



SPRING 2017

# ROOF 'N' ROOTS

The Newsletter of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society

## NEV THE REV IS A TIME LORD

**SOCIETY RESIDENT REVD NEVILLE PUGH HAS FOUND METHODIST MINISTERS DON'T RETIRE. THEY JUST MAKE TIME**

Dr Who returns to the nation's TV screens this spring. But the Housing Society already has its own 'time lord' in Revd Neville Pugh. However, Peter Capaldi needn't worry. Nev's powers are strictly making grandfather clocks.

Stepping through the side door of his garage in North Wales is like entering the Tardis. But the metal surfaces, lights and bleeps of the doctor's time machine are replaced by knotted wood, sawdust and the roar of power tools.

This is where 'Nev the Rev' – as he's affectionately known – creates his clocks with natural wooden cases, traditional mechanisms and Westminster chimes. Over the years he's produced 20 of these seven-foot-tall time pieces.

Nev's clockmaking started when he was a minister in Yorkshire. He was visiting a church member whose husband was a joiner and undertaker. Nev noticed the house was filled with clocks at different stages of development.

'I thought to myself, "Oh I'd like to make one of those!"' he recalled. 'So I went to the library at Knaresborough and borrowed a book on how to make longcase clocks. I paid all the fines for not taking it back on time.'

After reading about clockmaking, Nev needed to build one. Next step was acquiring the wood. Another church member offered him an old oak wardrobe. Nev made a clock from that for wife Muriel.

A visitor to the manse saw the result and



Photos: Clive Price

Glory days – Nev shows off one of his time pieces

asked Nev to make her one, too. He borrowed £300 to buy a machine that trims wooden boards. 'Every time I made a clock I'd buy a machine, so it made it a little bit easier,' said Nev.

A Nottingham vicar wanted a clock. So Nev shaped two unwanted church pews into another timepiece. Word spread. Now some of Nev's clocks are sold through a jeweller's in Newark.



## MEENA AND THE MEANING OF PENSIONS

Pensions are big news – so they must be important. That's the conclusion of the Methodist Church's new pensions team manager Meena Tooray.

MMHS and Meena's team assist each other where they can in a spirit of mutual support, as they serve retired ministers.

Meena looks after the day-to-day

operation of the Church's pensions, which are paid to ministers and lay employees. That includes co-ordinating trustee meetings, ensuring everything runs according to rules and keeping all data up-to-date.

A qualified mathematician, she has more than 20 years' experience in pensions. Read more of her story on the MMHS website!



Team leader – Meena Tooray





## CHERISH THE DESERT IN YOUR DOMAIN

Pulling away regularly from all the busyness of life to pray isn't something I find easy – and yet the benefits are huge.

At the time of writing, Lent is nearly with us. I face the challenge of adding a Lenten discipline or giving up something. Perhaps. It would be good, though...

Jesus favoured desolate places for prayer. But I don't have a wilderness on my doorstep.

Instead, I head into my garden, most usually very early in the morning. While drinking in the magnificence of nature – what's not to love about the watery light washing a wintry sky – I pray.

What I say is nearly always simple and unedited. It can be raw. It can be wilderness dry. It can be joyful, even funny. Whatever it is, I know that my words matter deeply to God simply because he loves me and cares for me. He meets me right where I am.

Do you have special spots in your home or garden? Please share your stories! Perhaps we might consider running a feature about the personal sacred spaces we all try to find and treasure.

Wishing you a blessed Easter.

• Mairi Johnstone CEO

## FIX IT, DON'T FAUCET

Job done – if you discover a minor problem with your property, just get it repaired



Photo: HighwayStarz-Photography

reviewing the findings of last year's repairs and maintenance survey. Out of nearly 900 responses, at least half the needs highlighted were minor like broken taps and cupboards. Still, such problems can be very annoying.

'If it's minor, treat it just like that – as a day-to-day repair,' said Property Services Administrator Conrad Mercer-Graham. 'Follow the same process as usual. If it's under £100, just get the job done and we'll reimburse you.'

**'If it's under £100, just get the job done and we'll reimburse you'**

Some residents may not know any suitable contractors. If that's the case, they can contact the Society. MMHS has a database of tradespeople.

Most completed survey questionnaires came in last summer. A small number of forms are still trickling through. Now the property team is making sure all minor repairs – as well as major works – are carried out.

'We've been in touch with residents who need new kitchens,' said Property Services Director Godfried Addo, 'and already started placing orders. So the process has begun.' Talks have started with national contractors to arrange replacement bathrooms where needed.

'The whole process will be a combination of main contractors and residents who can arrange work with our guidance,' Godfried explained. While major works are underway, a good number of smaller maintenance issues can be sorted out.

**'We've been in touch with residents who need new kitchens'**

As outlined in the *Tenants' Handbook*, the team recommend:

- for work under £100, arrange for the job to be done. The Society can reimburse you or pay the contractor direct, once we receive the invoice;

**U £100**

- for work costing £100-£500, at least one written quotation is required, but send it to MMHS before arranging work. If the Society has not agreed the repair, we may not be able to reimburse you;

**£100-£500**

- for work costing £500-£5,000, at least two written quotations are required. Make sure you send us the quotations before arranging work. If the Society hasn't agreed, we may not be able to reimburse you;

**£500-£5,000**

- for work costing £5,000+, contact the office.

**£5,000+**

## NEV THE REV IS A TIME LORD

Time wasn't always on his side. Nev was born in 1937 at Kingsley near Frodsham, Cheshire. Deprived of oxygen, baby Nev appeared lifeless and had to be fed with a pipette.

'I had an impediment of speech as a boy,' he remembered. 'Only my elder brother could understand me. So at school he was the interpreter.'

Nev became a Christian at seven on a mission in Kelsall Methodist Church led by Cliff College evangelist Tom Butler. 'Gradually my speech improved,' Nev recalled.

On leaving school, he went through a series of jobs from working on a poultry farm to running a contract cleaning business. All that changed when he heard famous missionary Gladys Aylward speak at Cliff College in 1954. 'I said to the Lord, "I'll do anything for you,"' Nev recalled.

He married Muriel in 1958, became a local preacher in 1962 and was ordained in 1972. Nev was minister at churches in

**'You need to develop an interest outside the Church'**



Welsh wonders – Nev's lovely MMHS property, where he grows grapes as well as makes clocks



Yorkshire, the Midlands, Somerset and Staffordshire. He has also been chaplain of a cattle market.

On retiring, Nev and his wife moved into a detached MMHS property in 2002. Nev always found it reassuring to know the Society was there. 'I understood there would be a home provided for us when we retired, so I could concentrate on ministry,' he said. 'I could relax.'

Muriel had health problems. Nev ended up nursing her at home. She died there in 2013.

Nev's two children and six grandchildren keep him busy, and he still preaches and leads music at churches. He's just celebrated his 80th birthday. The clockmaking continues.

'It's no good waiting until you retire, to find a hobby,' said Nev. 'You need to develop an interest outside the Church. I can absorb myself in clock making and the joy it gives to people.'

More than most, Nev knows it's about time.

### THE MOST ANNOYING PROBLEMS MAY BE THE MINOR ONES. TIME TO GET THEM SORTED, SAYS THE PROPERTY TEAM

If a dripping tap or a dropping cupboard is leading you a merry old dance, stop it in its tracks. Get the work done and send us the bill.

That's the message from the Housing Society's property team – after

### SCUPPER THE SCAMMERS

Scammers who try to swindle pensioners across the UK have started to target Methodist ministers and widowed spouses.

An 86-year-old widow recently reported a fraudster to the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme. The caller had claimed to be from the Methodist Church.

'Be aware of and disregard scam calls claiming to be The Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme,' said MMPS Pensions Administrator Tony Pritchard. 'We wouldn't ask for any bank account details over the phone.'

There is plenty of advice on the internet on how to deal with scam calls. MMPS and the Housing Society suggest the following simple guidelines:

- beware of any unexpected or 'cold' calls about your pension;
- disbelieve cold calls about transferring any or all of your pension;
- if pensions advice sounds too good to be true, it usually is;
- never give your bank details or

### REPAIRS HELPLINES

For questions about regular repairs, phone **020 7467 5271**

The out-of-hours service is under review, so for emergency repairs phone **020 7467 5270**



personal information to a cold caller;

- should you become suspicious about any such call, hang up and check with the pensions team or Housing Society at Methodist Church House.

The Pensions Regulator has issued important advice on this issue (<http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/pension-scams.aspx>).





## METHODISM IN OUR MADNESS

### ARTS AND CULTURE BY CLIVE PRICE

Hollywood dancer Cyd Charisse was a Methodist – and her work influenced the award-winning film *La La Land*.

The scene in 1953's *The Band Wagon* where Cyd danced with Fred Astaire by the light of a streetlamp inspired a main sequence – and the poster – for *La La Land*.

Written and directed by Damien Chazelle, *La La Land* tells the story of a young couple who want to do more than struggle to survive in a competitive industry. They want to see their dreams come true. That echoes Cyd's journey. Born in Texas in 1921, she spent her early childhood taking ballet lessons and grew up to pursue dancing as her career.

In 1939, she married her former dance teacher Nico Charisse. That ended in divorce eight years later. She married Jewish singer Tony Martin in 1948. It became an unusually long marriage in Hollywood.

It was 1952's *Singin' in the Rain* with Gene Kelly that made her a star – followed by her performance in *The Band Wagon*. Cyd died of a heart attack in 2008.

Although interred at a Jewish cemetery in Los Angeles, Cyd had always remained a practising Methodist. Her funeral was presided by a Methodist minister.

In his memoir, Fred Astaire described Cyd as 'beautiful dynamite'. In a recent article, Damien Chazelle acknowledged Cyd's impact on *La La Land*.

# HOME TRUTHS

## REFLECTION BY NORMAN WALLWORK

Thank God we no longer live in a manse. Church members and needy souls no longer beat a path to our door. Our home is now our castle. Yet the best ministerial households after retirement retain the best of what they were before.

The premises have changed. But the occupants haven't – not that the frantic days of the retirement move allowed for mature reflection on the future character of our household.

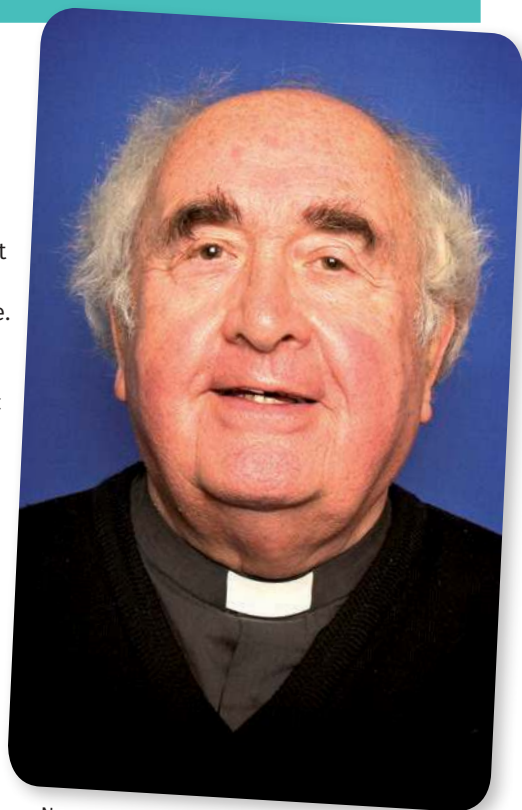
Tucked away at the back of *The Methodist Worship Book* is *An Order for the Blessing of a Home*. Seldom may we have used it for any household, including our own. But there it is, with its seven requests to God.

*Make this a place of joy, security and peace...create within its walls a place of warmth, love and safety. Most modern ministerial households are two-income concerns with the spouse working until their retirement – or the single minister having to maintain vocation and household. The manse was a busy thoroughfare. What a gift. We can now invite God to do something we didn't give him the space to do before...a place of joy, security and peace...warmth, love and safety.*

*May it be a place of thanksgiving and a sign of God's love in the neighbourhood. There may be more time for grace before meat now – more time for thanksgiving in our prayers together. Many a retirement household – ministerial and lay – now has the space to be a sign of God's love in the neighbourhood. Many a presbyter or deacon in the active work has regained their sanity because a ministerial retirement household had an open door and a listening ear.*

### *'We have more time to enjoy earlier friendships'*

*May old friendships be strengthened and new friendships blossom and grow. We have more time to enjoy earlier friendships. And we have more time to form new friendships – outside the Church. Thank God!*



Norman Wallwork is a supernumerary who's contributed both to *Singing The Faith* and *The Methodist Worship Book*.

*Grant that we may know Christ's presence in our daily life together. There's time to rediscover the 'quiet corner' perhaps long since abandoned. When we thinned out our library, we managed to keep the books of devotion that helped us 'practise the presence of God'. Some prayer books are well thumbed.*

### *'There's time to rediscover the "quiet corner"'*

*May all within this household grow in wisdom and grace. We have time to become a deeper disciple than for many years past. Am I nearer to God now than I've ever been? Some ministers have only blossomed in retirement.*

*Give us patience and strength when trouble comes. The gift of endurance we sought for others we will now – sooner or later – be seeking for ourselves. The pain and disability that comes to a ministerial household can be a faith tester. One of the more salutary Soperisms is – 'The older I get the less I believe and the more firmly I hang on to the few things I have left'.*