

# **METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN NEWSLETTER**

## **EAST ANGLIA DISTRICT – SPRING 2025**



**Editorial – Susan Eldridge**

Greetings!

You are probably now aware that I am becoming the East Anglia District MWiB President in the Autumn. This is an exciting but also daunting prospect!

I will be continuing to produce the newsletter but any help with this is always welcome. Please keep the articles coming in otherwise it may be rather short! We have a wonderful array of articles in this newsletter so thank you very much to all who have contributed.

### **Biography for Lizzie Zukiewicz – Spring District Day speaker**

I grew up on a farm in Wenhaston, Suffolk, with my parents and 4 brothers. I trained to be a diagnostic radiographer at the old Norfolk and Norwich hospital in the 1980's. First job after qualifying was at Addenbrookes Hospital. In 1989 my career took a different turn when I became a VSO volunteer in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I married a fellow volunteer, Anand, and we did quite a bit of travel together including visiting his family in India. After Anand's suicide I returned to Suffolk working in a number of hospitals and in the community as a carer.

I returned to working as a VSO volunteer in Oshakati, Namibia before being appointed as chief radiographer, training in Windhoek, Namibia. In 1998 I returned to the UK to be nearer my family and married my school friend, Charlie, with whom I have a daughter and a son.

In 2009 I had to retire from work due to ill health but I haven't been idle. I became an accredited local preacher in 2017 and have been involved in a number of outreach programmes. I'm also an artist, gardener, musician, craftsperson and enjoy sewing.

## **Report from Rita Rowe - MWiB Trustee for Lincolnshire and East Anglia**

I just thought you might like to read what I have been doing for the past 3 months in connection with events that have been held within our organisation.

### ***Trustees' meeting***

In February the Trustees from all over the Country had a 24 hour meeting in Launde Abbey which is in the heart of Leicestershire and hosts many day guests as well as retreats for people of all faiths. It is an interesting building which has been serving for over 900 years and is in beautiful grounds. We were not there long enough to enjoy the facilities to their full potential but if you ever get the chance to visit this area it is worth going in to enjoy the café serving hot meals and cream teas on a daily basis. In February it was not really the best time to walk in the grounds either but I did spend time on the Friday morning trying to find the entrance to the Chapel as communion was being held at 8am before breakfast. My walk took me to interesting gardens and it turned out the entrance was actually inside the main building where reception was and the dining hall. I need not have done the walk at all but it was a lovely sunny fresh morning and I enjoyed it.

The main reason for the meeting was to discuss how we can promote MWiB and let people know more of what we are about. Leonora Wassell, our new Co-chair, had prepared lots of papers for us to discuss making new leaflets explaining what we can offer as an organization. We need to promote Gifts and Grants to let people know how much we can help people with these. Each year we donate £15,000 in total to be shared between projects supporting work with women overseas. Application forms are available on our website and we work closely with "All We Can," WFM&UCW and Global Relationship Partners.

We also have Enabling Grants, Social and Community Action Grants for projects around the UK and Discretionary Grants of up to £1,000 on a matched funding basis to women involved in the Methodist Church. We also have a Pastoral Care Fund which has been set up to assist churches who wish to develop their pastoral care work in line with our aim of bringing women together, encouraging one another to "Know Christ and to make him known". We also learnt that there is to be a special service in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London on Tuesday 25th November 2025 between 10.30 and 12.30 for the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women which begins the 16 days of Activism against gender based violence which is very close to the work of MWiB.

We discussed a lot of issues over the 24 hour stay and we also got to know one another more at meal times and coffee breaks. It was a very nice stay, in a beautiful setting.

### ***Daffodil Day***

This was held at Westminster Central Hall on Saturday 1st March where a special Service is held in this wonderful Methodist Church in the middle of London right opposite Westminster Cathedral. The day is held for people to get together to celebrate the joys of Faith seriously but with a light touch. The hall is adorned with daffodils all around the platform and buttonholes of people in the platform party who are interviewed during the worship by Pam Rhodes, a BBC presenter on TV in Songs of Praise. This year she spoke with Leonora Wassell, our Co-chair and members of MWiB led the prayers. It is a most uplifting Service and the building enhances the voices when singing.

We had a lovely Male Voice Choir that entertained us as well as joining in all the hymns which included "Love Divine", "Let there be Peace on Earth", "Just as I am without one Plea" and "God is Love, let heaven adore him". The offering hymn was "I Love you Lord", with the chorus of "Cause all my life you have been faithful, and all my life you have been so, so good. With every breath that I am able, Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God". Words that rang out through that wonderful building with all the voices of people worshiping together and praising our Lord and Saviour. The last two hymns were "I will sing the wondrous Story of the Christ who died for me" and "Guide me O though great Jehovah". As you will see a lot of singing but well worth it and in between were prayers and interviews which really made the day wonderful. The Right Worshipful, The Lord Mayor of Westminster always attends and is interviewed and this year it was Councillor Robert Rigby. Also on the platform were Revd. Helen Cameron and Carolyn Godfrey, President & Vice President of the Methodist Conference. Pam Rhodes interviewed them all and then the Pearly King & Queen in their wonderful pearly costumes.



It is such a wonderful day out and the 2 hour service is well worth the enjoyment. I travelled to London by train with two friends and then we shared a taxi from Kings Cross to Westminster and back again. The Daffodil Day all began way back in the 1920's in a different venue but moved to London in the 1980's and is still alive today .....how wonderful, how marvellous is that!

## ***District Day***

My third big event was our District Day in Lincolnshire led by Revd. Vivienne Smith, who lives at present in Lincolnshire and she led a wonderful day of fun and laughter in the morning and then helped us to think more deeply about prayer in the afternoon. The day was hosted by Holbeach Methodist Church and 40 ladies attended the day in March (*including me – please see my fuller report on page 10! Susan*).



Holbeach Methodist Church

## ***National Conference***

Then at the beginning of April was our wonderful MWiB National Conference held at Swanwick's Hayes Centre in Derbyshire, where 200 women gathered together for a wonderful inspiring time led by Revd. Dr. Sonia Hicks, a past President of Conference. Some of you reading this will have attended the weekend and like me met up with some wonderful women and heard great stories.



The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

All in all a busy time for this year already.

## ***Future events***

Our next District Days are:

**East Anglia** – Wednesday 14th May 2025 – Dereham – 11am – 3.30pm – Speaker Lizzie Zukiewicz talking on many years of Mission Work abroad (*you may have picked up this newsletter here!*)

**Lincolnshire** – Thursday 12th June 2025 – Epworth Church 11am – 3pm, followed by a look at the Old Rectory if people wish to. Speaker Madeleine Reed – Helen Kim Memorial Scholar.

Wednesday 1st October 2025 – Immingham – Speaker – Leonora Wassell – MwiB Co-chair.

## **My MWiB story – Pauline West**

This begins much further back in the days when the movement was called Methodist Women's Network.



My friend Margaret was the secretary of the Rosebery Road (RR) Bright Hour and she was looking to shed a few of her smaller jobs. She asked me if I would be willing to be RR contact for some things of interest to Bright Hour members and others at the church. What does this involve? I asked and said I did not want to have to belong to Bright Hour and come to its meetings. I was assured I did not have to go to meetings but just to put up any posters sent to me and make sure these events went on the notices. There were two committee meetings a year but she did not always attend; it would be up to me what I did.

After some thought, I agreed. Nothing much came my way until papers for a committee meeting at Chapel Field Road. I went along and it all seemed fairly interesting, particularly something called District Day. This was a whole day event and a coach went from the Circuit starting at Wroxham Road and because Margaret lived on Constitution Hill, and usually 10 or more ladies went, it called at her house and then went on to Chapel Field Road. So I booked a seat and set off with my packed lunch to see what this was all about.

It was wonderful – so many ladies – so much chatting and excitement. The morning was reports of various things going on in the District. Then there was a break for lunch and time to go outside for a little while. We were warned to leave a coat on our seats as some people didn't like the morning reports and only came in the afternoon. This was necessary - the church had been full in the morning but was packed in the afternoon. I can't remember who the speaker was, or even which circuit we had visited, but I came away knowing this was something I wanted to be part of. I slept most of the way home but was full of excitement at what I had discovered.

The rest as they say is history. I can't say I have never missed a District Day because over 30+ years that would not have been possible.

I discovered Swanwick - a weekend of talks and workshops and information about happenings all around the Connexion and world-wide. Again mind blowing and exciting. Accommodation in the early days was basic, in what is now the Derbyshire suite, and we had to pay extra for a single room. None of them were en-suite.

Now we are in modern rooms in the Lakeside building. This year's event was as good as ever with lots to take in and think about in future.



Next I discovered the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. I was able to go to the World Assembly when it was held in Loughborough University. Again, this was another exciting event. It lasted a week and I was definitely exhausted by the end of that – again with many memories.

After this I was asked to be District President. This was hard work without a car though, with careful planning and kind people offering transport, we got by. One memory is of the efforts we made to build links with the Mothers' Union. One officer I had a long talk with could not get her head round the fact that there were no requirements for belonging. No baptism certificate or membership card. She was proud of the fact that they allowed non-mothers in!

One last thought. All women with any connection at all with Methodism are automatically part of MWiB. So if your church or circuit does not have meetings of any sort you still belong and will be welcome at any District or Connexional event.

See you soon!

### **Autumn World Federation Day – Ruth Arnold**

'You put your whole self in!'

I was privileged to attend this exciting day at Stamford last November. It was led by Dr Nancy Day from Southampton— a Kenyan musician and a British worship leader who is passionate about music and movement in all aspects of worship.



Stamford Methodist Church

I must admit that I do not find dancing in worship comes second nature to me but Dr Nancy had us all moving and actually enjoying the 'abandonment'! Her African heritage, British experience and spiritual depth has made her extremely passionate and she reflected on Romans 12 where Paul encourages us to put our whole selves, body and soul, into our life of faith.

Besides being challenged by Dr Nancy's passion about putting our whole selves into worship, it was a joy to meet together with other friends from MWIB. Thank you to Barbara Easton for arranging such an interesting day.

The next World Federation Day is planned for 18th October 2025 in Harrogate.

## **Charity News**

### **3 Million Steps**

We closed this as our Charity on 31st October 2024.

The "final" £1,443.10 raised for them was sent on our behalf by Shaun Cushion. There was then a late donation of £45.00 which was sent separately. This made a total of donation of £2,784.10 over the period of the project.

### **Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Association (PSPA)**

Peter Sorrell provided a wonderful presentation about this at our Autumn District Day and we also heard from a gentleman from the Association. I made some notes which I have used for my summary below.

Peter shared that Heather now can't walk, is losing some dexterity in her fingers, can still engage with people at times, does not complain of pain, is able to read at times, tends to now prefer her own company and is sad that she can no longer serve God as she once did. Heather knows that we are raising money for this Charity which means a lot to her and Peter. Heather is angry with God at times but, remembering Job, joked that it is OK as there are no whales in Norfolk!



The PSP Association is there to support patients, carers and research professionals. It also supports those with CBD (Corticobasal Degeneration). Peter explained the derivation of PSP:

- Progressive – means as it implies that it will get worse
- Supra-nuclear – means affects various brain processes and there is a build-up of protein
- Palsy – means muscle weakness

Around 5,000 people are living with PSP at any given time, with probably more that are undiagnosed. There can be problems with misdiagnosis (e.g. Parkinsons) and it can take up to three years to get the correct diagnosis. People are therefore sometimes put on the wrong medication.

The Association wants to raise awareness and to fund research to get a definitive diagnosis tool. Medical people do not know enough about PSP and other related diseases yet. It provides guides for medical professionals. The Association was started 30 years ago by a gentleman whose wife had it. It has a dedicated helpline. It produces magazines and other literature to keep people up to date. It is ultimately looking for a cure. It has 30 volunteer-led support groups and funds carers for those who just cannot cope. It is seeking businesses with regular payroll giving (so spread the word!). There is a film coming out in 2025 which will give an opportunity for good publicity. It has a goal to raise £2m in two years which it wants to ring fence for research.

Peter is happy to come to talk to local groups about PSP in order to aid your fundraising attempts.

The PSP Association has an excellent website [PSP Association](#)

Susan Eldridge



## A “bit of history”

Paul and I thought we would look back over the years to see where District Days have been held and who our speakers were.

MWiB District Days - venues, dates & speakers							
	Spring				Autumn		
Year	Venue		Speaker		Venue		Speaker
2024	Diss	16th May	Madeleine Reed		Histon	26th Oct	Rev Jenny Pathmarajah
2023	Beccles	18th May	Rev Diane Smith		Hunstanton	11th Oct	Deacon Linda Kinchenton
2022	St Ives	12th May	Sandra Goodwin		Thetford	7th Oct	Rev Dr Lord Griffiths
2021	None		None		Trinity, Lowestoft	9th Oct	Celebration of 10th Anniversary
2020	None		None		None		None
2019	Dereham	28th Mar	Judith Lampard		Chapel Field Norwich	10th Oct	Irene Hayes
2018	Wymondham	14th Jul	Creativity Day		Mildenhall	17th Nov	Quiet Day - Rev Mary Cousins
2018	Ipswich	26th Apr	Rev Catherine Dixon		Sheringham	11th Oct	Rev Anne Richardson
2017	Downham Market	26th Apr	Rev Julian Pursehouse		Ely	11th Oct	Bishop Everard, Jamaica
2016	Upwell	21st Apr	Rev Jennifer Potter		South Lowestoft	6th Oct	Rev Micky Youngson
2015	Chapel Field Norwich	30th Apr	Linda Crossley		Diss	8th Oct	Rev Pauline Greasley
2014	Trinity, Lowestoft	17th Apr	Rev Graham Thompson		Ely	22nd Oct	Rev Alison Walker
2013	Ipswich	18th Apr	Rev Sharon Willimott		Cambridge	10th Oct	Jean & Michael Simmonds

## Lincolnshire Spring District Day

This was held at Holbeach Methodist Church, which is only just over the East Anglia border so seemed a good one to attend.

They have three District Days a year and the next two are in Epworth and Immingham, much further away.



Holbeach Methodist Church

When Paul and I arrived I first spotted Nina Rawlins, former MWiB Finance Officer, who actually lives in the Northampton District and then a lady who looked familiar came up and said she knew me. This was Maureen Hearn from Bury St Edmunds. I expected Rita Rowe, who represents our two Districts, to be there and she was. Continuing the small world theme, the speaker for the day was Revd. Vivienne Smith, who from September 2025 will have pastoral charge of some churches in the Ipswich Circuit. She will be living in the Tendring Circuit as her husband, Luke, will be serving in the Beds, Essex and Herts (BEH) District.

Vivienne is a larger than life lady with a good sense of humour. In the morning she entertained us with various stories, only some of which were true ones! Amongst these we learnt the importance of conversations being filled with grace and seasoned with salt, so they bring healing and revive rather than be gossip and malicious. We sang some hymns including “At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow”.



Holbeach - interior

Vivienne’s theme was “surviving the battles and the storms through laughter and love”, both of which were in abundance during the day. One illustration given was that you never know what might hit you and the results, like a hedgehog falling through a cattle grid but finding a kind person had put a plank so they could get out on the better side. A metaphor for what God can do for us. Vivienne said she tries to be a more formal, serious Minister but funny things seem to happen to her. She also told us the tale of the prodigal son but in modern day terms and featuring a young lady rather than a young man.

In the afternoon we had a quieter session, again led by Vivienne. This was based on prayer, with a little more singing too. Vivienne has recently adopted the practice when asked to do something of not saying yes or no immediately but turning to God in prayer first. We had discussions around prayer at our tables (the afternoon was in the hall where we had eaten our lunch rather than in the church) considering when and where we pray, if we think our prayers make a difference (there were some good examples on our table), if we ever feel guilty for not praying etc.

It does not matter where you pray (Susanna Wesley did it with a tea towel over her head) and it is OK to rant at God! Everything we need is in the Lord's prayer. Remember that prayer in action is important too e.g. sending that card or giving a lift to an appointment. If you pray and the tears come then this can be a sign that the Holy Spirit is present. We listened to a short recording of Corrie Ten Boom speaking on prayer.



It was a very interesting and enjoyable day. Much was familiar to our District Days including the number present and the demographic. Some things were different and there was no tea at the end!

Susan Eldridge

The group of East Anglia ladies who attended Swanwick (*see report on the next page*)



## Swanwick – Again! – Ruth Arnold

As usual, euphoria reigned in our household on my return from the MWiB weekend at Swanwick! My husband has learned to expect it! Unfortunately I picked up a severe cold which dampened my spirits a little earlier this year but I am still high on the challenges and inspiration of the weekend. The theme for the weekend was 'This little light of mine' and there was plenty to refuel our 'little light' during the time together.



By the lake at Swanwick

Swanwick is always very special with the renewing of old friendships, the meeting of new friends, being inspired, challenged, renewed - and this year excelled. Our key speaker was Revd. Sonia Hicks and if we had expected the usual, somewhat veiled, experiences of being black in a largely white middle class country, we were wrong. Sonia really 'threw' it at us and I think most of us felt horrified and ashamed as we listened to the experiences she shared.

Having lived in Jamaica for six years with numerous black friends there and in this country, I always felt I was pretty O. K. and sensitive to the feelings of minority groups. WOW was I challenged as I realised that I was not always aware of how my words and actions could be hurtful and insensitive. Sonia made me re-think and I am sure others felt like me, too. So, without anything else, Revd. Sonia's contribution set the whole tone of the time together.

As always there was so much going on and so much to get involved with that it is hard to tell it all. I enjoyed the work shop led by All We Can. It was called 'pieces of justice' and as we made a coaster using small pieces of stones and glass we watched presentations of work that was going on in different areas of the world thanks to All We Can encouraging local initiatives.

There were so many workshops and everyone seemed more than thankful with the ones attended. Everywhere was 'choice' so there was something for everyone according to taste and/or need. There were different forms of morning prayer (*including a lovely early morning walk around the lake – Susan*), a wonderful market for all to enjoy and plenty of chance to enjoy coffee and conversation in between formal activities.

The Saturday evening concert showed how much talent there was among us and many of us saw Revd. Leonora in a new light. She held the evening together with great hilarity!

AND — all this in the beautiful surroundings of The Hayes - the gardens, the Lake, the flowers and the birds. One of the special joys for us was that there were seven of us from our District but I hope I have encouraged more to want to choose to come next year (dates are on page 22)! Start saving now!!

### **The Hat Cupboard – Revd. Heather Walker**

It has struck me this year just how many different ‘hats’ I have worn over the years.



For such a long time I wore my ‘Wife Hat’. Now that has been put aside following the death of my wonderful husband who had been a friend and companion since we grew up together in Sunday School. Working through losing him has affected every part of my being. I had depended on him for so much – far more than I ever realised! I now have to attend to all the household bills [how does one find the best energy tariff?], maintenance of house and garden [is there a formula for persuading a tradesperson who has quoted for work to actually turn up and do it?], keeping up with all those little bits and pieces around the house [I dare not go up a ladder now I live alone] and sorting finances [I thought all was well until the tax demand arrived!]. Worst of all, it probably goes without saying, I just miss him! Taking off the ‘Wife Hat’ after so many years is not easy.



Then there were my ‘Career Hats’. We lived in Northern England in our younger years. I worked in manufacturing industries in the days when we knew how to make things in Britain – carpets, engineering, knitting wools, paper – and I attained professional qualifications in Personnel Management (if you know what that was, dear reader, you are probably as old as I am). Those hats made way for another, far more important.



My 'Mum Hat', which has never really been put aside. I remember so well, and not without a little pain 45 years on, that lost feeling the day our second son started school, and then when they were both at boarding school and our previously busy home went quiet; later when we had two weddings in 2020. The 'Mum Hat' changes shape as the years pass. Now my sons are the ones who advise me, although I do still occasionally get a chance to be 'Mum'.



Other hats in my cupboard:- 'Foster Mum', 'Carer', 'Preacher' then 'Minister', 'Proud Grandma', 'Pensioner', 'Volunteer', there have been so many over the years. Looking back, there has been one constant through all of my life and that is the sense that I am loved – by my family and by God.

At times, I have been acutely aware of God in the tiny detail of my life, but even when that was not the case there has always been a church family to turn to for support and help. Sometimes, it is only in looking back that we recognise God's hand in shaping our lives and those of family and friends who help us get through the day; prompting the visits, the phone calls, the listening and the laughter, all those little things that mean so much.

Perhaps the most important hat in my collection will always be the 'Loving' one.



## **Reflect – Susan Eldridge**

As I had a small space to fill, I thought I would remind you of an online opportunity which takes place roughly quarterly. Reflect Methodist Spirituality and Retreats provides an online Quiet Morning (choice of two dates each time) and I have been joining these when I can and found them very beneficial. Previous ones have included "Exploring Life with Brigid of Kildare", "Offering hospitality – openness to others and to God" and "The call to contemplation".

If you would like to know more please contact Deacon Lynne Sylvester-Tonge (email address in District Directory) or ask me to put you in touch with Lynne.

## **MWiB – what are we for? – Revd. Pam Siddall**

I have been forced to give a lot of prayer and thought to this question, after being ‘encouraged’ to consider sharing the role of District MWiB President with Susan Eldridge. This, I’m afraid to say, I find I am quite sure I am not called to do. In all honesty, I lack many of Susan’s qualities, and in particular her willingness to be available in spite of really carrying too much already. The travel to district meetings is also a big issue for me – it is already a problem to get to presbyteral synods and representative synods and training sessions sometimes at least 2 hours’ drive from here. Putting that personal perspective aside, though, if the best hope for ‘new blood’ in this role is a 74-year-old supernumerary presbyter (MWiB is properly a lay movement within Methodism after all) I think that has to give us food for thought.

Perhaps what I can offer are a few issues for consideration:

Gone are the days when the reps to the executive meetings and forums actually represented specific groups and meetings within the circuits. Most of the groups have folded, as the members grew too old and infirm. Covid exacerbated that process. On the whole, younger women are not ‘housewives’ anymore and pensionable age is older than it used to be. Only in retirement can many turn their minds to other activities and let’s face it, it is more likely to be U3A or childcare for the grand-children than MWiB. Most of our active members are therefore a good deal older even than me and, like me, grew up with Network, and before that, Women’s Fellowship and Women’s Work and have been serving faithfully in a similar mode ever since. Worthy though it is, I don’t think that mode will do nowadays as we enter the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Returning to attend my first executive meeting in more than a dozen years I sadly couldn’t feel things had moved forward at all in that time.

After my accreditation as a local preacher 53 years ago, I was sometimes asked to be the speaker at a circuit event called “The Women’s Rally.” The word ‘rally’ isn’t so much used these days but it seems to me a useful concept in the context of our being an umbrella organisation inclusive of all Methodist women. Especially in these times when the smaller, local groups have disappeared, perhaps our role is indeed to rally women in the church to come together and recognise that they are not alone in their faith and Christian work.



Though the numbers attending our District Days are more encouraging lately, 47 from the whole District is not a lot: more like we might once have expected from a circuit gathering. However, it seems to show that there is still some life in the organisation. Although we meet midweek (*some Saturday District Days – Susan*) and therefore exclude the younger element by and large, it still seems to me that this is the best thing we can offer at the moment and rather than striving for new events which we haven't the time or resources to facilitate, I feel we should work at putting on the best event we can twice a year. The purpose should be:

1. Fellowship and developing relationships and lines of contact and communication across the District. The roll-call of circuits represented at District Days used to be good in that respect but doesn't seem to happen of late (*this is coming back – Susan*).
2. Inspiration, to build the faith of those attending and encourage them in their personal and corporate Christian journey. It was great to have our inspirational co-chair with us at the last District Day – would she give us a whole day in the future? Revd. Helen Hollands (our Chair of District) would be great, too, another time if she were willing. (*Helen has expressed willingness, and support for MWiB, but does not have the space at present – Susan*)
3. Education about Methodism and the work of our denomination across the connexion and globally, for instance, we have the District Harare link. What do folk know about the progress of this?
4. Outreach. This might include the fund-raising element. Some of our projects have supported very worthy charities but were without a specific Methodist or faith-based cause. That may be fine for the Rotary Club but I think our purpose should be different. Looking back, Ruth Arnold's 'Beds, Bees and Blessings' project partnered us with Methodist outreach overseas. Long before that we supported work out in Latvia. In this country too, there are Methodist outreach projects we could be supporting longer-term when eventually our currently planned fund-raising reaches its conclusion. (*We have, and are, supporting charities that have a personal link to MWiB members and I think this is equally valid – Susan*)



I believe there is a future for MWiB both nationally and in the District but only if we contribute our enthusiasm, practical support and ideas. At the very least we must thank Susan for her willingness and support her, and the organisation as a whole, with our prayers.

## The power of prayer and a wonderful trip – Sandra Walton

Last June I had an unexpected phone call from my cousin Denise in Australia. Denise had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in October 2022, and was told she had a few months to live. Denise asked me if I would go and visit her, as she had not seen any family, and could not do her annual visit to her Mum. While Denise was asking I said “no” in my heart; think about it she said, so I did. Speaking with my friend Maria, we talked about it, and I felt the Lord saying go. At 66, I had never had a passport, so the process began, and in November 2024 my friends in London took me to Heathrow terminal 2, so off I went, getting to Perth airport at mid-afternoon.



It was a wonderful experience, a cruise to see dolphins, kangaroos wandering in the streets and paddling in the Indian Ocean. Perth city was wonderful. I went for 2 weeks to the local church and was made welcome. Then it was time to come home, and my friends were waiting to meet me.



My cousin had been on chemotherapy for two years, and had just had a PET scan to be told no trace of cancer, and 3 months off chemotherapy, so we had some lovely days together, another PET scan in January still no sign, another 3 months off chemotherapy. I believe it was the power of prayer that there was no trace of cancer.



What an amazing story Sandra!

**A Prayer by Celia Shires (provided by Judy Bainbridge)**

O loving Father God as we meet together  
we remember your wonderful love,  
shown for us in our Lord Jesus who lived  
and died and rose again so we might be  
reconciled to you.

Help us to honour you in each and  
everything we do.

Draw us nearer to you.

Help us to rest in your presence

As we share in your love and fellowship  
help us to see you in one another and as  
we leave to go our separate ways help us  
to hold one another in our hearts and to  
hold out the light of your love

to help others on their journey of life

We ask this through the precious name of our  
Lord Jesus. Amen



Banner at Westminster Central Hall

## 2 Kings 5:1-14, Luke 14:1-6 - Jacky Woor (LP, Central Norfolk Circuit)

Of late I have been a bit hampered with doing anything that requires two good hands. You see I had my right shoulder replaced on 23rd February and have strict instructions to keep my right arm in a sling. Easy you might think, but being mainly right handed, not so easy. That has led me to thinking about occasions in the Bible when instructions are given that appear quite simple, but they are not taken up easily.



Looking at the story of Naaman in the second book of Kings – simple enough instruction, go and wash in the river seven times. But Naaman was a proud man, and he thought this very demeaning, especially if he was seen by anyone else whilst doing this. The simplest of things actually became a barrier. How often do we find that, because something is easy to do, it really isn't that relevant? Note it took a nudge from someone who knew Naaman well to get through to him. "If you were asked to do something that could have meant danger, could have even risked your life, you would have been ready and willing to do so." Then Naaman was ready to do the simple instruction and became healed.

And so we come to the story of Jesus healing on the Sabbath. Simple enough, there was a need; the man had suffered for a long time. He could not do a day's work with only one good hand – for two reasons – he was hampered with only one useful hand, secondly healing was seen as working, something not done on the Sabbath. The really observant of you will have spotted my connection to this story besides being hampered physically. Yes my operation was on a Sunday, our Sabbath! This was so that having this operation could be fitted in a lot quicker and therefore, my being relieved of the pain in my shoulder. We do not know if he was really willing to accept this healing right then, but surely he must have been a very happy man indeed once the healing took place.

Do we sometimes see things like Naaman did? Are we likely to just accept this or perhaps put up a barrier? Only you can answer this for yourself, but for me there was no doubt about what I would do, accept the operation whenever it was planned!

## **TREASURER'S REPORT - SPRING 2025**

Hello Everyone. If I can, please, introduce myself to those who do not know me. I am Olga Watkins your MWiB District Treasurer. I took up this position from 1st November 2024 and you could say am still finding my feet.

I would like to state a few facts. Anyone at all, individual, church, circuit or other, does need to be in touch with me if they are kind enough to donate money to MWiB in our District. That is the only way we can be sure the money definitely goes for its intended use and of course for us to acknowledge receipt. Cash can be directly given to me if we meet, any cheques should be made payable to EADTB (this is the District Treasurers' Bureau) and handed, or sent, to me at my home address (you can find this below and at the end of the newsletter) and if it is necessary (although not preferred) by a Bank Transfer. Please contact me for the Bank details.

Can it please be noted that any bank transfers will go directly into our account which is held by the EADTB (who handle the account for us). It will arrive without notification, so it is imperative I am also made aware you have sent something (an email will do) so it can be accounted for in the correct way. In all cases we ask that you either write on the back of the cheque or drop me a note stating whether the donation is for MWiB funds or for our designated charity and indeed who or where it is from.

We ask particularly that, if at all possible, each circuit donates £15 each church year; it's wonderful if more is available. Although we do not have many of the women's groups left in our churches, which were always the basis for this, your Circuit Treasurer is usually willing to oblige if asked nicely! This allows us to give a donation to any church providing us with a venue for a meeting or District Day, and also to be able to pass some to the National section of our organisation. The President does choose a charity and at the moment this is PSP which you will read more about elsewhere in the newsletter. Donations are coming in nicely for this from various areas by holding coffee mornings, book sales or just collections. Good ideas are always welcome.

Hopefully with the new layout of the finance sheet you may be able to see clearly how things are going.

I have tried to mention each church/circuit/partnership who has donated in any way so thank you so much for those of you for your annual subscription and also those who donated other sums of money, some for MWiB work and others to help boost our designated charity. If you do not see your circuit or church named when you feel it should be, do please get in touch with me, it could be, as I said previously, that you have sent things directly to the Treasurers' Bureau and I have no knowledge of it.

I do produce an up to date statement to our District Officers and Circuit Representatives periodically, hence what you see here is number 6 for this financial year.

I am always open to questions or new ideas so please do be in touch.

Many thanks, Olga Watkins

01487 814352 or email [olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk)

Address 1, Grenfell Road, Bury, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambs PE26 2QR



## MWiB East Anglia District Finances – 1st September 2024 to 8th April 2025

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance Brought Forward	<b>4,385.52</b>	EAD Treasurers Bureau	62.00
District Funds (unknown source)	37.40	Newsletters (see note 2)	0.00
Newsletters	18.10	Postage	6.80
EADTB Donations (see note 1)	155.00	Diss Room Hire	59.00
Bank Interest	34.66	Donation to Histon for DD	75.00
Late Donation to 3 Million Steps	45.00	Late DD donations (see note 3)	100.00
		Donation - 3 Million Steps	1,443.10
		Late donation (see note 4)	45.00
		District Day speaker gift	50.00
		Donation to MWiB national	50.00
Total (non-Charity) Income	----- 290.16	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	----- <b>1,890.90</b>

### Holding for PSP Association (our Charity)

Histon DD B&B	58.00	<b>Monies in Hand</b>	
Histon DD Offering	217.50	Current Account	2,288.74
Cromer MC Donation	62.10	Deposit Account	1,313.64
Histon DD Late Donations	20.00	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,602.38</b>
Donation via Peter Sorrell	60.00		
ELY MC Coffee Morning	400.00		
Total Charity Income	----- 817.60		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>5,493.28</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>5,493.28</b>
		(includes money in accounts)	

### Notes

1. The EADTB donations (£15 per annum) were from Norwich, Thetford, Diss & Mildenhall, Central Norfolk, The Fens, St Neots & Huntingdon, West Norfolk, Lowestoft & East Suffolk plus a donation of £50 from Waveney Valley.
2. The Newsletter is now printed at the District Office and the cost of around £30 will come out of our funds in due course.
3. The donations to Hunstanton and Diss for hosting District Days in the 2023/24 year were paid late.
4. This was a late donation to 3 Million Steps.

Our District Treasurer continues to work in conjunction with the Treasurer's Bureau. Please make all cheques payable to "East Anglia District Treasurer's Bureau or "EADTB". Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope and a note indicating your Church and Circuit and what the payment is for.

## **Future dates**

<b>District Executive</b>	<b>4th September 2025 by Zoom (9.30am) 8th January 2026 by Zoom (9.30am)</b>
<b>District Forum</b>	<b>18th September 2025 at Diss – 10 for 10.15am start 26th February 2026 at Diss – 10 for 10.15am start</b>
<b>District Day – Autumn</b>	<b>25th October 2025 – Ely – Revd. Graham Thompson</b>
<b>District Day – Spring</b>	<b>13th or 14th May 2026 (to be confirmed) at Diss</b>
<b>National Conference</b>	<b>Swanwick – 10th – 12th April 2026</b>

## **Members of the Executive Committee**

Sue Groome – President – [suegroome55@outlook.com](mailto:suegroome55@outlook.com), 01502 731038

Susan Eldridge – President Elect – [susan.eldrids@gmail.com](mailto:susan.eldrids@gmail.com), 01508 493795

Jacky Woor – Secretary – [jackywoor07@btinternet.com](mailto:jackywoor07@btinternet.com), 01362 697860

Olga Watkins – Treasurer – [olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk), 01487 814352, 1 Grenfell Road, Bury, Ramsey, Huntingdon, PE26 2QR

Trixie Dye – Resources – [theresadye39@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:theresadye39@yahoo.co.uk), 01508 499220

Susan Eldridge – Newsletter – as above

Ruth Arnold – Member – [ruth.ann.uk@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.ann.uk@gmail.com)

Judy Bainbridge – Member

Jeanette Soanes – Member

We are not including addresses (except Olga's) as this Newsletter is being circulated electronically so if you need an address please email the relevant person or ask Jacky or Susan.