



WINTER 2016

# ROOF 'N' ROOTS

The Newsletter of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society



Soul mother - Joy Murphy dances with children in Kibra slum, Nairobi. At home in England, she sews labels on bags made by Sudanese workers in Kenya.



became home for her and her now late husband in 2011. 'I just love living here,' said Joy.

Born in Hull, Joy was evacuated to Blackpool during World War II. She grew up by the Golden Mile from age two. At 17, she went to Manchester to start nursing.

'My mum - who was a single parent - and my younger brother and sister, emigrated to Australia,' Joy recalled. 'I wouldn't go because I wanted to finish my training.'

Her family weren't churchgoers. Joy had become a Christian and heard a sermon about putting her hand to the plough. 'I took it literally,' she admitted. 'I'd started my training and wasn't going to turn back.'

She finished her training, was a staff nurse for a year and then went out to Australia. 'But in the meantime, I'd met Bill,' Joy remembered. A mutual friend had brought the couple .....

## JOY TO THE WORLD

**SOCIETY RESIDENT JOY MURPHY AND HER FAMILY HAVE PLAYED THEIR PART IN LAUNCHING A MINISTRY THAT'S BROUGHT MEANING TO DISTANT SHORES**

For the cost of a cup of coffee, bucketfuls of hope have been poured out for hundreds of children in Kenya - thanks to Joy Murphy's family. But the road to Africa has been a rocky one for them.

Joy lives in a Housing Society property at Aylesbury. It's a big, beautiful bungalow with a generous, landscaped garden. It

## YOUR KEY CHRISTMAS CONTACTS

Scrooge may not believe in it, but everyone needs a break! The Society's office will close at 5pm on Friday 23rd December 2016 and will re-open at 9am on Tuesday 3rd January 2017.

Let's hope everything goes smoothly for your festive season. But should anything serious happen to your home that needs immediate attention, here are the essential phone numbers for you to call:

- for gas and electrical repairs, phone British Gas on **0800 107 7798** (quote ref **1608949423**);
- for emergency roof, locks and glazing repairs, phone HAUk on **01293 221041** while the office is closed;
- also, check our website - [www.mmhs.org.uk](http://www.mmhs.org.uk)

*May we take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!*



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## A LIFE THAT'S REALLY LIVED

One of the things I really appreciate about my job is interviewing prospective ministerial residents.

No, it's not number crunching and the weighing up of options that truly does it for me – important and enjoyable though both are! It's meeting women and men who've spent their lives making a difference, in the name of Jesus.

I love hearing all the stories of 'ministry in the fast lane'. There's nothing boring about Christian lives lived out fully. Of course, we all experience 'lows' as well as 'highs' – and it's in the complexity of the mix that we develop as people and grow in faith. My life is enriched immeasurably with these encounters. Perhaps you're reading this thinking – well, those were the days. If so, despite age and everything that comes with that, let me encourage you to think about what your next adventure might be.

I've noticed there's a common thread of adventure and trying out new ideas running through this winter edition of *Roof 'n' Roots*. We all wrote independently of each other – and came up with these similar themes. Why not ask God for something new in 2017? Let's stay 'fresh and green' for as long as we can.

Wishing you and yours special moments this Christmas.

• **Mairi Johnstone** CEO

# WINTER? THAT'S A WRAP!

Winter warmer - add some heat to your salad with roasted tomatoes and peppers



and also for those who do arts, crafts and reading in the winter months.

**Lift your mood.** Getting out and about for 20 minutes or so will not only boost your heart rate and circulation but also could be that mood lifter you need. If there's a bit of winter sun about, soak up some of that, too!

**Make a salad.** We're all told to eat properly. And this time of year can result in a lot of eating! We crave the carbohydrates. Keep that sunshine feeling with a crisp salad of green leaves and colourful peppers. For a winter warmer, add roasted tomatoes or warm chicken.

### 2 CHALLENGE YOURSELF

**Return to school.** Sign up for a course or workshop that really interests you. It could be photography, baking, upcycling old furniture or learning a new language.

**Launch a winter project.** It could be something as simple as scrapbooking. Go through all your old family photographs and memorabilia. Preserve and present those precious memories in a book. Research your ancestry – there are specialist websites to help you. How about writing that novel you often thought about? Again, there are workshops and courses to help with that.

**Get the travel bug.** Take that trip you keep planning to do – even if it's just to visit an old friend. Explore somewhere new, far or near. Leave the car at home and take the train. If you plan well in advance, the tickets can be very cheap to buy online.

### 3 HOMING IN

**Be water wise.** It's important to take

precautions against burst pipes in winter. If away from home overnight and there's a risk of frost, leave your heating on a low setting. If away for a longer period, ask a friend or neighbour to operate the heating for you.

**Foil the winter!** Fit tin foil sheets behind your radiators. It's a way of reflecting more heat back into your room. You can use car windscreen protectors or silver emergency blankets from a friendly neighbourhood marathon runner! It makes a modest difference to your energy bills, but it's worth doing.

**Defeating damp.** Most complaints the Society receives about dampness in homes turn out to involve condensation. The *Tenants' Handbook* offers much advice such as – limit condensation by providing ventilation; don't block up air bricks or vents; use extractor fans; vent tumble dryers to the outside.

### 4 COUNTING COST

**Find the freebies.** Check out grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve heating or help with bills. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of insulation grant schemes.

**Power shift.** Winter is the perfect time to think about switching your energy provider. Use comparison sites like <https://www.uswitch.com> or <https://www.comparethemarket.com> to check the deals. Most people are surprised at the amount of money that can be saved.

If you have some useful winter advice to share with other residents, please send it in and we'll gladly consider it for publication on the MMHS website. Send to: [CPrice@mmhs.org.uk](mailto:CPrice@mmhs.org.uk)

## JOY TO THE WORLD

..... together at Manchester in 1960.

Bill was training to become a Methodist minister. After Joy's move to Australia, they communicated by airmail – and one phone call. Finally they married in England on 14th September 1963.

Joy carried on nursing, part-time. Soon they started a family. Their first home was in Basingstoke, where their first two children were born. Then they moved to the mission church in South Lambeth, Friendship House.

'It was very rough,' Joy recalled. 'The youth club used to have bicycle chain and billiard cue fights. I would stay up for Bill to come home on youth club night, absolutely terrified something would happen to him.'

Years – and several different church appointments – later, 'something' did happen, but not in a youth club. On holiday in France, a huge off-road vehicle smashed into their car. Joy had whiplash and bruised ribs, Bill had concussion and rib fractures, but their

**'The youth club used to have bicycle chain and billiard cue fights'**

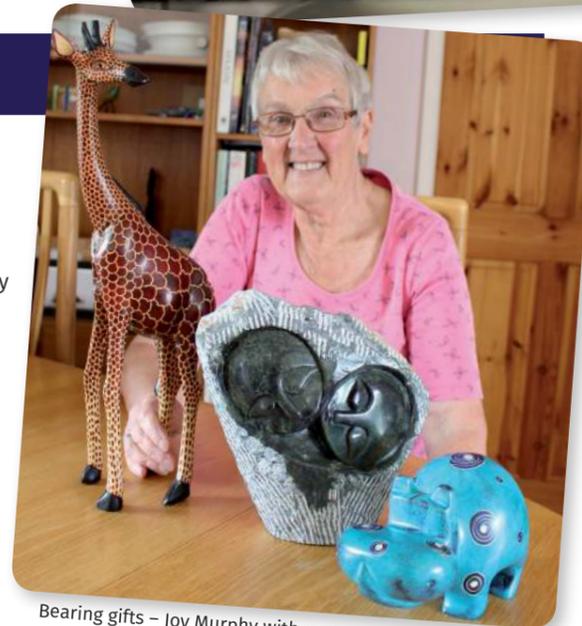
daughter Corinne suffered a severe head injury.

Recovery was extremely gradual. Corinne never returned to her legal secretary career. 'She's very focused,' said Joy. 'If she sets her mind to something, that's what she's going to do. It was a bit like that with starting the charity.'

Compelled by a 'vision' of Kenyan children calling for help, 23-year-old Corinne went to a local bank with just £2.56. She told the bank manager her story. With that modest amount, he opened a charity account for her. That was in 1995.

Today, Karibuni Children raises £200,000 a year to support 14 projects for children in poverty. 'We didn't go looking for projects, they came looking for us,' said Joy, an active, hands-on trustee with Karibuni (Swahili for 'welcome to all').

Bill was chairman until a year before his death from melanoma in 2012. 'People were just so shocked because Bill was always fit,' said Joy. 'He was 82 when he died, but he was never an "old man".'



Bearing gifts – Joy Murphy with some products made at the Kenyan projects

Joy, now 77, continues the work their daughter started. She's still mum to her own four children, grandmother to 13 and great-grandmother to another two! And her home is an ideal size for whenever the family descend on her.

'I don't know what we would've done if there wasn't the housing society,' she said. 'We wouldn't have been able to afford a house. So it's meant home and security.' Visit <http://www.karibuni.org.uk>.

## WINTER CAN BE A STRESSFUL AND DEMANDING TIME OF YEAR. BUT THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF – AND YOUR HOME

### 1 LIGHTEN UP

**Create your own daylight.** The days are so short. Invest in a daylight bulb that offers a similar level to natural daylight. These are helpful for people who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD),

## SOCIETY BOILERS TAKE HOME TOP AWARD

Worcester Bosch – whose boilers are regularly fitted in MMHS properties – recently scooped the 'Best Buy' award from consumer magazine *Which?*

The Society uses these award-winning boilers to replace existing systems in an average of 50 of their homes each year. 'We use a selection rather than any particular model,' said Maintenance Manager Glenn Fry.

'It depends on the local circumstances – size of property, location of boiler, combination boiler or conventional boiler. But we choose Worcester Bosch

because they're good products and replacement parts are easily available. A good boiler would be energy efficient, reliable and easily maintained. And we'd expect them to last ten to 15 years.'

The *Which?* annual boiler report surveyed more than 10,000 *Which?* members, 600 members of the public and nearly 200 'trusted traders' heating engineers to reach their recommendations.

Researchers quizzed engineers about the different brands of boilers on which they work. They asked them if



they could obtain parts and spares quickly, and how easy it is to fix a common fault.

Consumers were questioned about the boilers in their homes. *Which?* focused on any breakdowns, problems and annoyances the householders encountered. Worcester came out on top of both installer and user lists.



## METHODISM IN OUR MADNESS

### ARTS AND CULTURE BY CLIVE PRICE

Creator of *Star Wars* George Lucas injected eastern mysticism into his epic sci-fi films. The mystical 'force' is wielded by Shaolin-style Jedi knights. But Lucas was born and bred Methodist – even marrying at a Methodist church in California.

His religious background is documented on various websites and in Dale Pollock's book *Skywalking* (<http://bit.ly/2fz7Y27>). Pollock said although George's parents were Methodists, he didn't like their church and 'resented' Sunday school. However, the family's Lutheran housekeeper took George along to her church, where the young Lucas enjoyed its 'elaborate ritual'.

George grew up and pursued his movie-making, calling himself a 'Buddhist Methodist' (<http://bit.ly/1CWY10k>). He told the *New Yorker* he presented 'a traditional moral study' through *Star Wars*, a modern mythology to teach right and wrong (<http://bit.ly/2gubeux>).

Perhaps John Wesley had some influence. Wesley had promoted 'the comprehensive and instructive blessing' of 2 Corinthians 13 – 'May the grace be with you' (<http://bit.ly/2fgzfHW>). Did that ancient prayer resonate with Lucas when he penned, 'May the force be with you'?

If you accompany your children or grandchildren to the new *Star Wars* story *Rogue One* this Christmas, listen out for the spiritual echoes. Though George wasn't involved with this production, it may well reflect his roots.

# HOME TRUTHS

## REFLECTION BY PAT BILLSBORROW

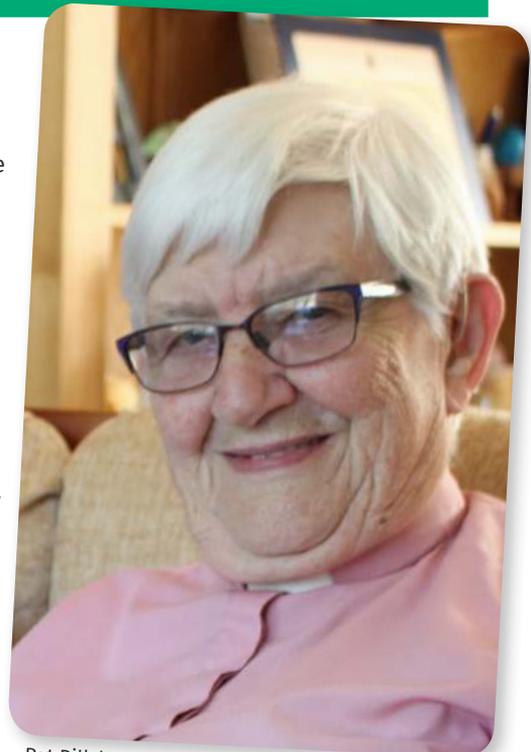
It's a fateful moment. For many people and their spouses, coming to the end of their work within the church, the question will be asked, 'You're going to retire, then?' But of course, it's not like that. It just means we've ceased to travel, and set ourselves in one place. However, ceasing to travel doesn't mean we sit in a corner and vegetate – no way!

In a few weeks' time, someone will ask, 'What are your New Year resolutions?' And a short time later they'll say, 'What are you giving up for Lent?' I have a suggestion for you. Instead of making these seasons a time of depletion – whether it be giving up chocolate or some such indulgence – why not make it a time for taking on? My idea is that when the inevitable calendar arrives among the Christmas gifts, you mark one day aside either once a month – or even if you're brave once a week or fortnight – to do something different.

'What on earth might I do?' I hear you ask. Well, it might be just a case of getting out of the chair and walking down the street to knock on the door of that lonely neighbour, or deciding to speak to two or three people you don't know that you might see in the street or in the local shop. It could be to decide to take up a new hobby, perhaps try your hand at painting, or writing a poem, or even writing down the story of your life. For life is an adventure given to use, and people like to read adventures. Or even learning a new game like golf or if more sedentary Scrabble, or some computer game which might keep you amused.

**'Life is an adventure given to use, and people like to read adventures'**

What about going back to school? I attend some classes on various Bible topics at the local university, and I've learned more and become more excited as the weeks have gone by. What about seeking to learn a new language, or read a book each month written by someone whose words you hadn't read before?



Pat Billsborrow is an MMHS resident and former chair of the board

The opportunities are endless – however mobile or inactive your life has become. One of the old hymns has the title, *God has given us a book full of stories*. He also gives each of us the spirit of excitement and adventure as he lays our journey out before us. So go with him and go with the opportunities available day by day.

**'The opportunities are endless – however mobile or inactive your life has become'**

Having completed your work, now it is time to play. Theologian Jurgen Moltmann tells us that play is a celebration of life lived to its fullest. His book *A Theology Of Play* says that in play, we emulate God's actions who enjoys creating. Play is not time out from work. It's not rest. It's 'a momentary escape' into the future reality that God intended.

Retirement – or 'sitting down' – doesn't mean waiting for the inevitable end. It's full of opportunities if only we're prepared to look for them. So as I wish you a happy New Year, can I wish you also an Adventurous Year with new opportunities, new friends, and new skills as you take up the challenge I lay before you.