

Welcome to the latest edition of THE BUZZ.

THE BUZZ is a great resource that brings the whole Methodist Connexion together and allows us to share successful ideas between districts, circuits, churches and church groups. If you have any stories you would like to share, which illustrate how your church is working out the four aspects of Our Calling, then please get in touch. The BUZZ needs 'good news' stories from you. Contact <mailto:newlandl@methodistchurch.org.uk> if you have a story for The BUZZ

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WORSHIP - Prayer, preparation and a personal invitation packs the pews From the **Blackheath and Halesown Circuit**



Harvest Festival is perhaps not the most obvious choice for an Invitation Sunday in an urban area - but it worked. Central Methodist Church, Blackheath, was packed full, with children squeezed three to two on the chairs. Materials from MRDF and Tear Fund on PowerPoint added to a colourful and aromatic atmosphere as children and adults brought gifts of produce to the table. Songs and hymns, contemporary and traditional, expressed our praise. There was an activity for young children while everyone else took part in a quiz and then there was a short invitation to faith.

A quarter of both the morning and evening congregations had not been in worship in any church for a number of years, if ever. Worship was followed by refreshments and many people, including newcomers, stayed.

The success of this outreach event was due to preparation, prayer and the involvement of a number of people. Leaflets were given personally by church members to friends, neighbours, colleagues or family with an assurance that the inviter would be present to welcome their guests. Most notably, June Connaughton, a local preacher for more than forty years, visited every group that meets on church premises, including a number of non-church organizations.



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LEARNING AND CARING - Seascale Methodist Church is Cumbria's first eco-congregation

From the **Whitehaven Circuit**

Seascale Methodist Eco
Congregation
in action!



In 2007 Seascale Methodist Church won a prestigious Eco-Congregation award for the way in which the congregation addressed environmental issues in all areas of church life. Seascale Church hasn't rested on its laurels but continues to work towards an ever greener church and hopes that it can reapply for the award at the end of 2010, when the current one expires.

Eco-Congregation encourages churches to consider environmental issues within a Christian context and to gain the award the church demonstrated how it focuses on spiritual issues, such as worship and teaching, practical things to do with the buildings, land and church management, and mission as the congregation engages with local and global communities.

Keith Bradshaw has really encouraged the congregation at Seascale and reports on just a few of the initiatives taken:

- The church has led the community in three 'Village Tidy and Beach Cleaning Days'.
- Many members help with regular gardening in the church grounds, they have sponsored the planting of three trees and invited Cumbria Wildlife Trust to help them maximise the potential of the church grounds for wildlife and flora.
- The church promotes regular community recycling and looks after its own house by ensuring careful use of energy including low-energy light bulbs, making sure that the church boiler is properly maintained, that the heating is on a reliable time switch and that all church waste paper is recycled. Keith gave a talk on recycling to the Brownies and provided free gifts of pens and yo-yos made from recycled materials.
- Church services have sometimes focused on waste, recycling and living more simply and a Traidcraft stall is often available. Children played their part too and painted pictures for a special creation care service, others for displaying in the local library and the Brownies gave a presentation at harvest festival.
- The church encourages sustainable transport opportunities and provided refreshments to 75 cyclists celebrating the new Sustrans Hadrian's Cycleway from Ravenglass to South Shields.



The 2009 Methodist Conference Report 'Hope in God's Future' calls on the Church to face the challenge of climate change and everyone is invited to comment before it returns to Conference 2011. If you and your church want to get to grips with this vital issue contact Eco-Congregation for more information about the award scheme and Methodist Publishing for Hope in God's Future. If you are interested to learn more about the initiatives of the Seascale congregation, Keith Bradshaw will be pleased to hear from you.

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Websites: www.ecocongregation.org and www.methodistpublishing.org.uk
www.whitehaven-methodist-circuit.org.uk/seascale_eco_congregation.html

SERVICE - Birthday biker Doug, pedals for pounds

From the **Sleaford Circuit**



To celebrate his 75th birthday and on every birthday for the past six years, Doug Laidlow has cycled 100 miles to raise funds for his local church, Little Hale Methodist Chapel. Over the years, Doug reckons he has raised around £3,000 through the supportive sponsorship of friends and neighbours in Little Hale.

Doug was introduced to cycling by his father in 1947 and has enjoyed cycling, both for pleasure and competition, ever since. In 2004 he thought that a good way to celebrate his 70th birthday would be to cycle a 10 mile circuit, 10 times, and really enjoyed the support of friends and neighbours as he 'flew' around the village raising funds for the chapel. And so every year since, on the 'Glorious Twelfth' Doug has donned his birthday suit of cycling gear and pushed the pedals for 100 miles, completing the ride in around 6hrs 30mins. He says 'Hopefully this celebration will continue for many more years, though the distance just might be reduced over time'

Congratulations and many more laps, Doug!

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EVANGELISM - Filey Methodists pelted with skate wings!

From **The Filey Circuit**

In 1806 a few Methodists in Filey, Yorkshire, attempted to preach in the streets but were pelted with dried skate wings, one of the major exports of the fishing industry there. In 1823 the Primitive Methodists Society in nearby Bridlington almost gave up on Filey, knowing of its reputation for 'swearing, gambling, drunkenness, cock-fighting, fishing on Sunday and other heinous crimes'. John Oxtoby asked for a final opportunity to convert the people of Filey and thanks to him, according to Canon Cooper of Filey, the town was 'turned upside down'. The fishermen of Filey became staunch Primitive Methodists and started going out around the north of England, spreading the gospel in song, and this was the start of the Filey Fishermen's Choir.

Today, the Choir is still going strong and is based at Filey Methodist Church but visits churches and chapels of any denomination throughout the district and beyond. The Choir can take the whole service, and has its own organist. The Choir sing old hymns, many with the sea as the theme, and most are introduced by members, perhaps relating the theme to their own lives or maybe with a personal testimony.



The Choir members are no longer fishermen, although it does have some who are retired, but they consider themselves as 'fishers of men'. Because the Choir is something different, perhaps unique, it can attract people who do not worship regularly, if at all. The Choir has made several recordings which helps in furthering its ministry.

Maybe a visit from the Filey Fishermen's Choir would provide a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbours to your church.

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