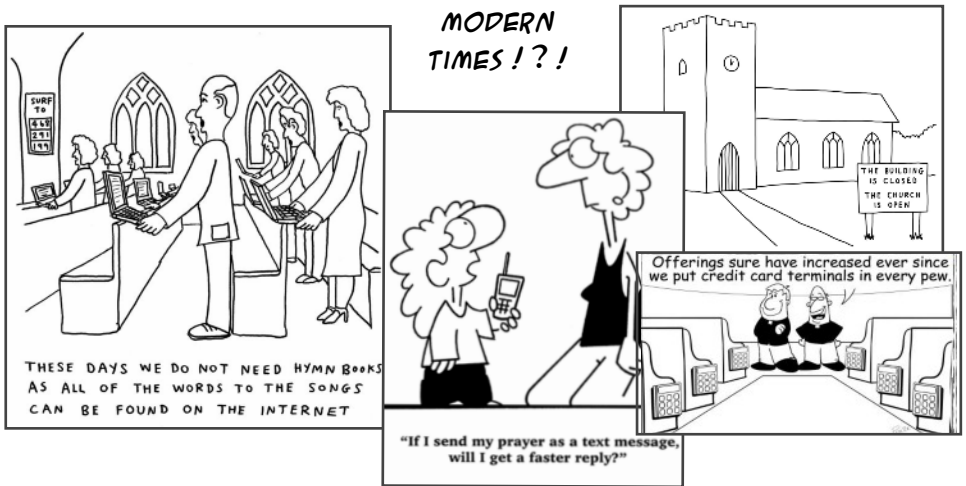


It would appear that Richard Sephton and Lucy Buckland became acquainted when she was living in his house as a governess. She is mentioned in a newspaper report on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1875 regarding a burglary at Springfield a few days previously. It states that a "remarkable and mysterious robbery" had taken place at Springfield a few nights before. During the night thieves had gained entry to the house, possibly via a pantry window which wasn't locked and had entered the bedrooms of both Doctor Sephton and Miss Buckland who was the governess. They had stolen a £5 note and twenty-five shillings in silver from the doctor's bedroom as he slept. They then went to Miss Buckland's room and searched the drawers, evidently without disturbing her, despite there being a light in her room all night. The thieves escaped with very little however, missing thirteen pounds in a pocket of a dress belong to Miss Buckland, £200 worth of silver plate, a quantity of old silver coins and a valuable case of medical instruments. The Doctor's parents and Mrs Mapei of Golborne were in the house at the time and although the Doctor's brother Robert had spent the evening there he had returned to his home in Atherton. Co-incidentally his house had also been broken into a short while before.

Dr Sephton was to marry Miss Buckland only three months later and after their marriage the family remained at Springfield, but not without further incident. In 1908 Doctor Sephton's daughter, Lily, was awoken at twenty past two in the morning by the crackling of flames. Realising the stables were on fire she raised the alarm and after three hours the fire was extinguished. The damage was estimated to be over two hundred pounds but fortunately the doctor was insured. The family were again in the news when the death of Dr Luigi Mapei in 1913. It was reported that Dr & Mrs Sephton, Carrie, Lillie and Dick had sent floral tributes. Obviously within the family nicknames were used by the children, Carrie being Caroline Florence and Dick the younger Dr Sephton. Jane Elizabeth appears to have gone by the name of Lily or Lillie, as she was referred to by this name in the 1881 Census, and the newspaper report on the stables fire in 1908.

The Sephton's were to remain at Springfield, which by 1911 had become one of the most prestigious in the area, having 14 rooms for the families own private use, until the death of the younger Dr Sephton in 1936. A map of 1920 shows the house even having its own gasometer. Dr Sephton never married and on his unexpected death the house and its contents were put up for sale by the local firm of Auctioneers, T Brogden and Sons on the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> August 1936. The eleven pages of the Catalogue give a very clear indication of the size of the property and the value of the items to be disposed of. The house comprised a drawing room; dining room; study; hall, staircase and landing; 5 bedrooms, one with dressing room; a maid's bedroom; a box room; a bathroom and a storeroom. Items for sale included general household goods, such as silver; electroplate; glass; china; bed and table linen but also more personal items such as cigars; wine; guns and books. Five hundred and sixty-six lots were for sale, the most expensive being the Doctor's motor car, a 1936 Wolsey Wasp saloon with black coachwork and green upholstery, which sold for £130. An antique Jacobean oak: blanket chest sold for £15 5s, and a Bechstein Grand Piano sold for £20. Of the more personal items a postcard and photographic album sold for 1s 1d and 4 Boys Own Annuals brought 6s 6d. Even the doctor's Wills Gold Flake cigarettes were sold. Doctor Cornelius Cummins Kennedy was recorded as living at Springfield when the 1939 census was taken and the house was still in use as a doctor's surgery as late as 1943 when The Liverpool Daily Post reports Dr C Kennedy of Springfield, Common Lane, Culcheth being fined £25 and his license endorsed at Leigh County Court for being drunk in charge of a motor car.

Local people remember the house still being there in the 1950s. Old maps show it being opposite Lime House or the Limes on Common Lane. Both properties are now demolished but a road called the Limes is still there, presumably where the drive of the original house once stood. On the opposite side of Common Lane are new houses which appear to have been built sometime in the late 50s or early sixties but unfortunately nothing of "Springfield" now remains.





## FLOWER AND COTTON PRODUCERS FIGHT COVID-19 THROUGH TAILORING

Flower workers are particularly vulnerable to acute food insecurity as earnings are low; without wages and no savings, the largely migrant workforce have no way of paying for food.

In the last months, due to the financial pressures faced by flower farms since sales have dramatically declined as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, tens of thousands of agricultural workers have lost their jobs. Farms are reporting that they are still only exporting around a third of their production now to Europe.

Unfortunately, with passenger flights still grounded, air freight is less regular and considerably more expensive. Adding to the export challenges faced by the farms, the weather in Kenya has seen rains and floods reduce production levels for the flower farms meaning they have even fewer stems to sell.



Like many other farms, Bigot Flowers have reduced workers to a 50:50 rota, so half of the workforce are in at any one time. Whilst this has had the benefit of keeping all the workers on the payroll, it has meant that workers have reduced wages and are therefore in need of additional financial support.

### **The vital role of the Fairtrade Premium**

There are 44 Fairtrade certified flower farms in Kenya, representing 39,889 workers. The Fairtrade Premium, the additional 10% paid on top of the commercial price of a Fairtrade flower stem, is helping these communities respond to the health emergency. In March, immediately after the lockdowns in many European countries, Fairtrade issued new guidelines on the use of Fairtrade Premiums to allow producers more flexibility in how they spend the funds. This means that funds can be used as cash or food to workers or to protect workers from COVID-19 (such as masks and hand sanitiser). This is already happening at many of the Fairtrade certified flower farms, where the Fairtrade Premium has been a critical source of funds.

### **Creating employment**

Some farms are using the Fairtrade Premium to keep workers employed. At Oserian Development Co, they are re-employing workers who lost their jobs to make masks themselves and distribute them in the community. On average, buying masks from the market is more expensive compared to manufacturing them locally, which only costs €0.27/mask. The masks are distributed for free to all workers and the local community. All tailors are screened for COVID-19 symptoms at the farm's health centre. Prior to the start of the operation, they received training to ensure production of the masks met the Ministry of Health's standards.



*'Working here helps us earn a little income at this time. So, we are happy to be working here to at least help make masks and save the company,' said Ezekiel Onyango, one of the workers in the scheme.*

### **Helping workers meet their basic needs: food and health**

On average, farms have used over a third of their existing Premium to help workers meet their immediate needs. To date, this has helped over 8,550 workers. The cash has been used towards food packages, which are more important than ever as local food prices have gone up and many workers now have to feed others in their family who have lost their incomes too.

The Fairtrade Premium is also being used to purchase sanitiser and face masks for workers. In Kenya, it is now obligatory to wear a mask to go to public places, with most Kenyans having to spend \$1 for a mask that lasts 8 hours. For many flower farm workers, they cannot afford to buy more than a single mask, and therefore are continuously reusing the masks and facing increased risks of contracting Covid-19 as a result. It is therefore necessary to use the Fairtrade Premium to ensure workers can access masks and use them safely.

One such farm is Valentine Growers, who ordered masks, sanitisers and hand soap for the dispensary that was originally built with Fairtrade Premium (in 2018, 14% of the Fairtrade Premium was spent on these types of health services). They are also 'prioritising getting food on the table,' explains Dennis Gakuru, HR assistant and Fairtrade Officer. 'Many workers are really scared. They are literally living hand to mouth, they don't know where their next meal will come from. We try to stay positive, we are working together to source and buy food for as long as possible. We are using the Fairtrade Premium to provide each worker with a package of different food items such as cooking oil, rice and flour, which will be enough for at least one month. Hopefully by then things will have cooled off.'

### **Why choosing Fairtrade flowers can help**

A crisis such as COVID-19 shows the importance of purchasing flowers sustainably and in particular, in buying Fairtrade flowers. Contributing to the Fairtrade Premium fund is a critical way to help workers access basic needs for an emergency, and it also helps workers build up resilience in the future. The Fairtrade Premium can provide credit and seed funding for capacity building for workers, including the tailoring skills that are now vital to produce face masks.



Grace is a worker on a Fairtrade certified farm in the Naivasha region of Kenya, who we spoke to back in April. Her words stay pertinent today as then:

*'Please continue to buy Fairtrade flowers. Many Kenyans will be hurt not by the pandemic but by the lack of basic needs. It will get really bad here.'*



Oserian flower farm workers making face masks in Kenya

Workers at Oserian Development Company stitching masks

As global cases continue to rise, so too is the demand for protective gear such as face masks, which in a country like Kenya must now be worn in public spaces. Consequently, Kenya like many other countries is dealing with the challenge of adequate protective gear for its health workers and national population.

Following the temporary revision of the Fairtrade Standards in March to allow for more flexibility in the use of Fairtrade Premium funds, Oserian Development Company Limited, a Fairtrade certified flower producer in Naivasha, chose to begin manufacturing masks for its workers, their dependents and

members of the community. Taking place in the farm's social hall, manufacturing is driven by a group of 36 tailors. Out of these, 22 are employees of the flower producer who developed tailoring skills through short courses funded through the company's Fairtrade Premium. All tailors are screened for COVID-19 symptoms at the farm's health centre. Prior to the start of the operation, they received training to ensure production of high-quality masks meeting the Ministry of Health's standards.

'We appreciate Fairtrade for being flexible. We are now able to make decisions faster especially now in the management of COVID-19. This will also go a long way in cushioning workers who may lose their income along the way due to the decline of the flower market,' said Julius Kigamba, Oserian Development Company Ltd.

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Media-Centre/News/May-2020/Flower-and-cotton-producers-fight-Covid-19-through-tailoring>



## *Held in our hearts*

Members of the Hearts and Hands for God Group have made over 170 hearts for everyone on our church pastoral/community list, plus our circuit ministers & local preachers.

Each heart has been named and prayed over during the creation/hanging on the tree/cross. You can see them through the side window of the church. They are symbols to show that, although we can't meet in the church building at the moment, you remain in our thoughts and prayers.





## **Statement on racism from the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference**

The brutal killing of George Floyd, who died at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, has prompted a wave of anger and revulsion around the world. As Christian people, we are appalled that someone could die in such a fashion and appalled also at the continued injustice which many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people experience in many parts of the world, including the United Kingdom, and in many institutions, including, shamefully, the Methodist Church in Britain.

We therefore welcome and endorse the call of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement for radical action in addressing the causes of this injustice. The Methodist Church in Britain believes that racism is a denial of the gospel. However, we have to recognize that we have not eradicated the problem from our Church, despite the excellent work of many over several decades; in the last year we have redoubled our efforts to do so and are actively working on the implementation of our 'Inclusive Methodist Church' strategy which commits to challenging all forms of discrimination and creating a Church where people from every background are welcome and are safe from abuse and discrimination.

Such a Church will celebrate and not be afraid of diversity; it will be disciplined and uncompromising in its refusal to tolerate any form of racism; it will work to encourage the vocation of those from minority groups to serve in positions of senior leadership; and it will be one in which all people can be confident of the welcome that they will receive as they share in worship and ministry with us. We repent of the ways that we have fallen short of that in the past and of our slowness in changing our ways and we continue to look for ways in which we can witness to the all-encompassing love of God and become the transformation that we long to be. 'Only the Spirit's power can fit us for this hour': we pray, 'Come, Holy Spirit, come!'





Loving and compassionate God,  
Help us to see hope in the most desperate  
situations.

Help us to uphold the value of others in our  
words and actions.

Help us to see the potential you see in each  
of your children.

Help us to know and to respond to your  
guiding hand in our lives.

Amen

*Claire Welch*

