

Wesley Study Centre NEWS

For All God's People to Serve the Present Age

WSC to Remain Open

We are delighted to be able to announce that Wesley Study Centre will be able to continue its important work after successful negotiations between the Council of St John's College, Durham University and Methodist Council.

At its December meeting St John's College Council approved ambitious plans to take over the running of Wesley Study Centre following the cessation of Methodist ministerial training in summer 2014. WSC will develop as a research and postgraduate centre continuing its contribution to the delivery of Durham University MA in Theology & Ministry and Doctor of Theology & Ministry programmes in partnership with Cranmer Hall.

Over the last 18 months, in the aftermath of the Methodist Conference decision to withdraw Methodist ministerial training from Durham, there have been complex ongoing negotiations between representatives of Methodist Council and St John's Council about the future of Methodist work in Durham.

Those negotiations have now concluded and a recommendation will be taken to the April meeting of Methodist Council which proposes the formal adoption of WSC by

St John's College, the conclusion of financial arrangements and a proposal for a new Memorandum of Association to be developed for the future to supersede the current Memorandum of Association between Methodist Council and St John's College Council which governs the work of WSC.

We are delighted at this outcome and looking forward to a future Memorandum which enables Connexional learning assets in Durham to be safeguarded. In addition, these proposals provide a secure foundation for the future for the work of the Study Centre.

We are continuing to explore ways in which the work of WSC in the region and across the connexion can support that of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network, particularly in the North East of England.

There remains a great deal of work to do and further thinking to be done but we are pleased that WSC 2.0 will be part of the theological education landscape for some time to come.

Visit of President

The President of Conference's visit to the Wesley Study Centre was an eagerly anticipated event which lived up to the anticipation in every way.

Ruth Gee spent the day of Wednesday 12th March at St John's College, Durham meeting members of St John's College and Durham University, including the Vice Chancellor, Professor Chris Higgins, as well as addressing students at Wesley Study Centre, Cranmer Hall and the wider university.

The President's visit coincided with the 20th Anniversary of the ordination of women priests in the Anglican Church. Given that St John's College was the first to accept women to train for Anglican ordination Ruth began by sharing some of her personal connections with this memorable event; namely that it was during an address given by one of the first ordained Anglican women priests (Angela Burnace Wilson) at the school where Ruth was a teacher, that she felt her own strong call to ministry.

Speaking on the theme of Women in Senior Leadership of the Church, Ruth confirmed that in the Methodist Church of the Great Britain, the ordination of women has been the norm for the past 40 years and that there are no barriers to women holding leadership positions within in any aspect of ministry in the church.

Nonetheless, the President noted interesting statistics

which suggest that women are not applying for positions of senior leadership within the Church.

For example, Ruth is only the 4th female President of Methodist Conference and there has never been a woman Secretary of Conference or General Secretary.

Presently the senior connexional team consists of 5 men and 1 woman.

Of 33 Chairs of District 7 are women and of around 400 Circuit superintendents 20% are women. However, there has been for some years now close parity between the number of men and women offering for ministerial training.

Ruth talked about the importance for people to discern the will of God for them in their place and context and spoke about her Presidential theme – *'Glimpses of Glory'*. She referred to it as is a topic close to her heart and one that she believes is vital for the church's mission and witness to the world today.

Ruth's words to us were a real inspiration and challenge. Concluding her time with us Ruth prayed for us, wishing us well in our future ministry and encouraging us to be expectant of catching glimpses of God's glory in our future ministry.

By Felicity Al-Hassan (student minister)



Left to right: Rev Dr Calvin Samuel, WSC Director; Rev Ruth Gee, President of Methodist Conference; Prof Christopher Higgins, Vice Chancellor of Durham University.





Reflections on the MATM

As a Superintendent Minister – a role for which there is no training in the Methodist Church and for which nothing prepares you – I was left searching for a way of understanding my role while being able to bring a fresh perspective to my work and circuit. I shared my thoughts with the Director of the Wesley Study Centre who suggested that maybe study in Durham might give me a context in which to explore this form of ministry.

So, in the light of this conversation and following my Ministerial Development Review I signed up for a postgraduate diploma as part of the MA in Theology and Ministry course with the intention of using the course to reflect on my role as Superintendent.

Although fitting in the study alongside the demands of circuit ministry is a constant challenge, it has definitely been worth it and I am thoroughly enjoying the course - not least because it is giving me space away from the circuit, and the opportunity, to reflect, to think, to read and to share experiences with others. And doing all this alongside those training for ordained ministry as well as lay people and those who have been in ministry longer than I have from a variety of traditions and denominations brings a unique perspective – which I thoroughly recommend!



By Rachel Deigh

Visit of Tom Stuckey



On 12th February, we were privileged to have one of our Past Presidents of Methodist Conference, Tom Stuckey, as the visiting preacher for our Tuesday evening St John's College communion service. Well, it was a privilege for us students; we're just not too sure that the various visiting preachers this term have felt the same as the theme for the semester has been Judges, and nearly all have said how challenged they have been by the texts assigned to them!

Tom remained in Durham for Wednesday, and was the visiting seminar speaker for the Wesley Study Centre module on *Contemporary Issues in Methodist Ecclesiology & Practice*, a compulsory module for all WSC student ministers.

The session looked at the relevance of the atonement to ministry today in which he shared some helpful insights into the various theories proposed to explain the mystery of grace shown in the cross. Much of what Tom shared with us is explored in more depth in his fantastic book 'The Wrath of God Satisfied?'

Looking to our future ministries, Tom challenged us to consider the atonement theory further. The cross shows that every situation is redeemable. We become as Henri Nouwen says 'wounded healers'. It was a challenging yet mind blowing and inspiring afternoon.

By Melanie Greenall/Maggie Patchett, (student ministers)

Confessions of a DThM Student

My name is Philip Turner. I'm a Presbyterian stationed in the York Circuit in the York and Hull District. I am also half way through my second year part time of the Doctor of Theology and Ministry research programme.

The attractiveness of this degree was that it met me where I was. It had been 10 years since I'd last studied formally and I was nervous about beginning again. What if things had moved on? Was I still up to it? The first year felt like it was structured purposefully to help me answer those questions. Through regular blocks of teaching and assignments I engaged with different contemporary theologians, theological issues and also social scientific approaches. The friendly and non-pressured approach of the Postgraduate Director, Dr Joss Bryan, gave me confidence to make a start.

My second year had a delayed start. Unexpectedly, I was asked to become superintendent in our newly formed circuit. It soon became apparent that the demands of this role would put unreasonable pressure on my studies. Fortunately,

such is the ethos of the DThM that I was allowed to pause the course for a year. Last September I began again. I've been appointed two excellent supervisors, and they are guiding me as I read widely around the theme of holiness and what it means for a local church to be God's holy people today. As with all students, I now know just how little I knew. The great thing is that my reading is already changing me, for example, shaping the content and the style of my preaching.



DThM is a long commitment and I can't predict how things will be in 6 years. What I can say is that I'm enjoying the journey and benefiting immensely from the support that I'm offered. I would commend the course for anyone who is keen to root their discipleship deeper and gain a locus for thinking that lifts them towards a bigger horizon than the limits of their current local experience.

Philip

Formation for the Future

We are pleased to be able to invite you to a major academic conference on the theme *Formation for The Future* to be held in St John's College, Durham University on 16-17 June 2014.

The 2-day conference will include a number of academic papers, workshops and public lectures around the theme of formation.

We have been delighted with the response to the call for papers which means that the Conference will have input from an international range of church leaders, academics, and senior ministry practitioners drawn from a wide range of denominational backgrounds and contexts.

Conference delegates can book for the whole conference or for either of the 2 days. We have negotiated a limited number of places with discounted

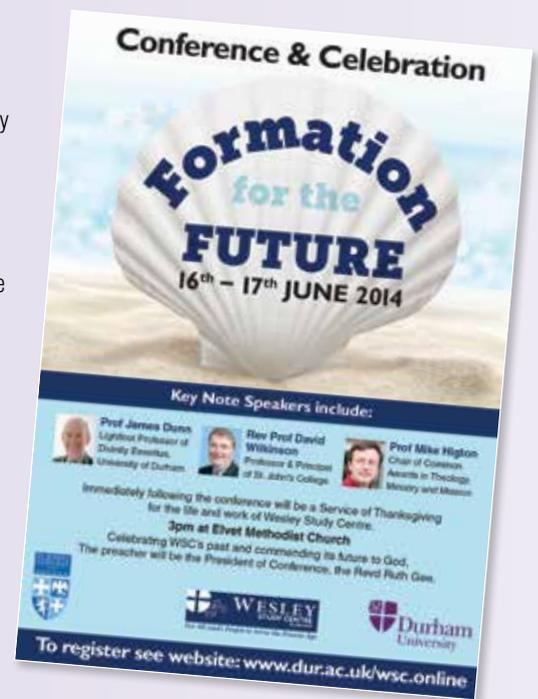
accommodation so we advise that you book early to avoid disappointment.

The Conference will include a formal dinner and conclude with a Service of Thanksgiving for the work of WSC at which the preacher will be President of Conference, the Revd Ruth Gee. The Service will be held at Elvet Methodist Church, Durham City, at 3pm.

Immediately following the Service of Thanksgiving will be the formal launch of the next phase of the life and work of the WSC, a sort of WSC 2.0.

We would be delighted if you would plan to join us for the Conference or for the Service.

For more details and for booking forms please see the WSC website:
<http://community.dur.ac.uk/wsc.online>



Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network News

The Revd Dr Martin Ramsden, currently Superintendent in the Middlesbrough and Eston Circuit, has been appointed as the Ministry Development Specialist in the new North East Region Learning and Development Team and will begin this new ministry in September 2014.

Martin has a long association with WSC. He completed his initial ministerial training at the Study Centre in 2000 and then a PhD through Durham University. He has also served on the Regional Oversight Committee. Martin has been a part-time tutor at WSC for the past four years and has contributed to the teaching programme especially in the areas of Rites of Passage and Practical Theology.

Martin will be joining the DMLN Regional Team which already includes Tricia Mitchell (Regional Co-ordinator and Discipleship Development Specialist) and John Boyd (Church and Community Development Specialist). Martin's role is to be an advocate of and catalyst for ministry development across the North East Region. He will encourage lay and ordained ministries across the region with a particular focus on developing Student Ministers, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders.



John Grocott, JCR President, March 2013 – June 2014

I currently have the privilege of serving as President of the John's Common Room, (JCR), the Union of Students for all those who study at St John's College, Durham, which is a paid, sabbatical role. I am a Methodist myself, training to be a local preacher and (almost despite being) a son of the manse.

My route to where I am is unusual to say the least. My father, Richard, was a probationary minister in Clayton/Newcastle-under-Lyme when he had the opportunity to be stationed in the English-speaking Methodist Church in Rome, I went to secondary school in Ashford, Kent, where my father was superintendent for seven years and, just before coming to Durham, my parents moved to London where my father serves two vibrant churches.

In my rootlessness, I was able to make St John's my home much more readily than other undergraduates were able to. Quickly something struck me. With my background, whilst growing up and as an adolescent, I considered Christian faith to be an unspoken duty; despite moments not only of severe doubt but feeling that arguments people put forward for the existence of God to be sometimes absurd and anti-intellectual. Before I came to Durham, I had already begun to become my own man and, whilst grappling with the biggest questions, began to recognise God's presence. But when I came to Durham, I was struck by the power of God's work in this place.

Postgraduate Opportunities

Over the past decade the postgraduate programmes at St John's College have continued to flourish and are recognised consistently as excellent by our external examiners. The WSC has been very much part of the development of both the MA in Theology and Ministry (MATM) and the professional doctorate in Theology and Ministry (DThM). These programmes have enabled a significant number of Methodists, both lay and ordained, to enrich the ministry of the church and also carry out research which has led to significant insights into the life of the church and its mission. At St John's College, there is a passion to make a difference in mission and ministry through quality in theological teaching and research which will enable the Church to flourish and reach out more effectively in its work of transforming the world.

The MA in Theology and Ministry has over 60 students from a rich variety of traditions both lay and ordained. New modules are introduced regularly to the programme to enable us to respond to the ever

changing contexts and demands of ministry and to incorporate fresh ideas and scholarship into mission and ministry. This coming academic year we are offering the following optional modules: Forgiveness in Pastoral Ministry, Preaching from the Synoptic Gospels, Scripture and Hermeneutics, Leadership, Issues of Authority within Anglicanism, Psychology and Christian Ministry, and Money Matters and the Church. For anyone interested in Money Matters and the Church there is an introductory day on Monday 19th May at St John's College 10.00am – 3.00pm, please contact Penny Bissell (p.a.bissell@durham.ac.uk) for details or look on our website <http://community.dur.ac.uk/wsc.online>

Our MATM programme is very flexible and allows students to study modules in residential blocks or term time lectures. Single modules can be taken to strengthen particular strands of ministry or to explore a new interest. They are well suited to those who want to explore returning to academic study and also those who have a sabbatical. The Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma awards are also available if the full MATM programme is not desired.



Image of courtesy of Shine Photographics 2013

For those who hold an MA in Theology and are interested in pursuing research in theology and ministry, the Doctorate in Theology and Ministry provides a supportive and exciting programme for research in Practical Theology. Staff in St John's College and the world class Department of Theology and Religion of Durham University ensure that DThM research is supervised by those engaged in cutting edge research. This year 12 students enrolled for this programme attracting 2 international students. There is still time to apply for this year which begins on 8 September with the DThM Summer School in which Rev Dr Roger Walton, Chair of the West Yorkshire District, will be our practical theologian in residence and will be speaking on the theme of 'Discipleship'. Anyone interested in these programmes or any stand-alone MA modules should contact Dr Jocelyn Bryan, Director of Postgraduate Studies
Email: j.m.bryan@durham.ac.uk
Tel: 0191 334 3853.

MediaLit

CODEC is holding its fifth **MediaLit** training course from 23 to 27 June 2014 exploring Christian ministry and the media and is open to anyone interested in engaging with the media - mass media, broadcast media, social media, community media.

Come along and add your voice to the conversation.

WHEN: Monday June 23rd – Friday June 27th, 2014

WHERE: St John's College, Durham

COST: only £175 including lunch and evening meal, refreshments, and teaching

www.dur.ac.uk/codec/about/events/medialit

Book: CODEC ADMINISTRATOR



Wesley to Wesley Visit

In November 2013 WSC Director, Dr Calvin Samuel, and St John's College Principal, Professor David Wilkinson, made a visit to Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC as part of a wider visit to sister Methodist institutions in the United States exploring possibilities for partnership.

In February 2014 we were delighted to have a return visit from WTS in the form of Professor Bruce Birch, an Old Testament Scholar and former Dean of the Seminary.

A number of possible avenues for future partnership were explored. In addition, students had a chance to meet Prof Birch whose book *Introducing the Old Testament*, is a recommended text for our *Introduction to the Old Testament* module.

We have yet some way to go before agreeing specific partnership projects. Nonetheless, it was a useful and creative set of conversations to pursue which we hope will bear fruit for the future.

Stationing Outcomes

We are delighted that most of our student leavers have been matched with a circuit. Regrettably for one of our student deacons, Pam Luxton, the proposed match did not prove appropriate. We remain in contact with colleagues in the Diaconal Stationing Committee seeking a more appropriate match.

Stationing matches were as follows:

Felicity Al-Hassan – Redhill & East Grinstead 36/11

Gareth Baron – Peterborough 23/21

Jo Brown – Huddersfield (Holmfirth) 27/35

Helen Hooley – Lincoln North 17/2

Melanie Greenall – Lincoln South 17/3

Steve Jakeman – Tadcaster 29/16

Lingyu Ji – Burslem Mission (Stoke on Trent) 11/18

Maggie Patchett – West Yorkshire District 27/-

Suzie Viana – Bournemouth 26/15

Janet Titterton – West Durham 13/12

Wendy Thornton – Kendal 09/13

Tim Woolley – Newcastle upon Tyne West 20/02

David Willis – Leicester Trinity 23/7



The Revd Dr Calvin T Samuel Director of Wesley Study Centre
Dr Jocelyn Bryan Director of Postgraduate Studies
The Revd Dr Andrew Lunn Director of Undergraduate Studies
Mrs Penny Bissell Administrator

Part-time Tutors

Mr Mark Bagnall

The Revd Dr Liz Kent

The Revd Julie Lunn

Deacon Jane Middleton

The Revd Les Nevin

The Revd Dr Martin Ramsden

The Revd Alison Wilkinson



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