

Celebrating 90 years

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Happy Birthday BMM!

Aniversaries are amazing things. They're opportunities to look back at what God has been able to do, and an opportunity to look to the future. All of which are included this issue.

One of the things I've loved about BMM is that it's been around so far for 90 years: that's almost three times as long as me. The earliest servants who founded the movement have long gone, but their legacy is an organisation that is committed to serving the Lord through love, action and discipleship.

It's easy to use a declining membership as an opportunity to get downbeat about our future. It's easy to get depressed when the same appeals for volunteers appear again and again. And it's easy to be disheartened when we see numbers at our annual conference are down again.

It's easy because it's the easy option. Trusting God and being a faithful witness for him is the hard option.

Over the next few years, the Movement will evolve. It has to; if we are to stand still, we'll continue to decline and eventually fold. That will be a sad day within our Baptist family.

What happens next will not be the easy option. For some, it will feel like we're asking the church to move the piano six inches to the left, for others it will be further. But if we don't step out of our comfort zones, our successors won't celebrate the 180th anniversary of BMM in 90 years time.

This is an opportunity to give thanks to God for 90 fantastic years – and to pray for the years come, that they will give him glory, not our egos.

Phil Creighton

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Contents

Around and About / 3

Man of the Movement –

Jack Norwood / 5

Secretary's desk / 8

Romanian adventure / 9

BMM @ 90 / 11

News from our auxiliaries / 15

Praying together / 19

Men from Texas / 21

Remembering High Leigh / 23

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Note: views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Baptist Men's Movement

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Around and About

A catalyst for change...

If there was a watchword for 2007, BMM's 90th year, it has to be change. MLA is changing as **Audrey** steps down, BMM is looking seriously about how it serves the denomination in future and Tapes For The Blind is evolving too.

This much-loved and much-needed service is now to be known as **Baptist Voice** – quite a clever title if ever there was. You can read more about the changes in the report from the new co-ordinators, **Gilbert Payne** and **Geoff Pratt** on page 18.

A desire for change

Paul Gilbert, a BMM member for Accrington, has written to share his personal view about BMM's future. Some of his points include, 'Would it make sense to have an age census? I believe it would help us to face the fact the Lord has used BMM to be the instigation out of which has sprung Operation Agri, Tools With A Mission, Tapes For The Blind, MLA – all thriving organisations.

'Should elderly drivers be travelling long distances by road to get to Swanwick?'

And, 'Could the capital reserve of BMM, though comparatively small, be better used in TWAM and OA?'

What do you think? It's all the more reason for you to attend the day conference on April 28.

A conference for change

It's no secret that BMM has been shrinking in recent years and the tagline 'the best-kept secret' has become an embarrassment simply because we're in danger of becoming a secret society.

If the Movement is to thrive and prosper again, some pruning is necessary.

Council appointed a sub-committee, **Bob Pengelly-Phillips**, **Bryan Orchard** and **Phil Creighton**, to explore possible ways forward. They have met several times to suggest ideas and a presentation was made to the annual conference at Swanwick. They also met with **Jonathan Edwards**, the new general secretary of the Union in early March.

However, the Movement needs to be in agreement about its future and plans are in place for a single day conference on Saturday, April 28. Further details are available from the secretary should you wish to attend. At the time of going to press, the venue was yet to be announced, but as the day co-incides with a Thames Valley Men's Breakfast, it is likely to be held in Reading.

All change at the top

After many years of faithful service to the Movement, this year's Swanwick was the final one to see **John Bennett** as the Movement's chairman. A full appreciation will appear in the next edition of **World Outlook**. And the new Chairman will be **Bob Pengelly-Phillips**.

Russell Ashley-Smith became President at this year's conference, and **Elgan Evans** steps into the role of vice-president. He will reveal some of his plans for his conference in the next edition of **World Outlook**. And the nomination for junior vice-president? Stay tuned.

All change on the internet

Not content with producing a stunning redesign of **World Outlook**, which the editor knows has gone down well with readers (now share your copy with other men with pride!), **Arthur Pallett** has been busy redesigning the

BMM website: baptistmen.org.uk. It's faster to load, easier to read and has a more modern look. You can access back copies of **World Outlook**, get the latest news and the site will be easier to keep updated. There's also a section for links – if your men's group has a website, then get in touch and we can add it in to the link section.

Not keeping a secret

Bryan Orchard writes: I have been invited to make a short presentation on BMM at my church's weekly group meeting where the church members, for the first time in many years, can actually hear about what we do and stand for and where we are heading for the future. Who knows what effect this may have for the future of the men in my church – including the ladies pushing the men to do something! What have you done in your church to promote BMM?

Conference 2008

Many of you will receive this edition of **World Outlook** around the time of the current conference, celebrating our 90th anniversary – now is the time to be thinking about booking for next year's conference! More details will be announced in the July edition, but make sure you keep the date free – March 14-16, again at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick.

News of men's groups

It's always good to hear of what men's groups have been doing around the country, partly to inspire and encourage others of us that it's possible. The Thames Valley BMM met on Shrove Tuesday for its annual Tools Contest. The event, held in Datchet, was a great success: look out for more news next

time round. Elsewhere, the men's group at Victoria Baptist Church, Eastbourne, is currently enjoying a varied an interesting programme.

Russell Ashley-Smith is joining them on April 19, while TWAM and MAF have both visited earlier in the year.

Positions still vacant

It feels a little depressing to have to repeat appeals for help, but the Movement will only continue to prosper if new volunteers come forward. We still need a new honorary treasurer, someone to take on the vital work of the Missionaries Literature Association and ensure that magazines are posted around the world. Can you help? Please get in touch with **Bryan Orchard** if you feel you can.

No life on the Ocean Wave this year

The other Christian movement for men, Christian Vision for Men (newly renamed) announced plans in late January for a conference cruise in October. However, not enough numbers came forward within the deadline to make it happen this year, so its annual conference will take place in Coventry between November 16–18. Its theme is "Going for Gold – Gripped by His Word, Fuelled by His Spirit". The website proclaim '2008 is to be the year when we stimulate your church to adopt Olympic practices to win men for Christ.' For more details, log on to: www.cvmn.org.uk.

People

It's been a difficult start to the year for many within the Movement. The father of former **World Outlook** editor **Bruce Hardy** went to be with the Lord in early January. Just days later, Bruce

was laid low by a very painful attack of sciatica, making it very hard for him to do anything. He was unable to attend his father's funeral, which was conducted by the BMM Vice President, **Elgan Evans**. Please pray for Bruce and his wife Ann.

Meanwhile **John Moore** lost his son Rodney to cancer in January. He had had a virus which went on to become cancer of the spine and spread to the skull. Rodney leaves a wife and three young children aged seven, five and three. Again, please pray.

Norman New of Caversham underwent a triple heart bypass operation in January. Please pray for him and Ruth as he recovers. As most of you will know Norman is a stalwart supporter of BMM, and formerly our enthusiastic secretary of the Thames

Man of the Movement

What did I do in the 1939–45 war? The most important job was Patrol Leader of the Seagulls. Our Scout Troop at Belle Vue Baptist Church in Southend met in the old corrugated hall and enjoyed ourselves. There was no Scoutmaster, we managed without them. The deacons always worried about our rough games but we manned the salvage project on Saturdays with our two trek carts.

Ten years on, I found my vocation in teaching at a Technical College. This was a ministry that fitted: the students were day release apprentices at Southend

Valley Association for many years.

With sadness, we report the death of **Don Howell** died of a heart attack while driving back to Worthing. A memorial service was held at Angmering Baptist Church in February.

Finally, **Clifford and Ann Challinor** would like to thank their many friends throughout the Movement, for their love, prayers, cards, letters, e mails and phone calls during the past few months. Clifford was making steady progress following his stroke, but late summer was unwell, and in November diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma (Type of bone marrow cancer). Since Christmas his condition deteriorated, and on January 11th commenced a minimum of 18 weeks intensive course of chemotherapy.



A series featuring BMM personalities: Jack Norwood of Leavenheath, Suffolk

College. In the 1960s, we were in difficulty because of the high failure rates at exams. Then came metrication, which improved teaching methods and the syllabi. Eventually we were achieving pass rates of more than 90 per cent. Metrication was a boon in education!

One feature was the practice of warning students who were likely to fail, to give them a chance to correct the situation. One such lad, Peter, was warned by me, his homework and laboratory reports were bad – but he was quite bright. He told me he was a member of a Christian youth group and was busy serving Christ. And, as a

result had little time for the demands of technology. I was a youth leader and a deacon at the time. How would you have counselled him? I hope you would explain that we serve God by serving mankind and to do the best of the ability given us.

Some 25 years on, and I was still enjoying teaching. I had married Eileen and our family grew to three children. Around 1978, Shirley Williams was minister for education and recommended lecturers in technical colleges should engage in Industrial Consulting and take sabbatical leave to keep up to date with developments. It was good advice. Those of us who had been brought up on valves never had a good relationship with transistors. One lecturer who taught me as a student loved steam and thought diesel was a passing phase.

I took Shirley's advice and enjoyed a half-day a week with a local firm of generator manufacturers. We planned a year's work and I obtained the first sabbatical leave in my college. Then came a blow to all our plans – the firm met financial difficulties and eventually was wound-up, not my fault.

So, I had a year's leave, but no job to fill it. At this time, I was working on a chicken incubator project to suit John Mellors' farm in Zaire. I was a member of BMM and the Operation Agri committee, hence my involvement.

We discussed who would go to Zaire to install it. I discussed the situation with my family and my wife Eileen, who had Multiple Sclerosis and with the deacons at my church. They were all confident in sending me off to Africa. David, my youngest lad, organised a gap year and lived at home most of the week.

Now, let's transfer to Africa. Here is a story of two Zairean boys – Bill and Ben, the firewood men, who lived in

Tondo a village near the equator in the middle of a humid, tropical jungle. They must have been about 11 or 12 and every Saturday they would bring me a bunch of firewood. This was a contract negotiated by Wilma, a neighbour and missionary nurse at the local hospital. I paid with two pages from a newspaper or a magazine.

I was working on the local farm project, where I had to install and commission a chicken incubator plant, to help improve the diet of the local folk by providing better chickens.

It seemed to me that Bill and Ben were getting a rough deal – we only had one newspaper, *The Baptist Times*, and one magazine, *The Poultry World*. These were shared between six of us and we needed the paper to light fires and wrap things. They would take the pages home, cut out pictures to use as wallpaper and the remaining English texts were sold to students in the local secondary school as books were scarce. I wonder what the students paid; the smallest coin, a macuta, was worth about a tenth of a penny at the time.

Conditions in the village were primitive. There were only earth roads and no drains. No electricity; water was fetched in buckets from springs, the toilets were primitive or, for many homes, non-existent. There were no formal shops, but trading of all sorts of goods was practised from homes and plots in the market. The nearest bank was 100km away. So when short of cash, I took my surplus clothes to the second hand store – we called it the sock exchange. My pyjama jackets fetched top price. I recognised one in church later.

As there was no refrigeration, animals were sold alive and killed just before cooking. Crocodiles were lashed to a pole and it took two people to carry one – and

From the Secretary's desk

quite a lot more to eat them. Instead of a bath, you could go for a dip in the lake. Coffee made on a wood fire in a billy-can can be refreshing.

Bill, Ben and I had one common word: 'mbote'; hello in Lingala. I suspect their main language was Umtumba, a local dialect. Bill and Ben did not go to school; their parents probably couldn't afford the fees or neat clothes expected. They probably never travelled further than they could walk during a day.

There was a gang of boys who lived around one of our farm fields and I managed some sort of conversation with them. They would, at times, politely ask for a lift when I was returning to the village. The Land Rover was bumpy and noisy, but so were their songs!

Bill and Ben seemed to be rather serious lads. I wrote to Eileen back in England and asked for a bundle of comics. A month or so later, *Boy's Own*, *Beans* and *Hotspurs* arrived. When the boys next came, I gave them a whole comic each. They looked stunned at first, yet I did see a smile coming. That should bring colour to their mud huts!

Half an hour later, there was a commotion and then a knocking on my door – outside was a collection of children with bundles of firewood! I tried to decline further trading, but more bundles were arriving. In a short time there was quite a crowd of eager, hopeful kids. They must have robbed their mums of firewood! I fetched the bundle of comics and led a procession of firewood carrying kids to Rena Mellor's house. Rena was an experienced Lingala negotiator, a Sunday school teacher and used a lot of firewood to cook for the project's staff.

Rena organised the exchange and collected an enormous heap of firewood. Dinner must have been late that day in

many households as the wood needed replacing. So much for my efforts to improve trading conditions for Bill and Ben.

Later I started preparing to improve the water and sanitation around the hospital. The patients were normally fed and watered by relatives who lodged nearby. Without adequate sanitation, this environment was counteracting the medical work.

I sat by a water hole to assess its use. Then three kids arrived with their water pots. The youngest was intent on being capable and insisted on filling his pot unaided. He fell over. His sister tried to comfort him. I watched them go each with a pot on their heads. They did more than fetch the family water that day. The incident made me quite angry. Why were children in such circumstances? I have learned to take anger about this world to God in prayer.

I came back to the UK, back to teaching, but organised an early retirement and worked for Tools With A Mission.

Twenty years on, and I'm still sort of working. I need more looking after now and am grateful to my colleagues for their tolerance. I hope you too enjoy the pleasure of working for Christ to make this a better world.

This is a shocking world for some, particularly for youngsters in African villages. It may take years, but we can help those who have no clean water, no jobs and little prospects. We are supporting a programme of making rainwater tanks for homes. Then, there is more time to grow crops and even water in the dry season for the garden. Significantly, the water is cleaner. This is an opportunity to make a real difference.



Bryan Orchard looks to BMM's future

This is a great year for BMM as we celebrate our 90th birthday, particularly at the Swanwick Conference where many of you will be reading this copy of *World Outlook*. However, we do have to recognise that our general membership is increasing in age and slowly decreasing in numbers which is a trend that needs to be reversed. To that end a small group, including myself, has been tasked to review where BMM is going in the future and where we can really have a vibrant future for the next 90 years.

We are arranging a one-day conference on Saturday, April 28, where we will have a presentation of thoughts and direction so far followed by an open discussion, in groups, on all areas pertinent to men in the 21st century who need to have a personal knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

We make an invitation to you to

attend on that day, prepared to bring your ideas, thoughts and prayers and where we can have a thorough, constructive and positive discussion. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend we would still welcome your input which will be disseminated accordingly. Further details will be found elsewhere and of course you can contact me.

Areas planned for discussion include: our name, making BMM more widely known in the UK, possible new auxiliary organisation, changes to the annual conference, *World Outlook*, use of technology, links beyond the BMM, international work plus any other areas you think would be important. Your personal contribution is vital!

We really do look forward to meeting you at Swanwick and at the day conference, in our Lord's name, where we can be excited for the future.

Teaching and taking the word round Romania



BMM member David Pusey has spent part of his retirement teaching students in Romania. He recounts some of his experiences

My wife was asked if she knew of anyone who would come out to teach in Braila Bible School. She said I would when I retired. Thus when retirement loomed the principal arranged for me to teach ethics over two weeks. At an international conference, I met another director of a Bible school. Soon I was to teach in both East and West Romania. When we visited folk in the North West, that first trip became five weeks.

Arriving in the capital Bucharest, my wife and I were transported through flat countryside for many miles, until we eventually came to Braila. My teaching was to all three years of students and each sentence had to be translated. The series had been advertised to the churches: extra people appeared for specific topics. The students were given handouts in Romanian summarising the material. These had been translated by the librarian from e-mailed English versions.

Our middle Saturday was devoted to a mini-bus excursion, for us and some students, to see Romania's famous – and unique in Europe – 'Mud Volcanoes'. Our last weekend was spent being driven by minibus, again with students along for the experience, across Romania to Surduc. This long East to West journey took us to some very interesting places including a one-time Royal Palace. We saw a greatly varied countryside including mountains and forests.

At Surduc I had to leave out some planned material, but the students were given access to a CD with all my material in English. Costel, one of the directors, translated for me and he was translated into Russian.

During my stay I not only preached at Sunday services, but was frequently

taken during the week to preach one of the several messages a congregation would hear. My chauffeur/interpreter on these trips was usually Daniel, whose English is excellent.

The middle weekend at Surduc was actually spent in Timisoara at a Hungarian speaking Baptist church. The pastor's wife was a friend of my wife and we were able to enjoy their hospitality. This is the town where the revolution began and we visited the appropriate sites. This pastor subsequently moved to Cluj and, on our next visit, we were able to visit the family there.

Once the duties at Surduc were completed, we went on to Satu Mare. We stayed with another Hungarian speaking family. We repaid some of their kindness during the 2005 BWA Congress in Birmingham. Pastor Zoltan Vekas has established several gypsy churches and I preached in two.

I returned to UK many things to send out to Surduc: books for the library and computers. Through Book Aid (office@book-aid.org) I collected a set of IVP Commentaries. Support for Romania, a charity based in Cardiff, took not only the books, but also provided a few computers.

The directors in Surduc had been pondering the use of computer training as a vehicle for evangelism. When these unexpected computers turned up, they were immediately utilised as a bridge to the community. The initial results were sufficiently successful for someone in the United States to provide more up-to-date machines. The others went to local schools. On my last visit, classes in computing were being conducted in several languages.

My second visit to Surduc (to teach the rest of the ethics programme and



some Apologetics) was not so rewarding. Of course, I was preaching as before and we took two classes in the village school. But instead of 150-plus students I had about 20. I did renew fellowship with folk met earlier, and in particular I began an ongoing friendship with Pastor Imi Hubert who wants me to teach pastors in Arad.

So last year, I returned to repeat Ethics II etc for 73 registered students from 13 countries and a dozen or so pastors and experienced considerable affirmation. In one session I used two articles only taken out 'by chance'. The subject was not one of which I could claim real experience, but I recalled personal anecdotes which made the teaching come alive. I could only be thankful at being used. I was invited to return in February to teach on holiness and spirituality.

As usual I preached each Sunday: altogether in four different churches. Two were quite new to me and one, a village church, had a mandolin band to accompany the hymns. The congregation, as is usual, contributed

poems and prayers. Daniel translated for me. I also spoke at an old folks home, with a young pastor, Christie, leading the service and translating.

Four times – midweek Bible study as well – I spoke in the Bethel Baptist Church at Resita. I think on each occasion I had a different interpreter. On the first evening I had a strong sense that this should be an ongoing story. When this became possible, I felt my presence in Romania was being used by God.

My final long weekend was in Pecica near Arad. Sunday morning I addressed the young people's Bible class, with Imi translating as required. Then I preached at the worship service. In the afternoon, I preached in a church 25km away with a young chauffeur/translator. Then we dashed back to Pecica for me to preach in the evening service which was their harvest celebration

On the Monday morning, I gave an address at the Arad District Baptist Ministers Fraternal. I was able to share several passages of Scripture which I personally find challenging in the context of the ministry and ended on a note of encouragement.

On the Tuesday, I spoke to the 16/17 year olds in the Arad Baptist High School at their weekly assembly morning. All hundred or so understood English. With no interpreter I had a good 20-25 minutes to explore the proposition that 'The Holy Spirit is like electricity'. The chaplain, who is also the Arad Association Secretary, was quite impressed. This has implications for any return visit I may make to Arad to teach at the pastors' school.



Outgoing chairman John Bennett celebrates our anniversary

There are not many Baptist organisations who can claim such a long history as BMM other than BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Many groups have come and gone although one or two still exist. However, few can claim such a list of officers throughout the years. There have been 75 BMM Presidents since 1917; initially men served several years rather than the one-year term now. Of these men one was a Government minister, two were Knights of the Realm, eight were Justices of the Peace, several had honours such as OBE or MBE, one was blind, three shared the same surname but were not related, one received Maundy Money from the Queen and one was a top banker – to mention but a few.

In addition, there have been several men who were regarded as experts in particular fields. Our most senior past president, Albert Siddle, was President in 1956 and is still the youngest man to hold such an office.

So how did we begin? William Carey in 1792 wanted to see a conference every 10 years for people of all denominations to meet in order to see how the work could be progressed effectively overseas. He did not see this happening in his lifetime but it began to materialise properly in 1910. In that year the conference in Edinburgh called for a greater participation in the work from laymen. The call was answered with the formation of the National Laymen's Missionary Movement in 1912.

A Baptist, W Parker Gray was one of the original men and he became convinced in 1916 that a Baptist group should be established. Despite the fact that Great Britain was at war he decided

that he should act immediately to form such a group. He consulted with the then Home Secretary of the BMS, W Y Fullerton, who wrote the hymn, 'I cannot tell, why He, whom angels worship' and a sub-committee was appointed in October 1916 to explore possibilities. That Committee itself was set up with a formidable list of men such as Sir George MacAlpine, Sir Alfred Pearce Gould and others including A R Doggart, H P Gould, W Parker Gray and H E Wood, among others. Most of the names from the early period do not mean very much to a lot of us now but they were heavyweights in industry, the armed forces and notable theologians. Two daughters of Parker Gray are still well remembered in Baptist circles – Ruth was the wife of Hubert Janisch, minister for many years at Worthing and Joyce who married Stanley Thomas of BMS.

They moved quickly because at General Committee in January 1917 they suggested that the time was right to possibly form such a group and in the Annual Assembly on Wednesday, April 25, 1917 The Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement was formed and immediately got down to work. The second resolution stated 'The Movement shall exist for the dissemination of information about missions and the promotion of prayers for missions among Baptist Laymen, in order that they may be aroused to take their share in claiming the kingdoms of this world for the Lord Jesus Christ.'

The third resolution appointed Sir Alfred Pearce Gould KCVO MS FRCS as president (an honour held for five years), W Parker Gray as chairman, Alec Tyler as secretary and a committee of some 20 men. Parker Gray held the chairmanship for 11 years, the longest serving until the



The combined attendance of the 1923 Swanwick Conference

present chairman. The rest, they say, is history.

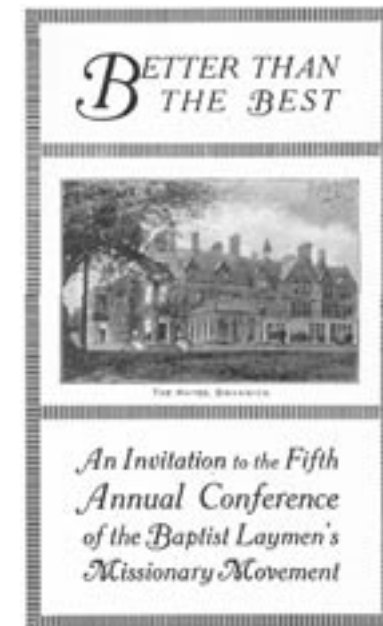
There is no man left from the early days, although several of our members go back about 60 years. In the 90 years of our existence much has happened and we have a great history to show.

The Movement spread its news in many ways but the first issue of *The Baptist Layman* in September 1919 began to tell men throughout the country what was happening. It was published monthly until 1925 and then it was published quarterly.

The name changed to *The Layman* in 1937 and to the present *World Outlook* in 1945. The Movement has most editions and other records held, in the Angus Library at Regent's College Oxford. I am not sure when it began but each president for many years, on leaving office, has been presented with a bound copy of the magazines of his official year.

The central theme was set by Alec Tyler back in 1918 when he wrote, 'Our task as a Movement is to move men to deeper devotion, greater activity, more fervent intercession and fuller support of the missionary enterprise.'

Prayer, effort and giving were then central themes and they remain so to this day. In the last edition of *The Baptist Layman* in 1920, it was announced that since 1917 3,000 laymen had been enrolled in Centres and Groups in 46 towns and districts across the country. This year also saw the second conference of the Movement but, in March 1921, a tradition was begun which continues



Cover of fifth Swanwick Booking Form (1923)

(Bottom) from left H E Wood, T R Glover & A J Allenborough (Swanwick 1938)





National Council (Swanwick 1949)



Harry Hemmens (Swanwick 1948)



Cyril Petch, L G Mann, John Mortimer (left to right) at Swanwick 1956



Swanwick 1980; Maurice Abbott centre (standing), Audrey Sheppard, who has given the Movement sterling service in many capacities

to this day. In that year the conference moved to The Hayes, Swanwick in Derbyshire and has held the March gathering at The Hayes (or just Swanwick as the men call it) ever since.

During our history, we have been responsible for much work for the Lord. A young Baptist formed MLA in 1894 and we eventually assumed control in 1926. It has continued very strongly ever since and sends out about 5,000 magazines and periodicals each year to missionaries, families and overseas workers.

The 1961 conference accepted the call to run Operation Agri and it continues strongly to this day. At the 1967 conference a new auxiliary was formed. The Baptist Men's Movement Housing Association became a reality. Much has happened since then because it was merged with the Anglican group to form the English Churches Housing Group. That has now merged with the Riverside Housing group. In 1986, Tools With a Mission and Tapes for the Blind were formed as new auxiliaries. In 2005 TWAM became a company limited by guarantee and moved to new premises in Ipswich.

Throughout our history God has been the centre of our existence. Leaders have come forward at the most appropriate times and have led the Movement on to doing greater things in the Lord's name. This will continue until the Lord calls time for us as individuals and the Movement. However, never let us forget that we are about the Lord's work and with his guidance and help things will be achieved for his Kingdom on earth.

I would like to thank Basil Amey and Ken Bennett for their assistance with this article.

Birthday greetings!

It's not every day that you celebrate a 90th birthday. Here's the first of our birthday greetings – more at Swanwick

'I am delighted to send the warmest 90th birthday greetings to the Baptist Men's Movement on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. The Movement has a highly respected place in our Baptist family life and I thank God for the faithfulness and fruitfulness of your ministry. There are thousands of people in these islands and around the world who have reason to thank God for the wonderfully creative initiatives in which you have been involved. The Movement is just that! It's a Movement and not a Monument – and so I look forward to see the exciting new ways in which the Lord will lead you as you move towards your centenary.'

Jonathan Edwards, *general secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain*

'Any movement encouraging men in contemporary society to take up the challenge of Christian discipleship, relationship and leadership deserves to be applauded. Congratulations BMM on 90 years of mission and ministry, may you faithfully continue to carry the torch for many more years to come.'

Kate Coleman, *President, Baptist Union of Great Britain*

My BMM highlights

We asked some BMM members for their special moments



For me one of the best booklets to be published by BMM is *Breath and Bread* by **John Hough**. It's a book of daily devotions which came out many years ago now and has been very helpful to me and still is. Thank you John for the careful thought you put into it. – **Stan Crees**



I became involved in BMM through OA. (I wonder for how many members this is true – initial encounters through one of the auxiliaries?) Incidentally I wonder (but wouldn't want it to appear to be bragging!) how many people have been presidents of three regional BMM associations before becoming national president? In my case Yorkshire, Sussex and then Kent & Sussex (or were the final two the other way round?). – **Russell Ashley-Smith**



My involvement with the BMM really starts with the conference four years ago: covering it for *The Baptist Times*, I was taken aback by the warm welcome and keen interest in what I was doing. Having been gently encouraged (!) to sign up by John Bennett there was no looking back. It's now my privilege to serve as editor of *World Outlook*, and on National Council as we look to the future. – **Phil Creighton**

News from our Auxiliaries

Geoff Pratt and Gilbert Payne reveals the changes taking place to Tapes for the Blind

A new *Baptist Voice*

Since the passing of our dear brother **Bill White** in October last year there have been a number of changes regarding Tapes for the Blind. Bill had been involved with the Baptist Men's Movement for many years and with Tapes for the Blind since its inception. We miss him greatly and wish to record our thanks to God for the major contribution he made to this valued ministry.

Earlier in the year Bill had indicated that he was no longer able to continue selecting items and preparing the scripts for the tapes, a role he had shared with **Geoff Pratt**. So far we have not been able to find anyone else to share this task, and Geoff continues to prepare the material each month. **Gilbert Payne** is responsible for the recording of the tapes. At the last meeting of the BMM Council in January Geoff and Gilbert were appointed Tapes for the Blind Joint Coordinators.

Bill had continued to copy and despatch the tapes up to the time of his death and now Gilbert and Geoff have taken on this role. Bill undertook the copying at his home, but we are pleased now to have the use of a room in 35 Ock Street, the hospitality centre of Abingdon Baptist Church. Until recently the tapes have been sent out from and returned to Baptist House in Didcot, and we have been very grateful for the support of the staff there.

In future, the tapes will be sent out from and returned to Abingdon Baptist Church which will simplify matters.

Copying the tapes is a lengthy process, and we are pleased that the Movement has purchased a slave copier to add to the existing machine. This

will allow seven copies to be made from the master tape each time, so that the copying can be comfortably carried out in one evening on the day after the recording.

The monthly tape now has its own name – which it has not had before. It has been agreed that from the February issue it will be known as *Baptist Voice* a name which will be used on the tape itself and in publicity material. This does not affect the BMM Auxiliary itself which will still be called Tapes for the Blind.

At the moment around 90 people receive *Baptist Voice* each month, and it is always encouraging to receive appreciative comments and helpful suggestions from the listeners. We feel sure that there must be many others who would appreciate receiving this selection of items from *The Baptist Times* and *BMS World Mission* magazine on tape, and our hope is that in future it will receive wider publicity.

Please make it known in your own church and if you know of anyone who would like to receive a copy of *Baptist Voice* free of charge each month, please contact Geoff Pratt: Tapes for the Blind, Abingdon Baptist Church, 35 Ock Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5AG. Tel: 01235 526344 (home); E-mail: geoff.pratt@ntlworld.com

We are a very small team and our prayer is that we will, through the continued support of fellow members of Abingdon Baptist Church, be able to continue what we believe to be a valuable ministry to members of the Baptist family with impaired vision.

Geoff Pratt and Gilbert Payne



Photos taken by Nick Catlin and Karl Bowen of Oasis International

from Operation Agri

A hope for the future

For a young girl growing up in the slum community of Musoto in the east of Uganda there are many challenges to face. Housing conditions are inadequate with no basic sanitation. Food is scarce. On top of this there is a lack of education and training which means there are few opportunities to earn any sort of income. There is little hope of change from one generation to the next.

These challenges leave young girls in the Musoto slums in a vulnerable position, open to the risk of abuse or rape. Teenage pregnancies are numerous and many girls are forced into prostitution. This brings the risk of HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases.

These are some of the reasons why the trustees of Operation Agri recently agreed to support the Beersheba Project as it cares for destitute girls, giving them a springboard to a better life and hope for the future. The project has been set up by Oasis International as part of its outreach work in Uganda. It will initially care for girls aged 10 to 14, providing a comprehensive programme of education,

training and support. It will be a place where the girls can not only receive shelter and food but also learn vital life skills, empowering them to make decisions that will lead to a positive and healthy life.

The life skills modules that are taught cover topics including HIV/Aids awareness, sexual health, hygiene, nutrition and healthy eating and gender equality.

OA is glad to support this project as it answers the needs of the local girls, who seem so obviously in danger of many things, from abuse to having no education and all the problems those issues would raise.



Stan Crees (Operation Agri's overseas secretary) reports on the work that the Beersheba Project, Uganda is doing



from Missionaries' Literature Association



Audrey Sheppard reflects on the highs and highs of her work with MLA'

As I was wondering what to write about (early November) for the April *World Outlook*, David reminded me that this could be my last article. I am hopeful that someone, or maybe two people who could share the job, will take over after the Swanwick Conference. It is the most enjoyable task because one knows that it is giving so much pleasure and support to others and the bonus is being in touch with all the courageous people, many of them young with quite large families, who have accepted the call to work abroad and often in very unstable situations.

Another joy is being in touch with all those who keep MLA going with their financial support. I have got to know people up and down the country. There is always an immediate bond when we meet with other Christians and that bond works over the telephone as well. To all those who have supported MLA over the past 4 ½ years I say a huge thank-you. Without that support MLA would cease to exist. I have never refused a missionary who has asked for magazines (the cost, including the postage, for a family of four for a year is on average around £250) and God has always moved someone to meet the need.

Here are a few quotes from missionaries and their families who receive magazines through MLA:

'I want to take this opportunity of thanking you for continuing to send us the *Guardian Weekly* and the *Barbie* and *Bob the Builder* magazines for Abigail and Joel. Both Abigail and Joel get VERY excited when they see the rolled up magazines in our pigeon hole at the mission base. Those who work on this project are such a great blessing and encouragement to us. Please pass on our

thanks to all concerned.' *Japhet & Alison Diarra, Abigail, Joel and Hannah in Mali*

'The knitting and cooking are both going very well. Thank you so much for sending out these magazines (*BBC Good Food Guide* and *Knits*). It is lovely to read something purely for pleasure, and to extend the enjoyment into actual activities too.' *Jenny Smith in Hungary*

'We do appreciate the magazines very much. Nathaniel is learning to read and the *Magic Key* magazine is perfect. Esther loves the *Your Home* magazine. However, I do fancy a change and would like the *New Scientist* if you can get it.' *Jonathan & Esther Heath in Asia*

'Thank you for buying and sending our magazines every month. We really enjoy them because I like the *Beano*, Charis likes *Barbie*, Alex likes *Disney* and Zoe likes *Tweenies*.' *From an email from the children of Peter and Vicki Butchers in Ecuador*

'We are always grateful for the loving way in which we are remembered by your organisation in such a practical way. We really enjoy reading the newspapers and magazines we receive. They keep us up to date with the wider world in ways which TV and the Internet don't manage.' *Mark & Suzana Greenwood in Brazil*

So, I say a huge thank-you to all of you who are part of MLA, for your faithful support and encouragement and to the Baptist Men's Movement for entrusting this task to me. I wouldn't have missed it for worlds!

I know that my successor(s) will enjoy the work and I wish them every blessing.

from Tools with a Mission



Bill Dewhurst reports on the latest from Tools With A Mission

Kenya calls for assistance from TWAM

For the last two years John Bartlett, our Overseas Director responsible for Kenya, has been receiving numerous requests for tools, sewing machines, computers, school books and many other items from churches and projects in Kenya. All of them asking for TWAM to help. Sadly we have been unable to respond due to the difficulties of getting goods into Kenya.

The last container sent some four years ago sat in the port at Mombassa for literally months. In fact, in the end it built up around £1,500 in demurrage charges. At the time we were using as our partners in Kenya, a UK charity, Rift Valley Futures. Eventually they were able to obtain release of the container without paying the demurrage charges, and the goods were distributed to those who had waited so long to receive them. Ever since this experience we have been reluctant to send other containers.

At one point we were advised that containers of aid from other charities were being held at the port, and with the senders unable to obtain release, the goods were destined to be destroyed. The situation seems to have eased a little since then, but the Kenyan Government have instituted new regulations regarding the sending of aid to Kenya.

During this time we have been looking for a new partner to deal with the customs clearance, unloading and storage and distribution of the goods. We now feel confident that the Lord has led us to Pastor Tsuma Upanga Davis. Before becoming a pastor he worked for a shipping agent and is familiar with customs clearance and distribution. Furthermore he has storage space available to keep the goods until

despatched or collected. He assures us that through enquiries he has made with the authorities there that there will be no difficulty in getting the containers easy passage of entry into Kenya.

It all sounds good, and with the need definitely there, it just requires us to meet Pastor Davis and check that he has the secure storage we need. It is hoped that the chairman will be able to go to carry out a survey, meet local and government officials and visit some of the projects who have requested help.

At this stage much prayer is needed in order that the whole process can become verified and used to deliver help to those in Kenya who so desperately need it. The same process has been taking place in respect of Nigeria, where Peter Fisher our overseas co-ordinator has been going through a similar process to establish a route into Nigeria. Again so many requests, but many are unable to meet the shipping costs.

Pray for John and Peter as they try to make certain that all the requests we plan to meet are indeed genuine. Pray for Bill as he goes to Kenya, Peter as he checks arrangements for our first container to Nigeria and for Martin who visited Zambia, to check on progress of our work there, and to see what else we can do to assist the people.



Restarting men's ministry in your church

Part 2: Praying together

What if? ... there was a way that all BMM members in your area could be involved in an activity regardless of their age, physical condition or location? Why not have a prayer diary where members can 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn' (Romans 12: 15). The same passage calls us to be faithful in prayer.

Sample entries from the Thames Valley Association quarterly prayer diary:

Wednesday 3 X Y OF DIDCOT

Please pray for my daughter who starts school in January 2007.

Wednesday 17 X Y OF WOKINGHAM

Pray for all who work untiringly for Tools With A Mission and give thanks for all the very practical help that is provided for needy families to earn a living where work is hard to come by.

Saturday 27 X Y OF MILFORD

I pray for all my brothers in the BMM wherever they are, here and abroad. May God continue to bless them in all they do. May the Lord lead others to join with us.

Sunday 28 X Y OF CAVERSHAM

Please pray for our youth work and children's work that they may continue to grow, and pray for all of the leaders.

The prayer diary is part of a programme which includes a tool supper, a prayer breakfast, a summer

outing and a men's day in October. Events are attended by a small proportion of the membership, but the prayer diary includes everyone. However, not everyone contributes; most of the entries come in late and some have to be chased up using e-mail or phone. Nevertheless, the combination of prayer and contact could be helping to hold the group together.

For those who we are unable to contact, the prayer is 'that God bless this brother and be close to him'. We recently had a letter from someone who was out of touch for about four years; he said that he and his wife felt supported by the prayers on 'their day'.

Some men do not find the words easy, and will say 'I think we ought to pray about Iraq', so I suggest a prayer that I think sums up their concern. If a situation is confidential, then the prayer might be phrased as asking for help with a difficult decision rather than giving details.

When men attend a meeting they already have something in common with others. (Name badges can help here); they can ask if the birth of a (grand)child went well, or how the building work is progressing, or how the search for a new pastor is coming along.

My wife, Gillian, and I share the work of collecting, collating, copying and distributing by post or email; a week's work every three months.

If you want to set up a prayer diary for your area, then please e-mail me at: lrh@boynhillbaptist.org.uk or write *c/o World Outlook*, and I will help you get a diary up and running in your area. We could start praying about it now.

Les Hollingbury, *Thames Valley BMM*

Men from Texas

Barbara Bedrick finds out how a US men's group has been making a difference to Mexican communities

Reprinted from The Baptist Standard, Texas, with permission.

Texas Baptist Men seek to provide pure Water of Life

Many children in villages throughout much of the Mexican state of Zacatecas cannot drink water without swallowing arsenic and heavy metals. But Texas Baptist Men (TBM) volunteers are seeking to correct that problem, one community at a time through their Agua de Vida – Water of Life – project. Much of the water supply in central Mexico contains heavy levels of arsenic. Thousands of indigenous people live with this danger, but children are the most vulnerable because their immune systems are not fully developed. Toxins in the water can cause skin lesions, cancer, neurological damage and even death.

In early December, TBM volunteers focused on the community of Cervantez, but the team met an obstacle at the border where customs agents prevented their truckloads of water purification systems from crossing. While the delay was disappointing, the team pressed on to turn a loss into an opportunity.

'We went and met with several dignitaries to build our relationships,' said TBM Logistics Coordinator Dick Talley. 'Through this [discussion], a lot of doors are opening for future efforts.'

Leaders have seen how the work by TBM teams has made a difference in their communities. In areas where people have no running water and the water they have is unsafe, TBM is saving lives by delivering and installing water purification systems.

Working with missionaries in Mexico and state leaders in Zacatecas, TBM workers already installed one large water purifier in the Santa Tomas area.

'Because of this connection, each family in this small community now has running water in their homes. Before this, they had to walk three miles every day for the past 92 years to get water,' TBM Executive Director Leo Smith said.

The water purification ministry has opened hearts and doors for Texas Baptists, Talley added.

'It's allowing our missionaries opportunities we've never had in the past. We are working directly through the missionaries and letting them guide us,' he said.

Baptist missionaries such as Ananias Cruz and Leo Baggett are an integral part of every mission TBM does in Mexico as the Baptist men work with local pastors to offer the pure water and the spiritual Water of Life, Talley observed.

'TBM is hopeful that the water purification system will have the same impact in other cities as their efforts did in the small Zacatecas community of Santa Tomas,' Smith added. 'In Zacatecas, the improved water became the turning point for major [business] development to consider the area.'

TBM's encouragement to share the improved safer water supply prompted state leaders to secure a tanker truck to transport clean water to surrounding hillside villages. To get there, the leaders first had to construct a new road. In turn, it led to the creation of a dam and a lake, which now provides a clean water supply to thousands of residents.

The initial water ministry project in Zacatecas impacted only a few hundred, so the TBM ministry team is pleased with this result. The team also has provided computers to students as they extend their outreach efforts. They are helping the indigenous people restore



Texas Baptist Men volunteers test and purify water in Zacatecas, Mexico. The men's work in Mexico is saving the lives of people whose only source of drinking water was contaminated

their lives and livelihoods with every week-long trek to central Mexico.

'The serendipities of that first trip to purify water for thousands of people have been unbelievable,' Talley said. 'A major automobile subsidiary saw the impact of this effort, and they decided to invest in the community. The company bought a warehouse, refurbished it and then bought sewing machines. The company plans to hire more than 650 workers to make seat covers for the auto company worldwide.'

Livelihoods are changing, with many workers now trained and others expected to be hired.

Coupled with the partnership between these Texas Baptist mission workers and missionaries, the movement also is saving lives for Christ. At least 13 churches have been started. 'The churches may be small, but this has led hundreds to know the Lord, including some of the political leaders,' Talley said. 'Pastors are being trained.'

As relationships grow, so does community support. Residents in Cervantez already have built a structure to house the TBM water purification units headed to the community.

'They've done such a beautiful job of building and getting it ready,' Talley

said. 'It's an unbelievable effort, and the community is very proud of its accomplishments'.

The TBM Agua de Vida team plans to return to Mexico in January to install the new water system.

'We need prayer to know that we're working where the Lord wants us to be working,' Talley said. 'We also need financial assistance to support the ministry.'

The team is praying that through its water and computer ministries opportunities will arise to train more pastors. A new facility is needed to provide a school to equip church leaders.

And word has spread about what TBM already has done in Zacatecas, as evidenced by a tree trimmer working in Talley's neighbourhood who stopped to talk after seeing a TBM insignia on his vehicle.

'You were in Zacatecas,' he said. 'We know what you are doing. You're improving our health, and you're making a difference in Zacatecas. Someday, we may not have to come to America to get a job.'

The water purification ministry has opened hearts and doors



Remembering High Leigh



Allan Burnett looks back at the London conference which has now sadly folded

The January *World Outlook* was the first for many years that had no reports from a London conference. This is because the London BMM has been disbanded, a sad moment for us.

In the early days, post-war, High Leigh was full with more than 100 men, with a waiting list for late bookers. Perhaps we were complacent, for I was unaware that there was a BMM.

Over the years, we have seen tremendous improvements at High Leigh. For over 30 years after the war members were either ex-servicemen or men who had experienced the dangers of war on the Home Front, and so enjoyed the camaraderie of common interests and were used to the spartan conditions. Now there are en suite rooms; luxury indeed,

The decline began in the 80s with a sudden drop in attendance from 100 to 70, then a gradual decline. This century, attendance has hovered around the 30 mark, and even at our Jubilee, the millennium, and **Ken Bennett**, and **Basil Amey**, returning as Presidents for the second time we could not attract increased attendance despite attractive programmes.

Last year the Committee was depleted by the sudden home call of our treasurer, our secretary moving, and the serious illness of our President. With an ageing committee, and a diminishing pool of men to call on, we reluctantly felt that we had no option but to disband after 56 years.

Inevitably, over 30 years, some conferences stand out more than others. One of the most memorable was in 1984 presided over by **Reg Dalton** with the theme 'Rejoice Evermore', that included two stalwarts **Geoffrey King** and **Peter Manson**; Squadron Leader **Mike Cole**

an adventurer straight out of *Boys Own* paper, but most memorably **Arthur Caiger**, a former probation officer who was instantly blinded by an unknown thug who threw acid in his face. With grace and humour he spoke on 'Rejoicing in Suffering'. He concluded by saying, "I hope to have new eyes one day. I hope they'll be blue, but I'm not fussy!".

I suppose one always remembers their first Conference. I do, because I confess I did not enjoy it very much. It was 1971 and I went because **Ken Parkhurst**, who had baptised me 19 years earlier, was the chaplain. I was a little boy lost among 140 men all of whom seemed to know each other but whom I did not know at all and it went on until 8.45pm Sunday evening! It rained all Saturday afternoon and everybody disappeared, except one old fellow who said that he only came to get away from his wife. Hardly a propitious start, but five years later I returned and found the conference so beneficial, I am the oldest continuous attending delegate.

Amongst the speakers in 1976 was **Peter Pearman**, a Billy Graham convert, old boy of my school and former member of my home Church. His contribution was so memorable, that when I became president 15 years later, I invited him back to enlarge on his theme.

In those days men dispersed on the free Saturday afternoons. Either a stroll into town, round the extensive grounds, watching amateur football in nearby Barclays Park, snoozing in the suntrap bay windows in the then, new extension, going on an organised country ramble or attending an especially laid on organ recital at nearby Haileybury College, a prestigious Public School. The most

famous luminary being Clem Atlee, the first post-war Prime Minister.

Space does not permit the listing of all 100 speakers who addressed us over thirty years, but most with only very few exceptions, imparted deep spiritual truths, with grace, humour and insight. Some stay in the memory because of a pithy remark or a particular characteristic

I recall **Douglas Sparkes** concluding his session with 'The rosy glow of Conference will soon fade. Tomorrow you will be back in the workaday world. This conference will have been in vain unless it has drawn us closer to the Cross.'

Two years later, **Stanley Voke**, speaking on 'The thrill of a Christian – A Living Power' opened with a completely irrelevant mother in law joke, that had everybody laughing at its unexpectedness; then switched with sudden seriousness to a deep treatise on the Holy Spirit.

Colin Marchant, in 1991, concluded his Sunday afternoon theme of 'Making the Word flesh' with an earnest appeal – 'Don't retire to the South Coast. Soon the South Coast will be the last bastion of Baptist witness. We need you in the city.' Also that year, **Vic Lambert**, ministering in a particularly difficult part of south east London, gave a graphic account of how bailiffs were stopped in their tracks with minutes to spare, after an impromptu prayer session with the desperate couple. Pastoral ministry at its best.

Who will forget **Chris Lambrianou** in 1997? He opened by saying that he expected 10 years for the crimes that he did: not 15 for something he didn't do! He was the only speaker we could not tape, because he did not stand still at all.

When he wasn't pacing the entire width of the room for nearly an hour, he sat down, stood up, lay down (Lazarus?) stood up, knelt down – never have we seen such an animated oration. Here was this great 20 stone bear of a man, reformed East End villain and former associate of the Kray twins overflowing with excitement and love for his Lord. That year too, saw the second of our three lady speakers – **Eilish Eves** from the London Bible College, as it was then known. The mould was broken the previous year by **Ann Luther**, pastor of a south London church, and followed five years later by hospital chaplain **Carol Nolan**. Her closing comment was, 'Everyone at some point experiences the storms of life. No one is exempt. Pain, though hardly welcome, can promote growth. Adversity often brings us closer to Christ, who Himself experienced extremes of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual suffering.'

Another moving memory was provided by **Alan Hart** in 1998. A Salvation Army officer who conducted the evening service at Enniskillen after the Bomb outrage the previous year. He said that it was the hardest thing that he had ever had to do.

No memory of High Leigh could be complete without mentioning seven special stalwarts.

Bill White, former Conference secretary with **David Threadgold**, was the last President, 25 years ago to fill High Leigh with 120 men. **John Hough**, five years ago, whose pertinent and relevant critique of modern worship patterns warranted reproduction in full in this magazine. (April and July 2002). That year too will live in memory as the time the fire alarm went off about 4.40am. Three small conferences

consisting of both sexes assembled in the dark, dank, drizzly forecourt in an astonishing array of nightwear until the crew of a solitary fire engine gave us the all clear. Somehow we knew it was a false alarm, but better safe than sorry. One of our number slept on until woken by the flashing lights of the engine. He looked out of the window, wondered what it was all about, then went back to bed. Which made me think that verse 1 of Hebrews 11 ought to be amended – ‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen and going back to bed when there is a fire engine in the yard.’

Cliff Challinor, our indefatigable recently retired National Secretary, made a round trip of nearly 300 miles year on year with his exhibition stand and publicity materials, often speaking at Conference as well. **Peter Manson** and **Arthur Thompson** each of whom have made half a dozen appearances on the platform, and whose very practical support has been invaluable. Arthur said that when he became minister at Ruislip, there were so many BMM members there that he thought that he had better join them. A good omen for he stayed for over twenty years.

Then there are the dozen or so Brixton boys, three of whom have held the Presidency, from three south London Churches, without whose enthusiasm our conferences would have folded many years ago. Every year they battled 25 miles through the middle of London, congestion charge notwithstanding. A two hour trek in the church minibus emblazoned with Jesus Lives!

Gladstone Davidson was unfortunate in being President in 1987 when our conference coincided with the Great Storm when High Leigh was cut off in both senses of the word

– no power and a fallen tree across the entrance. Did the marooned staff resort to Desert Island Discs I wonder? However Gladstone amply compensated with a day conference on home ground at his church in Brixton. Boy! Can those ladies cook!

Finally Mr. High Leigh himself, **Norman Tate**, who never missed a High Leigh or Swanwick in over forty years, until well into his 90s, when old age finally caught up with him, though he made a welcome return visit when we celebrated our Jubilee. **Peter Ashton** had arranged an intriguing display of mementos and past programmes. Norman resisted all invitations to take the Presidency, preferring to be our recording angel and it was tapes of past conferences that were his consolation when confined by the limitations of age. He was called Home in his 99th year, and I believe High Leigh died with him. To mark his faithfulness and contribution to successive conferences we presented him with a scroll and made him honorary life president to mark his 90th birthday. Norman was known as the Alleluia man. Speakers new to High Leigh were often startled when their perorations were punctuated by an exuberant ‘Alleluia’ or a fervent ‘Aaaaar-MEN!’ He was also a very useful man to know being a motor engineer and his name is still visible on the flank wall of his previous premises in NW London where it has been for over 80 years.

We cannot leave High Leigh without mentioning the weather and the catering. Both were superb. I always confidently predicted an Indian summer. I called it High Leigh weather. I remember three wet weekends in 30 years. Unfortunately one of them was the penultimate conference when as President I had to abandon my chosen

opening hymn ‘Summer suns are glowing’ After all, if **Peter Manson** can have a Christmas carol at Swanwick! Apart from ‘We plough the fields and scatter’, which talks of soft refreshing rain, I do not know of a spiritual equivalent of ‘Singing in the rain’.

So, this was High Leigh as I remember it with affection. I once attended another conference at High Leigh, but somehow it wasn’t the same.

But all is not lost. Bromley, with good transport links from anywhere in London, hosts an annual men’s dinner and several men’s lunches throughout the year, where we can renew fellowship and hear interesting speakers. All are welcome.