Covenant 2006

We, the Churches of Oxted and District:

- recognise that Christ wills the unity of his Church;
- acknowledge the sincerity of each tradition of faith;
- rejoice in our common Christian faith and heritage;
- give thanks to the Holy Spirit for leading us into closer friendship and unity of purpose.

So we covenant with each other to:

- continue our pilgrimage towards a visible unity, praying that God will lead us to the form that it will eventually take;
- share our Christian life together as fully as we can, in love and service to God and to God’s world.

To do this we will:

- worship, pray and study together so that we may understand, know and value each other;
- wherever possible, carry out our mission to our local community and the wider world as Churches Together;
- commit ourselves, as individual churches and together, to find ways to promote unity;
- every year, review our progress towards these objectives.

We commend each other to the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and pray for God’s wisdom and strength to fulfil this Covenant.

2012-13 CTOD Executive Committee

Chairman                John Roberts            All Saints
Deputy Chairman         Gerald South            Limpsfield Tatsfield Team
Hon. Treasurer          Margaret Cox            Hurst Green Evangelical
Hon. Secretary          David Cotton            URC
Alan Coombe/Penny Franklin    Methodist Hurst Green
Lesley Williams/Miles Corbett    King’s Church

Email:  ctod.oxted@gmail.com
Website:  http://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/oxted/
Chairman’s Comments

John Roberts

It does not seem possible that a year has passed since our last AGM when, in my absence (due to my daughter’s wedding rehearsal), I was voted into the post of Chairman, CTOD! It was not a total surprise and I was ready to leap into action at the first opportunity. This came in the New Year when I was able to meet individually with most of our Ministers and church leaders to explore their views as to possible priorities for CTOD for the coming 2/3 years.

The main suggestions focused on outreach - the Neighbourhood Forum established by the Oxted Churches, extending our work in local Care Homes, provision of debt management support and continuing the assistance given through the Housing & Homelessness group. The topic of over-riding interest though, was the assessment of the need for a local foodbank.

Although work in all these areas continues, CTOD’s principal area of outreach focus has been to research the foodbank question. We have reached the point where a recommendation has been made to our churches that they consider initiating food collections to support the work of other local food banks (East Grinstead & Caterham) and local charities (Methodist Food & Clothing Store/Redhill Welcare) who are already helping to serve our communities by supplying food into the area. The numbers coming forward for help are increasing as the services become better known, but we see the partnerships with the foodbanks as key to understanding what the real needs here are. The CAB and other local agencies are fully supportive of this approach (as confirmed in the Neighbourhood Forum meetings) and so we hope during the coming year that much can be done to qualify and, as necessary, support the emerging needs.

A theme that came through during the review and is evident in the enclosed reports is the extent of change that is happening in our churches at present. We were all very sad to learn of the closure of St Silvan’s and of the Religious Society of Friends and thank God for the inspiration and service that these communities have provided in our district. We welcome the new ministers and church leaders who have joined us, Rev James Percival at St Peter’s Limpsfield, Rev Phil Brooks at St Mary’s Oxted and Tim Maton at King’s Church. New incumbents are anticipated at St John’s and St Andrew’s and we look forward to the establishing of the new Team Ministry in Oxted which will encompass Hurst Green and Crowhurst.
Finally, I would like to extend the thanks of all our Executive Committee for the dedicated efforts of those who are stepping down this year, Lesley Williams who is moving from Oxted, Rev Alison Cooper who has retired from ministry at St Andrew’s and Alan Coombe who is stepping down as the Methodist Rep. They will all be sadly missed. We welcome in their place Penny Franklin as our new Methodist Rep and Miles Corbett from King’s Church and I hope by the time of the AGM we will also be able to welcome a new Deputy Chairman!

So, with some new faces on the Executive and perhaps some new ones on the Council, we look forward to the exciting challenges ahead and to a fruitful 2014.
SOME CTOD EVENTS

Late Night Shopping in Oxted
CTOD maintained its annual presence on this evening in Oxted town centre. From our stall we welcomed shoppers, chatted and handed out details of all the Christmas services at our member churches. This was followed by some enthusiastic carol singing which was much appreciated by passers by.

Carol Singing
Lesley Williams
The weather was less seasonal this year (no snow or rain), so more conducive to venturing out as a good cross section of folk from the member churches gathered once more in Station Rd East beside the Rotary Christmas tree. This is always an enjoyable time for all who take part and much appreciated by passers-by, bringing the true meaning of Christmas into the commercial market place and putting us all in festive mood.
This is always a low key, fun event for all participants of whatever age and any or no choral talent! The sound is wonderful and full of joy, made even better by the few who can really sing, but as one of the few times when we gather together publicly it is also a witness to the presence of Christ in Oxted at a time when most folk are open to hearing the traditional message as they prepare to celebrate His birth.
Do join us this year on Saturday December 14, 11.00am outside Boots!

URC Christmas Tree Festival
CTOD were delighted to contribute to the Christmas Tree Festival at the URC church.
Our tree decorations included an angel representing each of our member churches, together with a Christmas message from each church.
The 2013 Lent Course

The CTOD Lent Course followed this year was "Decisions, Decisions" by Nick Fawcett. A small ecumenical group, led by Steven Cox, considered a variety of possible courses and unanimously recommended this one. It used scriptural and other insights to explore the interesting question of how we, individually and corporately, make decisions, often involving a wide variety of factors and ethical values.

There were 120 people studying the CTOD Lent Course this year and they were organised into 13 groups with a good spread of denominations. We are very grateful to John Tolley for administering all this. One of the great benefits of these annual courses is the opportunity to meet and chat with others from different Christian backgrounds, to realise how much we have in common and also how much we can learn from each other’s experiences and outlooks. In addition there were 13 people studying the course outside a group.

The course ended with a combined service on Palm Sunday at Tandridge Village Hall.

Good Friday Walk of Witness

Despite the extreme cold some 90 Christians from 12 different churches gathered by the Tandridge District Council Offices at noon on Good Friday, ready to walk along Station Road East, past the station to Morrisons and on to the war memorial.

At various points we paused for prayer and to hear the Good Friday story together with some entertaining reflections written by one of our number, John Tolley.

Hot cross buns were offered to the shoppers - some of whom seemed rather puzzled to find that they were being offered something for nothing!

The opportunity for Christians of so many different denominations and traditions to come together in this way was greatly appreciated by all.
**Christian Aid Tea Event**

A young Christian Aid worker, Miriam, was visiting this part of the world in the Spring and Churches Together in Oxted and District linked up with the Oxted United Reformed Church to lay on a tea and talk by her on Sunday 28 April.

This was an opportunity to say thank-you to all the many Christian Aid collectors from our different member churches. Representatives from CAFOD, the Roman Catholic equivalent to Christian Aid, also came from All Saints'. Miriam's talk was very informative as to the practical work on the ground which her organisation assists with in Zimbabwe.

A good tea was then had by all, where the conversation dwelt on what we had seen and learned. Donations swelled by contributions for the tea added up to about £150 for Christian Aid. Collectors were pleased to meet up with each other, and the work of Marianne Bell of Limpsfield, the Area overall organiser, was recognised as well. It was a good afternoon, with Churches Together in Oxted and District joining up with a member church in laying on such an event and it promises well for the future in broadening denominational outlooks into ecumenical ones.....

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Renewal of the Covenant**

*Lesley Wiliams*

The Week of Prayer was again held between Ascension and Pentecost, commencing with an invigorating early morning service (6.00am!) outside St Mary's Tatsfield's hall and followed by the now customary nourishing breakfast in the hall.

The lunch time prayers led by members of different churches and held at King’s Church offices were appreciated by many as a real focus for each weekday.

Each session was based on a theme from the booklet produced by Churches Together In Britain and Ireland, this year written by Christians in India on the theme of pilgrimage. This still left scope for varied meetings with leaders bringing their own style and creativity, including sea shells as the symbol of Christian pilgrims and an ‘aide memoire’, pictures, music, reflection, discussion and of course prayer.
It was a time of learning, fellowship and of seeking God’s heart and mind for our area and the joint mission of our churches. Afterwards, those who could shared lunch and chat with old and new friends.

The week concluded with a service of Covenant Renewal held at St Mary’s Oxted and creatively led by John Roberts and actors and musicians from amongst the churches. This service brought together some of the musical skills from the different churches including, for the first time, the sonorous saxophone of Fr James Percival and the electric guitar of Stuart Murden (St Mary's).

Thank you to everyone who led or took part in any way over the week.

Worship with King’s Church

_Gerald South_

At the end of September the people of King’s Church hosted a CTOD united evening service at their usual place of worship, Oxted School. With many of their own congregation and CTOD visitors from most of our member churches it proved a lively and memorable act of worship, in a style less familiar to many of us - and all the better for that.

The band was both committed and talented and led a sequence of songs with enthusiasm that was contagious. Dale Barlow gave an impassioned address calling on us to seek reconciliation in the world around us as we spread the gospel message. Thank you King’s!

Goodbye Eden Hall

_John Tolley_

On 30th June it was a day of sunshine and showers, it was a sad day and, very surprisingly, it was a day of joy and looking forward. The Sisters of St Andrew, who are an ecumenical group, provided CTOD with its Weeks of Accompanied Prayer and so many people (including me) found a new way of meeting God from these. They also provided at Eden Hall a place of quiet and of prayerful space. People could visit for a day, a weekend or even a week, for discussion, for problem sharing or solving, for recharging spiritual batteries in a place of peace. I used to look at the programmes and wonder which event to go to - but was always too busy. The cost of a beautiful house and conference facilities in the middle of the lovely Weald countryside was offset initially by income from running a school and
a care home and latterly by providing a space for spiritual outreach and retreats. But keeping up with new laws proved impossible, costs increased and, when a break in the lease gave the Sisters a choice, they made the heart-breaking decision to go.

I, and many people from CTOD, attended the Sunday of the “Weekend of Prayer and Celebration.” On the previous day there were activities of meditation and yoga and poetry. On our day you could write your memories on a “Wailing Wall,” but there wasn’t much wailing. Thank-yous there were in spades and memories of joy and peace and of moments of inspiration. And as we processed round the garden and the house one could see why. It’s quiet at Eden Hall, there are views of open countryside and the garden is like a cottage garden with beauty of flowers and trees. The house is lived in and prayed in - you can feel the prayer in the stones. There is a labyrinth - Sister Diane’s special feature - showing how as we navigate the intricate twists and turns of life, all that we meet and do, all the everyday and the surprising things we come across, are part of the prayer of the earth and all that lives therein. There was a lovely liturgy, run by, amongst others, Maureen and John Roberts, when we said goodbye to the place, though not, we hope, to the people who made it what is was.

For the Sisters are to move to a new home in Blackheath so we can look forward with hope as well as backward with thanks. It’s a new turning in the labyrinth and if it provides any of the opportunities of Eden Hall, I shall hope to take advantage. Or perhaps we can do something ourselves in CTOD!

Meanwhile we are left with the memories of joy and peace. Glory be to God!

**SOME CTOD REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

*Christian Men’s Prayer Breakfast*

We gentlemen at the CTOD Christian Men’s Prayer Breakfast continue to lift our eyes to the distant North Downs over the dawn roof tops of Old Oxted. The disciples may have forgotten the bread (Matthew 16.5) but so far a simple meal has been vouchsafed for the dedicated number that gather once a month (except August) at the Gospel Hall in Beadles Lane at 7 a.m.. Thank you to the Warriors of Praise for their hospitality, and the Old Bell for permission to park in their Car
Park (when it is open). Our table currently seats twelve, but can extend: over the past twelve months, there have been seventeen different folk, from several denominations, at one time or another (and a dog), who have joined in our wide spectrum of prayer, and conversation.

Next year the 25th birthday of the gathering is celebrated and it would be good to add to our number of men, to join us before that occasion. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober (1 Thess 5.6) and pray without ceasing! (ibid v 17)

Further details from (email) ctod.oxted@gmail.com or telephone 01883 713883.

**Supporting The Orpheus Centre**

Each year CTOD raises funds for and gives publicity to a particular charity and this year it was the turn of The Orpheus Centre in Godstone. They provide accommodation and education for young people who have a variety of physical and other limitations, and especially encourage a wide range of musical activity in their students. Some of them have performed in concerts in CTOD churches and they also attend our churches, most notably St Andrew’s.

Collections have been taken at CTOD events and we joined forces with their fund raising team at the Oxted Carnival. The profit from the Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team barbeque has also been donated to them.

**Ministers’ Gatherings**

Gerald South

On two occasions this year the ministers of our churches have met together over lunch. The first was at St John’s and we thank Wendy Harvey and her team for their hospitality, the second was at St Peter’s Limpsfield for which we thank Fr James for his organisation and Margaret Cox for providing the meal: on both occasions we were very well fed!

Ministers tend to be busy folk, looking after their own flocks and it is not easy for them to meet each other in the usual run of events. Hence it has been most useful and enjoyable to get to know each other better, to share problems and experiences and to discuss matters of common concern and how cooperation between churches can be furthered.
GROUPS

Housing and Homeless Action Group

Stuart Paterson

During the past year our small Committee of 6 people has organised several activities.

Spring Fayre. This event was held on 23 March and raised £358.14 for our work. We would like to thank all those who supported this event by attending and those helping with stalls.

Projects Funded. During the past year we have provided financial support to Housing Justice, Furnistore, and Leatherhead Start (formerly the Leatherhead Night Hostel). We re-issued an uncashed £100 cheque to Furnistore and gave £75 each to Leatherhead Start and Housing Justice. More recently we have sent a further £50 to Furnistore.

Tandridge Rent Deposit Scheme (TRDS). This has now merged with the similar scheme organised by Reigate and Banstead. The donation paid by CTOD towards the scheme 2 years ago was refunded to CTOD by TVSC (who managed TRDS). We have no representation on the new scheme and are therefore unable to report further on its activities.

Tandridge Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-18. We were represented at the consultation hosted by Tandridge DC in May when the local voluntary groups involved in preventing homelessness in Tandridge attended a meeting to discuss the five yearly update of the Council’s homelessness strategy.

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

Felicity Dick

In the last year the 5 staff and 90 volunteer visitors of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group have supported over 1,000 detainees held in Brook House and Tinsley House at Gatwick Airport and, of these, 240 had a weekly visit from a volunteer visitor.

Detainees often feel isolated. Some have family in this country but they may be too far away or cannot afford to visit. If the detainee requests a visitor we allocate a trained volunteer who visits each week and cares about the detainee and does what s/he can to help. Detainees said:
“We feel the world is against us but in a visit we feel a little bit of the world is on our side”
“GDWG is more than a family. In talking to them you feel everyone is the same”
“With GDWG you know people can still think of you as human beings.”

The majority of detainees, about 70%, understand spoken English. The 30% who do not are often the most isolated and the hardest for us to reach. If you speak any of the following languages; Mandarin, Farsi, Arabic, Urdu, Pashto, Tigrinya, Amharic, Tamil, Somali and would be interested in knowing more about our work please do phone me, Felicity Dick 723152 or our office 01293 657070.

We have been particularly concerned for many mentally ill detainees as the Detention Centres do not have the resources to treat these detainees. Whilst it is not government policy to detain the mentally ill, it does happen. Other detainees arrive healthy but become ill as a result of the stress and the length of their detention. Fifty eight of the detainees we have supported in the last year have been held for over a year. During the year we published ‘A Prison in the Mind’ which investigates the impact of detention in Brook House on mental health. Our staff do detailed case work to try and obtain release for those with the most serious mental illnesses.

This year we have increased the talks we give in schools following training in how to teach school pupils about asylum and detention within the Personal, Social and Health Education part of the curriculum. In the year we took 30 lessons talking to over 600 young people in a number of schools. We had many positive reactions:
“It was a very important educational lesson which changed my views of asylum seekers.”
“It was very interesting to know that only 3% of the world’s refugees are hosted in the UK”
“I now understand what an asylum seeker is.”

We are no longer allowed to give toiletries to detainees but we do give good quality second hand clothes. If you have any suitable for young men I would be pleased to collect (723152).
The Tic Toc (Together in Christ, Toddlers of Oxted Churches) met weekly during term time. This ecumenical group of about a dozen members enjoyed a variety of speakers, studies and recorded TV documentaries on topics of Faith.

In Autumn 2012, Dr Eleanor Stoneham facilitated a series of workshops from the course 'Jubilee Lifestyle'. As a result of this members set themselves individual challenges to change their purchasing habits, and consider more ethical choices of bleach, cosmetics and children's clothing. Kate Keyworth presented an interpretation of how different artists have interpreted the Nativity in different centuries. Sue Mallinson has led several meditations and reflections on Advent, and other topics.

During Spring the CTOD Lent course 'Decisions Decisions' by Nick Fawcett was studied. Each week there was a practical task to assist concentration and understanding of the choices involved in decision making. The most memorable session was about perception of images. Mary Cook provided a printed selection of 'optical illusions' which demonstrated how our perceptions of shapes and shadows are often flawed. Nevertheless, we continue to make decisions based on these flawed perceptions.

This Autumn, Margaret Cox is facilitating a course called: 'Time Life Issues' by Jani Rubery produced by Crusade for World Revival, which promises to be a lively series questioning how we prioritise our time amongst daily tasks. This must surely be a very apt course for a group named Tic Toc!

For many years Tic Toc has enjoyed watching and discussing TV documentaries recorded on videos and viewed in the homes of various members. The change from Analogue to Digital TV initially presented a problem as videos became obsolete. Several members now have digital recording equipment so that we can continue to enjoy this valuable and free material!

We are so fortunate to have members with so many interests and talents. Thus our programme remains varied and stimulating to all participants. We always welcome new members with or without young children.
REPORTS FROM CTOD CHURCHES

All Saints’ Church in the Parish of Oxted & Warlingham

Rebecca Littleford

This year, All Saints' provided the first Roman Catholic Chair of CTOD for some time in the person of John Roberts who has worked on the CTOD Executive for some years, but had so far managed to avoid this position! His first task was to speak individually with the Ministers from the churches to ascertain their thoughts about CTOD and ideas on priorities for the future. John speaks of this in his Chairman's Comments at the beginning of this report, and we look forward to even closer working together of the churches in the future.

Throughout the year parishioners have enjoyed and supported a wide range of activities and acts of worship. In November, we participated for the first time (or at least, for some time) in the Remembrance Day Ceremony by laying a wreath on behalf of the parish.

Many again took part in the Lent groups - “Decisions, decisions,” a Nick Fawcett study course. As ever, richness was found not only in the material but in our coming together and in the sharing of our different traditions.

The Global Mission activity in our parish this year has focused on CAFOD’s Thirst for Water campaign. Once a month services have been held at All Saints’ followed by delicious lunches. Members from all churches have been welcome and have taken part in the services. The money raised from these lunches so far is £1066 making a total of £3625 raised for this very worthwhile cause. The lunches are set to continue this coming year and all are welcome.

We are pleased to report that our parish youth club (7-12 yrs) has successfully been launched. The children meet once a month at St Ambrose and it sounds as if great fun is had by all. The night hike was apparently very popular.

As a Diocese we continue to prepare for the celebration of our Golden Jubilee in 2015. During the four years leading up to it we are looking at the four main documents of the Vatican Council. Small groups met together in the autumn to study the document on the Sacred Liturgy and this year we will focus on the document, Revelation through the Word of God. Again, we welcome members from other churches to take part in these groups. The small groups will be advertised in our newsletter.
Evangelical Church, Hurst Green
Steven and Margaret Cox

Our church celebrated our 90th Anniversary in November. It was interesting looking back at the church’s beginnings and to see how it developed and changed through the years. We dug out old photos and minutes of meetings and met folk who enjoyed reminiscing. We thanked God for what he is doing in our church today and are excited about journeying on with Him in the future.

We have enjoyed joining with St. John’s and the Methodist Church for Village Celebration, Remembrance Sunday and the Wholeness and Healing services. It is also a blessing to represent Jesus as we serve our community together running services in Windmill Manor and Orchard Court, stalls at The Village Fair, helping out in clothing store, youth club and children’s centre, taking assemblies in Hurst Green schools, and singing Carols round Hurst Green.

As members of CTOD we have enjoyed being part of the wider church. The Week of Prayer is always a precious time. Our folk attended three different Lent Groups which was a real blessing. We joined the walk through Oxted on Good Friday. Again it is good to participate in special events with others like signing cards for Prisoners of Conscience and on Women’s World Day of Prayer. We are grateful to John Roberts for looking at how CTOD may get involved providing access to a food bank, there being one in East Grinstead and one coming to Caterham. We look forward to being able to support such a project.

We took our weekly prayer meeting up to Tatsfield during Holy Week to walk the pathway they had prepared. That was a blessing, thank you.

“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news”. This comes from Isaiah 52 v7 but is repeated in Romans 10 v13-15 where we are challenged to be those who pass on the good news. We have been challenged time and again to consider whether in all our ‘busyness’ we do seek to grow the kingdom.

King’s Church
Lesley Williams

This is a year of change in many areas for us and we look forward to the exciting new things God has for us. Links with those outside our own congregation have expanded this year. We are now part of a new sphere in Newfrontiers called Newground linking many of our
churches in mission and fellowship both within the UK and into East and West Europe. Dale Barlow is now the administrator for this as well as our lead elder and Steve and I are moving to Harrogate to join and support a new church there, so we are about to welcome Tim Maton on to staff. He and his wife Carrie and daughters have felt a real calling to Oxted from the church in Harrow and Tim joins the leadership team full time from the end of August. God has been instrumental in all this and we have been overwhelmed by His leading and kindness in all the details.

We have enjoyed even more this year working and worshipping together with those in CTOD. In particular the friendship and mutual support of our leaders with those of the Oxted churches continues to grow and we were pleased to join in welcoming James to St Peter’s Limpsfield. With their blessing we have been able to take assemblies in St Mary’s and Limpsfield schools and our youth workers have had a very encouraging year in Oxted School where they run ‘Base Camp’. This has included a youth Alpha course as well as fun and games.

Links with the community continue to grow through both the Neighbourhood Forum facilitated by David Skitt at the URC and our outward looking activities. Parenting and Marriage courses continue to be popular and many members of the Job Club have now found employment. Little Angels is our small and friendly toddler group attracting those who prefer a more intimate setting and the Friday Club serves 5 to 11 year olds. As well as fun, craft and Bible based activities, the leaders have been joined by a talented puppeteer who also entertained children at our stall at the Carnival. Look out for more children’s activities! Meantime the healing rooms continue to welcome people monthly where they can experience God’s power and love.

We enjoyed hosting the Week of Prayer lunch times and men’s breakfast again and always appreciate the Good Friday walk and Christmas Carol singing where we can join the other churches to be part of Christ’s visible body here in Oxted.

We are also looking forward to welcoming our fellow Christians to worship with us in September. Our worship bands have gone from strength to strength this year leading both young and old so well into God’s presence. As I write this 64 young people (12 to 18s) and leaders are preparing for their annual national camp which is always life changing for many. We have just baptised 3 who made commitments last year and welcomed back 5 gap year students who felt called to serve overseas. The rest of us won’t miss out this year
though as we prepare to camp and be challenged and envisioned with our new sphere. We pray the sun continues to shine for that and for our annual picnic where formal church is abandoned to welcome friends to play rounders in Master Park!

I would like to say a personal thank you to all my good friends in CTOD. It has been a privilege to know and serve with so many of you over the years. Miles Corbett will replace me on the Executive and I am sure will bring new vision and enthusiasm. This feels an exciting time with many plans and projects being researched. Let us continue to work together to introduce our amazing God to those who don’t yet know Him and show what it really means to love one another.

**Methodist Church, Hurst Green**

*Alan Coombe*

During the past year we have been gifted with £15,000 resulting from the closure and sale of Kenley & Purley Methodist Church. After a great deal of prayer and discussion our Church Council decided to use this fund partly to install a screen, projector and new sound system to enhance our worship and facilities; the remainder to be used for landscaping our car park area so that the Church becomes more visible.

We continue to serve the local community through the Friday Oasis Lunches (except for the Summer holidays). Numbers fluctuate but nourishing food and friendly fellowship is enjoyed by those who attend.

Our Food and Clothing Store is well used by several families at our weekly sessions. There is a good turnover of clothing with donations being also made. Food items are taken regularly and the occasional food parcel.

The three Hurst Green Churches work together on several projects each year, including the Village Celebration on the Green, local Christmas carol singing, Holy Communion Services at Windmill Manor Care Home, and joint Wholeness and Healing Services, with anointing of oil.

One ecumenical innovation was tried out on Maundy Thursday 2013. On a very cold March morning seven of us gave out 100 hot cross buns in bags with Easter booklets to hurrying commuters at Hurst Green Station from 7.00 - 8.00 am. A well received exercise. More widely there has been the usual Methodist participation in and support of
regular events such as Lent Groups, the Good Friday Walk of Witness and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Our minister, Revd Karen Bell, continues to inspire us with her vision, pastoral care and preaching gifts. Last Autumn she led us in a study of the difficult but ultimately rewarding book of Amos. At present we are tackling Rob Frost’s course on The Prodigal Son; an encouragingly well-attended house group. Following a retirement Karen now has pastoral charge of Caterham Methodist Church in addition to Hurst Green and Whitethorn Avenue, Coulsdon.

Oxted United Reformed Church

Our October 2012 Bluehouse Festival was again, we believe, a success and brought quality live performances of the arts to the Oxted community, not only using our Church but also involving schools, care homes and the disabled. The musical mix included a guitar recital by Richard Durrant, a jazz concert by Claire Teal and the Oxted Sinfonietta brilliantly conducted by Johann Katz (watch for notices about “Music for Christmas” by the Sinfonietta on 30th November 2013). Stage drama on “The Eric Liddell Story” was deeply moving and Noel Treddinick led a memorable small local edition of “Prom Praise”, with many newer Christian hymns. The team led by Katherine Saunders (from St. John’s Church in Hurst Green: how ecumenical is that!) is already planning the Autumn 2014 Festival. Professor David Cutler from Kew will give this year’s “Snelling Lecture” on Friday 22nd November 2013 on the topic “People Depend on Trees”, his thoughts on trees & climate change.

Our premises (having “weathered” a couple of roof lead thefts!) continue to be used by many local groups, notably the youth counselling team “Heads Together”, which helps young people to cope with difficult emotional, family or personal circumstances, thereby enabling them to lead fuller and more satisfying lives. Our Bluehouse Café continues to attract young people on their way home from school; we have regular and committed student volunteers and several have chosen to serve in the café as their service towards their Duke of Edinburgh award: good to see that student commitment to the venture, which is helping to strengthen links between the Church and Oxted School and indeed the wider community. A new initiative, together with St. Mary’s and All Saints’, and in partnership with St. Catherine’s Hospice Crawley, commenced in January in our premises. This is a Bereavement Support Drop-in
offering tea, chat and support with trained volunteers from Oxted churches on three Thursdays a month (from 1p.m. to 3 p.m.). Our support of Traidcraft continues and several local Charities benefit from our regular fund-raising social events: St. Catherine’s Hospice, Oxted One World Group and the Orpheus Centre. The Christmas Tree Festival was a good innovation (to be repeated this year), with the Charities represented showing an amazing variety of “evergreens” (trees and people!).

Recognising the difficulty families face on Sunday mornings with Church Service timings clashing with school and other local sporting events, our first Sunday afternoon all-age “Family Tea Service”, with music, crafts and topical discussion followed by a shared picnic tea, took place on Sunday 20th October 2013 at 4 p.m. Anyone would be most welcome at these Services.

We were saddened to learn in April of the passing of the Revd. Roy Robinson, Minister of our Church from 1982 to 1996. Roy was wonderful pastorally and on the ecumenical front. His book “Thoughtful Guide to the Bible” was developed during an evening Bible study course which he led in St. Peter’s, Limpsfield, old Vicarage with their then Curate, Sally Leeson. Roy also developed strong ecumenical ties with St. Mary’s, All Saints and all, by simply talking with and getting on well with their priests at that time: top political and Church leaders take note! - it is people not countries who make squabbles or peace: we in the URC take heart from the personal accord between Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin. We watch that space with interest!

In our Church, “The old order changeth, yielding place to new”, as Tennyson wrote. Robert Wingate is our new Church Secretary, taking over from Chris Bruce-Jones; Fiona Smith has taken on my past unconfessed sins as Treasurer; Alison Skitt is Administrator, Christine Kirk having a well-earned rest after 12 years of super service. Some new Elders too, some retirees. David Skitt continues as our inspiring preacher. The Church is people. And younger ones come forward. “And God fulfils Himself in many ways”, said the poet: I’m sure that He will in our Church community and ecumenically in this area.
St Andrew’s, Limpsfield Chart
Susan Compton

Some of our ‘churches together’ activities were among the churches of our Team Ministry, bringing St Andrew’s into much closer contact with St Peter’s Limpsfield and St Mary’s Tatsfield. A ‘Team Barbecue’ was held on a summer Sunday lunchtime on the lawns of St Andrew’s and a three-session Bible Course on ‘Revelations’ was given by Revd Gerald South on the Chart in August. Specific CTOD support came from 6 Leaders of Lent Groups, 1 host and 9 participants in a Course that was generally liked!

Outreach from St Andrew’s included Baptisms, quite often replacing our Sunday Parish Eucharist recently where (as well as at Weddings and Funerals) the congregation was joined by numbers of people who hardly ever attend church.

Regular outreach worship events include Harvest Festival early in October; the service held at All-Saints-tide in memory of those who have died, (to which all families who have had a funeral connected with St Andrew’s during the year are specially invited, whether or not they belong to the normal congregation). Our Carol Service in December and Christingle service on Christmas Eve attract many locals, who are invited to take part.

Our late summer ‘Pet Service’ - led for us this year by Revd Louise Ellis from Tatsfield-took place on the lawn outside: the topic was ‘Creation’ and twelve dogs were brought and blessed!

In the past year, one-off events included members of our choir who sang carols as requested by the Carpenters’ Arms, when the pub hosted our crib figures of Mary and Joseph and their donkey doing the rounds on the Chart in Advent. A summer Flower Festival featuring weddings brought in many who had married at St Andrew’s, often many years’ ago, and a Harp Recital held the same weekend drew a good local audience. Cream Teas were served in the Hall on the four Sundays of August and people from the whole district came along. We rely on the quarterly Chart News - delivered free to every house on the Chart - to publicise our events, often by means of flyers.

From October 2013 we are trying out a Coffee Morning on the first Wednesday of each month, which we hope will encourage local people to meet our regulars on an informal basis. We are also looking forward to a ‘Team Retreat’ to be held at Wychcroft in October.
Other important news from St Andrew’s was the retirement of Revd Alison Cooper, leaving a vacancy for a House-for-Duty Team Vicar. Alison will be specially missed by CTOD as she was on the Executive Committee, but she and Rod are not leaving the district and she has permission to officiate in the Deanery.

**St John’s, Hurst Green**

*June Reed*

July 2013 saw the culmination of twelve months of Centenary celebrations at St. John’s with a special Eucharist at which Bishop Christopher presided, followed by a lunch attended by parishioners past and present and members of the wider community. It had been a very busy year, especially as it coincided with a period of interregnum, but a very enjoyable one with events both at the church and in St. Agatha’s Hall. We have been so lucky during this period in having Rev. Mary Seller and Rev. Wendy Harvey, two hardworking church wardens and a strong P.C.C. to see us through. One of the last celebratory events was an Exhibition about 100 years in Hurst Green followed by an Open Forum in which long term residents from the village were invited to reminisce and answer questions from the audience. As a result of this an illustrated book has been produced by Kath McCarthy and is currently on sale.

Throughout the year our close link with the other two Hurst Green churches continued sharing the service on Remembrance Day, Wholeness and Healing services, services at Windmill Manor and Village Praise which for the first time had to be held in St Agatha’s Hall this year due to wet weather. A new joint venture this year was the handing out of hot cross buns to early morning commuters at Hurst Green station which was well received.

Looking to the future, work has now started on a handout leaflet explaining what goes on a St. John’s and what to expect when you visit the church. In an attempt to reach out to more young people in the area a widely advertised Youth Event was held in which they could take part in crafts, art, cooking and music. This proved to be very popular and another one was requested. We now look forward to welcoming our new incumbent and setting out on the start of the next centenary of worship at St. John’s.
This has been a year of fairly strategic changes for St Mary’s Oxted, not least of which has been the arrival of Rev. Phil Brooks as our trainee curate. Phil, with his wife Jenny, arrived in June from Cambridge, where Phil trained for ordination at Ridley Hall. Phil was formerly youth and children’s worker at Herne Hill Parish Church in South London, so brings a wealth of experience in this vital area of church life. We look forward to seeing his ministry flourish here.

Together with our sister church, St Peter’s Tandridge, and the neighbouring parishes of Hurst Green and Crowhurst, we have also been exploring the formation of a new ‘Team Ministry’ comprising the four parishes. At the instigation of the Bishop of Croydon, this proposal has been discussed and now agreed, so that we expect to see the new Oxted Team Ministry beginning soon after Easter next year. Whilst any changes in church life and organisation bring challenges in their wake, I greatly look forward to working together - firmly believing that we can do more together than apart - as true for Anglicans as it is for CTOD!

One new initiative that has felt both natural and fruitful has been the start of ‘St Mary’s Meeting Place’ on Friday mornings at the Oxted Community Hall. Between 9.30 and 11am, the meeting room is open for coffee and hand-baked cakes for anyone who is passing. With our toddler group ‘St Mary’s Monkeys’ running alongside in the hall, Friday mornings are an increasingly important focus for our community life.

We give thanks for our partnership in the Gospel with other members of CTOD and look forward to seeing God’s work flourish in the coming year.

St. Mary’s, Tatsfield

It has been a good and busy year - . Children. The Christingle Service took place in Tatsfield school hall, enabling the children to take part in a Nativity play, children’s choir and children’s orchestra. St. Mary’s has been awarded an area missions grant to help set up a youth club for youngsters 11-15 years age, within St. Mary’s and beyond. This is now successfully under way. A children’s concert in the church was enjoyed by an all age
audience, who were entertained by a mixture of instrumental playing, singing, gymnastics and jokes. A family craft morning for children of all ages (with parents/carers) was enjoyed at the commencement of the school holidays and included a sandwich lunch. Holiday Club for the children met from Wed. 31st July-Fri 2nd Aug. This was a great success again.

Fairtrade. St. Mary's is a Fairtrade church and during Fairtrade fortnight (25 Feb-10 March) we supported the Fairtrade village event which was a free event sponsored by Tatsfield Parish Council.

Retreat. Rev. Louise Ellis led a group from various churches up to the Island of Iona in Scotland, for a 5 day retreat in early May. Despite the long journey this was a good time of refreshment and renewal. A smaller retreat is now planned at the diocesan retreat Wychcroft for 2 days in October for 'time, space and opportunity to pause a while and nourish our roots.'

Talks and Courses. During May, St. Mary's hosted a second series of 'Big issues' over 5 weeks with different speakers and topics each week. This was open to the village and beyond and was very well attended. Amongst the speakers were Hilary Brand and Bishop Jonathan. After last year’s successful discussion group on Hilary Brand's course, based on the film Chocolat, this years 5 week course is now under way - and has increased from one group to three groups and is open to church members and beyond.

Holiday at Home. Held for a week in August, this is open to all ages but aimed at any who may need a change and might be unable to get away on holiday. Amongst the various activities was an outing and the very popular Tea at the Tatsfield ‘Ritz.’

SPA news. Two candidates from St. Mary's - Sue Ashmore and Jennie South have been successful in their applications for training on the Southwark Pastoral Assistants course, which commenced mid Sept: course is for 2 years. SPAs are lay men and women commissioned by the Bishop to develop caring and pastoral work on behalf of the church and parish.

Back to Church Sunday, 29th September. This is a national event which, as in recent years, St. Mary's followed. It is a time when each of us is encouraged to make a personal invite to someone we know to come as our guest to church and our church was packed young and old.
Harvest Concert. Harvest Harmony was a concert of light music in the church, beautifully decorated for harvest, followed by a glass of wine and light refreshments.

Amongst the activities mentioned above, we have still had time for some socialising and enjoyed a BBQ or two, whatever the weather!

**St Peter’s Limpsfield**

*John Tolley*

Ecumenical Activities. As I said last year, all of St Peter’s services and other activities are of course open to all local people from whatever church or faith. In 2012-2013 several events took place which were again open to other churches and people from the local community.

In November the Village Voices concert was a great success as a sort of old fashioned music hall and attracted many people from the community.

“Messy Church” is an event for all the family. It takes place on the last Sunday of each month at 3.30pm and involves children and the whole family in craft activities, prayer and a meal.

August 2012 saw the Pyramid Rock event for children based on the story of Joseph. St Peter’s and St Andrew’s collaborated on this.

An augmented St Peter’s choir performed Karl Jenkins’ The Armed Man to a packed church and considerable acclaim.

Our website www.lttm.org.uk/stpeters gives several other future events at which people from our neighbouring churches will be very welcome.

St Peter’s News. Last year we were lamenting the loss of Revd Penny Brown. This year has seen the induction of her successor Revd James Percival as Team Rector - our youngest Rector for at least 50 years. James has already presided over several changes in the way we do things at St Peter’s and is fully committed to the aims of Churches Together. His wife is also ordained and has just been appointed to St Peter and St Paul, Lingfield.

We lost our team children’s ministry co-ordinator in July. Becca Rolfe will be greatly missed at St Peter’s and the other churches in the team. We wish her well in her future career in teaching.

St Silvan’s. St Peter’s was greatly saddened by the decision the PCC had to take to close St Silvan’s. Those who served on the CTOD executive in the 1990s will recall the prayer lunches they used to attend there prior to its meetings. I like to think that our decisions
were all the better for that place of peace. Many older St Peter’s members feel the loss acutely as do the small regular St Silvan’s congregation. However in true Christian tradition there is a resurrection and most of that congregation are now attending a newly introduced 8am Eucharist at St Andrew’s every Sunday.

**St. Peter’s, Tandridge**

*Sally Walker and Margaret Brand*

Our services are a mixture of Morning Prayer, Family Services and Evensong. There are also services for St. Peters’ School on special Christian occasions.

We are still fortunate enough to have a traditional Prayer Book Evensong Service every Sunday at 6.30 pm. We welcome visitors, in particular to the service on the 2nd Sunday of the month, in term time, when the Lay Clerks and Choristers from St. Mary’s Choir School in Reigate come to sing Choral Evensong. Tea and cakes are served from 5:15pm for this service which starts at 6:30pm.

Although the numbers are small, Wellspring provides a time of stillness where we are able to pray in silence and have a time of reflection. We alternate between St. Mary’s and St. Peter’s on the last Wednesday of the month.

The very successful Tandridge Village Fete, held in July, is run by a combined team from the Church, the School, and the Village and was held in the Glebe Field. It has been voted by The Times as one of the top fetes in the country. This year it was a glorious hot summer’s day, unlike last year when the field was waterlogged.

Our Harvest Supper is hosted by the church as a village occasion and, as there are two farming estates around the village, this is truly a time to celebrate the Harvest together.

Tandridge Tea Time is hosted by St. Peter’s and is held on the 1st Friday of the each month in school term time. About thirty to forty mothers and fathers with children come to enjoy homemade cakes, tea, and fellowship from 2:30pm onwards. A few mothers, with children who have left the school, still come after collecting them from other schools. Donations go towards village projects.

There are a number of fundraising projects in the pipeline for this coming year, an Evening in the Courtyard at Tandridge Court, a Quiz Night, and a Bridge Afternoon.
We are heartened to see our family services growing in number with new families, while still retaining our older members, and we give thanks to Andrew Rumsey and his team.

For the work Churches Together does in this district we are thankful as it enriches our worship.

**St Silvan’s, Staffhurst Wood**

Earlier this year, after much discussion thought and prayer, it was decided that the time had come to close this small place of worship in the woods. It had been built to serve the farm labourers of the area but that demand has now evaporated. A final service was conducted by the Bishop of Croydon on 11th August.

The very loyal congregation, despite being saddened by this closure, is now finding alternative places to worship, most of them at St Andrew’s at 8 am on a Sunday.

Below is a personal account of what St Silvan’s has meant to many.

*Derek Ridout*

Scene 1: It’s about 6 o’clock on a fine morning in May. A short distance past St Silvan’s Church, a gateway gives access to the woods. The winding path undulates for nearly half a mile between acres of bluebells in bloom. The rays of the sun, low on the horizon, flicker through the tree-leaves to meet this carpet of flowers, producing fifty shades of blue! The scent is powerful and the vista is ever changing. Wildlife abounds; and the dawn chorus is all that breaks the silence. This is simply one of those unforgettable experiences; this is Staffhurst Wood!

Scene 2: It’s approaching 8 o’clock on a Sunday morning in February 2011. A dozen or so people are heading for the little church of St Silvan (built in 1898, before the age of the motorcar, to serve the local farming community). Inside, in the chapel, the candles are burning brightly on the immaculately prepared altar; nearby, a bearded priest, resplendently robed, sits motionless in prayer. Silence reigns. At one minute before the hour the angelus is rung on the church bell (3-3-3-9) and then the weekly Eucharist begins. Words of the poet John Betjeman come to mind: “Nothing can with this simple truth compare - that God was Man in Palestine and lives today in Bread and Wine.”

We knew not that this was to be the last service taken by Father Geoffrey Moorgas, the priest-in-residence since 1995.
Scene 3: It’s Wednesday 6th April 2011. Nearly a hundred people have come to St Silvan’s to partake in the requiem mass to mark the passing of Father Geoffrey. The chapel seats only 30, so closed-circuit TV conveys the service to a marquee and elsewhere. Generous tributes are delivered; Geoffrey was a deeply spiritual person who led a simple life and had no fear of death. He inspired many, blessed everyone and condemned nobody. At the end of the service, his urn was carried in procession down the road to the bluebell woods, where his ashes were strewn.

Scene 4: It is Tuesday 9th July 2013. Over the previous two years the future of St Silvan’s Church has been uncertain; and the Parochial Church Council of St Peter’s Limpsfield, has now gathered, after extensive debate, to vote on the closure of its daughter church. Those in office believe that it has outlived its purpose and that the devotion of limited human and financial resources to put the church building in a reasonable state of repair cannot be justified in priority to other parish objectives. The contrary argument, put forward by the regular and occasional congregation of St Silvan’s, about 20 in all, is that this is a most precious haven of tranquillity and spirituality which should be preserved.

The vote for closure is put to the meeting: 11 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

Farewell St Silvan’s - You have served us well!

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Ann Rainforth

It is with great sadness that we, Oxted Quakers, have to report that the Meeting House and therefore the Meeting has had to be closed down.

In the early 1960's, a group of local Quaker business men decided that the Council Office room, with its war posters, was not a suitable place to meet. They pooled their resources and bought 5 East Hill Road from Arnold Gwynne Matthews who was Congregational Minister in Oxted from 1922 to 1927 and lived there, dying in 1962. (He also bequeathed a legacy to St Mary's Oxted, and his name and bequest is recorded on a panel in the Choir Vestry there).

Eventually, the purchasers paid themselves off and after 10 years were given the licence to be a worshipping group, it having been established that Quakers were not a boisterous, rioting lot,
disturbing the tranquillity of East Hill Road - no chance with the Police Station opposite!

For all those years, it has been a home - primarily to the Price family, whose last member is the current tenant of the upstairs flat, but also for a constant stream of Quakers, Attendees, visitors and groups, such as AA, and Alanon, and Narcotics Anonymous, who found all that a good home can offer, in peace and security. WEA (the Workers Educational Association) met there for many years and many are the people of Oxted who have benefited from their classes. We were most proud that Oxted Oxfam began here, when clothes were collected and sacked up for distribution. This led to the opening of the shop next to the Cinema, where Sabine Price acted as 'collector', and £2,000 a week was considered good takings. The rest is history, and I think the existing shop in Station Road East has the largest takings in Surrey!

But bureaucracy has had the last say. The building was deemed to be unsafe for the tenant in case of fire, and there were not enough funds to make the necessary alterations.

So those of us who pass by, look sadly at the words “Quaker Meeting House” over the door, and remember the depth of worship we experienced there. Rarely did we come away unmoved or unenlightened by the “ministry” given in the silence.

**Remembering Those Who Have Gone Before**

The past year has seen the deaths of two great supporters of CTOD and some memories of them are printed below

**Roy Robinson**

*Chris Bruce-Jones*

Where were you on Palm Sunday evening, 31st March 1996?

You may have been amongst the congregation of 250 from the CTOD churches (including a combined choir of 40) celebrating the retirement of Rev Roy Robinson and his wife Effie after 30 years here. Roy had arrived to teach RE at Oxted School (where colleagues included Valerie Adamson and Barbara Bristow) in 1966, following the decision that, with their three young children, it was too dangerous to continue Roy’s nine-year teaching ministry in the Belgian Congo (alias Zaire, alias DRC).
They joined the then Oxted Congregational Church - not a difficult transition from one Reformed tradition (Roy had followed his father into the Baptist ministry) to another, and subsequently within the URC. After serving as Chaplain at Caterham School, Roy was called to be minister of the Oxted United Reformed congregation in 1982.

Roy’s contribution to the ecumenical drive in this community was far-reaching. Just how far-reaching that contribution was, was evident during the service that Palm Sunday evening. Roy would be the last to claim sole credit for what was achieved in his years here - the introduction of Lent Groups, the Good Friday Walk of Witness, the Oxted Christian Centre (at one stage four separate study courses each had an average attendance of 22), the co-operative venture of the Oxted Review, heightened support for Christian Aid and Traidcraft, Churches Together sponsorship of a Local Authority Youth worker, initiatives on Housing and Homelessness, links with Northern Ireland, the Soviet Union and Africa, and of course the first Covenant signed in Oxted School in 1986. During his ministry parallel Communion services for Oxted Roman Catholics, Anglicans and the Reformed were introduced (now tragically discontinued). Roy was the first Protestant minister to preach in All Saints’; he presided at the Eucharist in St Mary’s.

Roy died on 7th April; 18 of us from Oxted attended the Thanksgiving service at Bungay, appropriately a URC/Methodist congregation in which Roy had served in his retirement.

On Sunday morning 7th July at the URC, a time during our Communion Service was set aside for reflection on Roy’s life of Christian service, and to acknowledge his influence on our congregation and Christian life in this community, and to hold Effie in our prayers.

Alan Short

David Cotton

Alan was an ardent and much loved supporter of the ecumenical Church in Oxted and District for all the time he lived there - a period of over 25 years. He first represented St Mary's Oxted on the Oxted and Limpsfield Council of Churches (as it was then) in the early 1970's. He and his family moved to Hurst Green in 1976, but he continued his connection with St Mary's until 1986, after which date he worshipped at St John's.
His ability was apparent when he quickly became Chairman of the Council of Churches' Unity Committee in 1976, a post he held for six years. He continued on that Committee - often as Acting Chairman - until under a changed Constitution, he sat on the Council's Executive Committee. This he continued to do until he retired in 1998.

Part of that time, his position on the Executive was ex officio as he had become Treasurer of the Council in 1978, a position he held for the Council under its various names, until 1994 - a period of sixteen years. In 1991, the Chairman records his thanks to Alan “for the efficient management of our finances.”

The welfare of the Youth of the area was always one of his concerns. In the 1970's he was involved with the Council's Youth work, and also with the Local Authority's participation, when it took over, through the Oxted and District Youth and Community Service and Support Committee - which grand title he abbreviated to Odyssey! He saw the transfer of the Youth Wing, as it abbreviated to, at Oxted (County) School, (where he had been Chair for 8 years in 1987), to Harry's Youth Club in the town, where he continued as a Representative on the Management Committee. The Council of Churches also became involved in Youth Work of its own - the “Rural Youth Project”. An idea triggered by windfall funds available from St Peter's Limpsfield, it culminated in the employment of a Detached Youth Worker, Mark Haythorne from 1992 to 1995. Alan was a leading figure in the prolonged negotiations with Surrey County Council, and the raising of funds from the various churches to achieve this. It was a new model for Youth Work, which was later widely copied, and Mark had a successful “ministry” with our local youth, often outside church structures, before going on to greater things. Alan was the Treasurer for this, until handing over to David Cook in 1997.

In 1990, Alan raised the subject of Homelessness with the Council of Churches. Together with Brian Hebert of the local Quaker meeting, he encouraged support for this concern, with Public Meetings and letters to the local Council: a Working Party was successfully formed, which became an Affiliated Group of Churches Together in Oxted and District in 1996, and continues to this day under Stuart Paterson, to whom Alan handed over the Chairmanship.

Under this umbrella, Alan spent “many mornings” with Brian Hebert negotiating with various external bodies to set up a Rent Deposit Scheme, to provide financial guarantees to private landlords for tenants, who fell outside the statutory assistance for the homeless. He successfully exhorted the member churches to contribute £1000
for each of three years to see the scheme successfully launched in 1996. It has continued, with the churches' involvement, up to the present, when it is now run for the Tandridge District by “Next Step”, in Redhill YMCA.

In 1992, the Churches Council Chairman wrote “the Council is now tackling bigger projects - such as Youth and Homelessness”: in both of these spheres, Alan was the worker. In 1989, the Chairman records that he thanks Alan “for working hard as usual”. In 1995, another Chairman acknowledged “the fundamental part played by dedicated people responding to a vision of a need, followed up by enthusiastic well managed committee members”.

However, Alan’s health was a cause for concern towards in the end. In 1998, the time came for him to relinquish his ecumenical Church responsibilities, and positions representing the Church on many outside bodies: he was presented with a trophy bowl and made an Emeritus Member of the Council at its meeting on 6th July. Chairman Ann Rainforth gave a glowing tribute: Alan wrote a letter in reply, one paragraph of thanks for the bowl, and six paragraphs about the lack of candidates for the next Chairmanship!

When he left for Hereford, he entrusted his Church files to me, and it has been a privilege for me to read through them to prepare this tribute to a remarkable Christian. Rest in peace, Alan, well done!