



Yardley Baptist Church

Annual Report 2015

Charity Number 1158755



DEEPLY ROOTED
BRANCHING OUT

Every year I feel like I start the report with 'it's been a busy year' but 2015 has been a little different. We went into the year intentional about looking at what we did, allowing God space to speak to us and being ready to strip back and stop everything if we felt that was what God was saying to us. The year has still had its highs; we have shared in Baptisms and also lows as we have sadly said goodbye to some well-regarded members this year. Through it all God has been with us and as we look back hopefully we will be able to see how He has guided, carried and blessed us and then begin to look forward to what lies in store for 2016.

Our main celebration and communal teaching time has been at 11am on a Sunday morning. This has been an opportunity to meet together as a corporate body, to praise and encounter God. We have followed various themes over the year: starting with looking at taking a pilgrimage into Gods presence, followed by learning what fearless love means in reality. The summer took us through a journey through the gospel of Luke and we ending the year looking at prayer. These series were led and taught by Pastor Pete and also some of our in house preachers. Visiting preachers included Alistair du Plessis from the Leprosy Mission and Phillip and Vivienne Hatton.



There have been a selection of all age services throughout the year, to encourage the whole family to worship together in a more relaxed way and often involving food; jelly babies, chocolate bars, jelly beans to name a few!! Sunday evenings have taken a relaxed format, meeting every other week with a variety of prayer, worship and bible study led by members of YBC.

Several smaller study and friendship groups meet throughout the week in different homes, including a cell group for the young people. One of these is a Prayer Meeting each Thursday at Bill and Jean's home. Over a drink, there is prayer and a short Bible study. They try to pray for as many YBC activities as they can, and other matters local and worldwide. The first Thursday each month they pray specifically for missionary work.

We continued the second of a three year project called '*colour the community.*' The idea being to pray prayers of blessings for two streets a month; and within three years all streets in the near proximity to YBC will have been prayed for. Each of the houses in those roads has been given a card through their doors and an opportunity to return it and request prayer. This has seen cards returned most months with a variety of prayer requests. The



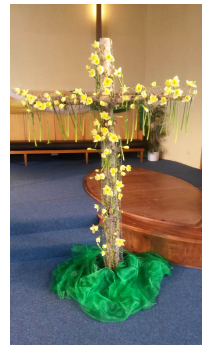
delivery of these cards has happened due to a small band of willing 'post people.' Thank you!

At the end of the year our official figure for membership was 74 members, while the actual number of people on the fringe of church is about three times that.

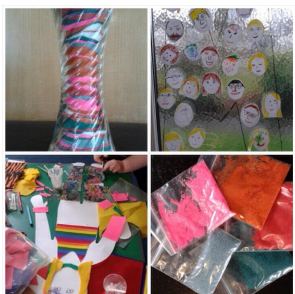
January was a relatively quiet month. It saw organisations starting back up after Christmas looking excitedly at what the New Year might have in store. We began to be challenged about the idea that while the comfort zone is a beautiful place nothing grows there and Pete shared further with us the idea of being deeply rooted and branching out that we had just started to ponder at the end of 2014.



February saw pancakes being cooked to mark the start of Lent and also the beginning of Churches Together in Stechford and Yardley's Lent group. A hardened group spent a night in a cardboard box to raise money for Birmingham City Mission and very sadly we also said farewell to Frank Davis. Regionally within HEBA, there was the commissioning service for the new regional ministers.



March found us very quietly getting on: the Stechford and Yardley Lent group continued and we were encouraged to spend time 'listening to God through Lent' to see what He might want to say to us as individuals and as a fellowship. We ended the month with a Tearfund bread and soup lunch.



In April we celebrated Easter. Celebrations began on Palm Sunday with an all age service and continued with a Tenebrae service on Good Friday and then a celebration on Easter Sunday.

May arrived and things seemed to suddenly get busy. Jo Green and Sandra Lilly ran their first Positive Parenting course through Lyndon Green Junior School, when over 6 weeks 6 different parents came along to learn together how to make family life even better. Birmingham Environmental and Public health turned up unannounced to inspect the kitchen, which we passed with flying colours. We shared a Ploughman's lunch together to raise money for Christian Aid and there was also a training day for those who wanted to learn how to use prayer ministry to support others. A new small group started up during the daytime on a Thursday.



June was soon upon us, Holiday at Home happened and we also had a gift day to raise funds for redecorating the main church Sanctuary. Ami left us to continue her studies in London after 4 years in Birmingham. There was an evening riding a magic roundabout of food and fellowship at different houses and the month marked the winding down of Kids 'R' Us after many years.





On to July; we packed up the building and moved out for much of July to join our friends across the park at Digbeth in the Field while we had the main sanctuary redecorated and plastered. What started as a 2 week project took slightly longer than planned and we were grateful to Digbeth in the Field for being so warmly accommodating to us.



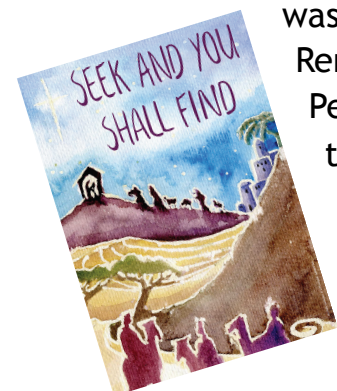
August generally quietens down a bit as organisations don't happen and some groups go away to Camp and Soul Survivor. A few of us also went to New Wine. At the end of the month we heard the sad news that a former member, John Stapleton had died.

September marks the re-starting of organisations after the summer, it also saw a new venture called Chaos eXtra begin: midweek church for all, whether young or old, single or married, churched or not. Another new venture was 'soaking prayer'. A chance to rest in God's presence and allow Him to have His way with us.



October arrived as the leaves began to fall off the trees, the month started with the heady excitement of new bins! We also celebrated Harvest together and we were treated to an evening with the lovely Philippa Hanna.

Nearly there, November and a good number of us went to Whitemoor Lakes for a time of fellowship together and teaching led by Hellie Brunt. For some this also included abseiling, snowman building or human hungry hippo's. There was a second Chaos eXtra and we marked Remembrance Sunday with an all age service. Pete also began 3 evening teaching sessions on the theme of The Paranormal through Christian eyes.



December finally arrived, the Boys' and Girls' Brigades came together for their annual enrolment service combined with the Christingle. Lyndon Green Junior School used the building for their Christmas celebration and more and more new faces were seen at the variety of Christmas services that we had.



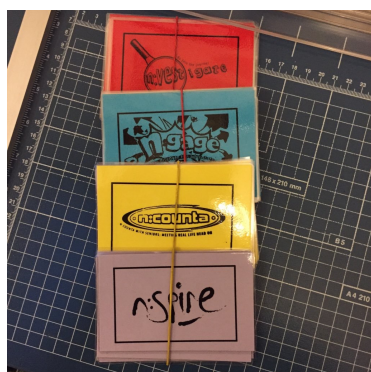
Throughout the year we have supported, both prayerfully and practically, many people who have been poorly and in need. Chaos family days continued up to the summer when Chaos eXtra



was introduced. These are midweek, evening, all age times to come together for fun, food and fellowship. They begin at 3:30pm to allow school children and parents to come direct from school, there are refreshments, crafts, knitting and games to keep people busy until the short service time at 5pm. Following this all age worship there is a meal and time then to finish off any activity before going home at 6:30pm. Each Chaos eXtra has been different to the one before yet each seems to have worked. We feed around 80 people - of whom about 2/3 are not regular Yardley Baptist Church folk. It is not aimed as an event just for children or families but the idea is for everyone to feel welcome and for the people it serves to experience God and meet with Him where they are.

Wow, when you look back despite saying we were going to have a quieter year and strip back some of what we were regularly doing, it has still been busy. Let's hear now from the individual organisations and see what they have been up to.

Girls Brigade: Alison Aylin writes;



"The 50th Birmingham Girls' Brigade Company has had a really great year. Since last year the company has seen a large influx of new girls. We are regularly getting 30 girls each Monday evening. This year saw us say goodbye to Ann Partlett who 'retired' from Girls' Brigade and moved to Digbeth In the Field URC, Ann gave many years of service to the company and Girls' Brigade in Birmingham. We celebrated her service with current and past girls and parents sharing their memories of Mrs P during our last evening of the summer term. We have welcomed Stephanie Hogarth as a Leader, and she has fitted right in and brought her Grandaughter Phoebe too.

We have been to the Ackers for a taster day, where girls and leaders took part in a wide range of activities including skiing, sledging, canoeing and jungle challenge. The weather was fantastic and we all had a fabulous day. (Jean would highly recommend it as a way to celebrate a birthday!!!!)

We continued with various badge work and attended the Pantomime at Hall Green Little Theatre.

During the last term we used a resource from Viz-a-viz ministries called Alf - About Life and Faith, it is a six week discovery course that helps children discover Jesus and become followers. We took longer than 6 weeks due to Christmas activities, however (as many of you will have already heard) this culminated in 'the big finish' on 25th January, this evening gave the girls the opportunity to make a commitment to Jesus. The leaders were delighted (and a trifle over excited) to discover that 12 girls had 'prayed the prayer' during the evening. We now have the exciting task of discipling these new Christians. We have an evening of 'Pasta with the Pastor' planned, this will be an opportunity for the girls to ask Pete their questions about life and faith.

We are very excited about the next year and God's plans for the girls and us as leaders."

Welcome Centre: Diane Davis writes;

"Welcome centre is in its 23rd year! When we first started we had about 12 people each week which included the team and we just served a main meal. Now we have up to 22 customers and the team plus we have a wide selection of options on the menu. We also have other activities during the year, a DVD day during January or February, holiday at home in early June, a coach trip with lunch at a country restaurant in September, a Christmas craft day in November and finally Christmas lunch to round off the year. Both of the coach trips were fully booked. Week by week our numbers vary but they seem to match the number of staff that are on hand to help and we've always been able to provide enough meals for everyone who comes.

During the year we had a visit from the Environmental Health to check our kitchen and food hygiene paperwork. The officer came with a trainee so his inspection was very thorough. We are pleased to say that we have again attained a 5H so thank you to everyone, who, like us also has to maintain high standards within the work of their organisation in the kitchen as well as completing the necessary paperwork. (Please keep up the good work). Following his visit, we used part of the time at our summer training meeting to go over the basics of kitchen hygiene routines, which was a useful reminder for us all.

We've had some staff changes this year. Averil McCann is now on the team and Jean Gregg is back now her health has improved. Audrey Price has decided to take up different activities and Jean Ward has also stopped coming. Since September Sheila Evans comes to help with serving customers. After an injury Marie Rogers is back helping by dishing up the meals. Mary-Ann Clewlow has just joined the team and is getting used to the routines. We are very grateful to Girls Brigade who put out tables and chairs for us each week, it is such a help.



I've looked back to last year's report to the questions we were asked then. What is our vision for the next 12 months and what can YBC pray for? We do have new customers and as I write, we had 4 last week (12th Jan) so that prayer is being answered. We see this as God's continuing confirmation for what we are doing. We know that the customers enjoy their time with us and look forward to it but please continue to pray that they may want to know the Lord in a deeper way for themselves. Pray that during the year some may decide to come to Chaos eXtra.

As usual I want to praise the team for all their hard work and faithful commitment. The work we do each week is pretty physical and demanding and most of us aren't 'Spring chickens' any more! They're a great group of people and it is a wonderful privilege to work with them."



Toddlers: Sandra Lilley writes;

"2015 was a very mixed year for the group. From January-July we had a few new people but mainly it was a well established group made up of families that we'd known for 2, 3 or more years. The average number

of families coming each week was 25 with a maximum of 40 registered. Everyone knew the routine and our ways, they were able to share things with us that were troubling them, and they knew we would pray for them.

We introduced the families to Jesus through songs, stories and crafts. The story/singing times were good with the children and adults happy to participate, and most children would then stay sitting while having drinks and biscuits before going off to play again. The themes till the summer holidays were New Life, Thank you God for spring, and Thank you God for summer.

As always we finished each term with a party, food and bubbles.



After much prayer and discussion it was decided that from September 2015 the group would meet on a Wednesday afternoon rather than a Wednesday morning. Many families were not returning in September anyway due to the age of the children, and as we partly set up on a Tuesday as well as first thing Wednesday morning it meant everything could be done on one day. The last day of the morning group was when we said goodbye to over half of the families many whom we'd known for a number of years.



September started with sadness due to the sudden death of one of the mums during the summer holidays. The families who had known her were shocked and donated money for the charity the family supported which I feel shows something of what the group is about.

The themes for the term were Noah's Ark and Christmas.

As more than half of the families were new to the group, and meeting in the afternoon rather than the morning, everything seemed very different and unsettled. However, by the end of term the group was less fragmented, people were much more comfortable with each other and with us, and the Christmas party was a lovely time.

A big thank you goes to all the people who help to make Toddlers a welcoming and friendly group.

After spending time on a Wednesday morning setting up, we have about 35 minutes for lunch, for which we ask a small charge to cover costs. Audrey prepares this for us and 3 or 4 families regularly join us. This is a good time of relative relaxation and chatting before the group begins at 1pm.

Martin and Trish are in charge of the kitchen, providing the group with much needed teas and coffees on arrival, and drinks and biscuits for adults and children after story/singing.

Gill who used to come to the group but now helps, and Brenda supervise the messy activities.

Bill and Tony give up an hour or so of their time in the morning to help with



setting up.

Louise, who used to bring her children to the group several years ago, comes to help with anything we ask and to help clear up at the end.

We don't yet know what 2016 will have in store for the group. With God in control we aim to be able to support people in their parenting and everyday lives, but our greatest desire is to see people come to Jesus. As we get to know the families more we aim to be bolder in sharing our faith, to ask to pray with people rather than saying we will pray for them, and explore ways and resources that will help us discuss Jesus with them."

Missionary Council: Iris Aylin writes;

"The Missionary Council met three times in 2015 to look at ways of encouraging us all to support the task of reaching out with the gospel beyond Yardley Baptist Church.

Allister du Plessis came on 1st February to bring us up to date with some of The Leprosy Mission's work and the next week our CLIMAs groups made cakes and sold them to us, raising £95.50p, while the communion offering and other gifts raised a total of £866.33p during the year for TLM.

The Tearfund lunch in March raised £587.54 for Tearfund's many projects throughout the world. At this stage Heather Kelcey relinquished her role as Rep and as we thank her for all she did to raise the profile of Tearfund we wish her well in all that she does at YBC. Bill Williamson has now taken on this role.

The Bread and Cheese lunch in May raised £666.21p for Christian Aid which was part of the national fund-raising week.

Isobel Easton is involved with Stepping Stones, a project for families in Small Heath but by the summer there was a severe shortage of money. We were able to give them £197.77p left from last year's Holiday Club to help with their Holiday Club and a communion offering in August raised a further £321.35 plus a collection on Christmas Day meant that a further £410.89p could be given.

Sunday September 20th was a tremendous day in the life of Sofia Baptist Church when, after 15 years of fund-raising by themselves and Bulgarian Partners Trust in Bristol plus donations from many other groups, they were able to declare open the new building as a meeting place and social centre. There were tears of joy for the new building as well as tears of sadness at leaving the old one.

At the end of September we said 'Farewell' to Phillip and Vivienne Hatton who had been our BMS Link Missionaries for 15 years, firstly in Belgium and latterly in France. They have now retired from BMS and are living in Leeds, near to their family.

By October we had been put in touch with Claire and Michael Skinner who were at the International Mission Centre in Selly Oak preparing to move to Lebanon to spend, initially, two years in a support role for different aspects of the work of the Lebanese Society for

Educational and Social Development. We were delighted to meet them and even more delighted that they are now our BMS Link Missionaries. They set off for Beirut on 14th January 2016

The autumn also brought with it a CLIMAs project to fill two shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. In the event, 24 boxes were filled with toys and goodies and no doubt were greatly enjoyed by children in various countries.

An offering at the Carols by Candlelight service raised £345.25p for BMS work with Syrian refugees whose plight continues to sadden and horrify us.

Throughout the year we have continued to support Warwick Goulding and Laura Williams in their work with Birmingham City Mission. The kindness of so many in bringing tinned and packet foods for BCM's Basics Bank and then, at Christmas time, a large amount of toys for the Toylink project, means that journeys to the new Resource Centre at the Clock Tower building are becoming more frequent.

So, a year of great generosity by many of YBC's people. Thank you so much. We continue to remember, too, the persecuted church in so many parts of our world. Pray for them and also for those who are obeying the commission to 'Go into all the world'.

Kids 'R' Us: Julie Bond writes;

As we started up Kids'R'Us again in January 2015, Julie, Sandra L, Laura and the KRUSH (Kids'R'Us Helpers) teenagers all knew that it was most likely that the club would close in the summer. This helped us to focus sharply on telling the children the most important things about following Jesus, on the need to keep involving their families and on finishing well. We did all this under the banner of 'Come dine with Jesus.'

We met, as usual, on term-time Wednesdays from 4.20-6.00pm, catering for children in school years 1-6 (aged 5-11).

We looked at foody parables, teaching, stories and miracles (mainly from Matthew's gospel) in the God spots; we made a new Bible library and enjoyed all the different foods involved in a Passover meal, before finishing the summer term learning once again about the '4 point gospel.'

We made a worship time more of a priority each week and learnt some more action and signing songs and started praying more. We built a 'prayerport' (like an airport for prayers!), learnt about what prayer is and the different sorts of prayers you can say, and asked God to do bigger, more amazing things in the lives of the children and their wider families. We learnt that God really does answer prayer and about the need to be persistent and not give up. The faith and prayers of particularly the unchurched children was really inspiring and by the time we closed all our big prayers for everybody had been answered!

We inevitably did a fair amount of baking too and plenty of food-focused games, arts and crafts, as well as a Rock climbing trip out to Red Point, a film night in ('You're special'),

some drama and we celebrated all the children's birthdays in our now customary (and inimitable) style (singing 'Happy Birthday' in the style of the birthday person's favourite animal!)

We had previously discovered that this seemed to be a cohort who were not easily going to accept invitations to Sunday church, but were happy to show up on Wednesdays, so, in addition to our regular invitations to the Kids'R'Us children's families to come back a little early on the last week of each half-term for refreshments, chat & to hear what we'd been learning about at the club over recent weeks, we invented foody reasons to invite them in on 2 extra occasions: a full meal in March that the children had helped to prepare and our Ready, Steady, Cook! Competition in May where family groups wearing real chef's hats fought it out to make, decorate and present the best cakes-in-a-mug. We were astonished to hear on both occasions that some dads took time off work, or made extra effort to get home in time to be there!!

At the end of the family meal it was deemed to be my job to break the news that I would be stepping down as Kids'R'Us leader and that therefore the club would probably be closing its doors in July. The news was met with sadness and many 'Why's?' from the children, but this turned out to be a great opportunity to explain how God seemed to have led me/us to this decision. There was nothing but understanding, encouragement and thanks from all the parents and all in really uplifting quantities.

We'd started the Spring term off with 19 children on the register. Inevitably this dwindled a little as the end drew closer, although it was mainly due to other school activities competing for the same time slot, so we finished the year with 13 still-enthusiastic regulars.

On July 1st, our last week, we were able to give the children the copies of Matthew's gospel that they'd been using throughout the year and, much to their total amazement, their very own copy of the whole Good News Bible (with pictures in!) with a note for each child written in the front. They all spent ages reading their messages and looking through their Bibles and realising that they could find out about God and Jesus for themselves by reading their Bible, even without the help of Kids'R'Us!

We praise God first and foremost for being Emmanuel, God with us, at Kids'R'Us throughout its 23 year life, for continually hearing and answering prayer, for bringing a succession of children to us to hear the good news, for providing enough helpers, young & old, to keep it going and for guiding us all the way.

Enormous thanks must go to Sandra and Laura for willingly staying with Kids'R'Us right to the very end, despite their incredibly busy lives, and for their unending enthusiasm and inspirational input.

The KRUsH teenagers must have a mention too. Anna Kelcey, Emma Nieuwolt (who was particularly helpful in leading some of the God-spot talks, including sharing her testimony with the children one week), Jacob Williams, Alex Blenkiron, Becky Bond, Jasmine Kelcey,

Harriet Blenkiron, Jessica and finally Philippa Harvey & Vicky who joined us to get some volunteering experience for their Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. The commitment of many of them was truly staggering, some continuing to come weekly or nearly weekly, despite the stresses and strains of GCSE's; some took an understandable break, but then returned to pick up where they'd left off. The younger helpers just kept coming throughout, whenever they could.

KRUsh's biggest input was in the small group time at the start of each week and helping out with games & activities. Alex and Jacob took more responsibility for the music during the weekly worship time as the year went on. Many faithfully came to the planning meetings too.

Also many thanks to those adults who continued to come along to help out regularly or when needed - Bill Williamson, Tracey Collins (Alex & Harriet's mum, officially doing it as community work for Asda, but always a really capable and reliable pair of hands), Isobel Easton, Audrey Price, Diane Davis and Jean Williamson.

And last, but certainly not least, as no prayer is ever wasted, huge thanks to all who kept us afloat and continually sailing into the wind with their sustaining prayers

It would not have been the club it was without you all!

It has taken a large amount of faith to follow God's leading to stop a seemingly successful mid-week club that shamelessly preached Jesus and tried to show a wonderful bunch of children, teenagers and parents how awesome God is and something of how to follow him.

It has been done in trust that God has led us to this point and that he himself will hold on tight to all who came and heard, particularly the ones who had decided to follow Jesus for themselves, and that he will have something else lined up for them at just the right time.

We note the interesting timing of the start of the 'Route 17' club at Digbeth-in-the-Field church on Wednesday evenings and are glad to hear that some of our Kids'R'Us children have been going there. And we're excited that some of the Kids'R'Us families have been coming to our new Chaos eXtra mid-week church events.

Would you hold everyone who's been a part of Kids'R'Us as it's come to a close before God in your prayers, and ask him to keep his hand on all who have passed through its doors since Autumn 1992.

We won't finish on a sad note - instead, let's praise God for all the seeds sown over the years by so many leaders and helpers and for those who have chosen to follow Jesus as a result. And let's step forward into the future with God, full of faith, optimism and curiosity as to what plans he has - for us and for those he has, and will, bring us into contact with, trusting that he will lead clearly and that we will follow obediently.

TWNG - The Wednesday Night Group: Laura Williams writes;

Through March to July TWNG met each Wednesday for games, crafts and Bible study. There were 8 regulars who took it in turn to lead an activity or game at the start of the evening. I continued to lead the Bible study each week.

8th July YFC did a session on Sport and Worship. As part of this we had the football cage for the evening and I invited Kingshurst Evangelical Church youth to join us. 4 of their boys joined us and everyone had a great time with the cage. Steve Bowns (YFC) gave a challenging talk as well as sharing his testimony. This was well received by the young people.

We had a party to celebrate the year we had had and the holiday coming up. Jules and Sandra L cooked for the group which was very appreciated by all!

I decided that I would use the summer break to assess if I could continue to facilitate the group on my own and after prayer and discussion with Pete it was agreed that I could not continue this on my own and we began thinking about how we could serve this group. I continue to highlight any events in the city that the young people might be interested in attending; Fulfil and Spirit of the Game being two examples. We value prayer for what the future should look like for the teens at YBC alongside our uniformed organisations."

Worship Team: Laura Williams writes;

"It has been a wonderful privilege to continue to serve the church through worship. Over the last year our team of musicians have fluctuated from none to seven and any number in between. This has made planning difficult at times but it is wonderful to see how God works in our limitedness!

We have said goodbye to Glynis and Ami this last year, but it has been good to welcome back Maggie, have Dave Ellis join us when he can and have Jacob playing more regularly. Steve A, Jo, Jules, Steve W and Pete have been playing and singing when they are able too. Lynn is currently not singing in the WT as she awaits her operation.

WT practise is on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at YBC but as this is difficult for the majority to attend I am reviewing this along with Pete.

My prayer and desire for worship at YBC is that it will be God centered and led by the Holy Spirit. I pray that we may all find a 'thin' place during worship to hear from God, receive all He has for us and find ourselves changed because of the encounter with Him. I am grateful to the technical team who support us each week:- Steve W, Steve A, Jo, Ian, Alfie and Jacob. If you are interested in joining the tech team speak to Steve W for information and advice.

If you want to know more about WT or have suggestions of songs then have a chat with Laura.

Thank you again for your support, love and prayers - it really is a privilege to worship with you each week and see God working and see the fellowship responding. Psalm 96:9 'Worship the Lord with the beauty of holy lives/in the priestly robes...' (TLB) may we all find encouragement as we meet together to worship."

Wednesday Housegroup: Ian Kelcey writes;

"The Wednesday Housegroup actually meets at Church, so its more of a Small Group really. But it does meet on a Wednesday, so that bit is right.

We have benefitted from some new members this year and are now up to around a dozen. Diane has joined Jean Gregg and Ian in leading the group, although most people are willing to take a turn now and again. We are currently working through Ephesians 6.

Tea and biscuits is followed by prayer and biscuits and bible study and biscuits. Or the other way round. Unless there is cake, in which case we have that instead.

We aim to help each other grow as disciples, apply what the bible says, support one another through life, and have a good laugh doing it."

Thursday Evening Housegroup: Heather writes

"The Thursday evening Housegroup continued to meet during 2015, hosted by Audrey and led by Bill and Heather, and with an attendance of up to 9 people.

The group took a break during Lent so that members could join in with the Yardley Churches Together joint Lent groups.

During the year, we have continued our study of the whole Bible, in 60 key passages. We have also completed a series called 'Life on the frontline', which encouraged us all to consider the places where we regularly have contact with non-Christians, and where God might be wanting to use us to witness. In the light of this, we aim to each pray for one member of the group and their witness each week."

Thursday Afternoon Housegroup: Pastor Pete writes

"In May a new small group started meeting at the manse on a Thursday afternoon each week from 1pm. The group is led by Pastor Pete and we have between 7-10 people who attend.

The group contains times of sung worship, bible study and prayer and more recently communion. The group started out by working through a study on the book of Ephesians

before studying big topics like Heaven, Hell, Judgment as well as others. The group is currently studying Isaiah."

Boys Brigade: Steve Green writes;

"The year began with Isobel, Jo and myself having a planning meeting. Isobel and Jo do most of the planning for Anchor section (age 4- 7 years) and Junior Section (7 - 11 years of age). They are ably assisted by Katie Docker and Lynda Green (Anchors), with Tony Hart, Phil Duffill and Alex Rogers assisting with the Junior Section, with Beth Rickus appearing when her studies allow. I run the Company and Senior Sections together as one assisted by Alex Rogers and Les Findon.

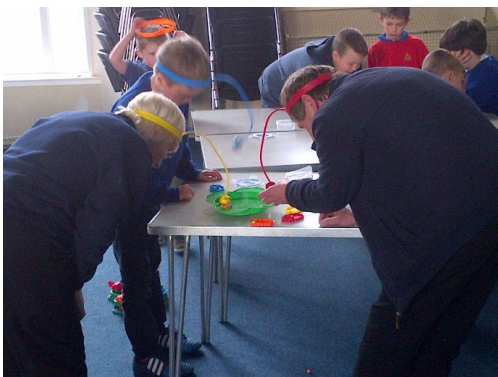
Our first meeting of the year there were 28 Boys in attendance, 7 Anchor Boys (age 4- 7 years), 13 Junior Section Boys (age 7 to 11 years) and eight Company Section (11+ years of age).

The Anchor and Junior Section have looked at themes of new beginnings, how to be a great man of God and giving through crafts, Bible Stories, sport, a quiz and cooking. They went to learn how to play Padel Tennis and had a weekend away at Whitemoor Lakes. They have taken part in Battalion Saturday football, games in the park and the annual display. In the Autumn term they raised money which is being used to twin a toilet, or two.

For the older boys the first activity of the year was a table tennis league, seeing 6 boys play several matches. The 58th came second and third in the competition with one of our lads stating it was good just to play. We also took the Boys to Padel tennis.

At the end of February I took six lads and a Dad with me to the BCM sleepout. Alfie woke me at five o'clock in the morning to let me know that the Boys were all having breakfast. Five hours after the Boys left the sleepout at 6am they were required to play in a series of five a side football matches starting at 11am. I had asked whether they wanted to field a team or not as they would not have slept the night before, the lads however said that they would have had a couple of hours sleep so decided to play!

In early March the 58th hosted a badminton competition which Alfie got to the final of and midway through the month the lads went to Whitemoor Lakes with the Birmingham Battalion and enjoyed a weekend of activities including abseiling and high ropes. We ended the month with another series of 5 a side football games for the Juniors and Company lads. We also had a new Boy join the older section of the BB.



After Easter we had a visit from a chap from Gideon's International, they had a BB specific Bible to distribute, one for every member. The Boys were very engaged asking a number of sensible questions. In April there was a basketball competition for the Boys to take part in hosted by the 4th Sutton BB. I was initially concerned when another Company, the 2nd Sutton BB, brought three of the tallest skinniest Boys I had ever seen. Thankfully the teams were of three Boys each and were mixed with lads from different Companies. It was a joy to see 16 & 17 year old lads working patiently with younger less able Boys, BB at its best.

In May some of the Company Section lads took part in an Athletics competition held at Norman Green in Solihull, I manned the microphone and did the announcing for the day, while the lads ran, jumped and threw things on a lovely sunny day.



The previous evening had seen the Company Section reach a new high for number attending, with there being thirteen Boys. Four Boys agreed to follow the Duke of Edinburgh scheme for their Bronze award.

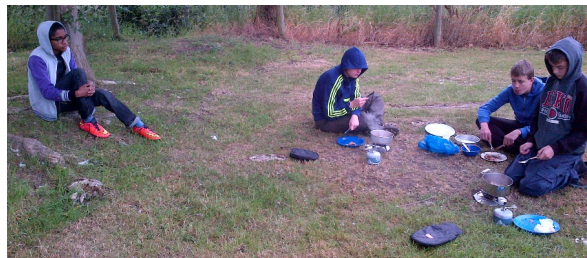
In June Youth For Christ brought a football cage to YBC, the lads had an excellent time and assisted in the dismantling and loading of the cage onto the YFC trailer. A job that YFC usually have to do on their own, they were very grateful. At the end of June we had the BB display, it was another successful evening.



The following weekend saw the four boys from the 58th BB (and one from the 2nd Sutton Coldfield BB) who are qualifying for their Bronze award take part in a practice expedition around Shustoke, camp overnight and hike to the finish.



It felt very strange watching Boys walk off on their own to meet them miles away.



July saw Jo, Emily Hanson and myself travel to Exmouth for BB Camp with the 4th Sutton BB & GB taking seven Boys from the 58th. The week long camp consisted of many activities, bicycle riding, bible reading, swimming, sumo wrestling, climbing, a murder mystery (I was



the victim), hoopy loopy, ultimate Frisbee and golf.



We saw one lad from our Company give his life to Jesus for the first time. Pete Everitt joined us for a couple of days of camp.



A week after returning we took all the Boys to a service at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church. Alfie spoke on behalf of Kai and Josh for the steps they have taken with Christ this year on camp.

We started back in September with a Challenge night at Company Section



Since September we have seen a large number of Boys join the Anchor section, this is God at work as no publicity has occurred, just word of mouth amongst the Boys.



The weekend of the 3rd October saw the four Boys from the 58th take on their qualifying expedition around Cannock Chase for the DofE Bronze.



We ended the year with the Christingle Service and a visit to the panto at Hall green Little Theatre.

We closed the year with 31 boys attending the last night; 12 Anchor Boys, 11 Junior Section and 8 Company Boys. As I look to the future, we are regularly having 12-13 Company and Senior Boys attend and will have 6 more join us after Easter. A possible 19 teenage boys with myself and 2 helpers who are unable to join me each week, offers of help greatly appreciated.



CLIMAs: Heather Kelcey writes;

"Climas numbers remained steady through the year, with up to 16 children in the three groups plus creche. Low numbers of children have at times made certain groups too small to run, so we start each Climas session all together, giving leaders the chance to decide whether to amalgamate groups if numbers are low.

Jean Phillips stood down from leading creche in July, and we thank her for her many years of service. The creche re-launched in September, with Jasmine Kelcey plus one of a team of adults on rotation providing a place to play for two thoroughly delightful toddlers whilst the service is in progress.

We were sad to say goodbye also to Marilyn Jackson who stood down from the Climas leaders' rota in July. Julian also had to bow out due to work commitments. However we have been delighted to welcome Sam Huggins to the team. Sam seems to have quickly settled in to the role and is a real asset to the team.

All three Climas groups took part in 'listening for Lent', producing written and pictorial contributions to what the church felt God was saying to us during that time.

For Mothers' Day, the children prepared a buffet meal for their families, master-minded by Jade Sinnassamy. We plan to roll this idea out further and invite all of church next time!

Over the Summer, when numbers are often lower, we amalgamated the three groups, and watched the DVD 'Miracle Maker' in instalments.

During the Autumn Term, Climas invited members of the congregation to donate items for packing in to shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. To our delight we were able to send 24 boxes to the local collection point. A cake sale in which the children sold the cakes they had made, raised all of the money (and more) needed to pay for the transport of the shoe boxes to their destination. We should hear soon where they all got delivered to.

As ever my thanks go to my team of volunteer helpers for enabling this work to continue."

Conclusion:

To conclude, 2015 has been a year with much to be thankful for. The leadership have met regularly throughout the year, initially monthly but more recently we have been back to fortnightly. One week a month to do practical business and a second week to worship together and actively seek God to see what He has to say to us as leaders and to YBC as a whole. We are a diverse group of people who don't always agree but who are united in believing we are called and therefore equipped by God to serve Him in His church.

As we go into 2016 my prayer is that we allow God to continue to be intimate with us. That we will dare to be open and honest with one another in a true community, family way. Warts and all we can support and love each other. Exciting times lie ahead for the community of Yardley and YBC with God if we are ready for the ride and willing to be open and honest with each other in a non-judgmental, caring way.

Jo Green
Church Secretary