



# THE GREEN SOCK

## NEWS FROM THE SHROPSHIRE AND MARCHES METHODIST CIRCUIT

JULY 2021

### SUMMER SONGS FAREWELL AT GREEN LANE

**O**n July 11<sup>th</sup> the group of chapels which Ministers, Revd Jon Chesworth and Revd Frances Biseker have cared for, gathered at Green Lane Chapel to celebrate their years of service and to share some beautiful hymns and worship songs. The church and the hall were filled to their (restricted) capacity. Some of the hymns were old favourites, some were new to us, some rousing, some reflective. All of them were chosen with care by various chapels because they meant something to those who chose them; they were very emotive and judging by the congregations' reaction, they had significance for many of us.

The hymns were interspersed with Bible readings and prayers read by members of the Green Lane congregation. John Gwatkin stood in for his son, David, to express their appreciation of all that Jon has done to support and encourage those involved with Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy. As the Chaplaincy's team leader, David had sent a special gift of a shepherd's crook and a cap for Jon. Later, John Gwatkin speaking as Circuit Steward, expressed thanks to both Jon and Frances for all they had done in the Southern end of the Circuit particularly *Tea and Worship*, *Messy Church*, *The Big Nativity Tea*, *The Big Nativity Zoom* and the *Holy Week Diaries*, just to mention a few things as well as a



Revd Frances Biseker and  
Revd Jon Chesworth



John Bacon

*Wednesday Worship on Zoom*, where a group have met together each week to share, while we have been unable to physically visit each other's chapels. He presented them with a gift that expresses the love and appreciation from all the chapels at this end of the Circuit. After the service we were able to spread out into the garden behind our Leominster Chapel for a 'Bring your own Picnic'. Everyone enjoyed being able to share a time of fellowship with friends from other chapels and to meet some of the new friends we had made via our Zoom worship.

The success of the morning was due to the brilliant teamwork amongst the chapels involved, and I would like to thank them all. Mike Nelson and John Bacon from Luston, providing the music for Orleton's reflective hymn as well as singing and playing their guitars for Luston's choice of hymn. John Bacon's technical skills, and the support of Phillip Purcell and Chris Hinsley from Leominster which allowed the congregation in the hall to see and hear everything happening in the chapel on the big screen. The people who brought garden flowers to decorate the church and Ann Purcell, Martina Bacon and Sharman Waldegrave who arranged them. Eve Pritchard who cleaned the hall, put out chairs and who during the service read the special prayers she had composed. Sharman and Joan Wilson had also composed special prayers for the occasion. Jenny Scott and Chris Hinsley for the Bible readings. There is one important person I haven't yet mentioned; and that is Ann Hinsley, who is currently playing the piano while we are unable to use the organ, the 'live music' enhances our worship every week and our Songs of Praise would have been flat without her contribution.



If I have forgotten anyone, I apologise. It was a beautiful service and a wonderful time of fellowship. We all wish Jon and Frances a long and happy retirement. Methodism calls it "Sitting Down" but I don't see many retired ministers resting very much and judging by Jon and Frances' active lifestyle, I don't think they will be doing much sitting either!

We have some wonderful memories, and our prayers go with them.

Margaret Wright

### BRENDA'S SPONSORED WALK FOR CHRISTIAN AID

After using the first 'Lock down' as a chance to catch up with paperwork and clear cupboards I, like many, found the second 'Lock Down' more difficult. I was feeling bereft of being involved and reluctant to volunteer due to my being age-barred. Even though restrictions were gradually being lifted, we were still prevented from attending small gatherings. Consequently, the Annual Coffee Morning for Christian Aid was again cancelled. It was at this time that the idea for a Sponsored Walk just popped into my head! Following discussions with friends and taking up a suggestion to use the canal towpath (no traffic, on the flat and very pretty), the route and distance was settled. Chirk to Trevor Basin and back

to Chirk is approximately 8 miles total. However, before committing myself I did a practice walk to 'Glencoed' and back.

Every project needs a 'Support Team' and this was no exception – Muriel Pearce, George and Barbara Porter, Rosemary and Derek Hughes, Sue Bell, Revd Julia Skitt and Hilary Prescott. So, on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May, just after 10:00am, I was waved off. A slight shower started but soon disappeared and I was able to enjoy the scenery and greenery. A comfort stop at Glencoed, and then the final leg to Trevor Basin where I was greeted by Barbara and George with a welcome coffee and lovely 'picnic', leaving the Basin for the return walk at 12:30pm.

I did plan for a Solo Walk, not for sole glory, but to avoid putting myself under pressure to keep up with others. Neither did I want responsibility for organising other walkers –keep it simple. However, Linos Roberts, North Wales Organiser for Christian Aid, asked if she could join me for part of the walk. This year Christian Aid celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, and Linos is trying to undertake 75 'walks' during the 12 months and this would count as one of them. As it happened, Linos walked with me the whole way to Chirk and then she walked back to Trevor Basin alone. She proved a stalwart companion and had to cope with the bad weather on the way back, sheltering beneath the bridges. This 'Walk' of course does not compare with other historical pilgrimages down through history such as 'The Camino de Santiago' but it has become a sort of 'Pilgrimage' to me, the support team and now all those who have supported by sponsoring, so, thank you. A total of £1600 was raised for Christian Aid.



Brenda Wilford ( r ) with Linos Roberts, the North Wales Organiser for Christian Aid

Brenda Wilford

## BORDELANDS CHAPLAINCY PLACEMENT STUDENT LEARNS ECO CHURCH AT CHURCH STRETTON



Student Hugh Reid (l) talking Eco Church with Revd. George Heinz and Church Stretton Church's Jon Cooke (r)

Theology student Hugh Reid was on placement with Borderlands Rural Chaplaincy when the opportunity arose for him to meet Church Stretton Church's Jon Cooke and learn about A Roche UK's Eco Church Award Scheme. With Hugh's interest in environmental issues and rural ministry already piqued, he was keen to hear more from one of the Circuit's original eco warriors.

Jon, the founding chairman of Stretton Climate Care, has spearheaded the church's environment campaign since Care for God's Earth was established through the Methodist Conference ten years ago. Since then Church Stretton Church has achieved Bronze and Silver A Roche awards. The extensive work required to reduce the energy consumption of the church building, including double glazing, insulation of its 120-year-old roof and solar panelling, currently render the prospect of achieving a Gold award impossible.

Nevertheless, the church eco-group is motivating individual members to embrace the Carbon Footprint concept and practice reducing their own both at church and at home. Jon explained that prior to Covid, there were plans for a church lunch where a Carbon Footprint talk was to take place. Despite it being cancelled, online communication and socially distanced meetings have allowed members to learn how to quantify their footprints and become more environmentally aware. Faced with those who, stating, "In twenty years I won't be here", distance themselves from the climate crisis, Jon's stock response is "What about your grandchildren and their children?" he said.

Revd. George Heinz who has pastoral oversight of Church Stretton Church and was also present at the meeting, shared some of what the church has incorporated as Environment Worship where on some Sundays the environment is the main focus. He stressed the importance of discussing climate change as a Christian, spiritual and theological subject and of access to resources such as the York Course' *Caring for Creation* which church members studied during Lent. According to Jon, members are addressing the issues, having "Climate Conversations", praying and fasting for the climate and supporting ecumenical environment schemes. York Course\*: <https://www.yorkcourses.co.uk/product/caring-for-creation/>

### BROCKTON CHAPEL'S DUCK-THEMED MESSY CHURCH

Ahead of officially re-opening for worship, Brockton Chapel hosted a Duck-Themed Messy Church. Crafts, a biblical quiz, a bring and share picnic and the sheer novelty of being able to meet together outdoors, brought people from the local area to nearby Acton Bank Farm where they enjoyed activities in the sun. Some of those present were from families only recently acquainted with the chapel's Michael and Elisabeth Knight who in availing themselves to the local community have maintained socially-distanced and online hospitality and Christian witness, throughout the lockdown periods keeping in touch with their Rainbow Gang and Summer Holiday Club regulars.



For more information on church services and events please consult the Plan or contact churches directly.

Contact us at: [media.smcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:media.smcircuit@gmail.com) 01588 630 769 or visit our website at [shropshireandmarches.org.uk](http://shropshireandmarches.org.uk)