

*Newsletter  
July 2017*



*The grass withers, and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God stands for ever.*

*Isaiah 40 verse 8 (NIV)*

*Welcome to the July Newsletter*

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## *A Message from our Minister*

How big is our God? Bigger than the difficulties we face as church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Bigger than the troubles we encounter daily? Can we trust him?

I watched a Sky at Night special recently. It was unusual in that it was set in the Vatican and in one of their Astronomical Observatories. The Sky at Night presenters interviewed Brother Guy Consolmagno SJ, the director of the Vatican Observatory. They asked why the Vatican did science – he said “Why does anyone?” explaining that people want to see and understand the amazing place we live in – “Man does not live on bread alone” he quoted “so, we can ask bigger questions than ‘What’s for lunch?’.” He concluded “Astronomy reminds me why I do everything else.”

Ps 19.1 says “How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done!” (*Good News Bible*). Yet the psalm writers didn't have science and didn't have a clue about how unimaginably vast the sky really is. Science shows God is a lot bigger than anything we imagine.

How big is our God? With the help of science, and each other, may God help us to realise that he is really much bigger than the difficulties we face as church and very much bigger than the troubles we encounter. Let's trust him.

Graham

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## *Church Family News*

Congratulations to Betty Atkins who celebrated her 90th birthday on 9th June. May God's love and blessing be with you.

Congratulations, best wishes and God's blessing to Jill Dix who celebrated her 80th birthday on 15th June.

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Please remember in your prayers Ann and Michael Sharp following the death of Ann's brother.

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## *Church Flowers in July*

We thank those who have agreed to donate the flowers to enhance our worship this month.

|           |                       |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 2nd July  | Ann and Michael Sharp |
| 9th July  | Sue and John Bunker   |
| 16th July | Jill Dix              |
| 23rd July | Mollie Curren         |

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## *Wesley Guild Summer Activities*

July 10th	Barbecue at Maryan's	4.30 pm
	Please let Maryan know if you hope to attend.	
August 7th	Walk on Flitwick Moor	11.30 am
	Bring and Share Lunch at Sheila and Ivan's 12 noon	
Sept. 11th	Visit to Wardown Museum, Luton	1.00 pm

All are welcome. Look out for further details later.

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Statement for Churches - Graham Claydon-Knights

After much deliberation, and a very helpful discernment process, I believe that I should not be asking for a re-invitation beyond my current appointment in North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit.

I am blessed to serve four amazing churches with devout and generous people, who are helping me to grow into the ministry to which God has called me, and who work hard to support me and my family. We enjoy living in our manse in Flitwick and I enjoy working with the churches and the circuit staff team. And I see future work, with the churches in particular, that is exciting to be part of. However, in discerning God's voice among many it became clear that I must allow myself to enter the Stationing process, in order to make myself available for whatever God has for me next. I do so with some nervousness, but also with a sense of peace that the right decision has been made.

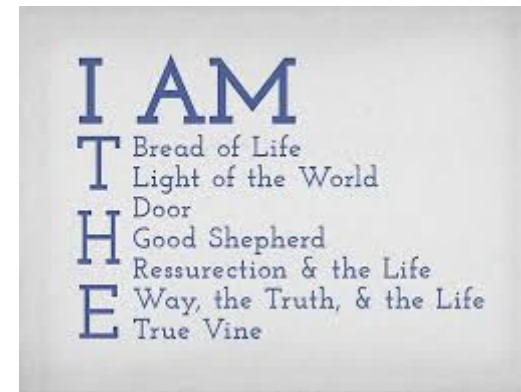
We shall find moving away very difficult, for we have found loving friends who we know will always be part of our lives. However, we are excited to see what God will do with us all here in North Bedfordshire in the coming year, for much is happening and there's work to do in God's Kingdom in this place.

Graham Claydon-Knights, June 2017



Prayer Morning

Do you always seem to be too busy to spend time with God? Do you wish you had time to be quiet, with no distractions? Then come and join us at our next prayer morning on Saturday 1st July. The church will be open from 9.30 am to 12 noon. This will be an opportunity for you to spend some time in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of the church away from the busy demands of everyday life.



There will be prayer stations based on 'I am' sayings of Jesus from John's Gospel.

You are welcome to use the ideas for prayer at the prayer stations or you can just come and be in God's presence. It would be good to see you there.

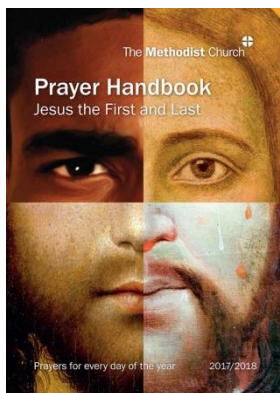
You can come for just a short time or stay as long as you wish. Coffee will be served at 10.15 to be followed at 10.45 by a reflection led by Graham. The rest of the time is for you to use as God leads you. The morning will finish with a Bring and Share lunch.

You may like to make a note of the date of the next Prayer Morning which will be on Saturday 23rd September.

*Janet Watts*



## Methodist Prayer Handbook



The Methodist Prayer Handbook for 2017-2018 will be published at the beginning of August ready for the new Methodist year in September. The title of the handbook is 'Jesus, the first and last' taken from the hymn by Charles Wesley.

The advertising for the Prayer Handbook says:

*JESUS THE FIRST AND LAST celebrates the Jesus of history, the Christ of faith and our cosmic Lord; the first word and the last word, which has not yet been spoken. We explore how the immensity of Jesus means that we need to experience him in many different ways and be open to the surprises he is yet to show us. We also explore the depth and diversity of personal Christian faith and experience, and the different perceptions and experiences of Christ found within and across the Churches of the world.*

If you wish to order a copy please let me know by **Sunday 23rd July**. The cost will be £3.50, payable when you receive your copy, not when you order. Please do not assume I will know you would like a copy even if you 'usually' place an order.

If you have never ordered a prayer handbook and have not seen one, you may like to look at a copy of this year's handbook to see whether you feel this would be useful to you. If so please speak to me.

*Janet Watts*

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## Messy Church Picnic

On Monday June 12th a group of 30 friends including eight families and helpers met on the Millennium Park to enjoy a messy picnic. The sky was blue, the sun shone, the breeze/wind blew well, the children exercised with balls and the local park whilst the grown ups were able to chat as the children played. There were activities for the children followed by a delicious picnic. I think everyone will have slept well after all that fresh air!

Our next Messy Church will be a breakfast on July 22nd – at church (not the park) from 9.00 - 10.30 am. Children from 0 years upwards and accompanied by an adult can join us but please let Graham know if you wish to share in the last event of our church year. We will have a rest in August and then meet again in September.

*Linda Pitts*

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Saturday 22nd July 2017

Messy Breakfast 9.00 am – 10.30 am

All families welcome.

Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Donations welcome to cover costs.

Contact Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights for further details.

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Bible Month

Bible Month has been celebrated in many churches in our circuit and throughout the Methodist connexion. The letter of James had been chosen for us to study, a book that perhaps we don't often turn to in our services. Were you able to attend the united Bible Month services during June at Ampthill and Flitwick? As you will realise, the book of James has much to say to us and so I hope that if you unfortunately missed any of the services you will have found time to read the relevant passages for each week as detailed in last month's newsletter.

It would be very helpful if you could give some feedback on Bible Month. Did you find it helpful to study one particular book through the month? Did you read the passage for the week either before or after the service? Did anything in particular make you look at the letter of James in a new way? Could anything be done to improve the way the Bible Month services were organised? These are just some of the points you could give us your thoughts on.

One aim of Bible Month is to give us the opportunity to look in more depth than is usual at a particular book of the Bible. Did it fulfil this aim for you? The Methodist Church is hoping Bible Month will be held annually so any feedback that you would like to give would be helpful in planning for future Bible Months both as a church and as a circuit.

Please let me have your feedback by Sunday 23rd July. Just speak to me or write your thoughts down. Thank you very much.

*Janet Watts*



Christian Aid Week 2017



Christian Aid Week celebrated its Diamond Anniversary this year – sixty years of volunteers knocking on doors to collect money to help the world's poorest people.

I began coordinating the collection at Flitwick eight years ago, “volunteering” to take over from Tony and Delia Forrester, who had been organising the collection since 1992. On that year's list of collectors are a number of special friends who are no longer with us, including Mary Abbott, Edna Ashton, Kath Burnett, Faith Childs, Wilf (and Kath) Dennis and Bill Heathfield.

But also on that list are names that are also on my 2017 list. This means that we have some Silver Anniversary collectors. So congratulations to Peter Fletcher, Margaret Olney, Maryan Pateman, Linda Pitts, Sheila Smith, Joyce Hallworth, David Blair and myself! One or two of you have missed a year through illness, holidays etc but you are still silver collectors. Thinking positively, more of you will be celebrating twenty five years in the next year or two.

As you know, the 2017 list of collectors was shorter than in previous years but they still managed to collect £1458.53. A special mention to Flitwick B.B. and their leaders, involved for the first time and collecting £164.30. Well done boys! The Big Brekkie raised £468 and there was a donation of £150 from Baby Comes Too. This means that Flitwick Methodist Church's 2017 total was £2076.53.

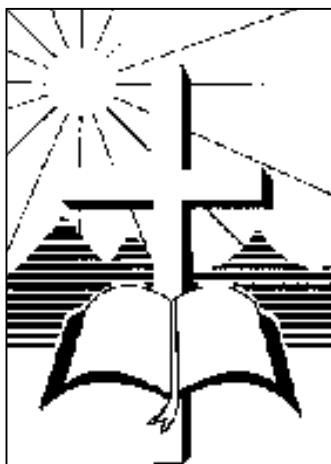
Going forward, we have to explore new ways to raise that amount of money to continue to support Christian Aid's work. Thank you to everyone who has supported Christian Aid this year. Hopefully, see you for another Big Brekkie on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2018!

*Ann B*



# Prayer Leaflet

## July 2017



*Draw near to God,  
and he will draw near to you.*

*Humble yourselves before the Lord  
and he will exalt you.*

*James 4 verses 8 and 10 (ESV)*

## Prayer Suggestions for July

*Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father  
and from Jesus Christ, the Father's son,  
will be with us in truth and love.*

*2 John verse 3 (NIV)*

Saturday 1st July - Pray for our Prayer Morning today.

Week beginning 2nd July - Emergency Services and recent disasters

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Sunday    | Pray for the Police Force, especially when they are called upon to act in response to an emergency. |
| Monday    | Pray for the people still grieving following the recent terrorist attacks and the fire in London.   |
| Tuesday   | Pray for those who have been injured in these attacks and in the fire in London.                    |
| Wednesday | Pray for the Fire and Rescue Service.   |
| Thursday  | Pray for the Ambulance services and Accident and Emergency departments in hospitals.                |
| Friday    | Pray for Air Ambulance services.  |
| Saturday  | Pray for all those affected by recent events.   |

Week beginning 9th July - Action for Children

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Sunday    | Thank God for Action for Children and the vision of Rev. Thomas Bowman Stephenson who began the work in 1869. |
| Monday    | Pray for the families being helped and supported through difficult times.                                     |
| Tuesday   | Pray for children being fostered and their foster families.   |
| Wednesday | Pray for children who have been adopted and their families.   |
| Thursday  | Pray for the short breaks for disabled children.  |
| Friday    | Pray for the staff working for Action for Children.   |

Saturday Pray for the campaigning work with the aim that all children will be looked after in a safe environment.

Week beginning 16th July - Bible Literacy

Sunday Thank God that we have Bibles available to us.  
Monday Pray that our relationship with God will continue to grow as we read the Bible.  
Tuesday Pray for those who still do not have a Bible in their own language.  
Wednesday Pray for the work of the Bible Society and other groups who work with people translating the Bible.  
Thursday Pray that the Bible will be distributed where it is needed.  
Friday Pray for Christians in countries where it is dangerous just to own a Bible.  
Saturday Pray for 'Open the Book' teaching children in schools about the Bible.

Week beginning 23rd July - Water

Sunday Thank God that he gives the living water to quench our spiritual thirst.  
Monday Thank God for our water supply that quenches our physical thirst.  
Tuesday Pray for people in countries where water supplies are inadequate.  
Wednesday Pray for charities such as Water Aid seeking to work with local partners to bring clean water to those who are without an adequate water supply.  
Thursday Pray for those working to educate people about how to look after their water supply.  
Friday Thank God for rain.  
Saturday Pray that we will not take water for granted.

2 days beginning 30th July - Summer time

Sunday Thank God for opportunities that the summer gives for enjoying the sunshine.  
Monday Pray for children and teachers as they enjoy a holiday from school.



Services in July

Please remember in your prayers those leading our worship this month, especially during the week prior to the service.

2nd July	10.30 am	Rev. Clive Larrett (Holy Communion)
	6.00 pm	Thea Lee
9th July	10.30 am	Pat Lilley
	6.00 pm	Keith Lilley
16th July	10.30 am	Local Worship
	6.00 pm	Deacon Jane Mills
23rd July	10.30 am	Rev. Graham Claydon-Knights (Café Church)
	4.00 pm	Circuit Farewell for Deacon Jane Mills at Priory (See below)
30th July	10.30 am	United Service at Clophill led by Janet Watts
	6.00 pm	Circuit Healing Service at Cardington

If you need transport to a United Service please speak to the stewards.



**Circuit Farewell for Deacon Jane Mills**

As you will know Deacon Jane Mills is leaving the Circuit in August. The Circuit's Farewell to Jane will take place at Priory Church, Bedford, on Sunday 23rd July, starting at 4 pm with a session led by Tony Vino, a Christian comedian. This will be followed by tea and then there will be a Songs of Praise service.

There will be no service at our church on that Sunday evening.



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## 1<sup>st</sup> Flitwick Boys Brigade



The focus of our attention in June was the Carnival where we once again had a float and stall. The Float where we depicted the musical Oliver came 2<sup>nd</sup> by just one point so no surprise that all involved are now setting their sights on 1<sup>st</sup> place next year. Stall didn't quite go to plan but some good conversations were had with parents and prospective new members.

Speaking of new members we are close to starting a waiting list for the Anchor Boys as their numbers approach 15! This limit is due in part to the space available but also staffing – could you come down and help as and when required?

After the carnival then our Summer programme began in earnest with lots of things planned including scavenger hunts in the woods and on the moor. Visit to The Parish Church, pond dipping and power kiting. Our session will end with the traditional family BBQ.

Competition news: 3 of our Company Boys attended the Ultimate Frisbee Competition in Harlington. They joined up with others to make up a team for the Senior Competition and won!

So a share in another trophy for the cabinet.

The end of June saw the Battalion end of session Competitions – news from that next month.

Thank you for your continued support for BB over the past session, long may it continue.

God Bless.

*Angela Brydon  
Company Captain*

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## George Matheson

George Matheson was born on 27th March 1842, into a wealthy Christian family in Glasgow. He was the eldest of eight children. During his childhood his eyesight was poor. However, he did well at school and went to Glasgow University to study Classics, Logic and Philosophy. Around this time his sight became worse and he learned that he had a condition that would result in him becoming blind.

While at university he met a girl and they fell in love but they never married because the girl said she didn't want to be married to a blind man.

George graduated at the age of nineteen with a first class honours degree and after studying theology became the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Innellan, Argyllshire. He was there for eighteen years and as well as preaching he wrote books. Queen Victoria came to know of him and he was invited to preach at Balmoral. Queen Victoria requested that his sermon, on the book of Job, be published.

George Matheson is perhaps best known for his hymn 'O love that wilt not let me go' and in his journal he recorded how it came to be written:

*"My hymn was composed in the manse of Innellan on the evening of the 6th of June, 1882, when I was 40 years of age. I was alone in the manse at that time. It was the night of my sister's marriage, and the rest of the family were staying overnight in Glasgow. Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering.*



*The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice rather than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction.*

*I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have ever written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high”.*

George also wrote other hymns including ‘Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free’.

In 1886 George moved to Edinburgh and was the minister of St. Bernard’s Church for thirteen years, continuing to preach and to write. He died from a stroke on 28th August 1906 and is buried in Glasgow.

Here are the first and third verses of George Matheson’s most famous hymn:

O love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

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## Clophill News

### **Tea and Chat**

Every Wednesday 10.30 am to 12 noon

### **Coffee and Croissant Morning**

Saturday 1st July  
10.00 am – 12 noon

### **Messy Church**

Saturday 15th July 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm  
All Age craft activities, worship and a meal  
Children must be accompanied.  
Contact 07920 568861

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## The Upper Room

**at Amptill Methodist Church on alternate Thursdays**

**Dates in July – 6th and 20th**

Coffee or tea and cakes from 10.00 am.

Light lunches from 11.30 am to 1.00 pm.

Proceeds after expenses for local charities.

All are welcome.

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## Circuit Prayer Meetings

You will be welcome at the Circuit Prayer Meetings on  
Monday 10th July at 4.15 pm at Putnoe Heights  
and Monday 24th July at 10.30 am at Willington.

Circuit Website

Have you looked at the Circuit Website recently? If you have, you will have noticed that there have been a lot of changes and improvements. If you haven't look at it recently you may well find it interesting to have a look. You can find out a lot about the circuit and the circuit churches and events. The Circuit also has a Facebook page.

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**You are invited to attend a Free Church Service in the Lady Chapel on following dates at 11 am:**

**Wednesday 5th July**

Preacher: **The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John**  
Dean, St Albans Cathedral

**Wednesday 2nd August**

Preacher: **The Reverend Rosemary Fletcher**  
Superintendent Minister, St Albans & Welwyn Methodist Circuit

**Wednesday 13th September**

Preacher: **The Reverend Stephen Copson,**  
Regional Minister, Central Baptist Association

**Services are followed by a fellowship lunch  
in the Abbots Kitchen**

**All are Welcome**

**Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain: Reverend Simon Carver**

News from Paraguay

14th May 2017

I have decided that for my visit I am going to be over from early December until mid January, which will be six weeks, and I look forward to having a proper Christmas. I will get the tickets sorted out this week so that I can give you exact details and then you can let everyone know that I am coming to visit.

I am sure they will all miss me, especially the little ones. I will miss Evangelina's birthday but with that being on the 16th December it would be far too close to Christmas if I stayed over here for that and then travelled. I am sure I can give her a little party before my holiday.

Your weather might be a bit mixed, but I am sure it is better than it was over here yesterday. During the afternoon for a couple of hours it blew a gale, shaking all the trees around whilst torrential rain came down turning the garden into a lake! If I had been the one planting bedding plants they would have all been flattened and washed away!

20th May 2017

The weather here also has not been great this week. One day of heavy rain and then a couple of days with low cloud and steady light rain - so it has been nice to see the sun this morning and as it is a better day today I will go into town for an afternoon out.

There are plenty of things I would like to do whilst I am over with you, but the main thing is to have a proper traditional Christmas and see all the decorations and the like. A little snow would be nice to look at - as long as it does not hang around too much.

I will bring what I consider my winter clothes and hopefully they will be warm enough as I am quite selective about what I wear and won't wear just any old thing!!

I did notice that once again Luton had not managed to get through a playoff match and also see that if Arsenal want to be in the Champions League next year they need others to lose!

24th May 2017

First of all the flights are all booked. So for your records the flight I arrive on is Latam 8084 from Sao Paulo which gets into Heathrow at 1.15 pm on the 6th December.

I thought I might be told there would be a problem getting from the airport to Flitwick. It will be a bit of a pain after travelling half way round the world! However, at least when I arrive I will have a light suitcase to drag around unlike when I return when it will be more inconvenient with no doubt a heavy suitcase. I expect I will have to spend a couple of hours on a tube train across London and then catch a train to Flitwick as I did when I found my own way from the airport once before. The Heathrow Express train is no good as that goes to Paddington, and I would still have to get across London. As for the bus when I looked up before I needed to book an actual bus in advance which as I have no idea how long it will take to get through the airport and customs did seem a bit silly, but that may have changed as it was a few years ago. I will investigate.

I will certainly pack all my warmest clothes (which shouldn't take too long!) and I am sure the shops would have something wearable in them for me to buy when I am with you.

The weather here has again been wet for a couple of days although it does look like brightening up now. However today it is so humid that damp patches on the tiles just won't dry and so the floor will more than likely stay damp until tomorrow.

There was a break in the rain yesterday so I was able to get down to Emilica's for a little birthday lunch for Jazmin's 12th birthday - that was better than cooking lunch!

27th May 2017

I enjoyed talking to the Ladies Breakfast last time I was over and remember that the Men could not fit me into their schedule and asked if I would go and see them next time I was over. So - yes - I would

happily speak at the Men's Supper Club but would rather answer questions than doing a speech! The January dates sound ideal - let me know which date they would prefer. I see it is a Supper Club, which is a much more sensible time of day - and does that mean I will get fed??

Must tell you this tale - which always amuses me. When I was in the supermarket the other day I paid with my credit card. For my BIG payment - nearly £20 - the girl on the till asked if I wanted to pay it all in one payment. In other words did I want to pay for my shopping in instalments. Could you imagine rolling up to the till in Tesco or any of the other large supermarkets and offering to pay in instalments?

29th May 2017

No sunshine at the moment - just very thick cloud, it is not so much as being misty it is more that the clouds are at ground level (well I am up in the hills) so everything is very damp, just like walking around in a cloud. I was due to go to lunch in Piribebuy with Colin today but was not at all surprised to get a text message at breakfast time saying he thought the weather was too bad to be going out. However I really do need to go to town so that is where I am going after the computer as it is not really that bad out there and I have just a bike not a car.

Also it now looks like I might have solved the problem of my long grass as one of the chaps from down the track came round asking if he could graze his cows on my garden. Of course I said that yes he could as long as they are tied up so they don't get to the plants!

I have not had cows grazing over here for a while. Last year the cows opposite disappeared one by one and since before Christmas there have been none over there. Occasionally it has been mentioned that a new one will be acquired but none have appeared. So it is very handy that someone else has come along looking for grass for his cows to eat.

6th June 2017

Yes indeed I am still living in the cloud - in fact it has been really thick cloud stuck here for ages and it has not stopped raining for a week and a half so not very nice at all. Here up in the hills the water runs away but I did see a news report yesterday that there is quite a bit of flooding in the south where everything is lower and flatter.

It has been a while since there were any cows opposite. I understand it became much too hard work looking after them after Rodrigo and David moved away as there was no one to help with them every day. There are though still a few chickens and a pig over there.

With all this miserable weather there is not a lot more to tell at the moment. I stopped off to visit Evangelina for a couple of hours last time I went to town. I played with all her toys with her. It's quite easy for her to keep her toys together as what they really are is just a little pile of broken bits, but they keep her happy inventing things to do with them.

12th June 2017

As for it being winter that is not really acceptable. There have been a few rather cold days although it was not quite cold enough for frost. There were a couple of very cold nights made all the colder by everything here not being built for the cold. It was nice to stick my leg out of bed this morning and to find things a little warmer! So I was out in the garden all morning being busy making the most of the sunshine. Hopefully it will stay nice all week.

We do have fun when I go down the road to entertain Evangelina. Everyone can see who gets all her attention when I am down there. When I go to Paraguari later this week I am looking for a coat for her as the poor little thing hasn't got one and she is not very keen on being cold. Not really a good idea to bring back many toys for her, and she never has many, and all the really nice things that are for sale around here are quite rubbish. However I learnt long ago not to get anything too nice as that only ends up getting put away where it can't get dirty.

I didn't get up to much this weekend, as I was waiting for it to get a little warmer, so everything has been put back to this week and will now get caught up with!

Simon

*The Newsletter*

Thank you to those who have contributed to this issue. I hope you have all enjoyed reading it and found it interesting.

Your articles and contributions make the newsletter more interesting and varied. Please make sure I have your items for the August issue by **Sunday 23rd July**. Thank you very much.

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