

**Stalybridge Unitarian Church is a  
Free Christian Congregation.**

**A member of The East Cheshire Union of Unitarian and  
Free Christian Churches.**

**A member of The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free  
Christian Churches.**

**A member of The North Cheshire Unitarian Sunday  
School Union**

**A member of The Unitarian Christian Association**

# **THE CHALICE**

**STALYBRIDGE UNITARIAN CHURCH  
MAGAZINE**

**APRIL 2010**

**THIS ISSUE OF CHALICE IS  
SPONSORED BY  
Mrs M Bennett  
in loving memory of  
William (Bill) & Emily Hallatt**

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

What have Mary, Gabriel, Thomas Hardy, the Inland Revenue and the Unitarian Christian Association got in common? No, this isn't some weird ministerial joke! I will try to explain. This morning (25<sup>th</sup> March), I checked my diary as I do every morning to remind me of any appointments for the day. Today though, doing this also reminded me that 25<sup>th</sup> March is the feast of the Annunciation. It is exactly nine months before Christmas Day and commemorates the visit of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary and the conception of Christ. In England, the traditional name for this day is Lady Day (the "Lady" being the [Virgin Mary](#)). As well as its religious significance, Lady Day also became an important date in the secular calendar. In most of medieval Europe the legal and taxation years started on 25<sup>th</sup> March and Lady Day was also a traditional day on which year-long contracts between landowners and tenant farmers would begin and end in England. As a result, farming families who were changing farms would travel from the old farm to the new one on Lady Day.

The Officer Group of the Unitarian Christian Association recently decided that subscriptions would become due on 6<sup>th</sup> April each year. This was primarily to tie in with the tax year which runs from 6<sup>th</sup> April one year until 5<sup>th</sup> April the next and should make the allocation of subscriptions to the relevant tax year for Gift Aid claims easier. When this was mentioned at the recent AGM I referred to 6<sup>th</sup> April as "Old Lady Day" and from the blank looks that I received I think that I had better explain what I meant!

In 1752, Great Britain changed from using the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar which was already in use throughout much of Europe. This meant missing out eleven days from that year (September 2<sup>nd</sup> was followed by September 14<sup>th</sup> in 1752) and resulted in Christmas Day 1752 being celebrated 355 days after Christmas Day 1751. As with all change, people were initially resistant. Some people thought that they had lost eleven days from their lives and there were riots in London. Many people continued to mark time using the old calendar and would refer to days which would have been special had the calendar not been adjusted as "Old Christmas Eve", "Old

Michaelmas”, “Old Lady Day” etc.

Until 1752 the tax year in Britain started on 25th March – Lady Day. In order to ensure no loss of tax revenue, the Treasury decided that the tax year which started on 25th March 1752 would be of the usual length (365 days) and therefore inadvertently moved the start of the next tax year from Lady Day to Old Lady Day. This vestige of the calendar change remains to this day as the United Kingdom's [tax year](#) starts on 6<sup>th</sup> April, i.e. the day on which Lady Day would have fallen had the calendar not been adjusted – Old Lady Day.

The date is also significant in some of the works of [Thomas Hardy](#). In [Tess of the D'Urbervilles](#) Hardy refers to the traditional agricultural contracts associated with the day:

*Tess was so wrapt up in this fanciful dream that she seemed not to know how the season was advancing; that the days had lengthened, that Lady-Day was at hand, and would soon be followed by Old Lady-Day, the end of her term ... At length it was the eve of Old Lady-Day, and the agricultural world was in a fever of mobility such as only occurs at that particular date of the year.*

Russia did not change to the Gregorian Calendar until after the revolutions of 1917. Many people continued to celebrate Christmas and New Year on the old days as well as the new days and so managed to pack four party occasions into a three-week span!

Each year we remember the Annunciation at our Carol Service when we read the passages from Luke's Gospel chapter 1, particularly the words of Mary's song – the Magnificat (Luke 1 v 46-55) but this year I thought it would be good to think of it nearer to the traditional feast day. Lady Day will have gone by the time you read this – but it might

Continued.....

be in time for Old Lady Day!

A Prayer for Lady Day

The God of Mary's song,

Preserve us from our pride,

Disrupt our patterns of power,

Detach us from our greedy hands,

Strengthen our work for the freedom of all,

And bless us as we lift the humble high.

Amen

Every blessing

Andrew

## **FUNERALS**

26<sup>th</sup> January. Agnes Rhodes. Service in church followed by committal at Dukinfield Crematorium, the Minister officiating.

8<sup>th</sup> March. Norman Bradbury. Service in church followed by committal at Dukinfield Crematorium, the Minister officiating assisted by The Rev Jean Bradley and The Rev Alex Bradley.

The first few weeks of 2010 have not been kind to us as we have lost these two popular and much respected members of our congregation. Agnes was born and brought up in Mossley and her early years were very much associated with The Christian Church on Stamford Road. It was there that she met her husband, Frank and she made many of her friends through the church. In recent years we have been privileged to have Agnes as a member of our church family. She loved the singing and

she needed at that stage in her journey through life. We will now miss her cheerful and spirited presence among us. We send our love to Liz and the rest of Agnes's family and pray for God's blessing upon them.

Little did we know it at the time but Agnes's funeral was to be the last occasion that Norman played the organ for a service in church. The two of them held a great respect for each other and Norman was determined to play that day even though he was clearly not well. In the days that followed we were all shocked by the speed of Norman's decline and we were greatly saddened by his death. We cannot help but remember Norman primarily for his music. A church organist for many years in Mossley before he came to us, we were greatly privileged that he chose to share his great musical talent with us in recent years. He also became active in other spheres of congregational life, became a member of the Church Committee, and, having an incredible memory, had a great fund of wisdom gleaned from a lifetime of church attendance and active service which he readily shared with us. His contribution to our church life will now be greatly missed. We send our love to Beryl, Ian and Sue and pray for God's blessing upon them also.

Andrew

### **FLOWERS FOR APRIL**

4th Mrs K. Turner & Mrs S .Howarth in memory of Mr & Mrs George Roberts

11th Mr & Mrs Alan Swift in memory of Mr Edward Robinson & Mr Frank Swift

18th Mrs Liz Griffin in memory of Mr & Mrs Frank Rhodes & Mr Michael Rhodes

25th Mrs Beryl Bradbury in memory of Mr Norman Bradbury

## FUND RAISING

Well, I think Spring has finally arrived so let's look forward to what we have in store for the next few weeks.

First of all, we shall not be holding our Whist Drive in April due to the fact that the beginning of April is somewhat congested with Easter over the first weekend and Arts and Crafts entries etc, so our next Whist Drive will be held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May starting, as usual, at 7.30 pm at church. Please come along and join us for an enjoyable evening out when you may even win a prize! The cost is £2 which includes a raffle and refreshments. Everyone is welcome, you don't have to be an expert!! In fact, last month, we were pleased to welcome a long-standing church member who lives away now but she came to Stalybridge to visit her parents and she hadn't played for years, so was a little rusty but soon got into it and came out the winner on the night!! We had a few good laughs over the night as well, so please come along!

Our next big event is on St George's Night, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, when we will be serving a full English dinner. There is a list on the board and the price is £7 per person. Please put your name on the list, so we know how many to cater for, but if you can't get there to do that, please give me a ring as soon as possible, and I will put your name up. It will soon be upon us, so we need to get cracking really.

As I mentioned last month, I am trying to put together a recipe book. I have about 20 recipes now, so will get it published within the next week or so. It will be in a format whereby you can add any additional recipes that come in, so, as I get new ones, I will make them available and you can just add them to your book.

Following the recent 'coffee morning' which resulted in approximately 20 people coming to church and having a good natter over a cup of something and a nibble, we will be holding a few more. The next one, which will probably be before you get to read this, will be held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March, then 30<sup>th</sup> April and following that the 28<sup>th</sup> May. Please come along and enjoy the social gathering. All ages welcome, we did have a couple of children under two last time who kept us entertained and on our toes.

Looking forward to May now, we shall be hosting our old friends 'A Piano Player and Friends' on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May. We are selling tickets in advance for this at a cost of £5 each. You will be beautifully entertained and light refreshments will be served. Please ask for a ticket if you wish to have one, I have some, as well as Clare, Wendy and Margaret Hallsworth. It should be a good night, so please come along and support this group as well as helping us with our fund raising efforts.

At our last meeting it was agreed that we would not be holding our sponsored walk on Good Friday this year, but to hold it on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May (public holiday) instead, when we hope the weather will be better and a few more people will be around. Bill will be organising a route for us, so look out for further details within the next few weeks.

I also mentioned flower arranging last month, well, Jessie Sykes has kindly agreed to come forward with her ideas for a harvest arrangement on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September which will be just before the Harvest Service. We will give you further details nearer the time, but basically, anyone can come along, bringing with them their flowers and a container and you will be shown how to make a suitable arrangement, or you can come along and just watch what everyone else is doing.

Our next fund raising meeting will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 7.15 pm which is just before the main church committee meeting. Please feel free to join us if you feel you could help in any way. We always need help with new fund raising ideas and those ideas could come from YOU!!

Sue Howard

## **WOMEN'S LEAGUE**

The April meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th at 3pm when the hostesses will be Mrs Eileen & Miss Clare Bullock.

On Saturday 17th April the Spring Meeting of the Manchester District Women's League will be held Saturday 17th April at Old Chapel, Dukinfield, commencing at 11.30am and followed by lunch. Please let me know by April 10th if you wish to come as numbers are needed for catering purposes.

## **ARTS AND CRAFTS**

**The Stalybridge entries will be received in church after morning service on Easter Sunday 4th April from 12 noon to 1 pm.**

## **ORGANIST**

Following the sad loss of Norman Bradbury the committee has appointed Barry Shaw to take over as our organist from 4<sup>th</sup> April.

We would like to thank Kathleen Redeyoff for her invaluable help over quite a few years but especially during recent weeks. I am pleased to tell you that Kathleen will continue to play when Barry is on holiday.

I hope you will all give Barry your help and support and make him very welcome in our congregation.

Ken

### **STEWARDS FOR APRIL**

4th Tom Whitehead

11th Stuart Hinchcliffe

18th Wendy Maher

25th Bill Atkin

From The Wiltshire Times, March 27 2009  
Kindly sent in by Mrs B Hallett

**“Edward’s delight at Trowbridge civic award”**

2pm Wednesday 25th March 2009

By Charley Morgan

The great and the good of Trowbridge were honoured at the annual civic dinner and dance held in the Civic Hall on Friday night.

The Civic Award, which is presented to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the community, was presented to Edward Jones.

The 70 year-old from Clarence Avenue has been involved with many local groups, including the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, the Yerbury Almshouses, the Halve Social Centre and the Trowbridge Probus Club.

He said: “I had just not got a clue what was happening or that I had even been nominated.”

“I have been involved in the town doing various things of a voluntary nature for a long time and somebody obviously thought it was worth recognition.”

“I never sought it, but I feel very honoured to receive it.”

Mr Jones worked at the CAB from 1975-2000 where he was an advisor and also the management committee secretary.

He said the CAB is as relevant today as when it was set up just before the Second World War.

He was also trustee and clerk to the trustees of the Yerbury Almshouses and was involved in selling them off when they were no longer viable and donating the proceeds to the Lady Brown Almshouse in Polebarn Road.

Mr Jones runs The Halve Social Centres as a member of the Guild of community Service and is also a member of the Probus club in Trowbridge

## WARDEN'S NOTES

The traditions of our church are very important to us and quite rightly so. Many of us can remember when both the church and the Sunday School were full of people every Sunday (four times a day). Sadly that is not the case now and I can not see this type of attendance happening again in the near future.

Our past is important but the here and now and the future is just as important. If we want to grow and improve our church we must always remember that we are not staring from fifty years ago, we are starting from NOW.

Whether we like it or not times have changed, the rules of life are somehow different than they used to be. We have to react to the situation that we find ourselves in NOW. Changes need to be made, we need to look at ourselves differently, and we need to behave differently as an organisation. We need to look at modern ways of attracting people to come to join our worship. We need to be more up to date in the way we handle our resources.

We have within our congregation people with different talents and if all these talents are put together we could be a formidable group of people. And that's what we need to be, TOGETHER.

I have said many times that it is up to us to make this congregation more successful than it already is. Nobody else is going to do it for us.

Ken

## MINISTERIAL MATTERS

After much discussion the church committee has decided to reinstate Andrew's normal working arrangements. This means that Andrew will be conducting all our services (except during his holidays and one Sunday when Andrew is already committed to a service at another church).

The committee feels that this is an important move as this guarantees us continuity in our worship, the most vital part of the life of our congregation. The committee would like to thank Andrew and the congregation for their patience over the last year and the people who have willingly and expertly conducted services; we hope that these people will continue to help when required.

It should be noted that to fund this we will have to use part of our capital investments but we feel it is extremely important to support and maintain Andrew's ministry.

The following list details the services which will not be conducted by Andrew.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Preacher</b>	<b>Reason</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Ken Howard	Andrew committed to Knutsford
9 <sup>th</sup> May	Rachel Plant	Andrew on holiday
6 <sup>th</sup> June	Favourite hymns service	Andrew on holiday
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Derek Clayton/Ken Howard	Andrew on holiday
8 <sup>th</sup> August	Ken Howard	Andrew on holiday
10 <sup>th</sup> October	?	Andrew on holiday

# Calendar April 2010

Saturday 3rd 7.30 pm UCA Easter Vigil service at Stalybridge Unitarian Church

Sunday 4th 11am Morning service and UYPG

Wed 7th 3pm Ladies Society monthly tea

Sunday 11th 11am Morning service and UYPG

Sunday 18th 11am Morning service conducted by Ken Howard and UYPG

Monday 19th 7.15pm Fund raising and Social committee  
8pm Committee meeting

Monday 23rd 7pm St George's Dinner

Sunday 25th 11am Morning service and UYPG

Friday 30th 9am-12am Coffee morning