

Newsletter

April 2009

From the outgoing chairman of the Partnership Council

It has been a great delight to work with so many people in Derbyshire and India who have contributed enormously to the development of the Derbyshire-CNI partnership. While I am very sad to be giving up this area of work, following my move to Nottingham, the future of the partnership lies now in the hands of some highly enthusiastic and committed individuals.

A particular highlight of last year was the visit by the CNI bishops, before they went on to the Lambeth Conference. The visit made a huge impact in many areas of the county. The outdoor service of celebration at Carsington Water, to which at least 600 people came, took place on what was the afternoon with the



finest weather of that week! The visit gave an opportunity for the deepening of existing links and the development of some new ones – including an opportunity for me personally to visit the Gujarati Christian community in West London last November.

Last autumn the Derby Diocesan Synod heard a compelling and highly illuminating account of the October meetings of the CNI Synod, given by the Bishop of Repton, who attended the Synod as a representative of the Derbyshire

churches. We heard how the tensions in Orissa have been an ongoing preoccupation for the CNI, and we were most unsettled by the accounts of widespread suffering in the Christian communities of Orissa and the difficulties involved in bringing about reconciliation between the opposing parties.

The Derbyshire-CNI partnership had particular cause to celebrate the appointment, at the Synod, of Bishop Purely Lyngdoh of NE India as the new Moderator, and Bishop Philip Marandih of Patna as the Deputy Moderator – Derbyshire has close links with both of these bishops and their dioceses.

Parallel to the links between groups of Derbyshire churches and CNI dioceses, the growth of partnerships between Derbyshire schools and schools in India has been a highly encouraging recent development. A highlight was the visit last October to the dioceses of North East India, Eastern Himalaya and Patna by a group of teachers and head teachers from Derbyshire, led by Phil Moncur and Alison Brown of the Derby Diocesan Board of Education. In spite of some members having to cope with frustrating last minute changes to the programme, the visit was very rewarding on many levels, and another is already being planned. I had the sobering experience of seeing the vast areas in Bihar state which were still flooded several weeks after the river Kosi has changed its course in August, causing millions to lose their homes and/or livelihood. The diocese of Patna was playing its part in the relief effort, but the scale of the problem was so enormous that even the government was finding it hard to respond adequately.

Last autumn John Davies from Melbourne church visited Bishop's College, Kolkata, with

a view to forming links between it and the Derbyshire churches.

Recent visits to the dioceses of Durgapur by an ecumenical group of leaders of the Wirksworth churches, and to Patna by John and Elizabeth Hurfurt from Ashbourne, took place in the early part of this year. Visits to Derbyshire by CNI members from Nagpur and Patna are planned for this spring. The Bishop of Derby's Harvest Appeal 2009 will focus on North India, in collaboration with Christian Aid. All in all, therefore, much is currently taking place in the Derbyshire-CNI partnership – although of course there is always room for new developments, and there are still some CNI dioceses which would like to form a link with Derbyshire.

I am delighted that, subject to the approval of the Derbyshire-CNI partnership AGM in May, Bishop Humphrey Southern has agreed to become the new chairman of the partnership, with John Hurfurt from Ashbourne Methodist Church as vice-chair. I would like to thank all those who have enriched and supported my own involvement in the partnership as chairman over the last few years, including all members of the council but particularly the officers – Jean Parton and Sheena Bryden as secretary, John Spray as treasurer, and Ted Ager as chairman of the Friends of the CNI partnership and a great source of wisdom regarding matters Indian. It has been excellent working with you all, and I hope that you will keep me in touch

With very best wishes for the future work of the partnership

Christopher Harrison

Three Weeks Teaching

In January Elizabeth and I returned to India. We had twice visited a schools complex in Barharwa in the Diocese of Patna, but we had only stayed for two or three hours each time. So we decided to go and help in the English

Language School there for three weeks. We were made most welcome both by the teachers and the pupils. It was a delight to find well motivated and extremely polite children there. It is a large campus with a church, two Hindi medium schools for girls, each school having its own hostel as about half of the girls come from the rural area surrounding Barharwa and could not travel to school each day as well as the mixed English medium school that we were at. We were extremely well looked after with our own cook who woke us at 6.30 a.m. with tea and a biscuit. For the last week at Barharwa we were joined by Josh Bate, the 18 year old son of Nicky Bate, Bishop Alastair's P.A. Our last week in India was spent visiting other schools. We hope to set up partnerships between some of these schools and some schools in the Ashbourne area.

John Hurfurt

Three Wheels on my Wagon!

Do you remember the song? In the Diocese of Durgapur, which has been linked with the Wirksworth Team Ministry for the last five years, three wheeled wagons are a means of providing a living for a number of poor families in remote areas of the diocese. Durgapur is about four hours drive North West of Calcutta (Kolkata), and its Bishop, Probal Dutta encouraged us to link with him and his people after our Rector's visit to India six years ago. Two years ago, David Truby and Alison Richards visited India and suggested that buying three wheeled rickshaws which could be used to transport goods and people, would be a good way of helping people to provide an income for their families. Since then, churches in the team, along with people from their parishes, have been raising money to provide the eighteen rickshaws that now make up the fleet.

At the beginning of February, David Truby, Wirksworth Team Ministry and his Methodist and United Reformed Church colleagues, Steve Bennett and Camilla Veitch, visited

Durgapur to explore ways of developing the link. Until now it has been focussed on the team, but other churches in the Wirksworth area have been drawn in through Churches Together in Wirksworth and District. Last autumn, our local Methodist churches decided to send the money raised through their harvest festivals to a hospital in Serenga, a small town south of Durgapur. This church run facility provides health care for many tribal people living in surrounding districts who would have to travel many miles to a government run hospital. The dedicated team of medics work against the odds to ensure the safe delivery of children provide a degree of emergency care and set up eye clinics in remote areas to remove cataracts free of charge.

One of the most moving occasions on the visit was the opportunity to participate in the ordination of a young woman priest who was sponsored through college by the Wirksworth Team. Swageta Das was ordained with two others at the Annual Diocesan Thanksgiving Service, in front of 3000 people from across a diocese which is larger than England! As guests of the Church of North India, our clergy were able to extend their hands at the ordination prayer—something which they would be unable to do in this country due to denominational differences.

The final part of the visit was spent in Calcutta, when a visit to Bishop's College, one of the theological colleges for the CNI, allowed the group to explore ways in which the Diocese of Derby might be able to help in theological education for the large numbers of people coming forward for ordination.

Now that the link with Durgapur has become well established our hope is that all of our churches will have a better sense of belonging to the world wide Christian Family. We all benefit and learn from each other as we seek to serve the Kingdom of God.

David Truby (Rector, Wirksworth Team Ministry)

Diocese of Kolhapur/Wingerworth link

Following the visit to Kolhapur, Marathwada and Nagpur earlier in the year, a formal link



agreement was signed with the Diocese of Kolhapur when Wingerworth were fortunate to be able to host Bishop Tiwade during the pre Lambeth visit. From the left, Carol Cooper Vice-Chair PCC, Jo White Rector, Nick Knyhynyckyj.. Church Warden, Bishop Tiwade & Jim Titterton Salem Independent Methodists, with the signed agreements.

Church of North India Partnership AGM

The AGM of the partnership will be on Sunday 17th May 2009 at All Saints's Church Wingerworth. (Agenda below). Ashbourne and Allestree links are expecting visitors from Patna and Nagpur respectively and these visitors will be coming to the AGM.

Lunch will be provided in the Church Centre (Next to the Church – ample parking) at 1.00pm for 1.15pm with the meeting starting at 2.30pm.

Please do come to the meeting, support and find out more about the partnership, and meet our guests from North India.

(For catering purposes it would be a great help if you could leave a message at the Church Centre if you are coming for lunch. Tel: 01246 297095)

The Derbyshire Churches and the Church of North India Partnership

Annual General Meeting

To be held at All Saints' Church, Longedge Lane,

Wingerworth, Derbyshire. S42 6PU

Sunday 17th May 2009 – 2.30pm

- 1. Welcome and opening prayers**
- 2. Greetings**
- 3. Apologies**
- 4. Minutes of 2007 Annual General Meeting**
- 5. Matters arising**
- 6. Financial Report**
- 7. Friends of The Partnership**
- 8. Election of Officers**
- 9. Date of the next Partnership AGM**
- 10. Presentations from visits**