

METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN NEWSLETTER

EAST ANGLIA DISTRICT – AUTUMN 2025



Editorial / President's letter – Susan Eldridge

Greetings!

Where has this summer gone? I am sure every year goes more quickly than the previous one. Perhaps it is a sign of getting older! As I approach officially taking over as East Anglia District MWiB President, I have been thinking back over the important role MWiB has played in my Christian journey. I owe so much to the District Days, Conference Days, and residential weekends at Belsey Bridge. I am sad we no longer have that Christian Conference Centre.

I am grateful to be able to go to the national MWiB weekends at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire but know this is not an option for many people, although it is possible to join online. I wonder if we could have a Conference Day, with creativity options and bible study, held somewhere else? We still have funds in our Conference account we can use. If you would be interested in this, please let me know and then the Executive and Forum can give it some thought.

I am delighted that Revd Graham Thompson is leading our Autumn District Day. Graham has played an important role in my Christian journey and Paul and I meet up with Graham and Alison about once a quarter for lunch at their favourite pub.



Photo by Paul

Since our last District Day I have sadly been to two thanksgiving services for lovely MWiB ladies. One was known to most of you – Joy Dean who, with her husband Richard, faithfully brought a Soham Books stall to each District Day (and to Representative Synod). At times this was hard for health reasons and they were grateful for the help my husband (and others) gave with moving boxes around and, towards the end, Joy even trusted me to pack some of the boxes! The other lady was Nancy Howe from our Church (Framingham Earl) who accompanied me to many District Days where she caught up with many friends. I miss these two wonderful Christian ladies.

Another lady who has played an important role organising Conferences (with me) and some District Days over the years for us is Elizabeth Wright. Elizabeth is in the process of moving to Yorkshire and we have sent her on her way with a card and small gift. I look forward to continuing to work with you all and hope someone will be called by God to take up the role of Vice President to support me.

Blessings, Susan

Thank you from Sue Groome (Past President)

It has been an amazing opportunity to share with the wonderful folk of Methodist Women in Britain East Anglia District over the past few years. I have felt really uplifted and inspired by women I can only describe as saints.

I have travelled across the District from Lowestoft to Hunstanton, Diss to St Ives, Dereham to Costessey and met so many different people and have listened to a wide range of experiences and viewpoints; their diversity underpinned by the commonality of their faith in Christ and their support for Methodism in this area. To the Executive Committee who have been there for me from day one, I thank you so much for your wisdom and guidance. I know that you have kept us going in the difficult times post pandemic when we could have so easily withered into nothing. And to Susan, going forward, I have every faith that you will lead us onward and upward with confidence and strength. MWiB in East Anglia will grow in your tender care.

Bob, Cedar and I were holidaying in the Lake District this August and had the rare opportunity to have a guided tour of a bobbin making factory. Opened in 1834, this factory turned out wooden bobbins of all sizes for the Lancashire cotton mills, the domestic and the global market until forced to close in 1971, superseded by cheaper plastic bobbins. As we were taken around by the expert and enthusiastic guide who obviously loved the old building I was struck by one thing in particular. Amongst all those bobbins made over all those decades - there was a notable anomaly. Between 1914 and 1918 alongside the making of bobbins the factory turned their hand to the manufacture of toggles for the greatcoats of sailors in the British navy. Such a simple thing - a wooden toggle - but what a difference it makes in the cold, wet night watch aboard ship. May God make each of us like those toggles providing warmth and protection for those around us as we go about our daily lives.

God bless you.

My MWiB story – Judy Bainbridge

I suspect like many of you my journey started at a very young age when I was taken to Sunday school. My first memory is a 5th birthday party in church with my twin sister, surrounded by parents, aunts and cousins. There were other women in the church who were Sunday school teachers who shared simple prayers and stories about the love of Jesus. All the women were involved in Women's Fellowship and Women's Work.

These were safe and happy times where my extended family played significant roles in the church.

I continued to be nurtured at my home church on Teesside until I left home to begin Nurse training. Whenever possible I went back home on Sunday to sing in the choir and spend time with family. I completed my nurse training in 1964 and married Norman in 1966.

We bought a house in North Yorkshire and along with our two children attended the Methodist Church in Stokesley, part of the Darlington District. It was there that I first went to a Women's Fellowship meeting where I met some amazing talented women. These women used their God given gifts to the Glory of God in music, creative writing, prayer and study groups often to my mind reflecting the women in the Bible. It was a time of growth in my Christian faith in which these meetings played a large part. It was a joy to go to the rural chapels around North Yorkshire, and I attended residential weekends at Minsteracres Retreat Centre in Northumberland.

We moved to Cambridgeshire in 1984 and I must admit it was a reluctant move for me but my husband's work made it necessary. We bought a house in Buckden and quickly became involved and welcomed into the Methodist church family. There I found another women's group which I was happy to join. When work allowed, I helped with the children's activities and encouraged the children with the work of JMA raising funds to support the Methodist Church's World Mission Fund.

After lots of discussions women's groups became known as Network in the Methodist Church which was formed in 1987 and brought together the two movements, Women's Work and Women's Fellowship, the aim was to Encourage, Enable and Equip women to fully participate in the life of the church.

Whilst working and bringing up children I loved going to the Network group where I found caring and sharing an enormous help in times of joy and sadness pointing me to knowing that Jesus is a constant strength. I could identify some of the women in the group like women in the Bible, the prayerful and those who were always busy like Mary and Martha.

Following on from retirement and leaving our children who were now settled we decided to make a change and moved to Grange-over Sands in Cumbria and of course attended the Methodist Church there. Here I found another well attended Network group. Our grandchildren came to stay in school holidays and loved to come to the fortnightly meeting. I think the orange juice and biscuits were a great attraction. Our group travelled all around Cumbria going to meetings and District Days. One I remember was at a small chapel with a lovely lively speaker who spoke of Miriam and encouraged us to dance around the aisles. Our residential circuit weekends were at Abbot Hall Guild Hotel in a lovely setting offering walks and visits to the Lake District, experiencing God's creation and beauty. Friendships were made through these groups and have remained over time, which are very special like Ruth and Naomi in the Bible.

We moved back to Cambridgeshire in 2011 and settled in the rural village of Warboys on the edge of The Fens to be near family and we now attend the small Methodist church in the St. Neots & Huntingdon Circuit.

Network/MWiB does not have a meeting at Warboys, sadly, this is case in many of our churches these days. I continue to stay connected with Methodist women through East Anglia District Days which are always varied and interesting and continue to support the Fund for World Mission through our Easter Offering.



Network changed its name to Methodist Women in Britain in July 2011 which connects women in Britain with women worldwide and continues to support today's mission partners with practical prayer and support.

I have been inspired by the women I have met over 8 decades sharing experiences and learning about social action, global justice, gender equality and much more.

A “bit of history” - Susan

This time I thought I would remind us of the Charities we have supported since Network became MWiB, working from the most recent first. The Charities have largely been chosen by the President (in consultation with the Executive) and our support generally lasts two or three years. I am carrying on with PSPA.

- Progressive Supra-nuclear Palsy Association (PSPA) – our current Charity which Peter Sorrell gives us updates on (see page 10)
- 3 Million Steps – helping people with brain injuries.
- Bees, Beds and Blessings – working with the Methodist Church in Jamaica. We welcomed Bishop Everald to our last Ely District Day.
- East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices (EACH) – this needs no explanation.
- Turning Point Trust – supporting Jean and Michael Simmonds’ daughter and son-in-law’s work on Kibera slum, Kenya
- Teenage Cancer Trust – helping to raise the money for the new specialist Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, which opened to their young patients in 2012. We raised over £33,000 which was amazing.
- Mind – provider of mental health services, the demand for which continues to grow.



While I was looking back through our old newsletters in order to remind myself of the above, I found that Heather Sorrell had written the following in Spring 2017:

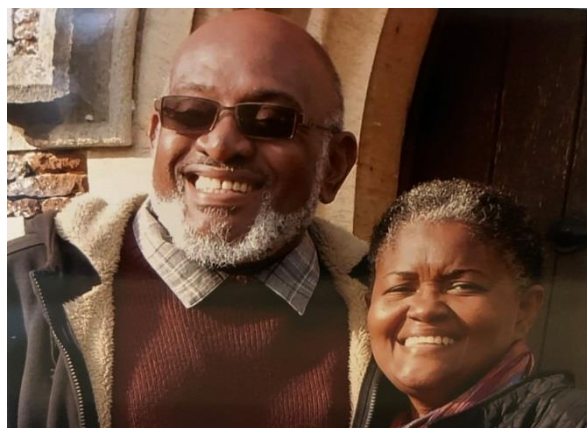
“All are Welcome” is a phrase often used in our Churches. Are we really ready to put these words into action?

This speaks to us just as strongly today! Things have moved on but we are not there yet. Hence, the importance of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy which the Methodist Church has adopted. MWiB has always been about social justice, as was John Wesley in his time.

Remember Birds, Bees and Blessings? – Ruth Arnold

On Sunday 28th September Bernard and I worshipped via YouTube in a service in the island of Montserrat to celebrate 50 years as a preacher and 40 years in the Methodist Ministry of Revd. Everal Galbraith. It was a wonderful Caribbean service and lasted for three and a half hours! That took us back to our days in Jamaica in the 70s and was very nostalgic and emotional.

Some of you will remember that Everal and Sherraine visited us in 2018 and launched our charity for the bee project in Jamaica and the conversion of an old manse into homes for local teachers in a rural area. So I thought you might be interested to have a little update on the charity and on them.



The honey business has gone from strength to strength, along with one for the production of avocados, which Everal instigated and are now known island - wide. The 'beds' bit is taking longer to achieve and has not yet been fully realised—prayers and finance needed I think.

Everal and Sherraine have had several significant moves since 2018 . When they came to us Everal was Bishop of the Jamaican District, living in Kingston, Jamaica. He went on to become the President of the MCCA (Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas) and moved to live in the MCCA centre in Antigua.

In 2024 his term of office was completed and he returned to circuit work and was sent to the small island of Montserrat, which is still suffering from the volcano which erupted 30 years ago and changed the island and its people for ever. It is a very different call and challenge for Everal and Sherraine but as always they have responded to God's call and thrown their heart and soul into the work of the Church and the school where Sherraine is teaching. I was thrilled to hear that she has also just been elected President of MCCA Women for the next five years. It will be great for us to be able to follow her activities and progress. It is an enormous commitment but I know she feels the Lord's leading and strength and will do a wonderful job.

Please remember Everal and Sherraine in your prayers.

MWiB Trustees and Ambassadors – Susan

You are hopefully all aware that Rita Rowe is the Trustee that covers Lincolnshire (where she lives) and East Anglia Districts. Some of you will have met Rita when she attended our District Day at Histon.

Are you also aware that Jacky Woor is our District Ambassador? My understanding is that an Ambassador represents their area for MWiB, works with the Trustee and attends a Trustee meeting as a voting member if the area Trustee is unable to attend. Detailed role descriptions for Trustees and Ambassadors are still being worked on.

Noticing from the national mailing that a Zoom meeting for Trustees and Ambassadors was taking place on 8th September, I asked Jacky what was discussed at these twice-yearly meetings. Jacky said that unfortunately she had not been able to make any so far due to diary clashes and it was the case again for this one. I therefore got myself invited in Jacky's place so we were represented!

It turned out to be quite a long meeting and one that Co-Chair Leonora could not make due to illness. It was an opportunity to meet the new Co-Chair (replacing Maggie Woods) Olive Ruzvidzo. There were over 30 ladies present from across the country ranging from Cornwall to Scotland and from Wales to me in East Anglia. Quite a few of the faces were familiar to me from Swanwick.

Reports were received from three areas – Cornwall, Cumbria and Scotland. Later in the meeting we went into breakout groups to discuss past and future plans – what had worked well in the past and what was being tried in the future. I noted a few things I thought worth sharing which we can consider further in our Executive and Forum meetings in January/February 2026.

- Afternoon teas with a speaker seem to work well in a number of places (we have done this in the Norwich Circuit).
- One area had a Churches Together speaker on the Nicene Creed and several talked about inviting those from other denominations to their events.
- Someone spoke of holding a retreat in a hotel which was enjoyed by those who attended but too expensive for many, which she was uncomfortable with. Consideration was being given to retreat days instead.
- Quiet days being held on a Saturday to try to attract younger women. It was commented that you need some young women in the first place.

- Some were struggling to get people to organise events and a few had little happening at all but remained hopeful.
- Some areas had low attendances whilst others still had well-attended District Days. This did seem to be impacted by the distances people needed to travel.
- It was talked about having District Days with challenging speakers and those who engage people; although it was acknowledged that many come mainly for the fellowship. Some offered creativity options in the afternoon (as we used to do with our Conference days).
- Local arrangement services had been used to tell people about MWiB and had resulted in some potential Swanwick attendees.

We also heard about forthcoming events including the Butterfly Service (see below) on 25th November at Wesley's Chapel, London. It was asked if this would be livestreamed and this will be investigated. Apparently livestreaming Daffodil Day (as in Covid times) is prohibitively expensive, which is a shame. 16 days of activism start on 25th November.



We heard a little from Olive about the new Webinar series (see page 9) on topics not normally discussed in Churches. We were encouraged to attend to hear specialist speakers and then take the thoughts away to talk about in smaller Church groups.

I also learnt that not all Districts have a MWiB President! This was a very interesting meeting and we will ensure that we are represented (by Jacky, me or someone else!) at future ones so we do not miss out. It is a good opportunity to hear how others are doing and take encouragement/learning for the future.

The next meeting is on Monday 11th May 2026.

The Butterfly Movement *(info from Leonora's blog)*

This is about the Elimination of Violence against Women goal. MWiB is developing its own campaign – The Butterfly Movement – in honour of the Mirabel Sisters from the Dominican Republic and our own emblem. It is holding the November service of thanksgiving and affirmation with invited dignitaries and organisations involved in the support of victims/survivors of violence as well as those around the Connexion involved in the campaign. The amazing story of the three Mirabel Sisters is told in the YouTube film “Code Name Butterflies”.

National news

Newsletter

Do you receive the national quarterly newsletter electronically? If not, and you would like to, please sign up directly or ask your local Circuit MWiB rep who should receive it via Jacky Woor. The latest one contains news of what the Co-Chairs have been doing, a report from the Helen Kim Memorial Scholar, Madeleine Reed (who some of you will have met at Diss), gifts given to Queen's Foundation leavers, thank you from Maggie Woods as she steps down as Co-Chair (we look forward to welcoming her to our District Day next May) and news from some of the Districts. It makes a good read.



Madeleine at Diss

Prayer diary

A quarterly prayer diary is also produced, the most recent one by Madeleine. This encourages us to join in praying for MWiB Officers, Trustees and Ambassadors, Methodist Women in Ireland and the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women as well as the work of MWiB across our Areas and Districts. The prayer diary can be used alongside the Methodist Church Prayer Handbook, which is a very useful resource.

Webinars

Another new national initiative is a brand new webinar series "Let's Talk About It". This will cover topics that affect women most but don't always get talked about in Church. The first two (Menopause and Intimacy) will have taken place by the time you read this newsletter but the one on 27th November is about "Female Genital Mutilation – Let's break the silence and protect our sisters". You can sign up via the MWiB website. Future topics will be mental health, Domestic Abuse (Violence against women and girls), Social Justice (Poverty and Money), Immigration (Welcoming the Stranger), Gender/Sexual Identity and Faith & Politics (What would Jesus tweet?). These sound interesting and challenging.

Footnote

Although we can feel that we are struggling at times, there is a lot of work going on in the name of MWiB across the Connexion. Please try to encourage others to join in.

Methodist Women in Britain and the PSP Association (PSPA) – Peter Sorrell

Beginning at Autumn District Day 2024, the PSPA has been the MWiB President's Charity, the link being that Heather Sorrell, a former District President, is a sufferer from PSP, Progressive Supra-nuclear Palsy. The PSPA was founded in 1994 by Michael Koe, whose wife Sarah had died of PSP, but at that time there was no support for PSP patients and carers, and a dearth of medical information. The PSPA was set up with the aims of supporting patients and their carers, but, equally important, making more information available for both the medical profession and general public, and then to fund research into PSP.

There are about 6,000 cases of PSP and Cortico-Basal Degeneration (CBD), but this is widely regarded as a substantial underestimate. PSP is a rare degenerative neurological condition for which there is no cure. Diagnosis of PSP can be a significant challenge because the symptoms of PSP resemble so many other conditions such as, for example, Parkinson's or a stroke, and for this reason there is often a significant gap between the initial onset of the illness and diagnosis. For Heather, looking back several years, I can now see things in the context of PSP, although at the time there would have been nothing to make that link.

PSP is caused by a build-up in the brain of a particular protein called Tau, which mis-shapes and hinders the transmission of messages between brain cells. PSP can affect different bodily functions, for example, falls, where patients with PSP tend to fall backwards. Eyesight, mobility challenges and anxiety are all possible indicators of PSP. Because of the variety of symptoms, it can be said with certainty that no two cases of PSP are alike. For the last 4 years Heather has been in a nursing home. She was the first person the nursing home had taken with PSP but they now have 2 other residents, but their presentation and symptoms are all different.

Heather is not in pain. At the same time Heather recognises people and is aware of what is happening to her and to the world. She likes to know what is happening and invariably wants me to read the Diss church newsletter to her.

In practice, what does PSP mean? Progressive is as it says – the patient's health will continue to deteriorate, and this is what has happened with Heather. Initially she was actively involved in all the activities provided at the nursing home, but she now rarely wants to take part and prefers to be in bed, where she is sleeping a lot more.

Supra-nuclear is because it is the lower part of the brain, the brainstem, which is affected with PSP. CBD is caused by the same protein malfunction, but in a different part of the brain. Palsy is weakness, and for PSP patients a common area of weakness is in chewing and talking, and for Heather she is now on a soft diet and has to be fed. I know that giving her lunch will tire her out, and she often wants to lie down and go back to sleep afterwards.

Thank you Peter for the update – you will see from Olga’s report that we have already raised £1,000 for PSPA - Susan

Something to think about

Maureen Hearn found the following in the Café of Buxton Methodist Church and thought it was interesting. I can certainly relate to it and will try to bear it in mind as I become President. Susan

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR REDUCING STRESS

1. Thou shalt not be perfect nor try to be.
2. Thou shalt not try to be all things to all people.
3. Thou shalt leave things undone that can be done tomorrow.
4. Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say no.
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thyself and for thy supportive network.
7. Thou shalt switch off and do nothing sometimes.
8. Thou shalt have quiet times just for you.
9. Thou shalt not feel guilty.
10. Thou shalt not be your own worst enemy but be thy best friend.



Relating to this, I have been doing a course called “Practicing the Way” and this includes various practices including the need to have a Sabbath. This really made me think and I am now making a conscious effort to have a day a week when Paul and I go out somewhere to get away from the computer and its demands! This has resulted in us visiting lots of lovely places in our District. Susan

A reflection on The Potter (Jeremiah 18 v1-17)



Looking at the passage from Jeremiah we need to remember that he was a very young man when called to become a prophet; Jeremiah was chosen to lead God's people back into accord with Him but the more Jeremiah told the people of God's word the more they turned against him. They came through drought, fire, earthquake and even went to the length of worshipping idols in the temple. Now God is losing his patience with them; He chose them out of all the world as His people, yet the Israelites decided they didn't really care much for what God wanted, only what they wanted.

So we come to this passage, God has told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house and see what His plans are. If we today were told to go the potter's and see God's plan how would we react? Perhaps that is how Jeremiah first reacted. What good would it do to go to see this labourer working? What could he possibly have to show him, Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet?

What Jeremiah saw was a man working with a lump of clay. As it was just then it was nothing to look at, just a mess, but the potter threw it onto the wheel and began to slowly and careful mould it into a shape, it was a work in progress. When he had finished he took it off the wheel and began examining it. He was not happy with what he saw and just lumped it into a ball, a mess, put it back on the wheel and started again. This time when he was finished he was delighted with what he had made and put it aside ready for firing in the kiln.

I am sure most of us have at some time or another watched a potter at work. It takes time, both by the potter and others, in producing a useful and beautiful object; skills of the potter and maybe an artist also. They have not rushed their work, but taken care and time until it was right.

This was the point that God was trying to make to Jeremiah, that God, as the potter, was creating a finished article in His people. Yes it was going to take time. His chosen people were not yet a finished article; there was still much shaping, drawing and painting to be done. It was an ongoing work, a progress that would take time and patience and there would be set-backs.

How about us, are we still a work in progress? Have we been moulded into shape or do we still need some more work doing? Only you can answer that question – over to you!

Jacky Woor, LP, Central Norfolk

Commissioning of new Co-Chair – Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo – Susan Eldridge

This took place on 21st September 2025 at Barn Hill Methodist Church, Stamford. Although unable to attend in person, I was able to watch the service via the livestream. It was a very enjoyable occasion. It started with singing by the Zimbabwe Fellowship. Then all present in person were invited to stand and were videoed saying “All are welcome”, with this video clip to be added to many others saying the same thing across and beyond the Connexion. A welcome was given by Revd Andrew Hollins, Circuit Superintendent. It was United Nations International Day of Peace and there was a minute of standing in silence and then spoken prayer, particularly for those in Gaza. Leonora (the other Co-Chair) gave a welcome on behalf of the MWiB Executive and candles were lit. The hymn “Great is thy faithfulness” was sung and then Olive was commissioned.



Olive said it felt surreal that this day had finally come. She had been working with the Executive for a while, but this was the official part. She thanked everyone for the confidence bestowed on her and said she had only attended Swanwick Conference twice, both as free places. She initially thought of all the reasons why she could not do it! She referred back to generations of women and remembered that she would not be working on her own but with the Executive and all those supporting MWiB. It would also give her an opportunity to stand up for social justice and the vulnerable. She thanked her predecessor, Maggie, and Leonora for the guidance given. She is working with a group of “sisters”, with laughter and her Mother had been involved with World Federation for years.

The readings (by MWiB Officers – one local and one national) were Colossians 3 v12-14 and 1 Corinthians 12 v12-27. The latter refers to one body with many parts which is particularly apt for MWiB. We sang the hymn “Love Divine” and then Revd Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu (from our District) gave the address based on the theme Olive had chosen “Woven Together – threads of faith, hope and love” and started by honouring Olive’s mother. The address included that Olive had responded to God’s call, that unity is not uniformity, when a thread is missing a garment is incomplete, faith is not passive – it wrestles, hope rises from lament and love is not sentimental. The voices of everyone need to be heard. The body of Christ is not confined to the pews.

Olive is the first African woman to serve MWiB in this way and that should be celebrated. Charity asked if we were willing to let our frayed edges show so others can find healing. We should be clothed in Christ, not nationalism or fear and should be rooted in Christ. This was followed by the great hymn “And can it be”. Olive said she loved the words but not necessarily the tune! She referred to Charity as her “big sister”.



Rev Charity, Leonora, Maggie & Olive

Following the prayers of intercession, the hymn “Blessed Assurance” was sung in both English and Shona. After the blessing by Revd Charity, Olive invited everyone to dance! I am sure they did, but the livestream cut off at that point!

Ely Methodist and Eco-Church – Helen Maguire

I have always been interested in nature and the environment, took school groups for gardening club and the annual bird watch and have an allotment. As the effects of climate change have become increasingly an urgent topic of conversation in the Western World, it was natural that I wanted to join the Eco Church group that was formed at Ely Methodist Church in 2023. A Rocha UK (www.arocha.co.uk) is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and equipping Christians and Churches in the UK to care for the environment.

The Ely Eco Church group were all keen to try and do what they could to achieve the A Rocha Eco Church Bronze Award.

We wanted to encourage talk amongst our Church community about the effects of climate change on our environment and thought about how we can all reduce our Carbon Footprint and as a Church organisation. We thought about how we could recycle more. To this end two group members looked into recycling blister packs. Another idea was to have a talk by Revd. Bernard Arnold about twinning toilets, followed by supper to raise money for these toilets in Third World countries. A water butt was installed and another this year, the Brownies tidied their bug hotel and insect friendly flowers planted in the tubs in our courtyard area. We are grateful to those who supply a picture before worship each week to help us to focus on our care for creation. Prayers for our environment were included in services and hymns on the theme were included where suitable. Gradually we hoped we had achieved enough for the Bronze Award.

We quite quickly and successfully applied to A Rocha UK in 2024 for our award and then planned a special service last July 2024, led by Revd. Catherine Dixon, when our Mayor at the time, Chris Phillips, presented the Church with the Bronze Eco Church award. The Mayoress, Mary Rone, cut a Celebration cake.

Following the success of last year's presentation event for our Bronze Award from A Rocha, and the talk mentioned above, we were able to "twin" no fewer than four toilets in less developed countries, and the scheme has been adopted as the Circuit Charity. We are having another autumn event on recycling: "Let's Talk Rubbish", followed by tea, this October.

In 2023 Ruth Arnold had suggested maybe a few people could do some knitting, or in some way portray the changes in the temperatures we have experienced in our weather over recent years. The idea had come from her daughter, Briony, who is a Vicar in Cheshire.

So I have been knitting two rows a day for nearly two years now. After managing to knit the daily temperatures in 2024, I thought I would like to compare what knitting in 2025 would look like. The changes in the colouring this year, especially with the long and extremely hot summer, are quite striking. I have been reading the temperature at 9.00 a.m. in a shaded N. facing spot. I was surprised myself at how doing this has shown quite powerfully the effects of climate change on our temperatures, even over twenty one months. My chart changes colour every five degrees from – 4 degrees to 25 degrees.

In the photo (right) of the 'scarves', (January to June) you can see that the darker orange yellow blocks and the red for the hottest weather are seen more this year from January to the end of June. I found it amazing and also unsettling to see the thermometer showing 21 to 23 degrees at nine o'clock!!

So since achieving our Bronze Award, we have spent the last year working on gaining the Silver Award through a variety of projects. This includes working out our Ely Church Carbon footprint (a very big job). Our Eco Church group have been trying to think of ways to recycle a wider range of things, and tomatoes and herbs were grown to share with the Community.



We have joined a monthly Litter Pick with friends from the Ely Cathedral and this cooperation led to an invitation to attend a special Cathedral Evensong. We were listed with parishes across the diocese involved in the A Rocha scheme. Teresa and Robert Ely attended this, along with Revd. Catherine Dixon.



Last year our Harvest Festival service had an environmental theme, and this year the Church Eco Group have offered to lead an “Own Arrangement” service on the morning of Sunday October 12th to celebrate the many ways in which we can all contribute to creation care. The A Rocha charity website has all kinds of ideas for Worship on the theme. Next year we hope to apply successfully for our Silver Eco Church Award!

Mary Bosanquet Lecture 2025

I again attended this lecture which was a fringe event at Methodist Conference, held in Telford. Mary Bosanquet was a remarkable lady enthused by Methodism and the Wesleys. She rejected her comfortable upbringing to set up an orphanage and school in her home. She became one of the first female Methodist Preachers and apparently once preached to 10,000 people. She preached from a step in Telford Church as, being a woman, she was not allowed in the pulpit! She married John Fletcher but this sadly only lasted four years as he died. Mary continued her ministry for nearly three decades.



Telford Conference Centre

The Methodist Church Global Relations team expressed their gratitude to MWiB including for the Easter Offering which is organised by MWiB but with the offering going to the Methodist Church. At the lecture there were several women from overseas who were at Conference. It was also attended by Revd Helen Hollands, our Chair of District, Revd Charity Tozivepi-Nzegwu and Anne Browse (who once led a weekend for us at Belsey Bridge).

The lecture itself was given by Kathy Galloway from the Iona Community who has worked for Christian Aid in the past. Kathy is a preacher and a poet (she shared some of her poems) and said she was finding less and less difference between the two. Kathy suggested the Universe is the song of God the maker and commented that babies first perceive the world through their senses and children experience the world in so many different ways.

A sense of place is very important to many (not something enjoyed by refugees). Kathy's lecture was quite challenging. She said many pay lip service to community and live out of individualism. She suggested that the "Eco disaster" is not yet powerful enough for people to change.

Kathy said that unlike Job (in the Bible) we are not embedded in the natural world. David Attenborough is a present day Job. We are torturing our life support systems. Those in power boats see little of what is happening in the water below.

Kathy's challenge was to:

- Pay attention (to what is around us)
- Be astonished (e.g. at the wonder of the Universe)
- Tell about it (e.g. speak up when needed)

Kathy encouraged us to recognise the gift of our bodies. The Olympics and the Paralympics demonstrate what the human body can do. She said God did not make a mistake when he created blind or deaf people or those who are different in some way. Jesus' stories were characterised by inclusion. Kathy suggested we will be judged not by what we believe but by how we love. We need to cherish our frailties.

Children are the most vulnerable victims of war in our troubled times. As a member of the Iona Community, Kathy is focused on peace and reconciliation. We can experience God through our senses, the beauty of creation, silence, songs, touch or even swimming in the sea (not one for me!).

It was an interesting and thought provoking talk encompassing poetry, nature, our bodies and things going on in the world. Kathy's passion shone through and she also gave an important reminder that Jesus' welcome is for everyone. Hence, the Methodist Church "Justice, Dignity and Solidarity" focus.

The last three year's Mary Bosanquet lectures are available on YouTube.

Footnote – I was shocked to learn recently that Kathy has since died.

Susan Eldridge
(East Anglia District EDI Officer)

Swanwick and experience of A&E – Rita Rowe, MWiB Trustee for East Anglia and Lincolnshire

I have been asked to write something for the Newsletters of the above Districts and I wanted to let you all know that the Swanwick Conference is being held next year on April 10th – 12th. This is a Conference that has been going on for numerous years now and, if you have never attended, please look out for the advertising. The booking will begin in January 2026. It is well worth a visit and so many people meet up for this who never see each other anywhere else all year but find friends and have a catch up as if they meet every week. We are all friendly together and come from all areas of the Country to meet up as Methodist Women in Britain.



There is a speaker each year that leads the weekend but various things go on through Saturday including workshops where you can learn about exciting events that are happening all year round. Next year's conference will be led by Carolyn Godfrey a Past Vice President of Methodist Conference. Please keep a lookout for information and posters advertising this in your newsletters and church notices. Please give it a try if you have never been or speak to ladies who have attended in the past and get more information.

I was very unfortunate this year in April when attending the Swanwick Conference as I was taken poorly during Saturday afternoon and was in a lot of pain. I had to call a member of the MWiB team to get some help, thinking I would just need a pain killer from the Medical staff.....but it led to an ambulance being called and I went to Derby Royal infirmary A&E so not quite the experience I had hoped for or expected but people acted very quick to get me help and I cannot fault the service of the Ambulance team who looked after me impeccably and very kindly. They gave me some pain relief which slowly took effect but decided I needed to go to hospital as my sats were very erratic.

I am writing this mainly to give an insight into A&E departments and how they are under pressure and have not got the staff to help those in need. I arrived at 6.30pm and was wheeled into a very busy department where there were trolley beds all over the place and people sitting in chairs waiting to be seen by a doctor. I was registered by the Ambulance team at 7.15pm having had to queue along with other ambulance patients and walk in wounded. I didn't know where to look as we were so close together and nobody was hurrying to get us booked in because they didn't know where to put us all.

After the team left me I sat on a bed in a corner next to a wall and a side room observing the system. People were everywhere but hardly any staff. Nurses were doing their best but no doctor was in sight. They came and checked my blood pressure and asked if I was in pain at 8pm. I was doing OK and not too bad. THEN an ambulance team arrived with a very distressed patient who was being held down on the trolley by 4 Policemen because he was throwing arms and legs all over the place. After 20 minutes of trying to find somewhere to put him, they moved the patient out of the side room next to me and took them down a corridor and put this distressed patient in there. Eventually somebody came to sedate them and then the police could release the hold they had on him. It was very sad to watch as I didn't know if he was drunk, drugged or having an episode through a fit or something medically wrong? It took staff a long time to get the right treatment before this patient as there were so few on duty.

The whole night went on like this with many other patients arriving and being put in corners and any spare areas until somebody could see to them. It was a nightmare and I felt like I was in a 3rd world country not England with a NHS system. I really felt then that our wonderful system had broken and is still struggling now. Eventually at 11pm I asked for some more pain relief as I was beginning to struggle again but had still not seen anybody. I spent the whole night in A&E and saw a doctor at 11am Sunday morning. He eventually sent me for a CT Scan and told me I was a very fit lady for my age and there was nothing showing as to why I had been in pain. I was sent home and told if it occurs againcome back!!!!!!

The moral of my story is continuing as I have had 3 more episodes and visited A&E each timeonly to witness the same scenario and be left for hours before being seen. Eventually I found out I have gallbladder problems with stones and one travelled into the wrong tube and I had to have it removed by endoscopy as I was going jaundiced. The staff doing this procedure were brilliant and I am only grateful somebody found out what was wrong. I am now on a very strict No Fat diet which is keeping me healthy and well so far. The Consultant does not want to operate so I am learning to live a different way of life and trying to keep healthy. I really do not want to visit A&E anymore so hope everything continues to be alright. I am grateful that a doctor eventually found out my diagnosis. The NHS is wonderful if you see the right people but they are very few and far between these days so try to keep well and I hope nobody else experiences what I have this year.

Easter Offering Dedication Service

Warboys is one of the smallest chapels in the St. Neots & Huntingdon Circuit on the edge of The Fens. We hosted the Easter Offering service on 18th May providing a sharing tea and welcoming friends from the ten churches in our circuit.

Women participated in the service by reading scripture passages, prayers and the four stories in the Order of Service prepared by MWiB as a gift to the Methodist people.



EDUCATION FOR ALL, HOPE FOR ALL was the theme of the service.

The stories were very interesting:

- 1) Hannah Ball - a friend of John Wesley - who believed that by giving children a basic schooling she could change lives for good, and set up a Sunday School in 1769.
- 2) A Methodist Girls school was founded in Sri Lanka. Methodists in Sri Lanka were offering education to girls before the British State had acknowledged the importance of schooling for all children in England.
- 3) The Church of North India - Durgapur Education for Safety. The Diocese is actively trying to protect the vulnerable, especially girls who are subjected to trafficking. Baldahura Safe Home, a residential hostel, gives protection for girls who are at risk. Central to the work is to provide education and new opportunities.
- 4) Social Communication in Latin America - Colombia. CEPALC is an ecumenical organisation based in Colombia which has seen much violence in which children are the main victims. Programmes to sow peace uses stories of the women in the Bible such as Esther, Rahab and Miriam to help women and children understand their social and political rights and how to build gender equal relationships.

The Order of service, in full, can be found on the Methodist Church website.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/easter-offering/>

Judy Bainbridge

MWiB Circuit Events - Susan

I would like to encourage you to tell us about the events that you put on in your Circuits, as Judy has done on the previous page. This may provide ideas that other Circuits can use too.



I thought I would tell you about a day event we held in the Norwich Circuit at my Church, Framingham Earl Methodist Church, who looked after us well. We initially referred to it as a Quiet Day but then thought that might not encourage people to come as MWiB ladies like to talk! So it was more of a Reflective Day. I led it and this was the first time I have done this, although I have been to many such days led by other

people. I called it "Rooted in God – Reflection, fellowship and fun".

Much of the material I used came from a book called "Landscapes of Prayer" by Margaret Silf, which I had been introduced to when I went on the lay employees and volunteers retreat at The Pleasaunce, Overstrand, a couple of years ago and later bought myself a copy.

It has a sub-heading of "Finding God in your world and your life". I used two landscapes from the book – trees and gardens – to help us look at how they help us to be rooted in God. For trees we considered how deep our roots are and what nourishes our soul and how there is springtime inside every winter as trees come back to life. One of the discussion points for gardens was whether anything needs pruning in the garden of your heart and whether you can ask God for the courage to let him do what needs to be done. Too often we try to do everything ourselves.



We had some bible readings, some singing, a short quiz and a lot of discussion. We also had a short period of quiet time with activities like colouring, writing and reading being available. I invited the ladies who attended to bring an item that helps them to be rooted in God and to say a few words about the item. This resulted in a nice variety of items. I also had a selection of pictures that I had kept from old calendars and invited each lady to pick one that spoke to them and tell us why. This proved to be very interesting.



We were a very small group but I think everyone enjoyed the day – I know I did and the preparation was quite enjoyable too.

Treasurer's Report

MWiB East Anglia District Finances – 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance Brought Forward (1)	4,385.52	EAD Treasurers Bureau	166.00
General donations to MWiB (2)	90.15	Newsletters	76.24
Newsletters at Histon (3)	18.10	Postage	6.80
EADTB Donations (4)	200.00	Diss Room Hire	89.00
Bank Interest (5)	58.03	Donation to Churches for DD (7)	250.00
Donation to 3 Million Steps (6)	45.00	Donations to Speakers DD	100.00
Current Charity PSPA	1,197.60	Donation - 3 Million Steps	1,488.10
		Donation to MWiB national	50.00

Total Income (7)	5,994.40	Total Expenditure	2,226.14
Less Expenditure	2,226.14		
Remainder in Bank	3,768.26		

Monies in Hand

Current Account	2,431.25	
Deposit Account	1,337.01	
Total	3,768.26	(includes £1,197.60 for PSPA Charity)

Notes

1. Includes £1,443.10 collected for 3 Million Steps.
2. This item can sometimes be confusing as it invariably contains amounts that have been sent directly to Shaun without Churches/Circuits advising Olga, although on this occasion a very generous donation came from Women's Own which we now know is Dereham (Central Norfolk).
3. Newsletter donations from Histon District Day. At Dereham the donations received of £12.50 went to PSPA.
4. Annual subs are set at £15 per Circuit but the large sum shown here contains a very generous £50 from Waveney Valley. Some Circuits have made no donation and a couple may have donated directly without letting Olga know.
5. Interest on the savings account held by Central Finance Board.
6. This was a late donation to 3 Million Steps and is included in the figure in the Expenditure.
7. This figure includes the balance brought forward.
8. This comprises two payments of £50 relating to the previous year and two payments of £75 for the 2024/25 year.

Thanks

What a marvellous response so far to our Charity, Progressive Supra-nuclear Palsy Association. I think we deserve a run-down of how this amount is made up – District Day at Histon, District Day at Dereham, Cromer Methodist Church, Ely Methodist Church, Women's Own Dereham, Peter Sorrell (fees from talks) and £50 from the Conference Account. We give a big thank you to all who have contributed in any way and written thanks have been sent. I have now asked Shaun at EADTB to transfer £1,000 over to the Charity – **Olga Watkins, Treasurer, September 2025**

Conference Account

In addition to our main account which is looked after by Olga and EADTB, we have a Conference Account which is looked after by me (with Margaret Snelling being my main counter-signatory for geographical reasons). This was set up many years ago when we had a loan from the District in order to pay the deposit for a residential conference at Belsey Bridge. The loan has long been paid back but we have retained the account in case we ever get back to having residential conferences.

For the last few years it has just been used to pay a few subsidies for first-time attendees at the Swanwick Conference when the recipient requested a cheque rather than a bank transfer (it is easier for me to write cheques than Shaun and it spreads the cost of the subsidy across the two accounts), to pay for Elizabeth's gift and to make occasional donations to our Charity (this keeps the account alive).

The balance on 1st September 2025 was **£1,587.29**. This sounds a lot but if we had to pay a deposit for a residential conference this could be quite high.

Susan

Payment reminders from Olga

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. Cash can be given directly to Olga at District Days and a Bank Transfer can be made if necessary (please contact Olga for 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 Olga is 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 Olga a note stating whether the donation is for MWiB funds or for our designated charity and indeed who or where it is from.

Olga's contact details

Olga Watkins, 01487 814352 or email olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk
Address 1, Grenfell Road, Bury, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambs PE26 2QR

Future dates

District Executive	8th January 2026 by Zoom (9.30am) 1st September 2026 by Zoom (9.30am)
District Forum	26th February 2026 at Diss – 10 for 10.15am start 24th September 2026 at Diss – 10 for 10.15am start
District Day – Spring District Day – Autumn	13th May 2026 at Diss – Speaker Maggie Woods (Provisionally) 21st October 2026 at Thetford – Speaker Sarah Friswell
National Conference	Swanwick – 10th – 12th April 2026

Members of the Executive Committee

Susan Eldridge – President – susan.eldrids@gmail.com, 01508 493795

Jacky Woor – Secretary – jackywoor07@btinternet.com, 01362 697860

Olga Watkins – Treasurer – olga.watkins@yahoo.co.uk, 01487 814352, 1 Grenfell Road,
Bury, Ramsey, Huntingdon, PE26 2QR

Sue Groome – Past President – suegroome55@outlook.com, 01502 731038

Trixie Dye – Resources – theresadye39@yahoo.co.uk, 01508 499220

Susan Eldridge – Newsletter – as above

Ruth Arnold – Member – 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.