

# THE NEWS

## 90<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary Edition

The magazine of Potters Bar United Reformed Church



Having a 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration is quite an achievement as quite a few members of our congregation (*been there done that!*) can attest. The pleasure is not unalloyed. A look back brings a warm glow but underlines that “*we are not what we were*”. Looking forward is clouded with uncertainty, “*how long can we keep going?*”

So the suggestion that we mark the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our church with a re-run of our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations seemed to most of us to be an attempt to ‘push water uphill’. And it has been a real achievement to take that idea and, bit by bit, generate

enthusiasm for it, and the dawning realisation that yes, we could still do it. And for that achievement we have to thank Frank Palmer.

For the rest of us, each deciding what we could still contribute, it has definitely been a case of “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”. We comfortably met Frank’s challenge and produced a magnificent Anniversary Week of events that we can all be proud of.

And this reminds us that a church without people is just an empty building. It is the people, the church community, that are the real church. And that when we gather in his name, God is there as well.

Our beliefs bring us together, but it is in doing things together that we really get to know each other, recognising and respecting the skills that each of us brings to the whole. And the simple pleasure and fulfilment of working together in harmony to achieve an objective we had set ourselves. These are the things that bind and make us stronger when we come together to worship. And for this, as for so many other things, we give thanks.

This Anniversary Edition of The News sets out to record some of the highlights of that week and recognise the contributions so many have made to its success. We may not have captured everything (*or everybody*) but hope it will both honour a real achievement, and remind us as we look forward to our future (and our century), that it is by what we do together that we build that future - and make it happen!



Our week of Celebrations for our 90th Anniversary involved nearly every able member of our church. The male team was led by Frank Palmer, ably assisted by Tony Corfe, Robert Hillyard, John Knott, David Morris and David Ramsay. Janet O'Connor organised the ladies of the church (Barbara Corfe, Janet Green, Margaret Hilyard, Maureen Marlow, Jean Morse, Marian Poulton, Joan Powell, Heather Rae and Chris Ramsay) to provide tea/coffee and biscuits all day throughout the week - and some also



ran stalls at the BBQ and Mini Fayre. David Morris set up his display in the vestibule of many pictures from the beginnings of our church until the present day. He also had a large photographic exhibition in the Church.

We had many friends from outside the church

come to entertain us as you will see.....

## 5th July – Setting Up

The 9 ladies in the Church who produce flowers every week for the church each did flower arrangements which were placed around the church.





David Aplin set up his train layout.



Suzanne Sive provided an Art Display.





## 6th July – Opening BBQ and Mini-Fayre

We went for plan B as it rained for most of the day. Everything had to take place under cover, in our vestibule, and in the halls. John Knott had to cook the Barbecue in the oven.

There were various stalls and Chris Ramsay & Maureen Marlow were kept very busy in the kitchen making sandwiches and providing drinks.

We had Merlin Magical Society members 'Mixing & Mingling' and a Gymnastics display from Leapz & Bounds.

More than 100 people passed through our doors despite the rain.





# Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July – Service of Dedication led by Mike Findley.



Mike's Opening Service" for our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Week looked back to 1934 and forward to the next 90 years.

We started the **Look Back** with a reading from Luke, Chapter 6, verses 46 to 49 – the two house builders. We thought about those who built our first church. Mike thought that we could all agree that since the church has lasted, its foundation must have been on rock.

Mike's thoughts on **Looking Forward** followed

the reading from Mark chapter 6, in which Jesus is rejected in his hometown, and sends his disciples out to preach, drive out demons and heal sick people.

The reading encouraged us in some ways but challenged us to look forward, because compared with 90 years ago we were in a different world in many ways, but a similar world in others. We had a broader range of people living here now - different races, different religions. And we had a world in which those walking past our church had no idea what really went on inside. We had affluence and poverty, and we had uncertainty in our home situation and in the world situation, just as they did in 1934. We had people who were lost and lonely, people who didn't know where their next meal was coming from, people who felt rejected and unwanted.

So we had a challenge. People out there didn't know what went on in our church. People were frightened of coming into church, fearing that they might be out of place. Our responsibility was not to ourselves but to bring people in - to spread the good news to others.

The church building was not an end in itself. It was a hub, a hub that refreshed us, strengthened us, renewed us - we who came here regularly. A hub to go out from: the front line started at the door. We had to go out and spread the good news in different ways. Also, we were going to find that we needed to do more and more activity not on Sundays. People with families had sporting events and other activities on Sundays: parents were taking kids around on Sunday mornings and didn't have time to come to church.

We had to do things differently, but in a quiet way. We could show through our lives, through the depths of our faith, something that could lead other people to think that there was something about us, about our faith, that showed itself in how we lived our lives, how we conducted ourselves, how we helped other people. They would want to know what we had inside us that enabled us to





project the love that we had for God on to other people. They would want to know and to come.



We didn't often in church talk about hope, but unless we had hope we had nothing. And so, in whatever we did for the future, we had to have hope. We could have a vision about our church being a hub from which people went out, each in their own way, to communicate their faith to those they met on their long walks of life.

And with everything we did, we must try not to do

it on our own but to do it together with God - to bring God into all our decisions and all our activities. Because the world was still like 1934. It was full of lonely people who needed love, needed hope, needed to be valued, to be wanted. And our job was to fill that void, to spread love and hope, to provide service to people in need. If we had vision, if we had hope, if we involved the presence of God in everything we did, then we stood the best chance of our church lasting for another 90 years - walking hand in hand with God every step of the way.

## Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July – Terry Barnes' Hertfordshire Show Band.



After the Opening Ceremony and BBQ on the 6<sup>th</sup> and a Service of dedication on the 7<sup>th</sup>, the first of the Anniversary Week's events opened with a concert by the Hertfordshire Showband.





Once again, the weather did not favour us and the Bands were not able to play outside, so they played for us in Tilbury Hall. The Junior Band (*Under 16's*) led off with **Final Countdown** and further pieces.



Then the Senior Band took us through their programme with both commentary and comedy!

A colourful evening well attended and followed by cheese & wine.





## Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July – Malcolm Ball plays the Ondes

### Martenot.....



This was indeed a rare chance to see and hear the exciting sounds of the Ondes Martenot (Martenot Waves).

Malcolm took us through the essence of the instrument during the session illustrating the effects created as he went and playing his programme to demonstrate its full capabilities.

Ondes Martenot is a musical instrument that creates its sound through the overlap of tones between

two radio oscillators. They oscillate at supersonic frequencies but in combination produce a lower frequency sound which you can hear. Many timbres, or tone colours, can be created by filtering out upper harmonics, or component tones, of the audible notes – as Malcolm demonstrated for us.

At times he played the instrument using a wire stretched across the keyboard and moving a ring along the wire to vary the frequency. For other pieces he used the keyboard showing us that the keys produce vibrato when moved from side to side.



The sound was amplified through a 4-speaker system, one of which had a small gong positioned in front of it producing a metallic sound: another was the 'Palme' a lyre-shaped loudspeaker, using strings to produce sympathetic resonances.

A truly fascinating session!

**...followed in the evening by a talk on Diabetes by Dr Sai Ramanathan of Parkfield Medical Centre.**



#### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

2010 → 2030, predicted doubling  
UK in 2015 approx. 3.8 M people over 16 yrs (by 2030, 4.9M expected)  
Impact on health economies is vast (UK is 10B/annum – 10% NHS budget)  
Consequences to the patient are multiple, varied and can be debilitating





A very full church reflected the interest that many of us have in the subject of Diabetes. It was a carefully crafted journey through the subject, starting with the types of diabetes, how the body reacts (*what's going on*), measures to reduce severity (*or if pre-diabetic, to avoid the step into type 2 diabetes*). Then information on medication (*benefits and risks of particular treatments*), on testing and monitoring the wider range of health issues associated with diabetes – and of course the risks/complications that can follow if appropriate measures are not followed.

For diabetics (and pre-diabetics), he told us that it is a lifetime journey requiring a willing and committed partnership between the patient and those providing their treatment. Dr Ramanathan is Parkfield's Diabetes Lead, and a video recording of the talk is on our website at <https://pottersbarurc.org/2770-2/>



## **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July – A morning 'Hymns of Praise' Service .....**

About 40 people attended the Service and joined in the singing. A number of the congregation had chosen their favourite hymns and each of them spoke about why we they had chosen that specific hymn.

## **..... followed by an afternoon with choirs, introduced by Stephen Jones.**

What do you do if you have three quite different choirs – our Nursery, Wroxham School, and the church choir - and a real mix of children, parents and church members in the audience?

If you are Stephen, you get everyone engaged by getting them to stand up and do exercises, then sing and dance (*well rotate*) to a couple of fun tunes.







Then it was the Nursery's turn to show what they could do.

A couple of the Wroxham children got a chance to play on our organ – and very well they played too!

Then we had the Wroxham School Choir present their programme.

Our church choir was set the challenge of singing Alleluia in a round, with all the other people present singing the basic tune



whilst the choir attempted all the fancy bits.

It worked – well sort of.

The afternoon was rounded off by the Nursery singing for us "He's got the whole world in his hands".

Doesn't time pass quickly when you are having fun!



But there was still time to play with the trains.



# The Evening of 10<sup>th</sup> July – Tuna Dyonmez in Concert



Sometimes an almost chance meeting delivers something quite unexpected – a once in a lifetime moment. Tuna's parents were looking for a local venue for a piano recital for their son. We had a 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Week in prospect and it seemed to offer a great fit – and indeed so it was.

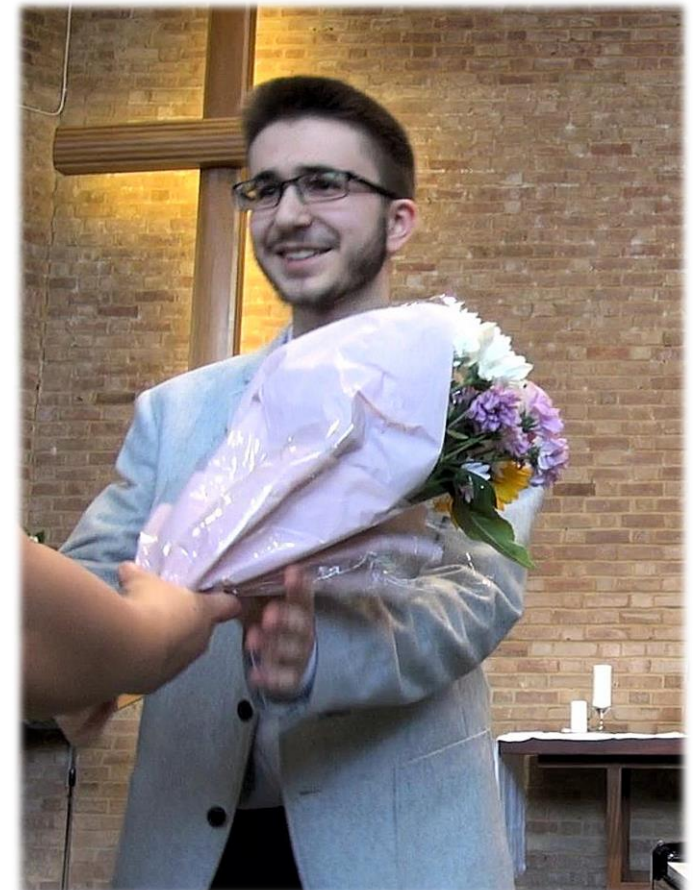
At 19, Tuna had been a Junior student at the Royal College of Music for 6 years and had just finished his first year as a Senior.

Stephen's 'one-liner' after pointing out the fire exits, that the only thing likely to catch

fire was Tuna's playing, proved prophetic. We had an evening of absolutely wonderful playing, a programme with incredible breadth and range of styles. A whole world of music!



His passion was at times intensely physical. As Stephen said, you could almost see the steam rising from our piano – which will never be the same.



And we were there, close up for a really memorable experience, given to us by a young man with a big future.

The bouquet of flowers was well deserved.

And we all celebrated with the Cheese & wine that followed.



# Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July – Flower Arranging Masterclass



The church was a hive of activity as 19 Ladies worked on their arrangements under the supervision of Eddie from Majestic Flowers – a regular Phoenix event which we'd rescheduled for the Anniversary Week.

Eddie's use of celery as a base for displays was creative: assembling the decoration to surround the base was not always easy - as he also demonstrated.



As usual Eddie provided a lot of creative advice as the individual arrangements progressed.



And the results were, as usual, magnificent!





Eddie's return to his vegetable theme – using tomatoes to decorate the plate on which the arrangement sat – seemed to come as a surprise for some.



A most enjoyable afternoon and some very satisfied flower arrangers!



## Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July Evening – Paul Day and the Life & Mission Choir







A fun evening of 'easy listening music' provided by Paul Day and the Choir, who had put together a programme of songs through the nine decades of our church life.

David Ramsay (*seemingly light of heart, having "bunked off" from his own choir for the evening*) set the mood, and we started with a rousing Happy Birthday for our Pam Maycock, a former member of the Life & Mission Choir.



We had an introduction for each song and the programme included a couple of solos and a voice quartet.







The last four songs were a reminder that this was a URC choir, so we heard The Beatitudes, St Richards Prayer, What He's done, and Praise his Holy Name.

## **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July – Pianola & Ogan Recital with Michael Broadway and Stephen Jones.....**

In our advance marketing we pitched this as a possible 'Clash of Titans', or a chance for perfect harmony. The reality was much more subtle.



We have enjoyed Michael Broadway's recitals on his pianola. His artistry is to take something that could be purely mechanical, and through changes of speed and emphasis add emotion



and bring it to life. It is nevertheless a co-production of man and machine and in the pianola and organ recital, the machine was still there as the 'third man in the room'.



So achieving that harmony required respect for the 'third man' and the constraints implied, and it was no mean feat for both of our human artistes. There was also the little matter of balancing the sound levels of piano and organ to achieve the desired harmony. I'm not sure that either Michael or Stephen was truly satisfied with the

day's performance, but certainly for us it was a real pleasure to experience something novel which was well balanced and allowed both instruments to shine. Hopefully this will not be the last time they work together.





## .....followed by our Charity Lunch



Our Charity Lunches on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month at 1.15 pm are a regular event and they usually follow the Lunchtime Recital.

We've been providing Charity Lunches for 25 years - initially on a weekly basis with soup, bread & cheese, but now with a more ambitious spread! We offer a full buffet menu of soup, meats/cheeses & salad, French bread, tea/coffee & biscuits and charge £6.00 per

person – eat as much as you like or until the food runs out !!

We have raised many thousands of pounds over the years and every few months we choose a different charity. We have just sent £350 to the Peace & Rennie Hospice and our next charity will be the Lifeboats (R.N.L.I.).

It is always a very friendly, happy occasion and it is especially good for those who live alone. Long may it continue !





## Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July – Anniversary Dinner



Why have an Anniversary Dinner, we asked ourselves? Well, we would certainly want to celebrate just the very fact of having made it through a challenging Anniversary Week, but there was so much more. We wanted to recognise and express our appreciation to those who have led our Sunday worship over the years and in doing so have made a huge contribution to the church we are today. We wanted to thank representatives from the groups who had been a part of the week's events – a big

thank you for all the pleasure they had given to those attending. We wanted to underscore the ecumenism of Churches Together in Potters Bar. And last, but certainly not least, to remember the big contribution to our church life made by past members whose lives have taken them away from Potters Bar - and to show we have not forgotten them!

We were pleased that so many invitees were able to join us. It certainly made for an eclectic mix and some great conversations.







David Ramsay was our host for the Evening. We started with a glass of fizz and a chat and then sat down to a well-stocked cold plate with trimmings, with cake or fruit to follow.











And of course, the speeches at the end.

Frank Palmer reminded us of Mike Findley's thoughts about the future of our lives, faith and worship, and the role of our church complex as a hub, a place of refreshment and renewal for those taking the Good News out into our community. For Richard Osborn, leading worship the next day, he offered a "How well did we do" report. The purpose had been threefold: to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our founding and our commitment to faith and ministry throughout the 90 years, to continue our outreach to the community, and to support a charity (Herts & Essex Air Ambulance).



Frank then took us through the very full week of events, noting that the small but talented organising committee had united under the slogan “Don’t let worry kill you, let the church help”. He thanked the artistes and soloists present, also those who had decorated the church with flowers, arranged art and photography displays, provided a model train experience for those young and young of heart, and produced a Church History in photographs for our 90 years.

We’d had a typical attendance in the mid-thirties for our events and he thought the hand-out of our 3000 programmes had also made an impact. In any event we had showed that Potters Bar URC was still very much alive and kicking!

He thanked all those who had contributed and all those who had joined us for the meal.

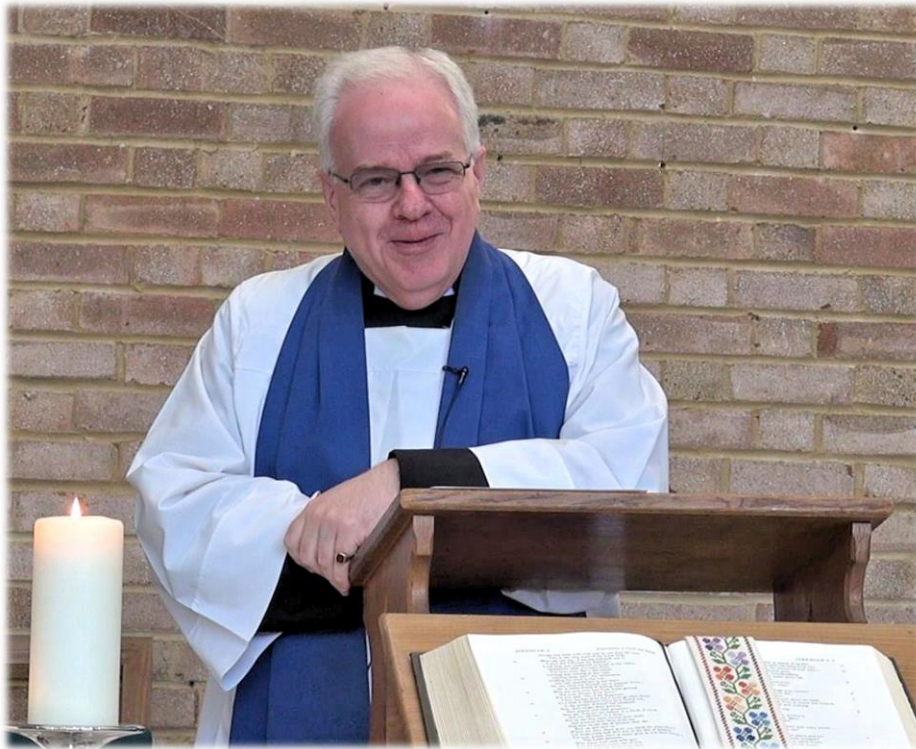


In a response from the Invitees, Fr Stefan Chrysostomu thanked us for making them welcome and feeding and watering them. As we raised our glasses (or coffee cups) we should reflect on what we’d achieved over the last 90 years and that we were still ‘alive and kicking’ – there was clearly plenty of life here, plenty that the Lord was doing here. Everyone in the room would want to say yes and Amen to everything that Christ and his Spirit will be doing with us and through us as we offer our distinctive ministry and witness to Jesus Christ, here in Potters Bar.

He congratulated us on our 90 years of service to the Lord and he looked forward to the next 90 years or so!



# Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Service of Thanksgiving, led by Canon Richard Osborn



It was a great pleasure to have Mike Findley and Richard Osborn - longtime and much appreciated leaders of our worship - to act as “book ends” – taking the Opening and Closing Sunday Services of our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Week Celebrations

Showing no signs of ill-effect after the previous evening’s Anniversary Dinner, Richard said it was marvellous to be with us on this special occasion. He knew a lot of us had had a very busy week, so if he spotted eyes closing, or

heads nodding during the sermon, he would quite understand.

We’d had a week of celebration and thanksgiving framed with worship. Many people had been through our building. New contacts had been made and old contacts renewed - especially the previous night. So we should give thanks to God for all that had been achieved, thanks for granting everybody the stamina to keep going, and for his many blessings now and over the 90 years we were celebrating.

The Anniversary was an opportunity to remember with affection ministers and church members over the last 90 years, the fellowship and fun we had all enjoyed, and to celebrate how our church had contributed to the community of our town.

Ours was a practical, comfortable, building, but nonetheless it was a special place in which to worship, a place where the bricks breathed the prayers of past worshippers. And it would have been nothing without the men and women who’d gathered in it to worship, to pray in times of joy and in times of sorrow, to serve the local community, and to bear witness to the mighty acts of God.

Our first reading was from the Book of Genesis. The story of Jacob's dream and Jacob's ladder. In his sleep Jacob sees this wonderful vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder or a stairway. A vision that speaks of a living and vibrant relationship between God and earth, between God and his people. On awakening, Jacob says, “This must be the house of God. It must be the gate that opens into heaven”. He cannot depart from the place without performing a ritual of worship, pouring olive oil onto the stone and dedicating it to God.

The hymn we'd just sung reminded us that, like Jacob, we were in the presence of God. “Here, be still! The presence of the Lord is moving in *this* place. We stand on holy ground. Be still. The glory of the Lord is shining all around; the power of the Lord is moving in this place”.



Richard hoped that that was our experience; that we were aware of the presence of God each time we gathered for worship in our church building - times when it was truly the gate that opened into heaven.

He hoped these experiences were not just confined to a building, that moments of deep intimacy with God were given to us at other times and in other places; those times when our heart missed a beat because God had drawn so close to us, those times when all became brighter and more vibrant – perhaps in the beautiful English countryside, or on the top of a hill or a mountain, as happened in the Bible.

For God was as much with us and as near to us on weekdays as on Sundays in our church. But this church building, set apart for worship and dedicated to the glory of God, was both a reminder and an assurance of His presence in it.

And then, in our second reading from the first letter of Peter, we were reminded that the church was not just a building but was about people called to live God's love day by day. It used the imagery of a building to remind us that we, as followers of Jesus, could, as 'living stones', form a spiritual house and be God's own people. And how, over the years, nourished by the Scriptures, by prayer, and by worship in this church, we could grow into an ever deeper walk with God.

We should be profoundly thankful for all who had gone before us and aware of this church as a place of encounter with the living God. And we should be conscious of our status as 'living stones' - as God's people called into His marvellous light.

So we were to give thanks for this whole complex of buildings; give thanks for this church community; give thanks for this place where, in the words of our Mission Statement, "We come to worship God, to grow in faith, and to share our service and love for Jesus Christ with others".

This church building was like the foot of Jacob's ladder, where our prayers ascended, and the grace of God came down to us. And the Lord God assured us of His blessing today, in the years ahead - always.

