

Winter



2018-19

Charity No 211042
SC045491



IN TOUCH

FRIENDSHIP SERVICE FAIRMINDEDNESS WITNESS

BY TOC H MEMBERS FOR TOC H MEMBERS

ISSN 1758-2407

IN TOUCH

Winter 18-19

EDITORIAL TEAM

Hilary Geater Childs
Rebecca Dickson
Marcia Wynter
Doug Geater Childs



Charity No 211042
SC045491

TOC H
PO BOX 15824
Birmingham
B13 3JU

Tel: 0121 443 3552
e: info@toch.org.uk

EDITORIAL MESSAGE

As one of the editorial team I write to explain why you have a rare edition of In Touch – one that is called “Winter”! I sent a note round explaining that illness had stopped the production of the Autumn 2018 edition then we suddenly seemed to be into Christmas!

On reviewing the material that we held much of it had been covered in the AGM mailings, both pre and post. So an Autumn edition would have been extremely slim anyway.

Many of you have sent get well messages and I really appreciate your concern and your good

wishes - thank you so much!!

I am glad to report that I feel really blessed, firstly because the cancer was spotted on a random scan, and in general terms I shouldn't have been called for one! Secondly, that I was operated on, twice, as a day patient and both operations were successful. Thirdly, I will have radiotherapy as opposed to chemotherapy. All sorted!!!! – **BUT** without that random call it may well have been very different!!

This Winter edition gives us a chance to look back at the joys of Christmas, to share news and to look forward to events that are around the corner.

It may well turn out to be a little more informal in approach and as far as possible we will attempt to make it a chronological journey of events since the AGM that may be of interest to you. A sort of journey through the period. We hope you find something both interesting and enjoyable!

Hilary Geater Childs

EDITORIAL

As you will see Terry prepared this for the magazine which should have gone out in November, but we believe it is absolutely worth printing and is still, if not more, relevant.

I'm writing this editorial a few days before November 11th which marks the centenary of the ending of the First World War, in Toc H we remember this day because whilst the Movement did not come into being for another year our origins are to be found in that terrible conflict. A fact we mark by taking part in the march past the cenotaph on an annual basis.

In this centenary year of the armistice we are reminded that whilst the soldiers were fighting in a war that was meant to end wars this was a hope that proved to be forlorn, humanity's capacity for conflict is so inbred that no war will seemingly be one that ends war.

We know that Toc H was born out of the embers of the battlefields of Belgium and the many men who survived and created Toc H did so in memory of those who had been left behind. Thus showing that out of the horrors of the trenches could arise a vision for a better society, one that could be focused on the Four Points of the Compass.

In this centenary year of the ending of the First World War and twelve months before we begin the celebration of a 100 years of Toc H it is important that we reflect on what we can contribute to society that draws on the Four Points of the Compass.

We need to do so with a candid honesty that recognises that we are a small number of people mostly of a certain age group, which means that our capacity for delivery is not as great as we might hope. Having said this age is not a reason for not having a vision for what we might hope for and working both as individuals and as branches to contribute to the greater good of the communities in which we live. Perhaps by looking for partners who will be willing to share in our endeavours.

In every sense the world of 2018 needs the 4 Points of the Compass as much as it ever did, their relevance in an age of so called fake news, #Me2, implicit and explicit racism combined in political discourse that seems to be based on the belief that an individual can declare

themselves right and allow no space for dialogue. It seems that we sometimes are living with political discourse of the metaphorically blind and deaf.

I know of course that Toc H is politically neutral the point that I'm making is that neutrality does not mean having a closed mind to what is right and wrong.

The contribution we can make is to live out our principles by:

Friendship: to love widely. In our small way we must offer friendship to all who we meet. This is not always easy in a society where there is an increasing focus on difference, arguments about sexuality, race and the perceived difference between people which can lead to tensions. We are called to meet everyone we meet as a friend and equal, offering our vision and perspective without question.

Service: To build bravely. Toc H has a good and honourable history of service with different groups of people and in many local communities. The importance of service is today as important as it was in 1919 and the years that followed. We may be small, but we can offer our support to others who are grappling with today's problems for instance in food banks, the homeless or refugees to give just three examples.

Fairmindedness: to think fairly: A few years ago I was walking in small county town which was suddenly filled with what seemed like large men on motor bikes. At first site rather off putting, one came up to me and with a very soft voice asked where he could get a cup of tea, my initial reaction was utterly wrong. Showing that judging by dress and size how wrong I was.

Witness: to witness humbly. The importance of witness cannot be underestimated. It is linked to sharing religious faith and this is an important element of the history of Toc H. It is about witnessing to the importance of what makes a good society, challenging the perception that we are in a downward spiral and life was better in some mythical past age. Our witness is to the essential goodness of all humanity.!

I started with the Armistice of 1918 the ending of the war to end wars - a sad truth is that the sentiment was right but the reality very different. Toc H came into existence to keep alive the vision of a better world, a message that has resonated in the 98 years since our foundation and a message that is as relevant now as it ever was.

Terry Drummond

Looking Back to the Summer!!!



Maria Beevers and her mother at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party last May where they represented Toc H. Since then Maria has been elected as a Trustee and is a valued member of the Board.



Looking Forward to Next Year

December 2019 will mark the start of the Centenary Year of Toc H becoming a civilian movement of people rather than the military run, home from home, Talbot House in Poperinge. It came into being because of the wonderful camaraderie and sense of belonging that had grown there behind the front lines, nurtured by a young Army Padre Rev 'Tubby' Clayton. The history of both, the House and The Movement, bear witness to the unique nature of both and the ability of mankind to create amazing positivity out of despair and depression. Thus to value each other for their differences as well as their common humanity and to pull together for the good of others, to see needs and to work out how to fill them with good humour.

Toc H in Scotland

Congratulations to Ronnie and Jim

You may remember the article in the Summer 2018 edition of In Touch - Take a place - Make a Community! written by Ronnie and this is an update on that.

Since then a Toc H group has been formed called 'The Five Villages' and there are now 5 members with others showing interest in joining. These five villages are all small individual communities that interrelate and are trying to build a thriving community. Isolation can be a terrifying thing but when a community pulls together, no matter how small, it is a pleasure and a blessing to be part of. The five communities—three villages and two Hamlets ~ Lugtom, Dunlop quite a sizeable community!!, Neilston, Johnstone and Uplawmoor are small but together they can support each other and make

Ronnie writes:- For me, Toc H is about being who you are, doing what you can for your community in the time that you have. Bringing like-minded people together on a project expands the time and skills given so that the community develops and grows more successfully. This is why I wanted to bring together at least five nearby villages. Each village has something different to offer. They are fiercely proud of their achievements but have a need to be recognised for their talents further afield. They all need a meeting place for their various activities and they are all in desperate need of volunteers to keep their projects going.

As an example, one village hosts a large and very successful agricultural show each year over a weekend with thousands of visitors, another invites tourists to view caverns containing ancient druid remains. Their stone circles and rocking stones are also of interest. A small village runs a highly successful cheese and dairy farm business with picturesque tea rooms. One village boasts of the boy band that grew up there and the small company that makes designer snooker cues for the rich and famous. The last and smallest, hamlet promotes an outstanding deerskin leather and tweed company. Yet all of these small communities have people living in isolation, a lack of clubs and groups for the

elderly and poor transportation to health centres and supermarkets. All of them are looking for less extortionate rates for meeting rooms and more volunteers.



With the closure of Barnsley Branch we now have the minibus to use to help people from other villages to meet up and join their groups but many groups are now closing due to the lack of an affordable meeting place. So, this is my new mission: To make as many people aware of the problems as possible and to look at ideas and alternatives. I have been working on a presentation to take around schools, churches and businesses which describes the aims and objectives of Toc H and my

personal goals to bring communities together with respect and dignity, love and kindness plus a fair amount of bewilderment.”

The last In Touch showed the Telephone box at the smallest of the five villages now a community defibrillator point bears a larger pane of glass with the Toc H logo and the Four Points. Since then the village has had a living Christmas Tree planted nearer the Road on the community green which took pride of



All Good Wishes, Shona.



Across the other side of Scotland is Denny Branch which is still as active as ever with large numbers attending their club and the annual pre Christmas trip to Scarborough for a Tinsel and Mistletoe weekend. This is the highlight of the year for many of the club who wouldn't otherwise get away for a holiday at all!! It also provides a break for the families, but, although great fun must, at times, be exhausting for the Toc H members who 'staff' it!!

In Touch Summer 2018 featured an article in which Shona Peattie introduced herself as a new and only 'Field Staff' employed by Toc H since all staff were made redundant in 2008.

Shona put a great deal of energy into the role, but it has never been an easy one, and to be a lone worker without the support of colleagues is always extremely hard.

At the end of her probationary period Shona resigned from the position, but is still active in her branch and also represented Toc H at the Cenotaph.

We thank her for all her efforts and wish her well for the future!!

A Special Remembrance Sunday

The day of the 100th anniversary of The Armistice saw blue skies over London. Sixteen Toc H members from branches all over the United Kingdom gathered in time to take part in the Veterans Parade past the Cenotaph.

At eleven o'clock, the guns sounded and utmost silence began. After an inspiring short service the march past commenced and Toc H members marched smartly(!), laying a wreath as we passed the Cenotaph.

We remembered the past members or the "elder brethren", Toc H members who had died in conflict. I believe all present thought it was an honour and privilege to represent Toc H on such a special occasion.

Linda Parker (Toc H Trustee)



As Linda states only 16 of our twenty strong contingent actually made it on the day and we extend our sympathy to the Spindley family from Cornwall all of whom had a flu-like bug and to Joe Bevan who made it to London from Birmingham before being taken ill at Water-

To Receive Appreciation is a Blessing!!

Received from Glen Craig past National Padre for Toc H SA:~

"I must tell you that many of the articles in Toc H UK "In Touch" Summer 2018 magazine, touched me deeply – especially the poem, "Refugee" by John Geater. (Is he a relative of yours?)

It inspired me to preach an Advent Sermon on comparing the "mad" world into which the Son of God was born that first Christmas Day, with the "mad" world of today, in which we will shortly be celebrating Christmas. I linked all this with the Centenary of the Armistice of WWI – supposedly the War to end all wars, but which actually had in it the seeds of punishment and revenge against Germany which, under Hitler, spawned WWII - this despite the entreaties of Jan Smuts (Statesman and friend of Winston Churchill) to the European and American leaders, to treat Germany as Britain treated the Boer Republics after the Anglo-Boer War in 1900 – 1902, by giving them self rule. Fortunately after the Second World War, they listened to Jan Smuts and helped to build both Germany and Japan into Global Economies, both of whom became leading Peace-Makers. God bless you."

This meant a great deal to me as the poem was written by my brother and I wrote back to Glen and shared some of John life story with him, and I reproduce some snippets from that letter below:~

At the age of 17 he started his medical training by reporting to the morgue! In due course he qualified and went on to take various hospital roles to enhance his experience. He had a strong Christian faith and he and his then fiancé who had trained as a pharmacist felt that they had both been blessed and privileged and wished to give back to God by doing medical missionary work for a time.....

John and Jane married and then went to Bible School for 6 months and then he studied Tropical Medicine and joined The Leprosy Mission. They were sent to Bhutan in the Himalayas which was a closed Kingdom at the time. They went via Ethiopia where he learned about eye surgery. They had to learn the language and were not allowed to preach Christianity but were allowed to practise it themselves as long as there were no Bhutanese converts.

Back in England they settled in Hastings and John practised as a GP. John has always been a highly active person and over the next few years threw himself into many things including painting, sculpture, local politics, play-writing for a Christian theatre group and acting, – the list is endless, but he did not often write poetry. Then he was found to have cancer of the colon and during the operation they had to remove his spleen and that led to his taking retirement on medical grounds. He still had a love for overseas mission but was limited in places he could safely travel to. However his major concern was that in many of the poorer countries medicine was taught purely as a science dealing with the body but not dealing with the person's needs. He inspired others with his philosophy and slowly they set up PRIME International

<https://www.prime-international.org/home.htm>

John's first cancer was in the 1990's and he has in total now had six different cancers and almost exactly a year ago was told that he may only have 3 weeks to live, but that he would probably be OK until Easter. It is pancreatic cancer and he had previously found that he could not tolerate the chemo so he was told to enjoy the time he had and the most he could expect was to last until the summer, but he would be unlikely to celebrate their Golden Wedding in September. Since then he has lived life to the full being upheld by prayer from around the globe and is still going and I hope to see him soon. He has withdrawn in many ways from Prime but it is growing



My big brother John!

and stronger than ever, he is still attending sessions and meetings and guiding and learning. He feels it has been the best year of his life and he has started writing poetry again something that had hardly happened at all since he was a student.

John is currently developing a website which he has called "The Creative Works of John Geater". It shows some of his paintings, poetry and stories. Maybe he'll add some of the plays that he wrote as well!!!

Hilary Geater Childs

The Star

That Star
may be a thousand billion miles away,
they say - or even more!
Indeed it may no longer even be ~
engulfed in some cosmic calamity
~ centuries ago.

Yet night by night it shines
as if eternal ~
a thousand times the size of our own sun
yet but a speck, a grain of sand,
in the vastness of God's created universe.

If then the light of so poor a thing
can reach across the bleak emptiness of space
to us so far away
Cannot the Light of God who made it
reach us across the bleak ugliness of sin
that separates Him
from the objects of His love?



One of the wonderful things about childhood is the sense of wonder, the "wow" factor. When thinking of the greatest wow factor in the whole of creation – creation itself – so often we reduce that in later life to years (13 billion plus) that are just numbers so vast that most cannot comprehend them or sadly in the church into arguments about 6 days of creation, when the psalmist says "a thousand years in your sight are as the noonday past". Where is the wow factor that God should create such vastness out of Himself? He thought and it was! In Him was, and is all the complexity and vastness both in time and space.

Yet within that – He cares for us.!

Christmas 2017

The world was darker than midnight
men's hearts were harder than stone.
Love grieved for the pain and the sorrow
and heard the whole universe groan.

A sword pierced through the darkness from heaven
tore through the blanket of night
releasing the power of Love's radiance
flooding the world with its light

A gleam in the gloom of the stable
Love flows from far beyond space
and a cry from a child in a manger
brings a smile to a young mother's face

<https://www.johngeater.org>

All material on this site is copyright © John Geater, the contents may be shared and used for non commercial use if shared with this copyright and attribution.

Third Hall Green Tree Festival

Over the majority of December Heart of England Branch again hosted a Community Christmas Tree Festival and the result was better than ever!! This year the set up days came and people weren't hampered by heavy falling snow!!!!!! A total mixture of folk took part, individuals, organisations, firms, shops, tradesmen etc etc The church looked lovely and people were really surprised at the creativity and meaning of some of the trees. A definite success which started the Christmas period well.

Due to Hilary's mis-timing, Heart of England Toc H Branch had in the end to rely on its three members that staff the Central Office as the Branch meeting which was going to do it was organized too late to meet the set up date!!!!!!

Still we were pretty pleased with our effort pictured overleaf.....

A Christmas Tree festival is a great way of bringing a community together. It costs very little to organise: costs to the contributor is the price of the tree and its decorations which can be handmade, sourced locally or commercially bought.



Costs are minimal particularly if you have a branch room in which to hold the festive. You then only need to provide the people to staff it.

The Toc H tree was built around a garden obelisk. Loops of flower ribbon and wrapping paper were stapled to the wire frame of it.

The Four Points of the Compass were added to the design which was topped off with a Toc H sign and logo. Delicate wire fairy lights illuminated the whole design which stood prominently at the front of the church. A wonderful sight!

Of course "What is Toc H" leaflets and In Touch were there to be taken.

It received a lot of admiring comments!



This stunning wall-mounted tree was sooooo....good!!!! Really eye catching and impeccably made entirely from felt.



The Friends (Quakers) tree was a truly beautiful one with much to meditate on surrounding it. It created an oasis of peace. ▶



The Baptist Church runs a Memory Café every 2 weeks for folks who are beginning to suffer from dementia and their carers who all contributed to this tree.



One of the pillars dressed with the re-cycled tree which was decorated with empty reels and the ends of the ribbons they had held—very effective!! ▶





5 inventive and representative trees in one of the transepts

A wide variety of clubs and associations were represented. The hairdresser's tree was decorated with a doll surrounded by hairgrips, curlers, combs, scissors and a hairdryer. The 'Chemistree' was covered in labels from common medications and topped with a star made from cotton buds. There were several small individual hand knitted trees which were displayed on the front of the organ next to the youngest contributor Luke, aged 7, whose Lego tree sat proudly on the top of the organ. One tree and its ornaments were crafted entirely from felt fabric whilst all the decorations on 'Stitch a tree' were made from wool. A white tree was adorned with decorated doves that looked resplendent amongst its golden baubles, holly and bells.



The Take Away Tree pictured above was the first and last tree that folk passed and all were invited to take away one of its ornaments, either for their own tree at home or to use as a book mark – whatever, but to keep with the blessings of the Tree Festival.



A New Vicar for All Hallows

We are delighted to announce that the Bishop of London has appointed The Rev'd Katherine Hedderly as the new Vicar of All Hallows.



Katherine Hedderly

Katherine is currently an Associate Vicar for Ministry at St Martin in the Fields, where she leads the day-to-day worship and liturgical programme and operational life of St Martin's. She is responsible for pastoral care, oversight of church staff team, PCC finances and communications of the church, where she has been since 2009. She also is a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee and acts as a spiritual director.

Katherine has a background in the film and television business, was a producer and director of an independent production company and is a graduate of the National Film & Television School and the University of Oxford. She trained at NTMTC London in Contextual Theology and was ordained in 2006, serving her curacy at St Michael & All Angels, Bedford Park. She has been a churchwarden at St John's Notting Hill, and has lived, worked and ministered in London for 30 years.

Katherine will also be Area Dean to the City, with responsibility for leading the clergy Chapter as well as chairing the Deanery Synod. She will work with the Bishop and Archdeacon as a member of the Area Staff team, helping to formulate a vision for the work of the City Churches in the next phase of their development.

Katherine says:

"I am delighted to be coming to All Hallows and to the City and to be sharing in mission and ministry with you and with colleagues in the Deanery. All Hallows is a beautiful church and I am looking forward to meeting everyone and getting to know you and to this new chapter in our life together with God."

Katherine, her husband and family will be joining us shortly before

Easter, and more details about her arrival will be circulated nearer the time. We will be praying for them as they prepare to move to All Hallows, and we also pray for the community at St Martin's as Katherine departs to take up this new role in the City.

We look forward to beginning this next stage in our journey together, and assure Katherine of a warm All Hallows' welcome.

parish@ahbtt.org.uk

Copyright © 2018 All Hallows by the Tower Church, All rights reserved.

Toc H Carol Service 2018

Hailed as Festival of Lessons and Carols, the annual Toc H Carol Service was held on Saturday 8th December at All Hallows by the Tower, our Guild Church.

Paul Dimoline, Hilary and Douglas Geater Childs did the readings whilst the Rev. Terry Drummond led the prayers. The service was led by The Rev. Richard Wyber of Wanstead Parish and a trustee of Toc H And All Hallows Trust. His prophetic Christmas Message of "Wait and See" seemed very appropriate during the current state of local, national and international affairs.

Ken Prideaux-Brune read out The Christmas Truce by Carol Ann Duffy. A poem that celebrates the truce between the trenches, when peace fleetingly existed in No Man's Land.

Also many thanks also go to Connie and Greta for the welcome refreshments, Chris Stoneham for organising London District Branch luncheon meet up, and for home baked cakes from Birmingham.

In typical Toc H style, Doug's twin sister and her friend were commandeered as willing stewards, helping out with plentiful supply of refreshments and other light duties. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.



In Memory of Helen Hodgkinson



My memory of my mother's activities is fairly limited but I will try to recall as much as I can.

Going back to my infancy I recall my Grandfather on my Father's side was a member of Toc H and presume that my Father and consequently my Mother followed him after the war when they married.

When we first moved from Northallerton in Yorkshire to Biggleswade where my

Grandparents on my Mother's side had lived since the war, I believe that is when Mum joined the Biggleswade Branch as a member. I am not sure if she held any other post there during the time we lived there but I do know she was quite an active member. We moved from there to Bedford itself and I don't think that it was until our next move to Bromham on the outskirts of Bedford that she resumed membership along with my Father.

It would be some time later into my teens when my Father introduced me as a junior to the Bedford Branch.

We had lived in Bromham for a couple of years until about 1965-6.

It was at this point Mum and Dad managed to land a joint job as Warden and Housekeeper of Mark XX located in Upper Richmond Road, London. Sadly my father was to pass away suddenly nine months later and his ashes are in the Toc H Crypt in All Saints Church, Tower Hill.

As the job in Mark XX was a joint one, it meant Mum had to move out to make way for another couple to take over. Mum moved to live with her parents back in Biggleswade. As far as I know, she did not continue her membership from that moment on until she remarried and moved to Wood End near Tamworth where she became a member and to keep in contact with Toc H. By this time, she was in her late 80's and not very mobile so was unable to attend any meetings, although she joined Barnsley Branch and joined in as often as she could.

However, Mum was a very active member of her local community centre which was only a few yards away from her home in Wood End, Atherstone.

Mum has (since my father died) been a fairly strong woman mentally and was a strict leader within the committee of the community centre. She used her knowledge of leadership and organiser to the full and soon became treasurer and then secretary and finally Chairperson, which is the position she held right up till her death on the 4th December 2018.

As chairperson, she was responsible for many events at the community centre including the Queens 90th Birthday celebrations, which was a huge success within the community raising several hundred pounds for charity.

Mum had acted as an ambassador for Toc H throughout her membership at many events throughout the south of the UK especially when my father was alive. She attended several events held by the Muscular Dystrophy and handicapped – Multiple Sclerosis organisations as a Toc H representative.

Since her death, I have found evidence of her donations to several charities both here and abroad. The Air Ambulance – RNLI – Smile Train along with several others. Her donations were often over a thousand pounds at a time as she felt so strongly about these worthy causes.

Her fellow members of the community centre have expressed deep sorrow at her passing and as a mark of respect have not only offered to organise her wake after her funeral in January this year but are also making a monetary donation to one of her favourite charities The Air Ambulance, for which they have my thanks for showing the respect that they all had for her.

Malcolm Temple (Son).

Editors' comment: This lovely tribute shows a life well lived and we thank Malcolm for writing it. One of the things that I want to add is that whenever I think of Helen I see her with knitting needles working away at various projects, always for others. You may remember that she invited folk to knit for a premature baby unit and produced many, many articles for it. I shall also always picture Helen at The Heart of England Garden party lapping up the sun!!

We will remember them !

Wendy Greystock Fletcher

Barbara Hilda Cook

Joan Williams

John Wilson

Harry TK Graham M.B.E.

Margaret Greenlees

Marybel Moore

Donald Hacker

Mr & Mrs F & M Staples

Betty Hawkins

Helen Hodgkinson

Jack Turner

John Beevor

Doug Fairgrieve

Age shall not weary them

It seems that there is a huge number of names listed here but please be aware that we have recorded not only members who have died but also people who have left us legacies. Some have left them in memory of other people or remembrance of happy times of Toc H in the past although they may have never been members themselves



Roy Beaney RIP

26 December 1943 to 23 July 2018

Sad news!

Roy was a helpful kind man liked by all who met him. He would be seen with his pipe in his mouth more often than not.

Roy used to sweep and clean the Toc H hall at High Brooms several times a week when he was a member.

He was a very keen short-mat bowls player at the hall which he enjoyed. Due to his ill health, he was made a honorary member as he was housebound.

Roy's quiet ways will be sadly missed.

John Anderson

John was born in Birmingham in 1933 and attended Solihull School. After National Service he attended Birmingham University to study Social Science. Having obtained his degree he taught in Birmingham and later with his wife, Jean, whom he met at university, went to work in Kenya as a teacher and teacher training lecturer for a number of years.

They went then to Malaysia for further years working in teacher training and eventually returned to the UK where John set up an overseas teacher training programme for the College of St Mark and St John which was eventually relocated in Plymouth. John was promoted and became Principal of University College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth (1973 – 1995). He was a Governor of Bradford Academy and had an extensive career in overseas education.

Much loved by his wife, he was a father to three children, and a proud grandfather to ten wonderful grandchildren. John was an active member of Toc H.

Percy Douglas Robinson RIP

My father, Percy Douglas Robinson, was also in Toc H when he returned from WW2. Here are extracts from his memoirs:

This during Dad's training:- On time off we could go into Tunbridge Wells where there were Cafes, Cinemas, a very good Repertory Company and a Toc H Canteen where I spent a lot of time. A real refuge from Army Life and an organisation that I joined on return to civilian life.

This on his return from WW2:- Socially we still attended the Baptist Church and I joined Toc H, which I had some association with during the war, especially when I was stationed at Tunbridge Wells and was a frequent visitor to their Forces Canteen. The Lynn Branch met on the top floor of the Conservative Club in St. James Street.

After WWI, Toc H continued the fellowships formed in Talbot House in peace time. It had a religious background but "Fellowship and Service" was its main aim. One motto was "Service is the rent we pay for our room on earth".

Incidentally, my grandmother was also a member of King's Lynn Toc H (Women's Section) 1940s to 1950
Philip Robinson

Chelsea Pensioners visit Paris Branch!

There is nothing like men in uniform to bring a bit of a sparkle to a November tea!

Four Chelsea pensioners and their captain were invited by the British Embassy in Paris to participate in 11th November 2018 commemorations. They came for five days and travelled free thanks to Eurostar.

They sold poppies at Gare du Nord with the Border Force. They also visited schools and a Scout Group. They attended the Arc de Triomphe in the cold and rain on the Sunday followed by the service in English at Notre Dame Cathedral in the afternoon.

Thanks to our member, Janet Hadley, we were very fortunate and felt very honoured that, in their busy schedule, they could fit in our monthly tea on the Monday. What a fun afternoon we all had; conversation flowing as well as the tea. 'Bully beef' sandwiches were provided to add to the ambience of the occasion.

The captain gave us the lowdown on the hows and whys of being a Chelsea Pensioner. All too soon, it was time for them to go on to their next visit. But the memory will last with all of us.

Valerie Chemama





100 Years On!

I shared a poignant moment with a beautiful soul yesterday; a delightful bright-as-a-button 105 year old lady.

She recounted that she has a vivid memory from when she was about five years old. She was in the house with her mother, grandmother and aunt when someone knocked on the door. She happily skipped and hopped along to answer it and cheerfully delivered a telegram to her mother. She watched as all three women collapsed in grief at the news of Uncle Jimmy's death at the age of nineteen at the end of the Great War.

My greatest respect to this lady for sharing the memory with me and for putting it into her five year old's perspective..

Ronnie Allen

A BIG THANK YOU TO TOC H FROM ST MARGARET'S CHURCH OLTON

On Sunday 11th November we held a remembrance service with a difference. Instead of the usual service with local uniformed groups holding a church parade, our vicar (Rev. Dominic Wright) thought that it would be good to concentrate more on some of the things that could be termed as 'positive' transpiring from the terrible conflict of the Great War, not forgetting the many who gave their lives in service to our country and the numerous others who were left with horrendous physical and mental injuries.

Woven into the service were several readings about some of the organisations that were born out of the war, those being the Not Forgotten Society and **TOC H**, plus information about the work of the Chaplains who ministered spiritually to the troops and the many advances in medicine that were introduced to care for the injured servicemen and women.



The readings were all very interesting and informative and we held an exhibition in the church hall afterwards outlining all that was read during the service with written information and illustrations. This brought a lot of interest from people who were previously unaware of these benefits. We also displayed the 'Lamp of Maintenance' which you very kindly lent to us for the event and we had great pleasure in showing this off to the many people who were interested in its purpose and the lighting ceremony involved.



People were very keen to ask us about Talbot House, Tubby Clayton and the history of TOC H and its role in today's world.

St Margaret's wish to thank Doug and Marcia for the help and information they supplied to us enabling us to display such a concise and interesting presentation.

We wish you well in the continuing good work that TOC H is so dedicated to.

Many regards,
Brian and Janet Gibbs,

(for and on behalf of St Margaret's Church Olton).

Many readers will remember Margaret Davies who edited In Touch as a regional magazine for many, many years, and it is thanks to her that it exists today! You will be interested to know that St Margaret's is the church that Margaret attended.

Greetings from New Zealand

Dear Toc H Friends

Time again for my usual yearly letter (available upon request from Central Office). I have had contact with some of you over the last year and learnt your news. I have also enjoyed receiving the "In Touch" magazine and one copy of the "Link". Think it was sent on to me from SA (by email).

I wish you all a HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A GOOD 2019.

Love Jean (Fenner)



The Heart of the Poppy From War to Amor by Dan Irving

In this book, the author has created a narrative which links the history of Talbot House and the formation of the Toc H movement with the Amor Ministries, who work with the poorest and most deprived amongst the rubbish heaps of Mexico.

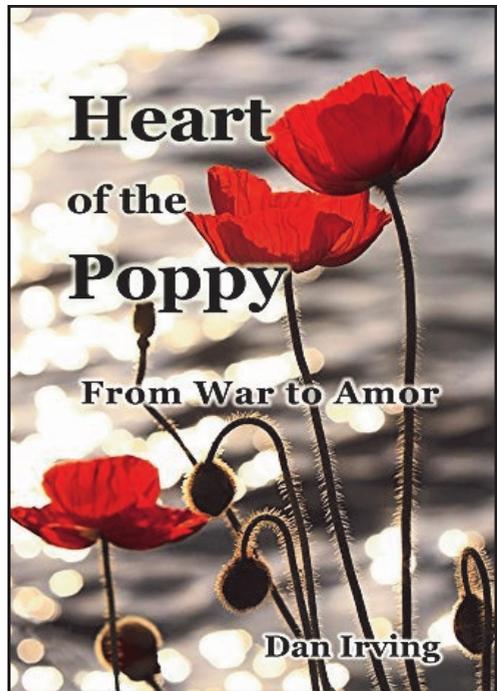
From his knowledge of Toc H and the Amor ministries, Dan Irving has drawn links between them and considers that even if there is no direct link, the latter owes much to the ethos and actions of the former.

The book describes at length the causes and course of the First World War and then moves on to the familiar story of Talbot House and its work in the war. A description of the formation of Toc H and the beginning of the Toc H movement and then an interesting section deals with the work of Toc H in the Second World War.

The Amor Ministries arose out of "Project Mexico" and developed into Amor, which seeks primarily to take volunteers from all over the world to build houses for homeless living on rubbish dumps in Mexico, for example, the Tijuana rubbish dump. The work has now extended into similar projects in South Africa.

Dan Irving considers that Amor Ministries to be the spiritual heir to Toc H and the book is an informative description of both Toc H and the Amor Ministries.

Linda Parker



The Great Flood Of Kerala

The State of Kerala experienced a great unprecedented and devastating flood recently. Kerala is just recovering from the horrendous damage it caused.

Kerala did not have great floods in the near past. Floods were all ancient history for Kerala. Even then they were never so devastating as the recent one. Many dams were built across the rivers of Kerala blocking free flow of water from rivers originating from the western mountain range, generating energy required for the state. After the building of the dams, floods became a very rare thing in Kerala.

The recent calamities of the region have been restricted to the spread of some infectious diseases in certain parts of the state. Kerala was on the path of human development. The scale of measuring Human Development has changed. Once it was the number of new roads, new bridges, new high-rise building and the sky-pointing smoke pipes of factories that served as an index of a place's development. Now the Human Development is measured by the longevity of human life, child deaths, education, healthy living environment and the well-being of the people. On the basis of the new criteria, Kerala stands very high in the state of Human Development; equal to that of some of the highly developed nations. **'Kerala Model Development'** is a norm that has emerged in the Development Studies.

It was then that it occurred – The Great Flood – immense and immeasurable. It happened all of a sudden. While people were sleeping comfortably on a rainy night - it came so suddenly! People were shocked when woken by the loud noise of heavy rains and the terrifying sounds of destruction caused by them. People found water creeping into their homes! They ran for their lives, shouting for help. Some people never thought the water could engulf them and found themselves trapped into their own homes. Water came up so high, that they only managed to save themselves climbing into upper floors, but then found they were trapped there. They cried out for at the top of their voices for help. They prayed as God was the only hope for them. Then as an answer to their prayer, some country boats came, rowed to their homes and picked them up to safety. Some were saved by

helicopters that came flying near to them hearing their shouting noise, picking them up to safety and life. They are people who saw death face to face until the help came.

Mahatma Gandhi once remarked, "To the poor and the starving, God appears in the form of food". For these hapless people, God appeared in the form of a small country boats or helicopters coming to help from the eternal silence of death. **Well, it was an immense, immeasurable and devastating flood!** Buildings collapsed; trees fell; land slid and many people died; vehicles met with accidents; animals and plants were destroyed; storms raged; rain ravaged. Here is the irony of Nature! ***Water that is the source and sustainer of life, turns to be the source of death and destruction!***

At such times of crisis and calamities, some notable and inimitable events emerge. At the time of flood, many people were organized as volunteers going from house to house with what small boats they could procure, picking up people in crisis from their homes where they were trapped and taking them to shelters and relief centres. These people being such help, unasked for, risking their own safety and even life, are ennobling examples of great virtues. Of such people, the services of the fishermen in Quilon region, were highly appreciated, applauded and adored. They plunged themselves into the deep and fathomless sea, dived into the depths and saved the dying men. They were willing to sacrifice themselves to save the dying. Here we find the noblest of the human acts of perfection.

This takes my mind to the story of famine during the days of Sri Buddha. There was bitter famine in the Kingdom of Shravasthy. The people there having nothing to eat, were starving and struggling. Then Sri Buddha went to the place.

"Who among you can take up the duty of feeding the hungry?", Lord Buddha asked his people.

Ratnakar, the banker, hung his head and said, "Much more is needed than all my wealth to feed the hungry".

Jayadevan, the Chief of the King's army said, "I would gladly give my life's blood, but there is not enough food in my house".

Dharmapal, who owned broad acres of land said with a sigh, "The drought has sucked my fields dry; I know not how to pay.

Then rose Supriya, the mendicant's daughter. She bowed to all and meekly said, "I will feed the Hungry". "How" all the people cried. "I am the poorest of you all" said Supriya. "I have my coffers and stores at each of your houses".

Sometimes great determination, great thoughts and great actions emerge out of adversity. Here in Kerala great action emerges from the fishermen, risking their lives to save the lives of others, some of the "**Rarest and the Noblest of human actions to be emulated**".

After the devastating disaster of the Great Flood, the people of Kerala are recovering to normality at a surprisingly fast rate. The mutual co-operation of the people has contributed to a great extent to make the miracle possible.

Professor Joseph

The Board will be sending £1,000 from Toc H UK to Toc H India to help with those that have suffered loss.



You are invited to

Save the Dates !!!

December 11-13 1919

This will be the launch of

*The Centenary of
The Movement of Toc H*

~

Watch this space

NATIONAL PRAYER CYCLE

Friendship – To love widely

Think of all members across the world and in Britain and those who are ill, isolated or housebound.

We pray that the new work in Scotland will open new opportunities and contacts.

Service – To build bravely

Think of the Trustees and others running Toc H and the need for a new Head Office

Pray that the vision and plans of the Movement were developed at the AGM in October.

Fair-mindedness – To think fairly

We give thanks for the Centenary of Toc H in 2019 and pray that the Movement will draw more people into its life.

We pray also that after the 100 years of the end of The Great War all will work for peace and reconciliation.

Witness – To witness humbly

We pray that all who visited Talbot House this year will have been uplifted by their visit.

We think of refugees and others suffering from war, and pray for work across the world, including in Khasdobir.



Prepared by Canon William Bestelink : September 2018

MISSION STATEMENT

The aims of Toc H are defined by the four points of the compass, first defined in 1920:

Toc H is committed to building a fairer society by working with communities to promote friendship and service, confront prejudice and practice reconciliation.

Friendship:	To love widely
Service:	To build bravely
Fairmindedness:	To think fairly
Witness:	To witness humbly