



CHAINLINK



INSIDE:

SHINE YOUR LIGHT	10
FEET ON A ROCK	13
GEOFF HOYLE WELLS	16
GOLDWING CHRISTIAN	22
LADIES AT THE HAYES	26
BOSTON SPA	32

WINTER 2022-23

The Magazine of the Christian Motorcyclists' Association UK

WINTER 2022-23

In this edition...

Issue no. 76

From the Editor's Workshop	3
'So, what do you do?'	4
<i>Mike Fitton, National Chairman</i>	
Official Stuff...	6
Message from the Trustees	8
Let your light shine	10
<i>Caz Laws, Tyne & Wear</i>	
Remembrance Day 2022	12
<i>Ian Francis, South Lancs</i>	
He set my feet on a rock	13
<i>Anna Stakesby-Lewis, Hants & Surrey Borders</i>	
Geoff Hoyle Wells	16
23rd October 1950 – 3rd December 2022	
Memories of Geoff Hoyle Wells	19
<i>John (Topbox) Finan, North Cheshire</i>	
Chef Geoff	20
<i>Chris Hodge, North Cheshire</i>	
Great Sunday Morning on the Bike	21
<i>Brian Jenner, Gloucester</i>	
The Goldwing Christian.	22
<i>Alan Brenkley, Norfolk</i>	
Rob and HOG.	24
<i>Robert Oats, North Yorks Vales & Dales</i>	
Ladies at the Hayes	27
<i>Sandy Angel-Jones-Fitton</i>	
CMA Ladies Conference 2022	28
<i>Magali Ellis, Essex</i>	
First Time Ever	30
<i>Kerry Labrum, East Midlands</i>	
CMA UK North East Regional Day 2023	32
<i>Debbie Anderson, Tyne & Wear</i>	
Boston Spa Update	35
<i>Tim Cannon, Tyne & Wear</i>	
Adoption	36
<i>Steve Wilds, South Yorks & North Lincs</i>	
Our world is full of anger.	38
<i>Jaimee Nix, Hants & Surrey Borders</i>	
A Psalm	39
<i>Sue Brown, Bikers Church</i>	
Rally & Events Diary for 2023	Back Cover

From the Editor's Workshop

*'And let us not grow weary while doing good,
for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.'* Galatians 6:9

So, you may have noticed that this issue comes from my workshop, not the garage. Actually, they are one and the same, as I guess many of yours are if you have limited 'real estate'. The bike is still here, somewhere, but essential projects and abundance of tools seem to have taken over during this cold winter period.

I guess, as bikers, we feel the effects of the different seasons more than many. Our spiritual lives and walk of faith can very often be seasonal. God Himself, at Creation, instituted seasons¹. Biblical feasts are seasonal². A fruit harvest is seasonal³. Rainfall is mostly seasonal, unless you happen to live in the UK⁴.

Times of great blessing may be seasonal – I say, 'great', since we continually experience a measure of blessing according to God's promises. When you see your brother or sister being mightily blessed, be happy for them and not envious, thinking, "How about me, Lord?" Remember, your life is in His hand and He will work in you as He wills, when He wills, for your greater good⁵. And when your intention is to serve and minister to others, don't do so according to how you feel or the season you're in, but rather as apostle Paul instructs young Timothy, 'Be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction'⁶.

Be blessed, and be a blessing!

John

¹ Genesis 1:14 and Psalm 104:19

² Exodus 13:10, Leviticus 3:4 and Numbers 9

³ Psalm 1:3 and Matthew 21:41

⁴ Deuteronomy 11:14 & 28:12

⁵ Philippians 2:13

⁶ 2 Timothy 4:2



Photo by Fallon Michael on Unsplash

Mike Fitton, National Chairman

A few days ago, Sandy and I stayed overnight with Gary and Pauline before the NE Regional Day – it gave us a chance to relax together before a busy day.

Gary and I left the girls doing crafty things and went to the huge local music shop *Gear4Music* (I've never seen so many guitars, drum kits, keyboards, and PA systems), followed by a visit to the BMW bike shop.



‘So, what do you do?’

As we approached the dealership, I saw a salesman chatting with a customer outside. I hadn't met him before but as he said 'Welcome', I just felt something in the *heavenlies* might be about to happen. He followed us in and asked if we needed any help. To be honest, sometimes I prefer to just browse and dream, but on this occasion I asked if they had any second hand, very low mileage GS 1250 Adventures in stock (*actually, it might be wise not to share that last sentence with Sandy...*)

I explained that Sandy and I are currently on our fourth 1200 GS Adventure and, as I work with the Christian Motorcyclists' Association, we put a high mileage on our bikes (often 12,000-14,000 a year), so I'm always on the lookout for low mileage bikes for the future. The mention of CMA began a wonderful conversation, it started with the usual comments of,

“What! You ride a bike for work, go to rallies and meet other bikers – and talk about bikes?”

“Not quite,” I reply,

“So, what do you do?”

It's a question I love to answer, especially when it leads into a meaningful conversation about personally knowing God's love and having a relationship with Jesus. I'm sure we have all experienced those moments, when you speak about Jesus and the atmosphere turns cold, the conversation ends abruptly, or the one you are speaking to says, “I'm not very religious” as if we would only have this conversation with someone who *is* religious!

But this time it wasn't like that – he really engaged with us, gave us coffee, and continued asking questions; he was fascinated about the work of

CMA, and I believe he gave serious thought to all that we said about the change Jesus had made in our lives.

I have been asked the following questions countless times and I hope my answers were honest and helpful.

'Why are you a member of CMA?'

'What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?'

'What difference has Jesus made in your life?'

I wonder what you would have said.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi and made it clear that nothing in this world was of greater value than his relationship with Jesus, describing everything he had lost or given up for Christ's sake, as garbage.

Philippians 3:8 Amplified Bible reads, ***'But more than that, I count everything as loss compared to the priceless privilege and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord [and of growing more deeply and thoroughly acquainted with Him—a joy unequalled]. For His sake I have lost everything, and I consider it all garbage, so that I may gain Christ.'***

A prisoner once said to me, "I've really made a mess of my life, if only I could be born again!"

That gave me the chance to tell him that when we ask God to forgive our sins and surrender our lives to Him, He gives us a fresh start. God is the God of new beginnings.

John 3:3 reads, ***Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."***

God is our Great Shepherd, He treasures us even when we go astray, He leaves the ninety nine other sheep to find us and carry us home.

William Temple (Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942-44) wrote:

'My worth is what I am worth to God; and that is a marvellous great deal, for Christ died for me.'

The grace of God is priceless and we will never be worthy of it, yet God lavishes His grace upon the *'greatest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives'*. (Hymn lyrics – *'To God be the Glory'*.)

Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary of the whole Bible:

'Grace is the free, undeserved goodness and favour of God to mankind.'

'No one deserves the forgiveness of God, all have sinned and fallen short of God's perfect standard.' (Romans 3:23)

A. W. Tozer put it this way:

'The Cross is the lightning rod of grace that short-circuited God's wrath to Christ – so that only the light of His love remains for believers.'

We must not cheapen the Gospel message that we share; it was unimaginable and inconceivable for Jesus to go to Calvary's cross on our behalf and take upon Himself our sin. Remember He did it for those who nailed Him to the cross, spat in His face and would say, "I'm not very religious"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:


'Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.'

When faced with questions, remember you are not alone. God is with you, He has made such an incredible difference in our lives, we cannot and should not keep it to ourselves.

'Be still and know (recognize, understand) that I am God.'

Psalm 46:10 Amplified Bible

God Bless you,

Mike and Sandy Fitton 

Official Stuff...

CMA UK Trustees

Adam Baker	adam.trustee@bike.org.uk
Brian Carbonero	brian.trustee@bike.org.uk
Naomi Hogan	naomi.trustee@bike.org.uk
Fraser McDougall	fraser.trustee@bike.org.uk

CMA UK National Chairman

Mike Fitton	chairman@bike.org.uk
-------------	--

CMA UK National Executive

Adam Baker	adambaker.exec@bike.org.uk
David Ball	davidball.exec@bike.org.uk
Chris Houghton	chrishoughton.exec@bike.org.uk
Lee Jones	leejones.exec@bike.org.uk
Dave Lock	davelock.exec@bike.org.uk
Phil Roberts	philroberts.exec@bike.org.uk

CMA UK National Officers

National Administrator	Adam Baker	contact@bike.org.uk
National Secretary	Adam Baker	natsec@bike.org.uk
National Treasurer	Phil Roberts	treasurer@bike.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Malcolm Wren	memsec@bike.org.uk
Chainlink Editor	John Hodge	chainlink@bike.org.uk
Merchandise	Kobus Bensch	merchandise@bike.org.uk
Fast Track Coordinator		fasttrack@bike.org.uk
Fast Friday Coordinator	Fred Gill	fastfriday@bike.org.uk
Rally Coordinator	Lee Jones	rallyorg@bike.org.uk
Rally Bookings		rallyreg@bike.org.uk
Ladies Conf Coordinator	Sandy Fitton	ladiesconforg@bike.org.uk
Ladies Conf Bookings	Pauline Lowery	ladiesconfbooking@bike.org.uk
Health & Safety	Adam Baker	hands@bike.org.uk
Safeguarding (Male)	Chris Houghton	male.safeguarding@bike.org.uk
Safeguarding (Female)	Kate Moore	female.safeguarding@bike.org.uk
Data Protection	David Ball	gdpr@bike.org.uk
Webmasters	Philip Head	webmaster.philip@bike.org.uk
	Stephen Hughes-Burton	webmaster.stephen@bike.org.uk
Workbooks	Ian Cameron	workbook@bike.org.uk

CMA UK Branches

For a complete and up-to-date list of all UK branches please check out the CMA UK website – see the link in the footer of this page.

The views expressed in *Chainlink* cannot be taken as official CMA policy on any subject. The magazine is published up to four times a year, to provide information for CMA members and to encourage them in their personal walk with God. We pray that this magazine will also stimulate non-Christian readers into thinking more about Jesus Christ, and also seeking Him for themselves.

The Bible says: 'Seek and you will find'
St Matthew chapter 7, verse 7



CONTACT US:

CMA UK
PO Box 8155
Loughborough
LE11 9AR

Freefone
0800 0154479

contact@bike.org.uk
www.bike.org.uk



CMA UK is part of the
CMA Worldwide International
Outreach Ministry

Registered UK Charity
1080911

**The deadline
for submission
of items for the
Spring 2023 issue
is 30th April 2023**

Acknowledgements:

Front cover image:
Marianne Myburgh

Printed by:
Heritage Print
Merseyside
www.heritageprint.co.uk

Mark & Lizzie Coupe's Wedding

Following the Autumn issue article on his and Lizzie's wedding, Mark is keen to point out that he actually got married in 'proper wedding attire', as shown below, and NOT his CMA cutoff! We understand, Mark.



A plea from the editor

The photo above is reproduced at a resolution of 300dpi (dots per inch). This is the standard resolution for the printing process and, with its file size of 710KB, is the maximum size we can display it on the page. Many of you are still sending photos that are far smaller than this, usually copied from social media, and therefore it is not practical to reproduce a sizeable image on the page. This is unfortunate since most photos we receive have really interesting content, which deserve viewing sometimes as a full page! Please, please, send full size images, preferably from the device that has taken them, with NO compression in file size. The e-mailing process usually offers you a choice of sending full size (slow transfer rate) medium or small (fastest transfer rate). Please, ALWAYS choose FULL SIZE – slowest transfer rate. *See also below.* Thank you, Ed.

Articles for Chainlink are most welcome, and should preferably be submitted by e-mail to chainlink@bike.org.uk

All images should be **high resolution** (originals from your camera/smartphone) and **NOT** embedded in a text document. Vector graphics are also welcome. Text documents should be unformatted text or rich text format (RTF) files. MS Word, OpenOffice and WordPerfect documents are acceptable, **PDFs are not**.

The sender must have permission for the inclusion of ALL names, addresses and pictures, especially of children, prior to submission and be able to provide accreditation for all material that is not original. The sender takes all responsibility for all content and rights relating to all items that are submitted. If in doubt, please obtain verification from the National Chairman or the Executive Committee. The editor retains the right to correct spelling and grammar as appropriate.

Message from the Trustees

Two important dates for your 2023 diary



Your diary is probably already filling up for this year, but these are two dates you will definitely want to ensure are included. They are:

CMA Spring Fellowship Weekend & Annual General Meeting, 21-23 April 2023, hosted by Forth & Tay Branch at Arbroath

CMA National Rally, 7-9 July 2023, at the Quinta Christian Conference Centre, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7LR

Being in membership of CMA UK means we are part of a national organisation, which in turn is part of a global network of CMA organisations. Our two annual UK national events are a great opportunity to hear what God is doing across the UK and abroad, to meet others from across the UK – including those in national roles, and to worship, pray and share fellowship together. For these reasons alone we should be prioritising attending these two events.

In case you haven't yet been to one or both of these events, they typically run as follows:

The Spring Fellowship Weekend & AGM

This normally starts on the Friday evening with time to meet and share fellowship. Saturday morning includes the chance to go on a ride around the local area as well as to continue sharing fellowship with others. The Annual General Meeting takes place in the afternoon and anyone in membership can attend. The evening usually involves a social event, such as a fun quiz. The weekend finishes with the local church's morning service which normally has some CMA involvement.

Branches volunteer to host this weekend, and so its location moves around from year to year. Feel it's too far away from you? Perhaps your branch should offer to host it, possibly with the support of a neighbouring branch. There is guidance available, and branches who do host it say that despite the work involved it has been a blessing to do so.





Anyone who is a member of CMA UK has a responsibility to attend this weekend if they can, particularly if they are a branch official or hold a national role. There is a minimum number/percentage of members who need to be present at an AGM for it to be valid (quorate), and every branch and twig should look to ensure they are represented. This is to ensure the discussions and decisions in the AGM are representative of the organisation as a whole, while taking into account that an individual member or supporter are unlikely to be able to attend every AGM.

The National Rally

'Servant hearts' are core to CMA UK's mission and for this rally. Anyone who can arrive on the Thursday helps set up for the weekend. This is a great chance to meet others and contribute to the rally in a very positive way. The rally officially starts on Friday, with people attending from all over the UK, Europe and sometimes further afield such as from the USA. Each morning starts with a prayer meeting in the main hall and a prayer room is available during the weekend. There is the option to have cooked meals at the restaurant and a Holy Joe's Café is available for drinks.


During Saturday other activities include a ride-out, chances to use the swimming pool and sessions such as the opportunity to hear from different branches how God has worked to change lives over the last year.

A highlight of the first two days are the evening services, which include worship, prayer, various speakers and a range of other items – and in 2022 this included a marriage proposal! The Sunday morning service includes communion and is a wonderful way to end the rally. Those who can help to pack up then do so, with some staying through to Monday.

These rallies provide a fuller picture of the work of CMA UK for all who attend – and it is important to realize that this rally is not just for those of us already within CMA UK's membership. You are very welcome to bring your family and friends, and many people have done – even if it means coming by car rather than by bike. Many people say that a highlight of our National Rallies is the chance to simply spend time with others, including getting to know people better within their own Branch/Twig, catching up with existing friends from across the UK and making new ones.

Many Branches/Twigs plan in advance which, particularly during the current cost of living crisis, can help with shared transport and accommodation, and to ensure that at least some of their membership can attend even if an important local event is taking place at the same time as one of our national events.

We hope you already make sure you have these events in your diary every year and attend if you possibly can, but if not, we hope this helps you decide to attend them in 2023. You will bless others and be blessed if you do.

Adam, Brian, Naomi and Fraser 

Let your light shine

'Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.'

Matthew 5:16

Hi! I'm Caz.

I'm a member of CMA Tyne & Wear Branch. I'm married to George, a lovely Christian man. We have five children aged 29 to 39, four girls and a boy, and seven grandchildren aged 1 to 7 years.

For many years I have struggled to understand how and why God would love ME. I've found it hard to recognise what gifts I have been given from God. I still struggle. However, I really do believe He gives talents, skills and gifts to people to use for His glory and to further the Kingdom.

I see Christians who are so lovely and I can see their gifts, whether it's the gift of speaking, serving others, praying for and praying with others, the gift of hospitality, singing or playing an instrument.

A few years ago I remember sitting with a large group of Christians in a church room. There were about eight of us around a table and the facilitator asked, 'What gifts have you been given from God and how can you use them?'

We were given paper and pens. The facilitator gave us fifteen minutes to think about this and discuss with others in the group if we wanted to. I sat there staring at my blank piece of paper. I watched others as they sat scribbling things down, some chatting away to one another.



My husband George asked why I wasn't writing anything. I said, 'Because I don't think I have any gifts.' He looked at me and said, 'You must be joking!' I started to choke up and said, 'You just write down your gifts.' He could see I was upset. I said I didn't want to talk about it. He then said, 'You are great with people, you get on with anybody. You're thoughtful, helpful and caring. You make lovely gifts for people.'

I said, 'Yes but that's just who I am, what I do.' He said, 'Those are your gifts from God.' I still couldn't see how or why God would give ME gifts. God has so much patience in trying to get me to understand that I also have gifts. He's still working with me on that.

I love being creative and making gifts for people.

For the past two or three years I've made bracelets and keyrings with Jesus Loves You charms on and have given them to random people who I meet who have shown kindness in different ways or whom God has told me to speak to. I know they are not random people really but are the people God has placed in my life at certain times. These are what I call 'God-incidences.' There have been many of these over the years of me knowing Him.

In one 'God-incidence' I jumped out of the car when we'd been in a feeder lane of traffic for 15 minutes and someone let us in (only to stand in more traffic) but God's timing was perfect. The two women in the car, now behind us, were startled when I thanked them for letting us in. I gave them two 'Jesus Loves You' keyrings I'd made, along with CMA cards. They were very thankful for them.

In another 'God-incidence' our Branch members were riding from Torver Biker Breakfast (in the Lake District) and George and I had got lost from the group after coming out of a petrol station. I was adamant that the group had followed the road to the left. George said it was to the right. After a few seconds of me arguing we turned left. After about a mile we stopped at a layby to take stock as we couldn't see the group – and also to take in the beautiful view of the lake. Another biker pulled in the layby behind us and I felt God saying to me 'Talk to him'. I got off the bike but George stayed on. I told the biker we were lost. He said he was too. I thought 'here's my opportunity.' I said lightly 'we can all feel lost but thank goodness Jesus knows the way.' He looked puzzled. I explained we were Christians pointing towards George who had his back towards us which showed a large white cross on the back of his jacket. I also showed him the cross on the back of my jacket. The biker said he didn't believe but understood that other people did. He then said his daughter was out in China and was ill, then asked if I could pray for her. I asked if I could pray with him then. He said, 'err yeahh'. So right there in the layby I prayed openly with him for her. After I'd prayed I said, 'Hang on a minute.' I went to our bike and took out a CMA card and a Biker Bible from the back box and gave them to him, briefly explaining what they were. He politely thanked me. I said 'bye, take care' and we started to set off on the bike.

As soon as we pulled away George asked, through the intercoms, what had gone on. I told him and immediately he started to pray about the situation. George then said, 'Sometimes we think we know which way we're going but God has a different idea and leads us in another direction. Just what had happened.' Praise God, He knows best!

I enjoy making gifts and have given gifts to many staff in Bed and Breakfasts and hotels up and down the country who've shown kindness or looked like they needed a hug – obviously I don't usually go around hugging strangers. I have also given these handmade gifts to street preachers I see to encourage them in the work they're doing serving the Lord in that way.

George is used to me doing things like this now and just gives me space to 'do my thing.' He always says that 'his job is to get me to places where God wants me to be and for him to be the rider or driver'. George is so much more than that. He's my Number One supporter and what's more, George loves Jesus too.

Recently I made sixty white, wooden hearts with the words 'Hope', 'Peace', 'Do not worry', and 'Love' on them. On the back of each heart I'd written a Bible reference. I'd stuck an adhesive diamond on the front too.

It was Sunday morning at Stormin' the Castle biker rally. As I sat in the borrowed campervan (thanks Lee and Catherine), I prayed that God would give me strength to go out amongst the bikers and offer them a white, wooden heart and they'd take one. I knew some would be hungover from the night before but with God on my side why worry? I was nervous but knew that God wouldn't have asked me to make the hearts if He didn't want me to take this next step. So I told George what I was going to do and he said he would pray for me. As I walked up the field I thought 'Maybe they'll think I'm mad?' I said to myself, 'If God was with me, who could be against me'. Nervously I went to a huge, open-sided tent with lots of tables and chairs and saw that it was packed! I thought, 'Here goes.' I opened the plastic box containing the hearts and spread them about inside the box. I could see people at different tables wondering what I was doing. I asked people to choose a heart that meant something to them. I also told them that the diamond on the wooden heart symbolised how precious they were to God and then said, 'If they wanted to know what the Bible reference on the back was they could come to Holy Joe's Café and pick up a free Bible or speak to one of us with a cross on our backs, or even look up the reference themselves on their phones'. I gave out CMA cards too, to explain who CMA are. By the time I'd left the tent and walked around the stall-holders I'd given all of the hearts away. No one had been awful to me, which I felt was a great blessing. People were very thankful. Some even offered to pay for them. I politely refused and said it was a gift. I don't know how many people looked up the Bible references, but I do know that's another 60 people I've had the opportunity to share God's love with by giving a small gift. Praise God!

A couple of weeks ago we were on our bike in a parade. The streets were lined with about 1000 people watching. We had a bubble machine attached to the back box and hundreds of bubbles flew out behind us. I threw out about 40 to 50 'Jesus Loves You' charms in tiny plastic bags into the crowd as we rode along. At the end of the parade I thought to myself, 'There's another 40 or so people who know that Jesus loves 'them'', and smiled inwardly to myself, praying for them silently.

I used to wonder what the people receiving the gifts thought about me, jumping out in traffic jams, giving gifts to staff in B&Bs, cafés and shops, to street preachers and to bikers at various bike rallies.

More recently we were staying at Oliver's Mount, Scarborough to watch the road racing for a few days. George was a photographer there. I felt I was there to show God's love in whichever way God wanted me to. I felt God saying, 'I just want you to be'. I wore my cut, walked around and prayed God would give me opportunities to share Him with others. As I was walking up the field through the two lines of stalls, I saw a woman with 3 girls; her daughters, she'd explained later. One of her daughters was in a wheelchair and the mam was struggling to push it on the uneven grass field. I said, 'Hi' and we all stopped walking. The woman was looking at my cut. We started talking and she said that she was supposed to be coming with her husband to Oliver's Mount but he was poorly at home and, as she didn't want to disappoint the children (aged 8 to 17) she'd brought them on her own. She was looking at the various badges on my waistcoat, so were her children. This gave me the opportunity to talk briefly about the cross on my back and I spoke about CMA. I gave the woman and her children 'Jesus Loves You' keyrings and CMA cards and said 'bye, take care.' We then went our separate ways. I thought, 'Well, there's more people that know Jesus loves them'.

I had other opportunities at Oliver's Mount whilst standing at a fence, watching the bike race. Standing next to me on my right was a small group of men and one woman. To my left was a man with a teenage girl. I later found out she was his 12 year old daughter. At various times I chatted with these people about the racing. I quickly prayed, 'God give me the opportunity to talk about You.' The man with his daughter told me he used to be a motorbike racer about 11 years ago. He'd given it up just after his daughter was born as he didn't want to continue risking his life, leaving his daughter without a dad. At different points I got the opportunity to talk about racing, risking your life, having only one life and 'living it.' As I was talking to the man, his daughter and the group to my right, I could see them looking at the badges on my cut. I turned around and showed them the white cross and explained I was a Christian and also a biker, that I rode pillion and was a member of the Christian Motorcyclists' Association. I gave them all CMA cards and 'Jesus Loves You' keyrings. They all kindly accepted them and I left. I thought, 'Thank you God for opportunities like this to tell people, by way of a keyring with a 'Jesus Loves You' charm on that actually Jesus does love each one of them.'

People out there may think I'm mad!

But I think, 'Thank you God for giving me these opportunities to share You and may the people receiving these small gifts come to know you'.

I often think, 'Maybe this could be the only time they'll hear Jesus loves them by way of a simple keyring or bracelet with a 'Jesus Loves You' charm on or a simple white heart with a Bible reference and a diamond stuck on, given to them by a stranger—a free gift—free, like Jesus' gift of love to us all.'

Life is short. I want to take every opportunity to tell people that Jesus loves them. Like I said at the beginning, I still ask myself, 'What are my gifts from God? And how can I use them?'

God has given you all gifts. Do you struggle, like me, knowing what your gifts are?

Just say, 'Here I am Lord. Use me,' and He will. ✝

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2022

Ian Francis, South Lincs



I was asked by two local bike clubs to arrange a Remembrance Day Service at a farm where they meet, a farm just off the East Lancashire Road¹. Some of the guys are ex-servicemen and wanted to remember with their clubs.

I put together a short service which included Bible passages, poems and prayers, with assistance from John Rowley (FAMM) for the last post, reveille and a minute's silence. We all stood outside their clubhouse and respectfully remembered those who had given their all for our freedom. Some of the guys had damp patches on their cheeks at the end and they all came up and thanked me afterwards.

Following on from the service about twenty of us mounted up and rode to Birch Services on the M62 for the start of 'The Ring of Red', a ride of remembrance that goes all the way around Manchester on the M60 outer ring road. As we rode towards the start other bike groups merged into our group and by the time we got to Birch services our group had swelled to about 100 bikes. We got there an hour before the first bikes were due to start the run, enough time for a Costa and a chat to other bikers I

knew—most of my time amongst the biking community is spent talking. I caught up with five other clubs that I visit and shared how the eleventh hour silence had been spent. As always I ended our discussion with a 'God Bless'.

The last post sounded to bring us all to order and to concentrate our minds on why we were all there. We then all went off to try and find our bikes amongst the 6,000 that were lined up in neat rows. The bikes were released about 200 at a time onto the M62 which leads onto the M60 and it took over 90 minutes to get all the bikes out of the car park. We then rode in an orderly manner at about 50 mph all the way around Manchester. Virtually every bridge we went under had people waving and flying flags, some with military emblems, others with the cross of St George or the Union flag. Some of these people had been waiting over an hour and would be waving their arms and flags for over an hour and a half!

The group I was with had agreed to meet up at Veterans Garage café afterwards, where we drank coffee and chatted about mates who were not there for various reasons.

I have done this run for five years now (on my own during lockdown) and always get a buzz from being in such a huge group of bikes.

Ten years ago at the first 'Ring of Red' there were 600 bikes taking part, this year there were 5,984! †

¹ A580, Liverpool to Manchester - Ed.

He set my feet on a rock

When Sandy asked the question at the Ladies Conference this November, what has God done in your life in the last 4 years?... the question cut into my flesh. It started a discussion with Annelie, who was sitting beside me and I roughly went through the mile-stones of this very significant time of my life. Then the mic went around and Annelie kept poking me in the side to encourage me to share. I chickened out sharing at the conference, but resolved to share my testimony in writing later on as it is very personal with details easier to share either as a one-to-one or in writing. Let it be an encouragement to all who read my story!

This year's conference has actually framed this part of my life nicely as the big changes started back in 2017 when I attended the Ladies Conference for the first time. I was completely drained and disappointed, stuck in a toxic marriage, I had a job I really disliked, I felt I was just running in circles and felt a complete failure.

Just before the weekend away, Jesus sent a dear friend, called Margaret, who let me stay with her for a few months to get a grip on my life and I knew I was going to stay with her right after the conference. So, even though I arrived pretty much broken and anxious, as I knew only a few people, I also had a little mission to find a lady called Fran, as Margaret and Fran were college friends!

I moved in with Margaret and, oh Lord, it was just amazing! It felt like the sun was shining again. I was so happy – and to see a

smiling face first thing in the morning was nearly a shock. I felt I reached an oasis in an emotional desert that had been surrounding me for years.

As I started to feel better, I had the capacity to look into my work life and prepare for changes in that field, too. From December I started volunteering for a local garage. I didn't know anything about cars, all I had was my enthusiasm and the unbreakable faith that God would open doors for me. Week after week I turned up, helping where I could and learning everything from scratch. I mean literally from scratch, as I didn't even know the name of the tools, car parts, anything! But I had very patient people around me and they recognised my determination.

2018 started. In January I moved back in with L. who was my husband at that time. Some brighter months came, but all collapsed by May, when we moved to a new house. I was exhausted as I was working full time plus my one day a week volunteering at the garage. Along with moving house, I also was preparing for a two-week dive trip to Indonesia that I signed up for so I could teach diving again. I hoped and asked for help from L., but all I got was accusations; calling me stupid, sick and argumentative. I ended up moving boxes and furniture by myself.

The new house was such a perfect place. It really cheered me up and I started to accept that even though I was married on paper, emotionally I was alone. I focused on my garage work and tried to spend time with friends to fill up my emotional love tank as much as I could. It kept me going. My determination at the garage paid off, as in September, they offered me a full-time contract as an apprentice with a proper wage (more than I was earning in my current job) and college to gain my qualifications. Such abundance from God!

While my professional life started to take shape, my personal life was complete chaos. By December, I separated from L. and started a long and painful journey. I only saw darkness but I never gave up the hope that I would see sunshine again.

2019 started and to add to my challenges I was made redundant at the garage at the end



Photo by Nathan Dumlao on Unsplash

of January. It was a business decision, but it still came as a complete shock. I felt ashamed that I didn't have a job. I was confused but I refused to believe that God had opened this door for a short time to let me have a little taster, only to take it away again when He saw how much I loved it. I insisted things would work out.

A few days later my car was broken into. I have to share this as it is significant. I was close to just giving up and sinking into depression but as I had to sort out the car my brain had the ability to ignore everything else and focus on the practical problem. The verse from Genesis 50:20 sums this up: 'You (the thief) intended to harm me, but God intended it for good'.

As so many people in the Bible were saved by their faith, so was I. One of my colleagues from the garage applied for a job in another workshop and when he got the position, he recommended me. By the end of February, I got odd shifts in that garage and by the end of March they offered me a full-time contract. I spent 3 challenging but very happy years with that company. Enjoying my job and feeling happy had given me so much energy that I was able to face what was before me. I also finished my college course while I was working there and finally held a proper qualification: IMI Level 2 Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair!

In this emotional chaos I had yet another battle to fight and this was my sexual identity. I always found the guy-things more interesting than the typical girl stuff and many times I felt this woman's body I had to live in was more of an obstacle. Then I met someone who got really close to me, was there for me, wanted to spend time with me and told me it was OK to be different. She was there to walk with me through really difficult times. She explained to me that ending a marriage—doesn't matter how dysfunctional it was—takes time and that I have to cut the cords one by one. The feeling that she needed me and that I was special was an amazing feeling, but I knew that this contradicted God's word and I couldn't go ahead with a relationship with her. I believe God sent her to be a good friend as well as help me through very difficult times leading to my divorce. When the friendship ended a few months later, I was still confused about my identity but realised God never gave me the go-ahead. I had to find peace and reconcile with myself as He created me. To accept who I am and what I enjoy doing would be probably much harder as my physical frame is not a strong male body, but it is possible. I don't need to be someone else to have a fulfilling life.

Then in July BoB¹ came along. Now, don't judge me straight away! BoB is my big bike. To get him was another significant decision, but that would divert the story, so I would just say, he really added a new colour to my life and we have had a good few great adventures together. He was my escape as my so called 'home life' started to be unbearable. My life was about work, cheap ready meals and staying at a dear friend's house after work as I could not bear spending the nights at home. By October, I decided enough is enough and I applied for divorce in November.

Very uncertain times followed. There was never good communication between L. and me but it was reduced to zero by then. I requested for L. to move out, which he accepted, but I did not know when that would happen. I

started advertising the room as I could not afford this place by myself but as I didn't know when the room was going to be available it was very stressful. It was a real brain storm to scan through everyone who would potentially be a good candidate to live with and one night when I was driving home I remembered Tim – that it would be so much fun to be flat mates. It left me with a warm feeling but then I forgot to follow up my idea straight away. Later I sent my room advert to the climbing centre where I used to work and when I popped in on the way to a meeting with a person who was interested in renting the room, I learnt that Tim was also very interested. He asked to see the place and for whatever reason I took it as a 'yes' and assumed the room had been taken! The final confirmation came a bit later on Tim's side: knowing that someone I knew would move in was a great relief. We were good friends as we had worked together for a few years. I also knew he was not in a great rush and that took the pressure off me as I still didn't know when the room would be available.

The new chapter of my life started before Christmas. I was away that weekend and when I got home the room was empty; L. had finally left! Tim moved in shortly after Christmas.

2020 arrived – the New Year started so cheerfully. We had so much to talk about and it was great that Tim was so happy to join in whatever I came up with. We went for a few day trips and just simply enjoyed the time together. Meanwhile I was preparing for a single life. I felt I was done with men and I knew very clearly there was no other alternative for a relationship. I was so unsure anyway if I had anything left to offer, I felt so burnt out, so used and so old. With all these feelings the thought that I would need to step aside to let Tim find the woman God had prepared for him was increasingly painful.

In February life took a turn and our friendship started to change into something more. One evening I took Tim out for a short ride on Bike. The journey had started! Our relationship looked rather suspicious from the outside as I was much older, still married on paper and I really dreaded the world's judgement on Tim. I didn't want to look ridiculous either but the world kept its judgement to itself and slowly my soul relaxed. We both knew we were doing the right thing or let's say were not doing the wrong thing, as we remained in our own rooms even if we were in the same house and our relationship was in God's hands. From then on, nothing else mattered.

In March lockdown hit. In the midst of all tragedies, death and grieving, God had given us a very special time to spend with each other and with Him and after so much trouble, I could rest without feeling guilty about it! I was on furlough for seven weeks and we enjoyed every second of this truly unique time. Building up a relationship in the Lord is an amazing experience. One of my dear friends told me once: the secret of a good marriage is that the two are best friends! I think I started to understand what she was talking about.

Here I feel I need to emphasise how mind-blowing the Lord's timing was. When I think about it my hair stands on end. What if I didn't make the decision when I did? I would have been locked together with L. with no escape? I would not have had anywhere to go as the whole country had stopped! Only a few months' delay would have changed this

¹ BoB means Brother of Bike. Bike is my Kawasaki ER5, my little bike.

story from having a happy ending to possibly a tragedy!

In May I had to go back to work, but felt physically refreshed. Learning that life can be peacefully happy was not that easy! It took months to accept, life CAN be happy and peaceful and God has given me this man who is truly a treasure.

For years I had been attending a local church – I did enjoy it but I didn't feel I was part of it. When Tim moved in we went there a few times, but when lockdown started the church, like every other, had to close. One day we were talking about church, family and growing up and a name came up in conversation. This man used to be a pastor at the church Tim grew up in and we quickly identified that the same man used to come to preach occasionally at the church I attended for a few years. I knew his current church—Southampton Lighthouse International Church—so we looked it up and we joined their online services in December. We have been part of this church ever since.

When the New Year started in 2021, I was amazed. A whole year passed by in this peaceful happiness. No arguments, no tension. Whatever came up we could talk it through. What a team we are! Tim is really a gift from the Lord; his endless patience and unconditional love slowly brought out the best in me. I can be hard work, I know it very well and when I'm angry, that is no secret. My emotions are written right on my forehead – but Tim is not intimidated by my radical emotions. He is right there with his peaceful self and instead of putting more fuel on the fire as everyone else did before, he helps me to calm down. Once the storm is gone, the sun shines again! We were growing together and our relationship was and is strongly built in the Lord. In February he asked me to marry him. You may have seen my article in the Autumn edition of Chainlink of the time leading up to our wedding.

In the Summer Tim finally left the climbing centre, a long overdue change and started to work for someone we both knew. It was a tiring but a good change as this job had no late-night shifts. Tim gained an IT qualification during lockdown and though this job had some tempting promises, we decided to treat it as a temporary solution. We didn't expect it to be so temporary though! After a month Tim had to leave and just a few weeks before the wedding he was out of work. Again, harm was intended but God used it for our good. Tim now had time to focus on the final arrangements. That took a lot of pressure off me as work was full on and once again, I was reaching my physical limits. I always forget to book time off and the last time I had a little break was around Christmas!

The wedding went well, such a happy time and the rest of the year passed by quietly with

yet another great change. A few days before the wedding an agency contacted Tim and they offered him a short-term contract as IT support. A few weeks later he was offered a temporary contract, which was extended a few more times, leading into a permanent contract with a promotion!

In the midst of all these happy events for whatever strange reason I started to struggle with anxiety and the New Year started with me completely amazed by my mental state. Just looking back on my life full of struggles, difficulties and pressure I had to endure, I had no idea why this came upon me now. My life was so happy, peaceful and fulfilling I had no reason on earth to be anything but grateful.

2022 therefore started a bit rough. Even though I loved my job, I also felt I had to make a dramatic change. I felt I was on a plateau and I desperately wanted to grow, gain more qualifications and my ambitions were not supported at all by my employers. Once again, I prayed for the impossible to happen. I needed a change. Back in 2018 when I had to leave my first garage, I visited a few other workshops looking for employment. I went to one very close to where I live and though they didn't have any openings for me, I remembered them with a nice warm feeling. So, I looked them up again for their contact intending to send my CV and, to my greatest joy, I found a fresh job advert on their website looking for a technician! I applied and then they called me in for an interview. A few hours later they offered me the job!

The best thing is that I didn't just get a new job but also had the chance to start a Level 3 college course. Everyone was very helpful and supportive and I also had the opportunity to take part in different short training sessions. By July I was booked to do an MOT Tester qualification and at the end of November I successfully passed my last exam to be a qualified MOT Tester. I got so much more than I hoped for and this is where I am at the moment. The trade I'm working in can be quite tough at times but I have to say, for the first time in my life I feel valued. I receive encouragement and I feel appreciated.

So, what has God done for me the last few years? The answer is in Psalm 40, 1-3

1 I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him. ✝

GEOFF HOYLE WELLS



23rd October 1950 – 3rd December 2022



GEOFF'S FUNERAL TRIBUTE

By Lela Hoyle Wells

The word that people have kept using about Geoff is LEGEND! So, here's some background –

Geoff was born in a back-to-back terrace in Norden, Rochdale in 1950 to Doris (still with us) and Jim (who died a few years ago). Christened at St Clements, Spotland, he recalled 'seeing God in the clouds' aged 5, but Doris told him not to be so stupid! I'm sure this sentiment may have been echoed by others down the years, like Gran – "Geoffrey, you'll drive me bald-headed!"; sister Barbara; at school in Norden; at the Baptist Chapel where Geoff went to Youth Club and his dad acted in lots of plays.

There were also lots of happy memories – haymaking in the summer, friendships with the kids at Millcroft Tea Gardens, eating crisps and drinking pop outside with Barbara while parents were in the pub after a day out all together; going to the chippy over the road; listening to Grandad tell stories about the patterns they could see in the coal fire; swear words dedicated to Barbara sent up the chimney by that same fire. Brother Ken and then sister Jeanette were born, and all four siblings have remained close over the years.

However, things changed when Geoff was 10 and his parents separated. Geoff and Barbara stayed with Dad, eventually moving to Greave (Rochdale), where Geoff's house painting skills as a kid unfortunately didn't match up to his dad's high expectations! Despite this, Geoff passed the eleven-plus exam and went to Grammar school at Balderstone (Rochdale), having to cross town to get there. But life and lessons there puzzled him, and he attended less and less, preferring to eat bags of broken biscuits with his mates!

Then came teenage years after holidays at Colwyn Bay with Dad, plus one memorable one in Cornwall where he discovered girls – one in particular! Good times at the MAG coffee bar in Rochdale seemed to foretell his later happiness at MAG motorbike rallies. By the time Geoff was in his teens, sister Barbara was already courting Tony, now her husband. Dad was courting Nan, mum to step-sister Anne and step-brothers John and Neil, and later to become a much-loved step-mum to Geoff and Barbara.

Feeling a bit left out, Geoff decided to run away to sea – only because he could get taken on there at 15¾, rather than having to wait till he was 16! He travelled the world in the Navy – including two trips across the International Date Line that delayed his first official alcoholic drink at 18 – he wasn't impressed with that! Time spent in Hong Kong and blockading South Africa were especially memorable, leading to lots of anecdotes – like the time he applied to grow a beard and was told that he looked like a rat peeping through oakum! (Since then, Geoff has become better known bearded, getting nicknamed Father Christmas/Santa on many occasions.)

However, all times—good and bad—come to an end and before long, Geoff decided that 'he and the Naval Discipline Act were incompatible', so he bought himself out of the Navy. After some time back in Rochdale, working at a bakery and then making ladies' undergarments (anecdote alert!), one day he boarded a train bound for Great Yarmouth – but never arrived! Chatting to someone in the buffet car of the train, Geoff ended up changing course for Jersey, and spent 16 happy years there, playing rugby and crab fishing with a great bunch of lads. He even toured the USA with the rugby team, getting called 'the coolest dude in San Francisco' during its 'flower power' years – some tribute! He also enjoyed a long friendship with Steve and Mary, having many great times doing up their holiday home in the tiny hamlet of Maniel in Brittany, northern France.

Branching out from Jersey, Geoff broadened his horizons, still in the manly world of fishing for crabs at sea (think 'Deadliest Catch'), sometimes for Brouse Brothers of Devon, with links to Grimsby in the north east and Thurso in Scotland, among other places. Life plans included buying a croft near Lake 'orrible and changing his name to Hamish McKnicker-Elastic! There have been many moving tributes from his fishing buddies, saying how Geoff had helped them



learn the skills they needed to work well and keep safe. The high esteem they still have for him was also evident when we attended the funeral of one of the other fishermen a year or so ago.

Motorbikes were part of Geoff's life from at least Jersey days, where he described a memorable trip with an ironing board! Many a time he nearly set himself on fire, trying to light a fag in the fast lane as he sped along the M62 between Rochdale and Grimsby! Romantic relationships were many and varied, both with Jersey gals and since, but Geoff also enjoyed many long-lasting friendships with women, too. However, these were often easier than his romantic relationships, where Geoff's hair-trigger nature and high alcohol consumption didn't make for success and he was asked to leave by a number of his lady loves.

There were also memorable times in Jersey, Guernsey or Alderney where, held overnight for fighting, he ended up in the same cell as, a) previously occupied by the film star Oliver Reed and, b) the person he had just been fighting – without even recognising him!

This carefree life came to a dramatic end when he met Lela in 1996. She says of their meeting: "He was a drunken bum I picked up at a party" – because he'd already downed three bottles of Jack Daniels by the time they chatted! However, he had already impressed her by being the only person there to get down to the eye level of a lady in a wheelchair. So, when Geoff asked Lela if she'd like to go to see the fun group *Showaddywaddy*, she immediately said yes, "but as a mate, not as a date" – God must have laughed at that one! However, they nearly missed each other when subsequently getting together for that event – Geoff's beard and long hair had been half-shaved off when he was out of it on drink and drugs over the weekend between their meetings, so he'd shaved off the rest and not mentioned it to Lela on the 'phone when they arranged to meet! Neither of them looked like their previous party selves – thank God the bar was nearly empty, else it could have been really embarrassing!

Conversations that weekend and two church services at what was *Bethel Assemblies of God Church* served to reignite the connection with God that Geoff had been aware of at various points in his life, and he chose to become a Christian at the bar in Piccadilly Station! He was on his way back to Grimsby and before long all the North Sea knew of Geoff's new-found relationship with Jesus – and that he had miraculously stopped his 40-60 a day Capstan Full Strength cigarette habit. Only months later he was also able to enjoy just one or two drinks of beer or whiskey instead of not being able to stop there, and Geoff gave both God and Lela the credit that he lived as long as he did. In those extra years, he tried lots of avenues for shore jobs – carpentry/DIY, trade-plating (which he loved), computers, kitchen phone sales, working in Bethel's Christian Book Shop – but the two things that really played to Geoff's talents were

motorbike rallies and his work in church cafés at *Holy Trinity*, *Salybridge*, and *Resurrection & St Barnabas*, East Manchester. He also served as Church Warden in both. The café work suited him well, and Geoff was both loved and appreciated as much for his grumpy outrageous humour as for his excellent breakfasts. Rose, one of his colleagues in the early days at *Resurrection*, talked warmly of their time together, and the many kind things Geoff (and Lela) had done. Church Christmas Day lunches for those on their own or in need were added to the list a few years before COVID, and they made a great team – Geoff did the hard work of preparing and cooking the food, while Lela brought people to the church and chatted to them during the meal.

As mentioned before, motorbikes had long been a thread in Geoff's life, so, when he became a Christian a friend of Ken's father-in-law suggested CMA – 26 years later that link is still strong, as the wonderful support from so many bikers at the funeral showed – not only from CMA but also *God's Garage*, the *Long Riders* and even a *Devil's Disciple*! Mick Brooksbank (aka Mad Mick) was Chairman of North Cheshire Branch when we joined back in late 1996, and he shared some witty and moving recollections about their time then and friendship since.

Geoff became a fixture at the many northern motorbike rallies each year, especially in the 'Holy Joe's' tea tent – once when he fell asleep there (the shifts were long and gruelling sometimes!) someone asked if he was Holy Joe, and his nickname of 'Holy Geoff' was born! (A previous nickname of 'Womble' dates back to a drunk night of fun during his fishing days. Quite appropriate really, as Lela is a bit like Madame Cholet!) Later rallies saw Geoff taking turns at marshalling and even 'pulling blondes' (beers) in the bar! He enjoyed rallies such as *Stormin' the Castle*, *Yorkshire Pudding*, *Into the Valley*, and *Farmyard*, as well as NABD. We also attended CMA National Rallies together and one memorable CMA European rally – just after Geoff had finally got his car driver's licence!

One of his friends from MAG rallies was unable to join us in person due to serious illness in the family, but she kindly emailed this – "Myself and my husband Bod absolutely adored Geoff and always looked forward to seeing him and especially working together on our bar at the 'Into the Valley Rally'. Geoff would always prefer shifts with MAG as he said he got to meet a lot more people that way. He was so hard working and for the last few rallies, I tried to look after him by splitting his shifts up to more manageable hours. Myself and Bod found Geoff to have a wonderful sense of humour too. I will dearly miss him and only have fond memories of him." About the funeral she said "I am thinking of you all today, and will wear pink in his honour." (Pink was Geoff's favourite colour.)

Lela and Geoff's family are so grateful to all the bikers who took Geoff very much to their hearts, and wanted to be part of his special send off.



In addition to CMA, Geoff had close links with God's Garage in recent years, as well as with Biker Church since its inception. He enjoyed time with most bikers, whether or not they had a faith connection and found the *Ride to the Wall*, Toy Runs and the *Ring of Red* very moving when he was able to be part of them. Other than that, he preferred to ride solo, and, when sharing memories of him at the crematorium service, Sid O'Neill mentioned Geoff's amazing skill in getting so much camping equipment strapped to his bike! It was very moving to hear so many wonderful comments about him and to see the guys shouldering his coffin after riding with him to the church and to the crematorium. That certainly made an impact!

Healthwise, Geoff was diagnosed with diabetes in 2002 but kept this quiet so he could go ahead with the first of two trips to Ecuador with the *Soapbox* charity. The ready tears Geoff was known for flowed there many times at the happiness and laughter despite the sad deaths from HIV there.

Epilepsy came next in 2009 but we had a hard time at first convincing doctors that it wasn't just normal husband behaviour when Geoff went blank in the midst of conversations with Lela! After the symptoms got even more weird, he spent the first of three Christmases in hospital – we joked it was because we had invited his mother to join us for lunch! A few years later (2013) Geoff had a bike accident on the way to the Christmas Bible Study at Biker Church, and needed around 30 metal pins to put his smashed arm and shoulder back together. When we sneaked a look at the x-ray, the broken bones looked just like the upward-pointing arrow on the CMA t-shirt.

After the bike was looked at and declared dead, we discovered God's mercy had been at work – apparently the front brakes had seized while Geoff was turning into a garage to get petrol. If that had happened afterwards on the motorway he was planning to take, the story would have had a very different ending. Instead, we had the kindness of CMA providing him with a 'new' bike!

Similarly, Geoff's increasing problems in later years with mobility and pain due to arthritis in his ankle served to remind him of God's mercy when he was washed overboard while at sea many years earlier. The rope that had tripped

him up got tangled round that ankle and was then used to yank him back on board – around the time Lela (under stern instructions from God) had started praying for the safety and well-being of the man God would eventually bring into her life. Some of the hardened seamen on board with him couldn't bear to watch, fearing Geoff must be dead after his time in the water. One of the girlfriends, deeply distressed, rushed to hospital thinking it was her man, then said "Glad it's only you, Womble!"

God's gracious intervention in Geoff's life was also in evidence at the rapid help he got when first diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2016, and since then, especially during his last two hospital admissions.

The first of these was in 2021 after breaking his leg, which had been weakened by the progress of the cancer into his bones since 2020. The break (which God had

miraculously arranged a warning about by a series of apparently unrelated events during the previous week) happened when Geoff was safe, warm and well-looked after at Barbara and Tony's on a cold and rainy November evening.

As a result of the operation, complications, and lengthy recuperation period (his third hospital Christmas – with many opportunities to show God's love!), the timing was just right and we were able to get him into a lovely flat more suited to his mobility and future care needs. His time at Gorton Mill House has been really happy, filled with the love of his new friends, who spoke warmly of what he meant to them. We are grateful for Geoff's place in their hearts.

Then, in early December 2022, after a seemingly insignificant fall in his flat, God ensured a speedy

transfer to the right care for Geoff's final brief stay in hospital. We managed a meaningful time with his mother, and many opportunities to speak about God and pray with staff and patients, before a gentle and peaceful transition into God's presence.

To quote St Paul, Geoff has run his race, crossed the finishing line, and now receives the victor's crown from Jesus.

Thanks to God, and all the lovely people He has brought into our lives – and even the challenging ones! ✝



Taken outside the North Cheshire 'clubhouse' in 2014 when Geoff was presented with a new bike.

Memories of Geoff Hoyle Wells

John (Topbox) Finan, North Cheshire

I first came across the CMA in around 2006 and I attended some Merseyside Branch meetings in Maghull, north Liverpool. I was not a member but I soon became active in the outreach aspect of the ministry and one of the events I helped organise with my church and CMA was a charity ride to the 'Ark', a homeless refuge centre in Birkenhead.

This was the first time I met Geoff and it was memorable because afterwards we had a Biker Blessing service and his cruiser was one of the bikes ridden into my church along with several others. This is a 12th century building and no doubt the first time motorised two-wheeled transport had ever graced the wood flooring! But I mostly remember the event because of Geoff.



Taken at the biker blessing service in Eastham, Wirral, October 2006 as Geoff rode off through the graveyard.

Geoff was one of the last to leave and he was standing in the aisle with tears rolling down his face. I didn't know him and didn't even realise he was in CMA because I hadn't spoken to him or noticed that he had a white cross on his cutoff. I thought he was someone who had joined the day's event to support the homeless and maybe didn't normally attend church because he was very emotional and the only words I remember him saying were, "This is where I need to be, this is what I have been missing, this is where I belong, with you guys". I put an arm around his shoulder and then watched him ride off through the graveyard.

I was never sure of what mood he was in – he did seem to be an up and down character. When I joined North Cheshire Branch I got to know Geoff better and marshalled alongside him at MAG rallies. I often witnessed him with tears in his

eyes. Maybe he was making up for not crying much when he was younger and more of a typical man's man. If you didn't know him you might not get Geoff and his dry humour and pan faced demeanour but under the beard and the cheeky grin was a true servant heart, a man who had his life transformed by the love of Jesus and the love of a good wife. Sensitive, caring and generous is how I will remember him and someone who knew what people needed before they knew they needed it. I will miss you mate, your catering efforts will really be missed and you have left a big hole in our branch. 🙏



Chris Hodge
North Cheshire

Chef Geoff

All of us at North Cheshire loved Geoff, his 'Father Christmas' look, sense of humour and big heart. Geoff always 'said it as it was', sometimes with colourful language, but that was Geoff.

He loved to be at the rallies, NABD, Yorkshire Pudding, Into the Valley, etc., and when he couldn't camp he would sleep in the back of his car.

He loved to cook for us all and we have fond memories of the NABD Rally and the National Rally at Lenchwood of Geoff setting up his 'kitchen'. It was a portable commercial kitchen with everything including a toaster, pots and pans and even a deep fat fryer. There was also lots of food, no one went hungry, a full English breakfast, soup and hot dogs for lunch, pasta for dinner! Any leftovers were taken into Holy Joe's of a night and dished out to the punters! He did it all with lots of love included.

At Lenchwood he and Lela were in the caravan next to ours – that is me, John, our daughter Joanne, her husband and three children. He set up his kitchen between the two caravans and cooked for us all once more. The children loved him and he loved them, joking with them and they thought he was 'a really funny man'. It was a novelty for them to be passed their breakfast through the caravan window. They made a new sign for his kitchen, colouring it in carefully. It said 'Chef Geoff' and so he became known! They thought this was a much better sign than his previous one, 'I haven't killed anyone-yet'!

We miss him lots but look forward to when we will see him again! †



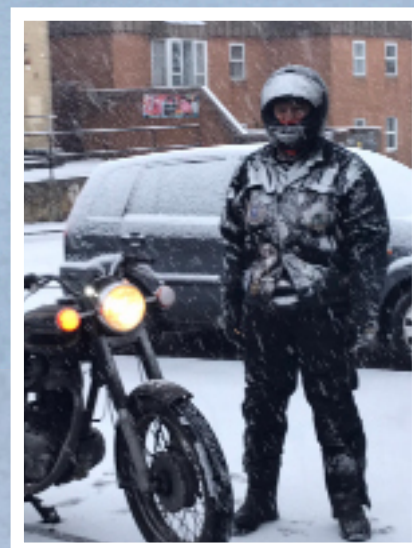
Brian Jenner

Great Sunday Morning on the Bike

How to meet your biking friends who meet on Sundays and not miss Church? I spotted we had a meet of Royal Enfield guys 09:30 at a café in Barnwood not too far from home. I noted that a friend who was a trainee at our church was now a vicar and his church was near the café and had a service at 10:30. Looking good. We had had snow but the morning was looking bright. The lawn on one side was white but looked soft and the car park was largely thawed. Bike out, CMA jacket on and away. Main road to Gloucester had a bit of snow falling but no problem. Approaching Barnwood, getting thicker. Road was now more like packed ice. But hey, I was riding when we knew what snow was and the Enfield was designed in the days before global warming was even thought about. Now all I had to do was find that road off the main road that I had seen on Google maps. No, better ask, back I go, ask again. I had now passed it twice as it had been blocked in some time ago and a little bypass through the village created. Now shown the way I progressed round the row of roundabouts to reach the café. No bikes. Too late? Wrong place? Parked up and out comes Russ our R.E.O.C. branch secretary to take a picture of my black (no white) jacket and bike. Got in the warm to meet nine of our chaps and four scooter guys. Breakfast finished and I asked the time – 10:17 “What time do you have to get to the church?” “10:30 and I don’t know where the church centre is. They meet at 09:30 in the old, cold (and no loos, etc.) church building and at 10:30 in the church centre.” So kit on, off outside, find bike, wipe off some snow, start up, then 15 yards to roundabout and, “What is that

building on the other side of the roundabout?” Church centre! I could have walked but, hey ho, I park up again and go in. Great welcome, just as one gets as we meet old and new Christian family members. Then found out the advertised Café Church was today something of a Christmas Celebration and afterwards a carol singing visit to the St John’s Care Home next door. We assembled in their back garden and all around residents came to the windows and some were opened to hear the angels sing (well we did our best) with the snow gently falling again. Back to the centre, another mince pie and coffee and depart. Now riding on ice—no great problem—I have done hundreds of miles of that but round the corner and join the back of a queue of cars who somehow even with four wheels can not maintain progress.

Nothing for it but to try to grow a little more of that fruit of the Spirit, patience. Once back in town, queues gone and I made one short unplanned detour but better to stay upright in the wrong direction than carry on in the correct direction flat on the floor. Home, and remember God is good even if things are not quite as originally planned. †





The Goldwing Christian

Could you tell me what Luke 15 vs 11-32 is about or Luke 18 v 25? Some of you will probably know whilst others will check the scriptures. However, if I had asked you about the *prodigal son* or the meaning of the *camel through the eye of a needle* you would have been able to explain instantly.

Jesus spoke in parables for good reason, many were illiterate and more importantly every time they saw a camel being unloaded at the gate (eye of the needle) it would make sense and reinforce the scripture.

For us as motorcyclists' I hope this is equally relevant to you as I describe my walk with the Lord through my bikes.

My CB650Z is a bike I have owned since 1983, and my children have all been pillion

passengers during their childhood.

The 650 has many similarities with my early walk with God;

- The narrow tyres of 80's bikes were similar to my limited knowledge of the Word
- The lack of a fairing equates to the absence of the shield of faith
- The seat has no backrest for a passenger's comfort, my compassion was not great
- The single headlight is not that powerful nor was I a shining light for Jesus.

It is still a lovely bike and occupies a space in the garage



and in my heart reminding me where I have come from on my journey.

Sitting alongside it in the garage is my 2012 Goldwing, and like my Christian walk has advanced considerably from the 80's.



- The wide tyres are like my increased grip on the Word and provide greater confidence
- The huge fairing bears resemblance to the shield of faith covering both me and the passenger
- The seat is described as a Parker Knoll on wheels where the passenger can feel secure, I hope those I minister to have that same feeling of security and can relax
- The twin headlights, four on main beam, as well as extra lights, shine through the darkness. Again, I hope my faith shines through the darkness of this broken world
- The panniers and top box, provide ample space for my baggage and the passengers baggage, so my faith is strong enough to be able to deal with the baggage in other people's lives
- The sound system provides a joyful song for the journey, as does my praise as a Christian.

It has been said, when our Norfolk branch go on a ride out and stop for refreshments, the Wing gets the attention. It attracts more non bikers than bikers and my prayer is for me to attract more of the lost, rather than having a little Christian social chat.

In order to ensure this parable stays in the mind, we will also look at the other types of bikes and ministries;

The BMW GS and Honda Africa Twin are capable off-road machines that are comparable to the missionaries who travel to inhospitable places to reach the lost. Mike Fitton immediately springs to mind as he has travelled to dangerous and inhospitable places to bring the Word and encourage others. Appropriately he rides a GS.

The Yamaha R1, Suzuki Hayabusa and the Honda Fireblade are powerful sports bikes that bear similarities to the evangelist, who roars in with a strong presence and has influence for a short time. My wife, Jan, is a testimony to this



comparison – she arrives at bike meets on her VFR1200F, and almost immediately engages others in conversation.

The moped and 125, bearing L plates, remind us there are many new Christians who may benefit from our advice and guidance. Remember, the Bible calls us to be fathers to the fatherless.

The cruiser, normally used on shorter runs, is mirrored by the Christian who works in the local community, helping wherever there is a need. Have you helped on a soup run or other community projects?

The thing that applies to both biker and Christian is the danger of nostalgia. "Church isn't the same anymore," that's frequently said by the older generation and also, bikes are not the same anymore either. The world has become a faster and solitary place. Imagine travelling on an autobahn on a Honda 250 Superdream which was notoriously slow in its day, over forty years ago. Imagine trying to sort a Zoom meeting with a 486 computer with a 56K modem. We must continue to be relevant to today's world but enjoy the memories of the past. Look around and see how many people do not engage in conversations, but stare at their phones for hours. Technology will be the best way to get through to them.

The thing about being a biker is you need to be riding, if you are physically able to, and being a Christian you need to be witnessing, if you possibly can.

A bike that never leaves the garage is wasted, but a Christian whose Christianity never leaves the Church is devastating.

Next time a bike roars past ask yourself, "have you got your Christianity out today?" 🛵

Robert Oates

Rob and HOG

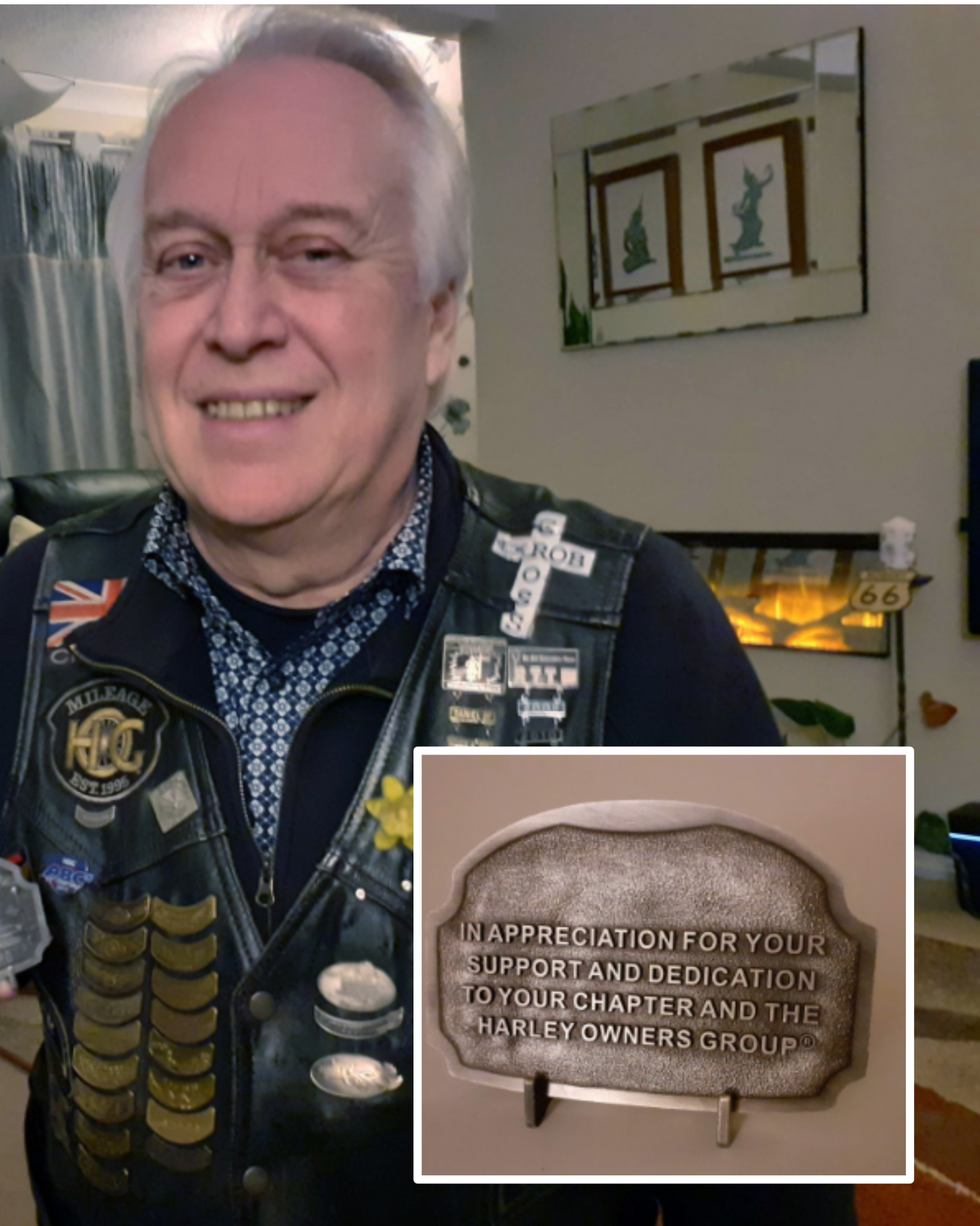
I have been a member of the Geordie Chapter Harley Owners Group for about 17 years now and have helped the group over the years in various ways, always wearing my CMA waistcoat and being conspicuous as my cross stands out amongst all the other HOG and Geordie Chapter back-patches. This makes me noticeable when I'm on group rides, at events and even when I'm not there, as I often get asked afterwards where I have been. Some of the members even think that I'm a clergyman until I correct them that I am just a committed Christian as well as a fun loving Biker.

I attended this month's Chapter AGM and in and amongst all the awards given out, I was stunned to hear my name called out! As I stood up and went to receive the award in front of 120-plus seasoned bikers I was humbled that they had considered me as a suitable person to single out.

The award was given to me by the Geordie Chapter Director Allen Glasper. It read, *'In appreciation for your support and dedication to your Chapter and the Harley Owners Group'*.

I will continue to ride my Harley 2003 Anniversary Heritage with pride as well as showing the cross at rideouts and meetings.

I often give out CMA North Yorkshire Vales & Dales prayer cards and our CMA Biker Bibles as well as take the Chapter Memorial Service to remember past members. 🛤





Hi. My name is Sandy Angel-Jones-Fitton, and I have the awesome privilege of being the leader of the bi-annual CMA UK Ladies' Conferences. The 10th one took place at the Hayes Christian Conference Centre, 4th– 6th November 2022.

Preparation for the conference always begins in a lesson of obedience and that starts with praying and then watching for and listening to God's plan. When God's plan begins to form, there is a complete sense of peace, even if there is no understanding. He shows what He wants for the ladies in the most incredibly intricate ways. It is like God is weaving a tapestry of His design and He moves our hands, provides the thread and the colour, and the picture that we can't see is finally revealed throughout the weekend!

For this event God gave one word, 'DIAMONDS', and that was it – for months! I didn't know exactly where God was going with this, but I knew it was right by a deep peace and as God revealed more and more!

Six titles with their 'content' followed:

RESILIENT – God's creation of the atomic structure for a diamond makes it beautiful and resilient to damage. Until tested we can't see what strengths God has provided us with—at the deepest level—but we know that He has built His strength within us to prevail and overcome.

BEAUTIFUL – Every single one, whether finely faceted or not faceted at all, is beautiful – because God sees the finished product and it is as He intended – beautiful!

WORKING – Not only there for beauty but for a purpose! God has a purpose for you and work for you to do for Him.

FASHIONED – God fashioned you with His hands and gave you His

passion to reach the lost – you are to be a brilliance in this dark world!

LITTLE GEMS – Our future generations. We are all models to our young ones. We are to teach them with our actions, words and the Word.

EVERLASTING – When Jesus comes for the second time, He will bring His light that casts out all shadows – FOREVER! Till then, we are His light in a dark world.

I wrote it all down and waited and listened.

I had received the *really sad* news that Jackie Russell (my mini-me) was stepping down from speaking, Rhonda, our wonderful 'crafty' lady was unable to come and Dot, who is a master at providing fun and games as

Ladies at the Hayes

Sandy Angel-Jones-Fitton

our 'ice-breaker' was also stepping down this year! Who was going to take their place and who was going to speak on what? God had it sorted! Dot blessed us by taking up ice-breakers duty again and each speaker approached said yes!

The six titles were given to them to prayerfully choose one specific to God's prompting to them. Five titles/ subjects were chosen one by one, without any conversations between each other, and one was left for my speaking slot. I hadn't a clue where I was going with the title or subject, but I knew God would and so I put it to prayer and got on with agenda. As I did this, God clearly led me to three verses from the Bible: Malachi 3:17 NKJ, Zechariah 9:16 NKJ and Matthew 5:14-16 NIV; they are literally 'brilliant' and fed right into the whole weekend!

There were huge WOW moments with what our wonderful speakers delivered. Without a doubt I know God spoke to them, they listened and obeyed; the fruit was seen in the response of the ladies as we were challenged and encouraged by His Word and by each other in each workshop. God has ALL the glory, honour and praise for guiding us and weaving us together.

The great strength of the conference is that we are a team. Who knew that gift bags would need a team? They do, right from buying, to sourcing, to crafting and filling! I have the very easy job of buying the bags and then head 'Bag Lady' Janet (yes, they are called 'bag ladies' – an endearing term, don't you think!) coordinates a team of crafty ladies (yep, another endearing term) to fill them! This year my mom crocheted 60 poppies. Rosie and Caz joined Shelley and spent months creating arty notebooks with scripture and positive quotes in them, plus other crafty objects; including jars

with candles, which God had a plan to be used in a workshop to demonstrate His light through us—even when we can't see it for ourselves—reiterating the verse He gave from Matthew.

Our weekend started with Dot's hilarious fun and games; she knows what will make us laugh and put at ease those who are new to the conference. Stephanie and Fraser finished our evening with their gifted poetry, letting us all hear about the wonderful way God worked in their lives.

Natalie was delighted to be the worship group leader again and blessed us all mightily with her sweet voice, brilliant piano skills and gifted leading in worship. She will be the first to say that the worship team were as much of a blessing to her as they were to us! It is such a great pleasure to hear the sweet sound of ladies fill that room with singing and praising the Lord!

Worship through music didn't stop there. We were blessed to have Abz, a member of CMA Bristol Branch, come and sing her testimony to us. Abz drew us into her world of ups and downs, good and bad times, and we laughed (and cried) along with her as we listened to her anointed songs. We are soon to receive another gift of one of Abz' songs as soon as it is finished!

The brochures that contain the agenda take a great deal of time and we are blessed with a graphic designer called Clare. Her company is called Apostle Designs. She takes on the role of proof reading and adding the finishing touches. What a joy it is to work with her and have her expertise!

Pauline, aptly named our 'bookings lady' painstakingly takes all our bookings and then pops us into our rooms—on paper—and with the help of Janet, on the weekend too! The accounts are an essential part of this.

Pauline takes the brunt of it, as she takes all our money (well, just the amount for the ladies conference, of course!) and we both ensure that we run to budget.

We have been blessed with quite a few bursaries from the Hayes Christian Conference that help ladies attend that could not otherwise afford it and extremely kind donations from CMA members. So, if you are in that category, don't let the lack of money stop you. Approach Pauline or me and we will see what we can do to help you.

This article would not be complete without including you! It is you, ladies, that help make this weekend the incredible experience that it is. You come to receive but you give so much more with your love, smiles, compassion, generosity, voices, participation, insight, and passion for Jesus.

Annelie Woodford from CMA North Yorkshire Vales and Dales Branch created a peaceful and creative prayer space where the ladies could come and reflect on where they were as they entered the conference, and where they found themselves during and after the weekend. Great prayers were lifted to the Lord in that room and Magali, one of the ladies who attended the conference and was conscripted in to the prayer team, will tell you more about that in her article, also in this issue of Chainlink.

Oh, and did I tell you that we still found time to rest and relax and to have a quick salsa lesson! Are you interested in attending the next one in 2024? (date to be confirmed). Then contact Pauline: ploweryork@aol.com and book your place now. You will be blessed if you do – see what Kerry writes (also in this issue) and you will see... 🙏

CMA Ladies Conference 2022

Magali Ellis, Essex

Lesson from the Ladies Conference 2022: The Power of Prayer



I was looking forward to attending the CMA Ladies' Conference which took place 4th – 6th November 2022. The last one had been on Zoom and there were so many ladies I was looking forward to meeting face to face again.

I drove up with Molly and Lynn from the Essex branch and we had a great time getting to know each other better during the journey. We arrived in the afternoon, settled in and got ourselves ready for the first meeting.

My big surprise was that I was put on the prayer team! It was a surprise on many levels as I had not volunteered for it and I do not consider myself a prayer warrior – far from it! As you can imagine, it was a bit daunting. But how can you refuse anything Sandy asks you to do? So I put my big girl's pants on and turned up to the prayer pre-meeting to find out what I was supposed to be doing. All the ladies were obviously lovely and they made me feel very welcome. We sorted out who was on duty and when then spent some time in the prayer room. We prayed for the conference and its leaders as well as all the attendees.

My slot was after the Sunday service and initially nobody came to the prayer room. After a few minutes, we decided to look inside the prayer box. There were some requests and we shared them out, two each. We sat in a circle and took turns to pray out loud for each request. It was such a deeply moving time and I truly felt God's presence in our midst while we prayed. Most of the requests were anonymous and we had no idea who we were praying for. When praying for my last request, I felt God prompting me to pray beyond the healing for the physical need described on the post-it note, so it ended up being a fairly long prayer, which is unusual for me and a personal prayer although I had no idea who I was praying for. But God knows!

The prayer finished and I opened my eyes to see a lady sat next to me, thanking me for the prayer. To my surprise, she was the one who wrote the prayer request I had just prayed for. We spent some time talking and praying together some more. We both felt encouraged; her, for walking in the very second her prayer request was being prayed for, and me, for praying not for a random post-it note but for a person and her needs through that bit of paper. God's timing is truly marvellous, isn't it?

Never underestimate the power of prayer!

Another wonderful prayerful time was with Fran who knew a young lady who had reached out to her in the days before the conference. As Fran was sharing with me how desperate the situation was and how it needed God's intervention, we both felt led to pray for her there and then and for wisdom. We marvelled at how God can make each one of us His angels and how His light shines through us to reach people who are desperate. Even when we don't know what to do, or even if we feel ill-equipped to even pray, we can always rely on our God, open our heart and let Him lead the way. If that weekend taught me anything, it is that, 1) nothing is out of our own strength, it's all of God's and that, 2) prayer is powerful!

That was confirmed throughout the weekend by so many testimonies that were shared! It was an exceptionally powerful, raw and emotional weekend where everything was laid bare in front of the Lord and where strength came from being vulnerable. If you haven't attended a conference before, be it the Ladies' Conference or the National Rally, let me encourage you to book your place and come prepared to share a really special time of fellowship with our CMA family. Come and see God at work! 🙏

First Time Ever

Kerry Labrum, East Midlands

CMA Ladies Conference 2022

2022 was my first ever time of going, riding alone, anxious, nervous but definitely ready to hear what God had for us all. Within an hour of arriving, all of my nerves were cast aside and friendships were immediately forming with a fair few ladies congratulating me on doing the ride alone.

Throughout the weekend, I separated myself a little from the lady who had thankfully invited me and began talking to others about church, home life and even sharing a little testimony. The entire time, I felt uplifted and

treasured and found myself booking into the next one within the second day and decided I'm inviting another lady from the church I attend to also join me!

A very wet ride home as the heavens opened but **nothing** dampened my spirit.

Thank you to every one of you that had input into this, including the men who were preaching and assisting.

These wonderful, inspiring, kind women are genuine 'Diamonds'! ✝





More pics from the CMA Ladies Conference



Almost fifty members from two twigs and three branches braved the cold and foggy Yorkshire weather to attend this year's Regional Day at Boston Spa. It was great to see old friends again and to meet new ones.

The things we heard during the day made me think that it was like travelling through a country where all the road signs were in the same language, but the terrain changed as the road stretched before us (see my drawing opposite).

As we started the journey we passed community events, regattas, bike nights and large and small rallies. Local MCCs have invited CMA to take part

in their annual summer BBQ and club activities. We discovered that local radio stations as well as *BBC Look North* are interested in having bikers interviewed to talk about various projects. Young people are being engaged in helping at a repair shop, others are taking part in music venues with a mixture of Christian and other music styles.

So many opportunities to serve people and show them the Love of God.

Mike Fitton spoke about things which will affect Holy Joe's at some of the rallies and everyone was understanding about the need for changes in some details of operation regarding meal vouchers, etc. It

CMA UK North East Regional Day 2023

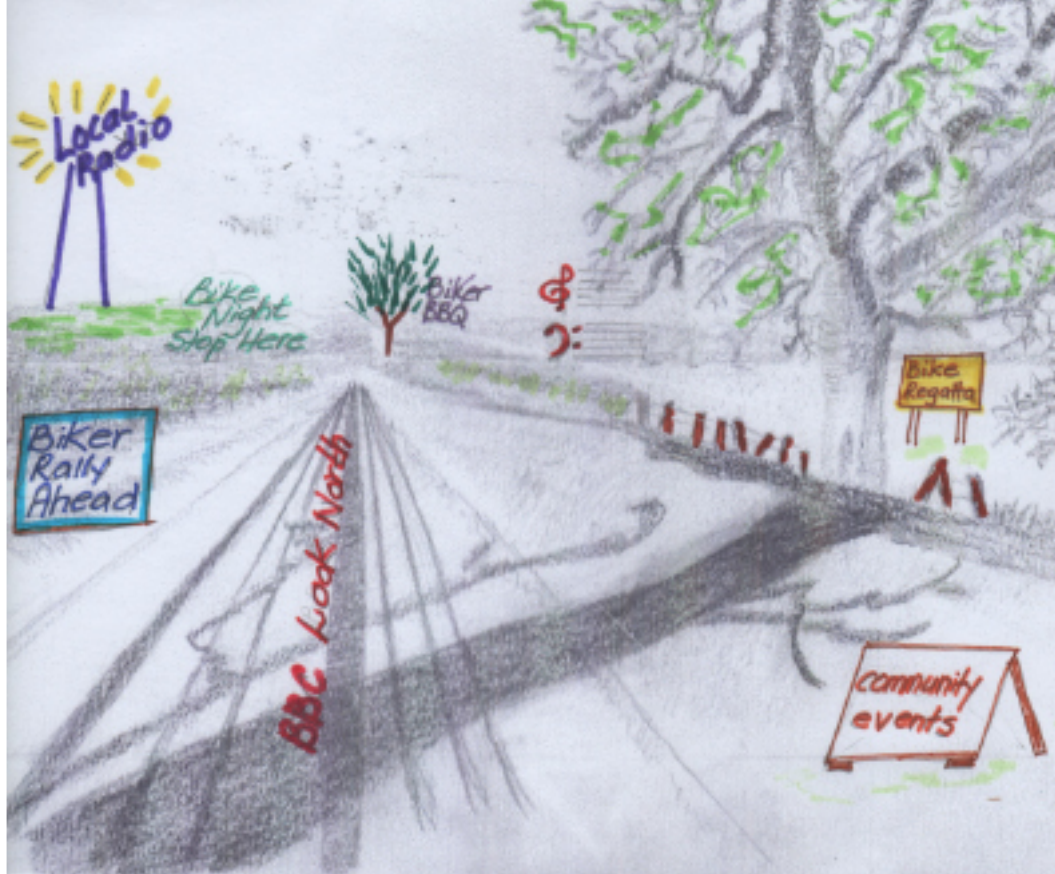
Debbie Anderson, Tyne & Wear



is such an important ministry for CMA and we want to help MAG as much as possible to continue to make a success of the rally venues.

An exciting prospect for the coming months is an idea to have a Biker Service at a church in Whitby every two months. Each of the different branches/twigs will take turns to do a service.

Watch this space. 🙏





The best thing about Tyne and Wear branch is the people in it. The picture is us at Wetherby Services on the A1 having a nice breakfast before arriving at Boston Spa for our annual get-together!

The heart of any team is the people. They are the face and voice and reputation of any organisation.

My team are exceptional and it is my honour to try and serve them as Branch Chairman of Tyne and Wear.

At this point I would like to say a personal thank you to the branch's Leadership Team. Thank you for the hard work that they put into running the branch and the support they give me in making decisions that we feel are best for the branch.

The best advocates for any team will always be happy members.

The members are the ones who talk to the bikers we are trying to reach.

It makes sense to try and ensure that they feel valued so that they continue to act as kind of CMA brand ambassadors wherever they go.

You cannot grow any team on the backs of unhappy members.

For your team members to do well telling others about our Jesus, they have to care about being part of the organisation they represent.

Part of that, I feel, is to give them ownership of the branch.

They have to know that they are involved in the decisions of the branch and know that they have a say on how it is run and what it does.

I hope I have passed this sense of involvement and ownership to the people of Tyne and Wear Branch – you'll have to ask them!

The other side of the coin to this, and I have told my Leadership Team this, is that you shouldn't have to try to persuade a soldier to train and serve in the forces – he volunteered to join and should want to serve without any badgering and persuading. My view is that there is a responsibility that lies on each one of our members that if they have joined our branch of CMA they should want to serve God under that banner.

The reason I know that the team have taken ownership of the branch

is the way that they take on responsibility for getting things done and making suggestions along the way. The following are some examples of where our members have stood up, and taken responsibility:

Storage Unit

We have recently started to share responsibility for managing the storage unit in Teesside which is used for the storage of the CMA trailer and goods for the larger shows of Farmyard and Stormin' the Castle. A member took responsibility for the transport of the various pieces of kit forwards and backwards to the various local events where we serve as a branch – without being asked. There is a lot more to successfully managing an event than just turning up to man the stall for your shift. Gazebos, boilers and supplies have to be picked up from the storage unit and transported to the venue, then the gazebos have to be set up and all the boilers and supplies that we will use during that rally unloaded and set up, not including cables for electrics, gas

Boston Spa Update

and water unwound and connected up. This is all before serving your first cuppa! The reverse is also true – the taking down of everything is just as exhausting! In addition, a member took responsibility for organising the whole unit and producing a plan of what it contained and where it was located in the storage unit. So now we know what we have got (and what we haven't) and where it all is!

Houghton Feast Parade

In a town local to us there is a family orientated event which includes a large fun fair and a parade through the centre of the town by all sorts of vehicles such as classic British cars, customs cars, American cars and of course, all sorts of motorbikes. The event is massive with thousands attending. A member had the good idea of showing the vast crowds there that Christians are fun people too and took it upon themselves to purchase a couple of bubble machines and putting them on the back of the bikes as they rode through the town centre. The bubbles spewed everywhere as they slowly rode along - much to the amusement of everyone! [Both this and the following events were covered in a previous issue – Ed.]

Womens Refuge

A couple of members took it upon themselves to provide a large amount of much needed essentials

for Christmas and Easter celebrations for battered women who may have left home in a hurry with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The items were purchased and delivered to the various centres by these lovely women.

Smaller Bike Rallies

Two other examples of local and much smaller bike shows where our members happily turned up to serve are for the:

Revenants BBQ

This was a family orientated and fun get-together organised by the local MC's, where they had activities such as face painting, axe throwing and a BBQ! Two of our members have excellent relationships with the local MC's in this area often attending their meetings with their crosses on their backs. Because our members had taken it upon themselves to make this commitment, the branch received an invitation to attend the BBQ a few years ago and we have been there ever since. We always get an invite to attend the following year! We are allowed to have a little gazebo (with our CMA banner on it!) and offer free tea, coffee, soft drinks and Biker Bibles to all. Last summer was an excellent event in which we net-worked with other bike clubs and back patch MCC's and MC's and where I was introduced to the leader of the Northumberland Hells Angels. Most importantly,

Jesus was talked about and prayers for healing were offered and accepted!

Vulcan Rally

Two gazebo's and one proper coffee machine was used for this small rally. The proper coffee machine was an idea of one of our members for use at smaller rallies – but I think he drinks most of it himself. Although there weren't too many bikers here, we had a couple of very personal conversations with Vulcan Rider members – which is possible at these smaller and calmer venues. In addition, I was asked to bless the ride out that they did. We formed a very good relationship with the young couple running the catering van and we blessed them with a financial gift at the close of the rally.

There are other examples too where individuals within the branch have come up with great ideas that we use throughout the year, but I can't mention them all. I do however, want to express my sincere thanks to them all for their commitment to the branch and to telling others about Jesus, which after all, is the reason we do all of this!

Finally, the biggest thank you must go to Jesus himself – for He is surely the inspiration and motivation behind all these ideas and opportunities that appear before us!



Steve Wilds

I have recently had to spend some time abroad, not all holidays but all good experiences. I went to Dubai—wow, how expensive is Dubai—twenty quid for a cup of coffee! Unbelievable. Anyway, one of the things that happens when being away is missing the things you do at home, not least of which is riding my motorcycle. Nearly seven weeks away so, after seven weeks without the bike withdrawal symptoms had set in. The bike was in my garage and I was worried about it starting after so many weeks just standing there. I needn't have worried, it started first time, praise God!

Adoption

I am sure most, if not all of you would agree that once a biker, always a biker. I have never been a drug user, but in some respects I guess riding a motorcycle is an addiction – you just have to keep coming back and riding some more. Unlike illicit drugs bike riding is good for you—well it is for me—just great.

Having thought more about this family of bikers and riding together, I came to the conclusion it is much like family adoption. We become part of the family of bikers and so also as members of the CMA where the family of bikers has much more meaning. We belong with our fellow riders, we love and support each other and in the CMA we can also—and more importantly—work for God, seeking to bring others into His family by the '*spirit of adoption*'. When I was at work, child adoption was one of my responsibilities. Under my authority, no child could be adopted unless I signed off the paperwork – I had to be satisfied that the adoption was in the best interests of the child.

Note that I had to check it was for the *child's benefit*, not the parents. Adoption is permanent—there is no

legal way to undo an adoption—and once agreed, it is permanent. So it is with entering into the family of God. We are adopted into the heavenly family, for our benefit, to secure our future and as a family member we get on with the tasks God sets out before us. I also believe, like in law, once adopted into the family of God it is a permanent state. Don't misunderstand me, the child can walk away but the parent never can – once adopted always adopted! ***Nothing can separate us from the love of God.***

Do you remember the parable of the prodigal son? All through his wanderings he was absent from the family





Photo by Annika Marek-Barta on Unsplash

but he remained a son, although not in the presence of his family. Then when he came to his senses he went home and his father came running, welcoming the lost son home. We must stand firm in our faith, we must stay close to our Master and enjoy the benefits of being in the Father's presence. Do not be like the prodigal son, do not put distance between you and your Father. Should you find your faith has cooled off and you are now distant from God, remember, He stands watching and waiting for the return of His precious child. 'Come home my son, come home my daughter, all is forgiven'.

So having returned from my travels, having turned the bike over and started it without a problem, all I need is a slight increase in temperature to be back on the road. Three degrees Centigrade is the cut-off point for me – anything below that temperature makes it unsafe. I don't worry about the cold – it's the ice that will be in the shadows waiting for those two wheels. So, roll-on warmer times and let's get out on the roads, enjoying that sense of freedom that the bike gives but also being part of the family out to win souls for Christ – and to biking too! 🛵

Our world is so full of anger, frustration and pain
And children growing up thinking war is a game.
If you want it you go out and get it,
It doesn't matter who gets in your way.
But an increasingly selfish society is the price we pay.
No longer is love and devotion
To the forefront of our emotions.
It's the will to survive that keeps us alive
In our present day civilization.

It's a shame the command to love is rejected
Whilst looking out for self is more readily accepted.
Instead of admitting when we make a mistake
And turning to God before it's too late,
We make our own way in this world.

Is stepping down off our throne so hard a task?
Is pride all we have, must we hide behind masks?
Let self go, and let God in
His love heals, repairs and changes things
Let His changing you, change the world.
Make a difference.
Let the Man who made history make
Our future pure gold.
This Man is Jesus, a joy to behold.

Our world so full of anger, rebellion and pride
And for this our Saviour died.
The penalty for our sin
Death on a cross, the price paid by Him.

Jaimee Nix

Our world is full of anger

Image courtesy of Michael Shannon, Unsplash

A Psalm

Sue Brown, Bikers Church

LORD, I CRY OUT TO YOU FROM A DRY AND DUSTY PLACE.
I LOOK FOR YOUR COUNTENANCE, I SEEK YOUR LOVELY FACE.
MY EYES ARE AWASH WITH TEARS, I NEED YOUR WARM EMBRACE.
YOU SEE TO THE DEPTH OF ME, MY SECRET PATHS YOU TRACE.

I LOOK FOR YOUR COUNTENANCE, I SEEK YOUR LOVELY FACE.
NO WOUND IS BEYOND YOU AND NO SIN BEYOND YOUR GRACE.
YOU SEE TO THE DEPTH OF ME, MY SECRET PATHS YOU TRACE.
LORD, YOU ARE MY CONFIDENCE, THE AUTHOR OF ALL FAITH.

NO WOUND IS BEYOND YOU AND NO SIN BEYOND YOUR GRACE.
MY EYES ARE AWASH WITH TEARS, I NEED YOUR WARM EMBRACE.
LORD, YOU ARE MY CONFIDENCE, THE AUTHOR OF ALL FAITH.
LORD, I CRY OUT TO YOU FROM A DRY AND DUSTY PLACE.

Sue Brown
15 January 2023

Photo by Jayden Staines on Unsplash

Rally & Events Diary for 2023

Rally/Event	When	Where	CMA Contact
Into the Valley Rally	Friday 28 th April to Sunday 30 th April	Drifffield Showground East Yorkshire	Mike Fitton chairman@bike.org.uk
You've been NABDed	Friday 5 th to Sunday 7 th May	The Royal Cheshire Showground Knutsford, Cheshire	John Finan chair.northcheshire@bike.org.uk
Farmyard Party Rally	Friday 16 th to Sunday 18 th June	Duncombe Park Estate, Helmsley, North Yorkshire, YO62 5EB	Mike Fitton chairman@bike.org.uk
Yorkshire Pudding Rally	Friday 4 th to Sunday 6 th August	Escrick Park Estate, Escrick, North Yorkshire, YO19 6EA	Oliver Hamilton chair.westyorks@bike.org.uk
Hoggin' the Bridge	Dates TBC	Caldicot, Monmouthshire, Wales	Tony Williams cma.bristol.treasurer@gmail.com
Thunder in the Glens	Friday 25 th to Monday 28 th August	Aviemore, Scotland	Amy Stalker secretary.forthandtay@bike.org.uk
Stormin' the Castle Rally	Friday 2 nd to Sunday 4 th September	Witton Castle, Co Durham, DL14 0DE	Mike Fitton chairman@bike.org.uk
Dolau Afon Camping Weekend	Dates TBC	Dolau Afon, Pont, Llanafan, Aberystwyth, SY23 4BQ	Penny Cavill cma.bristol.chair@gmail.com
North West 200 Road Races	Sunday 7 th to Saturday 13 th May	Coleraine/ Portstewart/Portrush N.I	Roy McGarvey roy_ermentrude@msn.com
Isle of Man TT Races	Monday 29 th May to Saturday 10 th June	Isle of Man TT circuit	Mike Fitton chairman@bike.org.uk
Brighton Burn-Up	Sunday 3 rd September	Ace Café, London and Madeira Drive, Brighton	Stephan Powell chair.sussex@bike.org.uk

Please send any revisions and/or additions to the Editor at chainlink@bike.org.uk in time for the next issue.