

# Fulneck Moravian Church Magazine

October 2023



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## Book of the Month

Over the coming three months I am going to have the pleasure of talking to each of our retired Ministers about a book: I hope you will enjoy this dip into their bookcases. This month the book is 'India and Nepal' by John McOwat. John's book tells vividly of the travels he undertook, twice accompanied by Beth.

John recalls that as a pupil at Fulneck School he heard from many missionaries and found their work inspiring and exciting. He hopes that by sharing his story he can inspire others to support this work.

Between 1995 and 2009 John made ten visits to India and Nepal, first as Chair of the Mission Board, with special responsibility for Asia, then as Bishop. The work of the church in South Asia had started in the 1850s but progress was slow, it had been described as 'ploughing stony ground.' Now the work in the area is developing and in the last year six young men were ordained.

John recalls that on each of his visits he met with Br Thsespal Kundan. Many years earlier, Thsespal had been a pupil at Fulneck School and he spent holidays with Beth and John, as it was too far to travel home. Thsespal and Beth had frequently played challenging games with obscure words: Thsespal enjoyed the challenge and consequently speaks excellent English. He proceeded to Cambridge University before returning to work at the school in Rajpur (Rajpur Institute).

For Moravians world-wide, education is vitally important. In India and Nepal, children of a range of religions were welcomed and often provided with a free education. This was so appreciated by

people of other faiths who regarded this as a great gift. Hence, they often gave gifts of great value in return. The Matho Moravian School, in Ladakh high in the mountains, was given the priceless gift of a piece of land with water, by local Buddhist monks. Hence in 1997 this enabled the school to open, taking forward work begun the previous year.

The trip in 2008 saw 'a dream fulfilled' when the church in Rajpur was dedicated; it is a beautiful white marble building. It was Thsespal's grandma who had the vision of such a church existing. Until then local Moravians met in a small room. John recalls the place being packed and on one occasion he feared stepping on folks as he administered Communion. By this time, Thsespal was Headmaster of the school in Rajpur. He took this role from his father who had strong links with Assam and had arranged for children to travel the two thousand miles to attend Rajpur school.

In addition to placing a strong value on education, Moravians have always pursued the belief that people should be able to read the Bible in their own language. Br Eliah Tsetan Phuntsog, Thsespal's grandfather, and Pierre Vittoz, a Swiss missionary, were instrumental in translating the Bible into the Tibetan language. Along with the details of the work he undertook during his ten visits, the book treats us to some interesting snippets along the way. For example: John arrived in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in September 1997 and was invited to visit the lying in state of Mother Theresa; as he was leaving John was presented with a peace lily.

**In Essentials: Unity; In Non-Essentials: Liberty; In All Things: Love**

On a humorous note, the book includes a list of essential items for such a trip, including plenty of short sermons & talks, toilet paper and a washing line.

The book clearly tells an important story of the development of the Moravian Church in this part of the world. Throughout, John's style offers a mix of important details with tales of the challenges faced when undertaking such journeys, including Beth and him scrambling up a very muddy river bank. If you are looking for a small Christmas gift, look no further: this book can be obtained for £10 from John or from Church House. All funds raised go to the Moravian South Asia Mission.

Following her trip with John in 1996, Beth wrote an article for the MWA, titled 'Auntie Take My Hand'. It is fitting to close with her final paragraph:

*'We had gone to India because the British Province, on behalf of the world-wide Moravian Unity, is responsible for our churches there – and John represents our Mission Board in India. But the privilege was all ours. They accepted us lovingly, cared for us unceasingly, simply because that was what their Christian teaching asked them to do – not for anything that they wanted from us. I asked myself again and again what on earth we could give these people – they have so much in spiritual terms. They seemed to be the ones doing all the giving. But over and over again it became apparent that they needed approval and assurance that what they were doing was right. They needed God to speak with a human voice and to tell them how much He loved them. They needed to hear the authority of God's words, and I can only say, very humbly, that God used us for that purpose. God used us in a way that I have only experienced once before – not because John and I were important, but because our Indian brothers and sisters were – and God needed us to tell them so'.*

A sincere thank you to John and Beth McOwat for their hospitality and willingness to share this story with us.

*Sr Mary Holmes*

This Tibetan type table was given to Beth and John during the trip in September 1996, while visiting Ladakh Moravian Church. Today you can see this table, known as a choktse, in the Fulneck Museum.



## GLADNESS AND GENEROSITY

I have to confess that initially I did not understand the concept of **HOLY HABITS** even though I agreed to assist in delivering it amongst the congregation. Judging by the poor response to the prayers leaflets that were placed on the board inside the church I knew that I was not the only one. When Brother James the Minister, handed me a stack of ten HOLY HABITS books one Sunday morning whilst I was quietly meditating before the start of morning worship my heart sank. I knew I had to seek the Lord's help and guidance.

I soon realised that we as a congregation are already engaged in **HOLY HABITS** discipleship (Prayer, Bible Study, Eating Together) and now we are starting our **Gladness and Generosity**. However, it appeared we were not doing it together. Moravians it can be argued are traditionalists and it is sometimes difficult for us to move out of our comfort zone!

Gladness and generosity is a joyous and challenging Holy Habit. It is an opportunity to let our light shine. It is said that it is often in the darkest places that the light of Gladness or joy shines most brightly. Gladness and Generosity are inextricably linked. They go hand in hand. When we give gifts to others and they are graciously received, we experience a warm glow within. When God generously sent his only begotten son as a gift, because He love us, to die on the cruel cross, what joy it must have brought to him.

When Jesus was baptised, God was so happy that out of heaven a voice was heard saying "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." GOD has not stopped showering us with unmerited gifts. His Generosity lifts our spirits with joy and prompts our gladness. In the following passage the disciples are displaying Generosity.

Acts 2:42-47 "They devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers. ...day by day as they spent much time together in the temple they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

The disciples were following Jesus's teaching in Matthew:10:8 "freely you have received freely give." Generosity is not just money it is also giving thanks to God; supporting those in need and loving one another, giving of your time and resources- the list is endless.

Perhaps we need to revisit what our Bible teaches us about Gladness and Generosity to enable us to be more effective servants of God in a world where greed and selfishness seems to be high on society agenda. We must remember that Gladness and Generosity is a Christian way of life.

This prayer is a reminder of where our focus is when we go astray from our Biblical teachings.

"Generous God, we don't do abundance  
We see scarcity all around us  
The threat of our own lack preoccupies us.  
We clutch and grab for ourselves  
We do not trust in your provision for tomorrow.  
Dear Lord forgive our foolish ways. Amen

Sr Gloria Hanley

## Heritage Open Day

The Heritage Open Day was a great success in many ways. Lots of folks on the tours, visiting the exhibition, the museum and the Classic Car Rally . Not forgetting the welcome refreshments on offer throughout the day. This all resulted in the day also being a financial success ... the total heading towards £1500.

Thank you to everyone who contributed in whatever way, working together we achieved so much.

## Heritage Open Day—Bibles

One day as working on my small contribution to the exhibition, I came up with the idea of having a Latin Bible as part of the display. Thanks to The Leeds Library I tracked down a very old one (16th century) which they loaned to me.

Having asked around for a Latin Bible, I was answered with Greek, Classic French and German from congregation members—a warm thanks to you each. Plus, Church House sent up the Kralice Bible.

Standing in the Church I was so interested to see people of all ages and, they told me, all faiths and none, were fascinated to look at the range of Bibles and talk about being able to read it in ones own language.

Back to The Leeds Library. If you ever fancy a trip to this library, established just a few years after Fulneck settlement, then let me know and I will be happy to show you its many wonders.

Thanks, Sr Mary Holmes

## Brethren's Festival Breakfast: Sunday 8 October

We hope that all Brothers will join us for breakfast at Café 54 from 9.00 to share breakfast and the cup of covenant. There is a list in the Bell Room for you to choose your breakfast; the cost remains at £10 as last year.

We then look forward to the service that will be led by Br Trevor Auty at 10.30.

## Events at Fulneck this year

### October

**Thursday 5.** The second of our autumn **organ recitals** starting at 11am. The organist will be Charles Edmondson. No need to book, just come along.

**Saturday 14. Autumn Fair** 10.30am-1pm. Lots of original stalls and games. We'd love you to help us make this a huge success with giving your time and talents. Please see the separate article for more information.

**Thursday 26. Ruth Strong Memorial Concert.** This **organ recital** starts at 11am; Professor Graham Barber will be the organist. No need to book, just come along.

### November

**Tuesday 14—Saturday 18.** At 7.30pm each evening Fulneck Drama Society will be presenting Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw.

### December

**Friday 1 at 7.30pm.** We start our Christmas Tree Festival with a **Christmas themed Brass Band Concert** by the Clifton and Lightcliffe Brass Band. Tickets will be on sale soon either online or in church.

## Autumn Fair: Saturday 14 October

**Coming soon:** the Autumn Fair in the Boys Brigade Hall on Saturday 14 October from 10.30am until 1pm.

Firstly a big thank you to everyone who has already volunteered to have a stall. It makes things so much easier! We are still looking for more volunteers to help run some tombolas and games stalls and serve some simple refreshments.

By request, we're having a chocolate tombola so we're looking for chocolate items for this. We'll also be wanting some home-made cakes to sell both whole and cut on the day for refreshments.

Have you anything we could have for a raffle?

Last year there were no Autumn Fairs in Pudsey so let's make this one everyone will want to come to! Let us make this a really fun event for everyone.



Sr Annette and Sr Allison



## CRAFT GROUP

This will meet on Monday 2, 16 and 30 October from 14.00  
Sr Vi's house.



at

**FULNECK DRAMA GROUP: 14 – 18 November 2023:**  
**19.30 in the Comenius Centre**

*Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw*

All are welcome. Tickets can be obtained from Chris Robbins.



**MAMMA  
MIA!**

**SOUL SISTERS: MAMMA MIA!**

**TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER— AT 19.30 IN THE BB HALL.**

Watch out for more details next month.

## Christmas Tree Festival: 1 & 2 December

The shops have had Christmas decorations in for a few weeks now  
so it is time for us to start talking about our Christmas events.

We have already got people decorating the four trees on the window ledges,  
the Flower Group have ideas for their trees and six community groups are  
signed up!

The brass band concert is booked for the Friday evening and we have ap-  
proached a few other musical groups to see if they will come and entertain us  
on the Saturday.

We are planning to promote this partly with Fulneck angels again.  
A few of us have been knitting for several months but we still would like more  
people to knit some angels for us.  
They were very well received last year.

Patterns are available at <https://www.christmasangel.net> or we can  
let you have a printed copy.

Thanks. Sr Allison Turner



# Calendar

## OCTOBER

Sunday 1 Oct	14.30	Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Br Kenneth Evans
Thurs 5 Oct	09.45	Morning Prayers
	11.00	Organ Recital
Sunday 8 Oct	09.00	Brethren's Festival breakfast in Café 54
	10.30	Brethren's Festival service. Br Trevor Auty
Wed 11 Oct	19.15	Church Committee
Thurs 12 Oct	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sat 14 Oct	10.30-13.00	Autumn Fayre in the BB Hall
Sunday 15 Oct	10.30	Morning service. Sr Kathryn Woolford
Mon 16 Oct	19.30	Congregation Council meeting. BB Hall
Thurs 19 Oct	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sat 21 Oct	10.00	Who Let the Dads Out. BB Hall
Sunday 22 Oct	10.30	Morning service. Sr Ruth France
Thurs 26	09.45	Morning Prayers
	11.00	Organ Recital
Sunday 29 Oct	10.30	Morning service. Sr Diane Thornton

## November

Thurs 2 Nov	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 5 Nov	14.30	Lovefeast and Holy Communion. Br Martin Smith
Thurs 9 Nov	09.45	Morning Prayers
Sunday 12 Nov	10.30	Remembrance Sunday. Br Kenneth Evans

Please submit material for the next edition to myself by **Thursday 19 October** . Thanks, Mary

