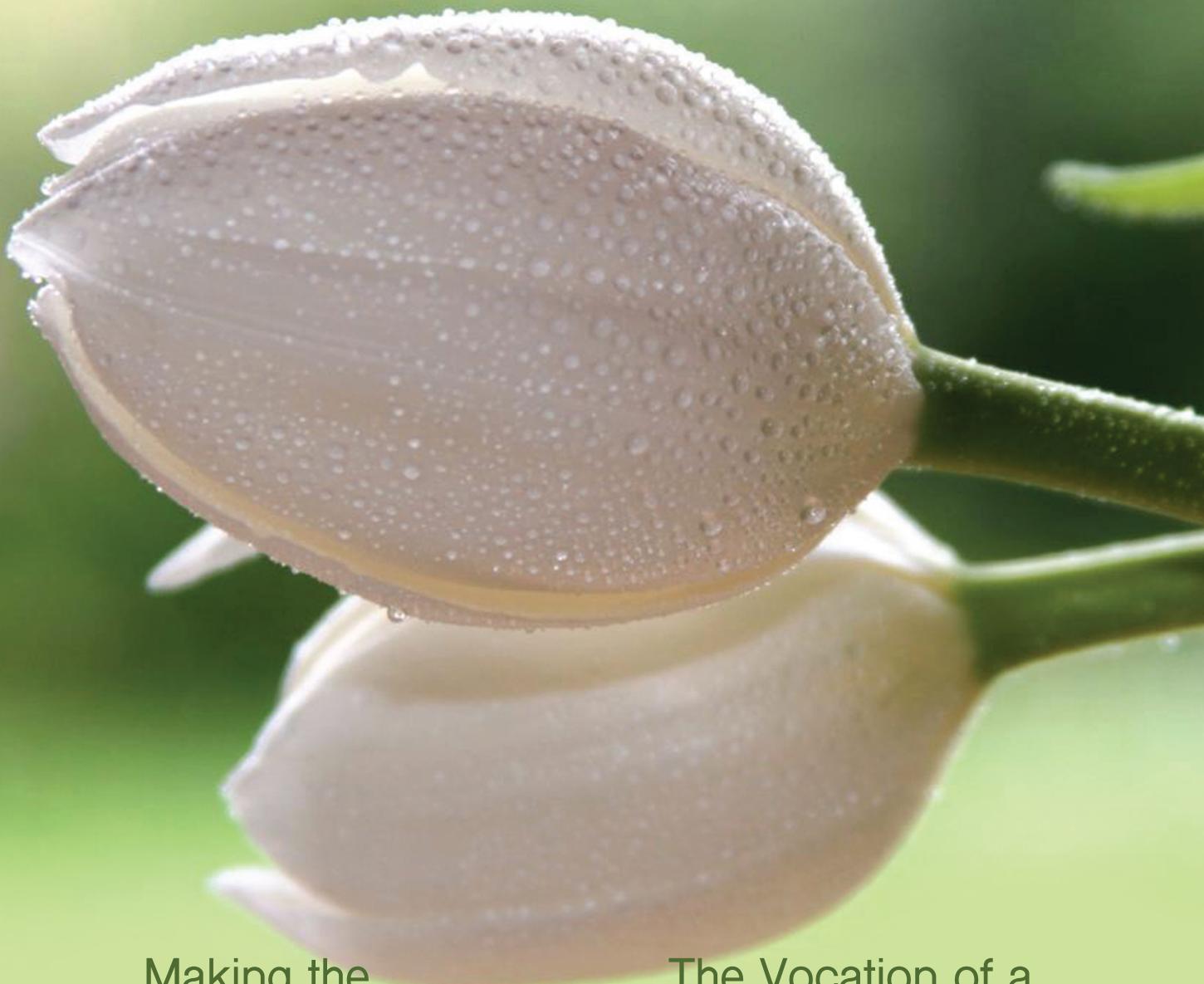


Buzz

connecting the church family

www.firstportadown.org



Making the Grade?

Preparing for exams

The Vocation of a PCI Deaconess

Heidi England & Joanne Dunlop

He is Risen

Editorial

Peter Morrow

I sometimes wonder if the opening words of Psalm 126 were in the minds of those who travelled back and forth through the ancient walls of Jerusalem on the first Easter Sunday morning:

*When Zion's bondage God turned back,
As men that dreamed were we.
Then filled with laughter was our mouth,
Our tongue with melody.*

Someday we may know.

What we do know, however, is that that morning a number of women left their homes in the city while it was still dark. They had intended to anoint the body of their friend; by the time they reached the tomb, the sun had risen.

Interestingly it was these women who first believed:

"Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women who were with them," (Luke

24:10) And it was they who told the apostles, who did not (at first) believe:

"And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." (Luke 24:11)

It seems appropriate, then, that an Easter issue of the Buzz should focus on a variety of the women's ministries in our congregation, as they tell how Jesus Christ has overcome death.

The Buzz committee very much appreciates all those who have contributed to this issue - and not only those named alongside the articles, but all those who make the various ministries possible and who have offered help and guidance in producing this issue.

This Easter, may we hear again the Good News that, "Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened up unto us the gate of everlasting life." (from, the first Collect for Easter Day.)

Pastoral Visitation

Margaret Hynes

I have worked as a Pastoral Visitor for 9¹/₂ years, and am also a wife to Cecil, a mum and a granny.

As part of the Pastoral Team, my role is to 'be there' - to support people wherever they are: at home, in hospital, in a nursing home, or just meeting up for coffee.

My work mostly involves being with women. As I meet those who are facing difficult circumstances, whatever they may be, I seek to bring the One who knows them best, who loves them the most and who knows what they need. That person is Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to listen, to chat, to share God's living Word, and to pray for them. I might also take someone to an appointment, make a cup of tea, share a Bible study or lead a short service in a nursing home. In these various activities it is very special to be supported in prayer by the congregation.

One of the most difficult things I have to do is to say goodbye to someone who has died. It is like losing a member of the family. Another challenge is to support a person, where there seems to be no hope - but God is always there. As they turn to Him, they are changed, given peace and many are enabled to minister to others. The gospel of Jesus brings peace.

"Peace came, Peace lived, Peace died, Peace rose again. Peace is a person and his name is Jesus." (Paul Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*.)

God gives us the gift of sharing the Gospel with others.

It is encouraging that a large group of women in our Church are involved in spreading the gospel. Their ministries are varied and includes the PW, Women's Prayer Groups and the monthly Craft Group. There are women and girls of all ages: babies and children in Chatterbox, girls and young people in Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and those who care in our community.

But there is room for more. Jesus wants you to spread His message of peace. It may be that you can make a cup of tea, chat to others, are able to listen or be a friend.

As He calls you to work for Him, He will never leave you, and will give you everything you need.

Remember, too, that we are called to pray for our sisters in other parts of the world. They are treated as second class citizens, lower than a dog. Why? Firstly they are women. Secondly they are Christians. They too need our support through prayer and love.

Pray for the ministries of our own Church and pray for those who work worldwide; and, 'As we do the ordinary with intentionality and in faith, this opens the way for the Lord to do the extraordinary.' (from Henry & Nancy Bell's prayer letter Nov 15).

First Words

Philip Thompson



It is good to be serving in First Portadown at the present time and I thank everyone for the warm welcome I have been given.

My prayer is that my tenure as Vacancy Convener in Edenderry will

be brief, not because I have anything against Portadown, but because I want to see your congregation get a minister as quickly as possible. I know that is your desire and prayer too. The best thing you can do in this time of vacancy is to pray! Ask the Lord to continue to be at work in Edenderry, whoever is at the helm, and seek His guidance in the search for a new minister.

What's the most shocking thing you have heard someone say? In the Bible, in Matthew 16, the Lord Jesus says something really shocking. Speaking to one of his disciples and closest friends, Peter, he says to him in verse 23, "Get behind me Satan." What's going on here? Earlier in the chapter, Matthew records how Peter has confessed Jesus as Christ (v.16) and how Jesus calls Peter to a key role in the church that Jesus would build. Why then such a strong rebuke in verse 23?

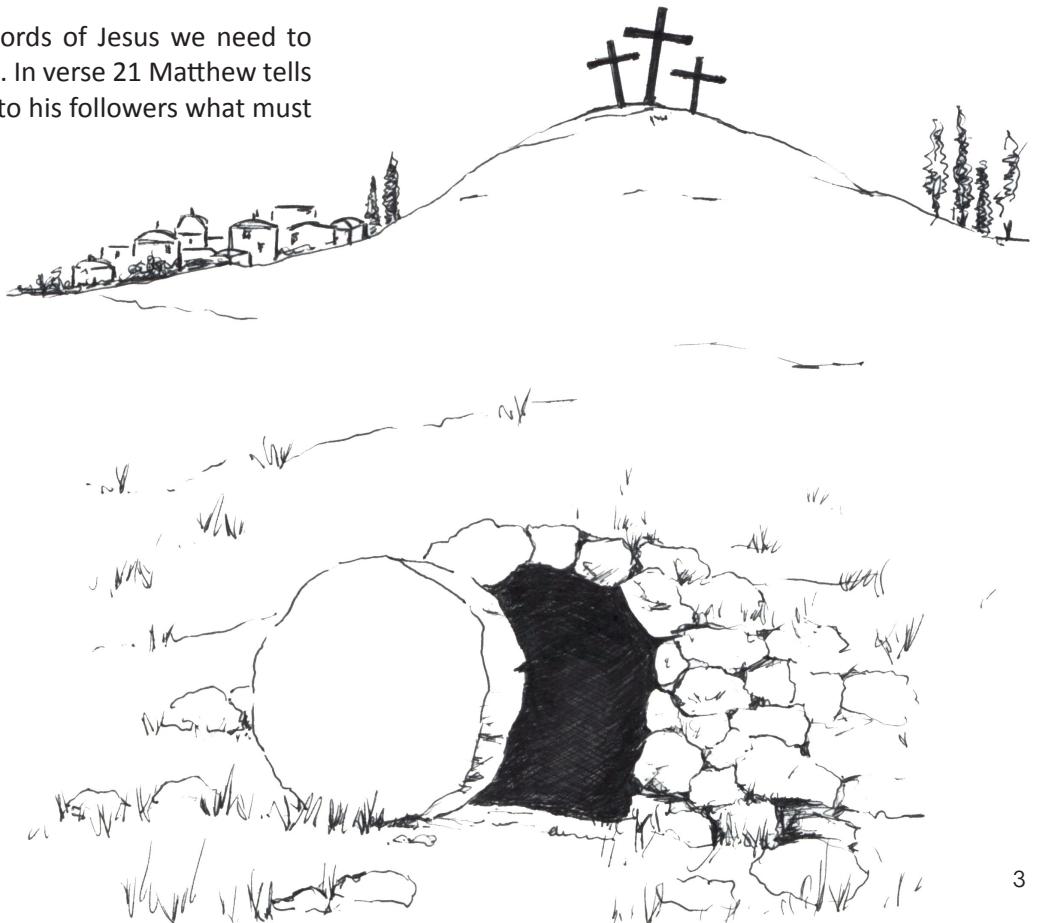
To understand the shocking words of Jesus we need to look at what is said beforehand. In verse 21 Matthew tells us that Jesus began explaining to his followers what must

happen next, that his death and resurrection were part of God's plan. Peter didn't want to hear any talk of death. The prospect of Jesus dying didn't fit in with his idea of what the Messiah would do. Jesus would be victorious, not dead! Peter was missing the whole point of why God sent His Son into the world. Christ came not to save one nation through taking life but to save sinners from all nations through giving his life.

Jesus understood that above all else, his death was the central part of the Father's plan. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus would put right the wrong of The Fall, win salvation for those who would believe in him and defeat the Evil One, Satan.

Peter vowed that he would prevent Jesus' death. That's what prompted Jesus to say, "Get behind me Satan," because Satan was the only one with a vested interest in not seeing Jesus die and God's salvation plan unfold. We know what happened next and it is really good news! Jesus was victorious in his death and resurrection.

This Easter we have a lot to celebrate and praise God for. Is this good news story your good news story? Have you found the forgiveness and relationship with God that Jesus' death at the cross brings? If you have, then this is good news worth sharing with others. Make Jesus known.



Garden Tomb by Jenny Hampton

The Ministry of a PCI Deaconess

Valerie Clarke interviews Joanne Dunlop and Heidi England



Joanne Dunlop

What does a deaconess do?

How to define a deaconess...not an easy job!

We come from different backgrounds, have a range of gifts and skills, and work in a variety of areas. One thing we

have in common, however, is a love for Jesus and a passion to see His Kingdom expanded by loving people well.

The role of deaconess began about a century ago when the Church began to recognise that in many situations females were best ministered to by other females. Deaconesses are now trained at Union College (funded by the United Appeal) and called to serve in various roles within our churches, hospitals, prisons and community projects like 'Friendship House' and 'The International Meeting Point'.

Explain your hospital visitation

I have worked as a part-time Assistant to the Hospital Chaplains in Antrim and Craigavon Area Hospitals since November 2012.

In Antrim Chaplains are attached to certain wards and see patients of all faiths and none. In CAH we continue to work using the denominational model, visiting those who have a Presbyterian connection (although we never pass the bedside of anyone who appears to be in need, whatever their denomination or faith).

Describe your visits to CAH

Working as a Hospital Chaplain is a total privilege.

It is a privilege to take time with people in an otherwise busy environment, whatever their age, background or circumstances. We provide a listening ear; a sounding board for fear or frustration; words of encouragement; and, for those who are willing, offer prayer and the truth of God's Word in very difficult times. It is also a privilege to share in someone's joy!

Every visit is different, and often unknown. We will not always know the person or circumstances we encounter at each bedside. My constant prayer is that God will provide opportunities to plant seeds for His Kingdom, and

to carry His presence to the people I meet - even when circumstances will not allow audible words to be spoken. I value being able to spend time with patients and their families, including those from First Portadown. It has been so helpful to work with the First Portadown Church team: Martyn and Anne, who help to connect people with the most beneficial pastoral support.

What was your path to deaconess

God led me into deaconess work by giving me the desire to work in Hospital Chaplaincy – it was not something I had expected!

I had worked as an Occupational Therapist for eight years with the intention of working in an overseas mission context. I had also spent some time in India, but when applying for longer term work overseas, God opened my eyes to recognise the passion I had for the pastoral care and the role of Hospital Chaplain.

I am so thankful for the way in which God leads us when our desire is to be fully open before Him. We may not always know where God is taking us next, and while it is not always easy, it can be very exciting! We know that we are putting our hand into the hand of the One who knows us perfectly. He is the One who loves us, who is completely trustworthy, and who goes before us, every step of the way.

Heidi England



Why do you want to become a Deaconess?

I want to be a deaconess because the vocation offers good opportunities to encourage people to put their faith in Jesus Christ, and to become active in the fellowship and the work of the Church. I also

want to support and develop the work of the women's ministries and to help ensure effective pastoral care within the congregation.

As a mature student, what has it been like to return to full time study?

Most of the ministry students are mature, so that hasn't been an issue. I do, however, find it hard to remember all new material that we have to absorb, so it's always a relief to pass an assignment.

What do your studies involve?

Weekdays I am at Union Theological College in Belfast, sharing classes with Queen's Theology students and students for the Presbyterian ministry. Each semester there are 5 written assignments and a placement in a congregation.

What have you learned from your placements?

The first placement was part-time in First Lisburn Presbyterian Church. I had a good breadth of experience and took part in services, women's meetings, social projects, GB, and visiting. Working alongside their deaconess I observed an experienced practitioner taking care of the flock.

Next I was in the Mall Presbyterian Church in Armagh. Here I took part in Sunday services and visited people in homes, hospitals and nursing homes. I also helped in Holiday Bible Club preparation. Most of my work was visiting, and as time went on, I became more confident at steering a conversation to spiritual things.

When do you finish and what might the next steps be?

I have to complete another year of study and a year as a probationer in a church. At the end of the probationary period I will be eligible to apply for a deaconess post.

PW – Living for Jesus

Nanette McKimm



The motto of PW is, "Living for Jesus", and the mission statement: "To encourage women to become disciples of Christ."

Our Church archives contain records of an organisation dating from before World War 2, known first as Women's Missionary Association (WMA), then Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA) and now PW.

Presbyterian Women has been supporting mission in the Presbyterian Church for over one hundred years and most congregations have a group. In 1st Portadown, the PW group meets monthly and ladies of all ages are welcome to attend. Many of our members participate in the meetings which include singing, a devotional reading to support the yearly theme, prayer which is focused on the needs of our missionaries and ourselves as we seek to follow Christ, and a visiting speaker.

This year our theme is "Here is Love" and our speakers have been from a variety of backgrounds: PCI and our

own missionaries, deaconesses, representatives from the wider Presbyterian Church and others, all of whom seek to serve and further the Kingdom of God in every aspect of their lives. Each meeting ends with tea, plenty of chat and great fellowship.

A very important aspect of our work in PW is to financially support the local and global mission of the Presbyterian Church. Many members faithfully contribute by using missionary boxes and others make individual donations. The PW Mission Fund provides opportunities to 'Resource and Equip Women'; support 'Special Projects', which for the year 2015-16 include Mullingar Presbyterian Church, Aaron House - a residential care home in Belfast for people with a profound learning disability - and James and Heather Cochrane, PCI Mission Personnel involved in a church-planting project in Porto, Portugal.

And we do so much more:

Some meet for prayer before each meeting.

Wider World is distributed quarterly.

Books are available from the PW Library.

Many knit children's garments for the mission field.

December brings the Christmas Special, and in June we have our outing.

Great food, shopping, craic, and lots more.

Please come along and give PW a try. You will be very welcome as we meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 8 o'clock.

Making the Grade?

Peter Morrow

Last year, Kellogg's carried out a survey with primary school children and discovered that some as young as ten worry about their exams.

Everyone is concerned about exams, even those who say they never worry.

Some people worry about passing and failing. Some worry about which grades they will achieve, or if it will have a 'star'. Some worry about coursework, and some worry about which school, university or work place they will go to.

If any of this seems like you, the next thoughts might be helpful.

You are not defined by your grades.

Your parents and your Church care about you; and God cares about you. Yes, your exams are important, working hard is important, and setting high standards is important, but people are more than their grades.

Jesus reminds us of this in Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Nerves are normal

There is nothing wrong with being nervous. In fact, being nervous usually means you care! Lots of people have written articles for this edition of the Buzz, and they were nervous about that. You will be nervous about your exams. When nerves come, remember there are others who know what this is like, so:

Talk to someone

Most importantly, talk to your parents - helping you with your problems is one of the things your parents are for.

Talk to your teachers, especially when your concerns are about coursework, deadlines, or understanding what they expect.

Talk to your friends. They will understand.

Talk to your Church leaders - a YF leader, a CE leader or Minister. You are not on your own, and it will be helpful to talk to people who have already experienced your fears.

Talk to God

Prayer will not change the grade on your exam paper, but will remind you of your Heavenly Father and your part in His family. Prayer will remind you to live by faith, and enable you to accept disappointment with grace and success with humility.

Dealing with success

Everyone has seen photographs of happy students on exam morning - some even make it onto television!

And to those who achieve the highest grades and a place at a top university it is good to say, "Well done," - because success is worth celebrating.

Most people, however, do not achieve these particular standards. Not every pupil can be top of the class and you do not need to be - every pupil has his/her own strengths and talents. You may not excel in academic subjects but your strengths may lie in more practical areas, and both are of equal importance. Always remember that there are different kinds of success: technological, creative, academic, retail, vocational, mechanical.

Everyone is good at something you will someday need, so thank God for your own talents and for the talents of others.

Dealing with disappointment

Unfortunately, disappointment can come - and it always feels bad. So what can you do if this happens?

Remember there will be other opportunities. It is too easy to see disappointment or examination failure as permanent - it is not. Sometimes we have to fail in order to succeed. There will always be another path: a different career; a different course; another exam.

Or it may be that you will have to change: perhaps a change in attitude, or time out to refocus. It could even be that your first choice was not the best for you or that you might have to work harder next time.

Whatever the future, exam disappointment is not the end, and will not be your only disappointment.

A Better Future

Understand that what we do now is important. How we live now counts forever because there is another, eternal world.

This world is not the only one we have, and for the Christian this makes a world of difference.

As exam time approaches, we wish you all every success in whichever exams you face; and more than that, we pray that you will learn to trust Jesus for a better, and eternal, future.

Fellowship Groups

Hazel Neale

Quite simply the key is the name: **Fellowship Groups** – a group of people who meet together for fellowship and Bible study.

The groups range in size - between 8 and 12 - as experience has shown this is the ideal number to encourage commitment and participation.

Committed to the word

We know it's good to read and study the Bible, but it is also very helpful to talk about what we believe and why. It helps our understanding to talk with others about things we don't understand and look together to God's word to find the answers. This in turn equips us to live for Jesus, to grow in confidence and to talk with others about what we believe even when they don't share our faith.

Committed to each other

Being part of a Fellowship Group will extend your existing group of Christian friends. It provides an opportunity for us to know each other better, to share our problems, concerns and joys. A Fellowship Group is able to pray knowledgeably for one another, something which is such an encouragement and which leads to genuine love and concern within each group.

So what is a Fellowship Group like?

Most groups meet fortnightly in a home. For some this will be the group leader's home; but sometimes groups will move around different homes, maybe to accommodate child care needs, or share hospitality.

Our Fellowship Groups usually have three main parts – study, refreshments and prayer - and in whatever order best suits the group.

Time for coffee (or tea) and a chat is a chance to catch up each other's lives in a relaxed and informal setting. This is an important part of our time together, and one which gives people an opportunity to talk to others - maybe just

one person - about something that has been bothering them at work or home. It can be a time of help and encouragement, or simply a time to laugh together.



The Bible study is also relaxed and informal. Rather than a sermon, everyone is free to contribute, but there is no pressure on anyone to speak. Groups generally work through a study guide with questions on the passage being considered. The questions guide discussion and thought on how we can apply what we are reading to our everyday lives. Very often the best nights are those when a topic or question precipitates a deeper discussion.

The final element of our Fellowship Groups is prayer. The prayer time is based on our application of the study, on prayer for each other, for our church and for those we know. These times of prayer can be very special, and are a real help and encouragement - particularly for someone going through a time of trial.

Recent Bible studies

Over the past months we have been studying, "Fruitfulness on the Frontline". This has consisted of six studies encouraging us to be active and fruitful wherever God has placed us. We have considered how we can seeking opportunities to speak for Him and to serve Him in all of our words and actions.

The current studies are based on 1 Corinthians and the theme of Church and why it matters to God – and to us.

Perhaps you would like to be involved.

Would you like to get involved? If so, speak to Hazel Neale, Jim McCavery or Marty Cowan, and we will be happy to find you a group to settle in to.

Or may be you know someone who is already in a group – then why not go along with them and try it out for yourself?



Chatterbox

Patricia McGuire



Chatterbox is for preschool children, their parents, grandparents and childminders, and is held in our main hall every Wednesday morning. Around 57 children attend each morning, so along with the adults we can have over 100 in the hall.

The room is divided into zones: one for babies at the sitting and crawling stage; one for table top activities, and the older children can enjoy another range of activities at the back of the hall.

It is lovely to see such a mixture of ages playing together, and good for the adults to be able to relax knowing their children are in a safe environment.

Chatterbox is a very social morning, and is a perfect way for the adults to get to know each other and to share information and tips on child-related problems. Dads and granddads come along as well and as a family event we can sometimes have three generations attending together.

We asked two of our mums, Joy Smyth and Lisa Knipe what they thought.

Joy describes how she first heard about Chatterbox and what she enjoys about it:

"I heard about Chatterbox through church; I think it was Margaret Hynes who had mentioned it to me."

"I enjoy meeting up with other mothers and having a good old chat together. It's also lovely seeing all the children mixing and playing together and having plenty of fun."

And could she describe Chatterbox in a word or two?

"Friendly and welcoming... Chatterbox has such a lovely friendly atmosphere about it, and the helpers are so welcoming and friendly to everyone. It's been lovely getting to know them and getting to know so many other mothers and grandparents. It's a great place for children to come, and with so many different toys and activities it's great for them to mix and play together."

The highlight of the morning is break. While the children have juice, toast, grapes and cheese, the adults can enjoy tea, coffee, scones and biscuits. And while the adults enjoy their morning with a cuppa and a chat, there are always helpers available to help hold a baby or keep an eye on the children.

This is something Lisa confirms, and she encourages others to come along as well:

"I started Chatterbox after Elsie was born. It's hard to believe that was nearly 6 years ago and now I think she is jealous that she has to go to school!"

"As I work during the week I was only able to go when I was off on maternity leave, but the girls don't miss out as mum still brings them. She loves it just as much and used to be one of the wonderful team of ladies who keep it all going."

"Penny loves it too! She loves trying out the large variety of toys and puzzles, and is one of the first sitting down waiting for her cheese, toast and grapes at snack time! I think she takes after me as I am probably one of the first up for coffee!"

"There is a lot for Lottie's age group too, and she had her first experience of using a 'walker' a few Wednesdays ago at Chatterbox."

And what would she say to someone with young children who had thought of coming to Chatterbox?

"Oh definitely come along! I have brought a few friends along over the years and I know they really appreciate having 'Chatterbox' each Wednesday. The whole team is so friendly and not only do the kids have fun but the mummies (or daddies) can catch up with friends over a cup of coffee and a bun."

"And for those with "extra small" children, I can personally vouch that there will always be a nice lady at hand to hold or feed a baby for you!"

So if you have a preschool child, come along any Wednesday morning. We will make you welcome and you will soon find that you have made a few new friends.



Edenderry Guides

Louise Irwin

4th Portadown or Edenderry Guides was first formed in 1927.

Guiding is open to every girl or young woman regardless of race, faith or social background, something which is evident every Tuesday night. Our halls echo with the buzz of girls from the age of 4 to 14 years, attending Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. Gone are the days of stiff skirts, shirts, ties and hats, polo shirts, leggings or jeans are the new, more comfortable, uniform!

So what do we do?

Guides

This is an age group which loves to chat and to work together. They enjoy badge work based on cooking, sports and crafts, and benefit from being in each other's company.

We asked two of our Guides both of whom have been with us through Rainbows and Brownies what they thought of Guides.

"At Guides you do such a variety of things - we cook, do crafts and play games. It's a place where you can hang out with your friends, and meet new friends. We also learn about God – Guides is a really fun place to be, and our leaders are good fun too."

Brownies

The Brownie group was formed in 1943 to cater for a younger age group - Primary 4 to Primary 6. They meet on Tuesday evenings between 6.15pm – 7.30pm. This is a lively group and everyone is keen to participate. The Brownie programme is varied and constructive, but with such enthusiastic girls, the leaders sometimes find it difficult to keep up with the pace!



Rainbows

Rainbows is the youngest of the Guiding groups - some may even remember its first name: Bunnies! It was formed in 1974 when an opening was identified for a younger group.

The girls are full of fun and so eager to please. This is an age group full of wonder and the girls are easy to work with and easy to amuse - although they do demand a lot of attention!

Through our teaching and leadership we encourage:

- Development of a personal faith in God, and also respect for the faiths and cultures around us
- Development of self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Making friends and having fun
- Learning teamwork and working with others.

Every girl participates in a varied programme, which includes physical, social, craft and spiritual activities.

So remember, Tuesday night is Guiding night, and if you would like to join us we would love you to come along!



Amy Carmichael

Buzz Kids by George Ruddock



What would you do if somebody said, "I want to live with you" – and would not go away?

Amy Carmichael was a missionary in the South of India. One day, a 7-year-old girl called Preena joined one of her preaching trips. Preena's family was poor and had given her to a Hindu temple. In the temple she would be a devadasi – 'servants of the gods'. Devadasi wore beautiful clothes and were part of festivals and celebrations; but they worked hard, and nobody enjoyed being there.

Amy was concerned about Preena and the other servants, and began to ask questions about them. "How many girls were devadasi?" she asked. "How well were they looked after? Could they leave the temple?"

Poor families gave their girls to a temple hoping to earn favour with the gods, but the children hated life in the temple and wanted to leave.

When the staff at Preena's temple realised she had gone, they were determined to have her back. But Preena said, "No!" She wanted to stay with Amy.

As more and more girls came Amy began a new life looking after them. The girls had a new family, and no one was allowed to call them orphans.

But how could they be kept safe?

The answer came in 1901. They were able to move with Amy to an old mission property at Dohnavur - say "Doh" like donut. It was a huge place with plenty of buildings –

and room for even more. At Dohnavur Amy and the girls lived miles out in the countryside and everyone was safe. She and Preena and many other girls lived at Dohnavur for 50 years.

As more and more poor families heard that Amy would take care of their children, babies began to arrive at the gate. Some were only a few days old and many of the first died. But by 1918 there were 130 girls in the family.

The family loved Amy. Even the adults called her Amma (Mother). She knew all the children and tried to speak to each one of them every day. Eventually dormitories, classrooms, a clinic and then a full hospital were built. House parents and teachers, nurses and doctors came to Dohnavur to help. Money came in from all round the world, and people prayed.

Amy arranged school, and church, and even the youngest children could enjoy worship. If they were too young to learn the words, they were given coloured flags to wave.

As the children grew up, many went away to work but some also became workers and stayed in Dohnavur.

In 1948, the state of Tamil Nadu made it a crime for temples to keep devadasi and it was later outlawed all over India. The government gave Amy Carmichael a medal for her work.

Today, Dohnavur still has a family of 500 girls and young women.