

Bridge Builders

Christian Trust

connecting children with faith, hope & love

Anno Domini 2018 Anthony Taylor, Chair of trustees

The Easter Journey and The Christmas Journey Inga Voss,
ExploRE Manager—Journeys

All Change Again Peter Gordon, Honorary Director



Annual Report 2017-2018

Anno Domini 2018

Advent is about to start and the first week of the Christmas Journey, back to Israel in the first millennium, is now drawing to a close. I am looking forward to playing the role of a Roman soldier next week, with the responsibility of stamping many passports for the children as they start their Christmas Journey. Over a period of 3 weeks, more than 750 six and seven-year-old children, from 16 schools will participate in the Christmas Journey, an engaging experience for them to hear the story of the birth of Jesus, taken directly from the Bible.

The Christmas and Easter Journeys are the most visible activities of Bridge Builders; less visible are the assemblies and lessons that continue throughout the year—so in total, more than 5,000 children benefit annually. On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank all of the churches, volunteers and Bridge Builders staff who work hard throughout the year to deliver our projects, as well as all the school teachers who are warm and welcoming their schools, or enjoy visiting a local church with their pupils.

Sadly, my first act as chairman of Trustees was to write and inform some schools that we could no longer provide the MAPS project (Mentoring and Pastoring Support Service). This was due to the loss of two key members of staff and our subsequent recruiting effort proved unsuccessful to recruit well qualified replacements. We had to act quickly to inform the schools, so that they had enough time to make alternative arrangements to continue to support the children who benefited from the mentoring and pastoral support service we had been providing.

As a Trust we have 3 objectives that can be summarised as: to advance the Christian faith, to advance education in accordance with Christian principles and to facilitate social welfare for the benefit of children. Since it was founded in 2001 Bridge Builders has probably changed every year, both in how it is organised and what it does to deliver these objectives. In 2019 there is likely to be only one certainty, we will have to evolve again to be able to continue to serve God and the local community—but we can be confident that God is with us and that His love for us is unchanging.

The Trustees are conscious that with the cessation of MAPS our direct involvement in social welfare has ceased, so in 2019 we will be looking at how we can strengthen what we do towards this objective. It is not easy, because whatever we do has to be effective, sustainable and of a high standard, otherwise it could be counter productive and would not serve our children well.

I would like to thank Revd. Don Dowling who has retired this year as Chair of the Trust but has, thankfully for me, agreed to continue as a Trustee. His experience of ministry and his long involvement with Bridge Builders will continue to be invaluable.

On behalf of all the Trustees, I would like to thank you all for your continuing support of the Trust and the work it does.

Anthony Taylor, December 2018
Chair of Trustees



Variety Show at the Gordon Craig Theatre

One of our 'Friends of Bridge Builders', Ken Moore, organised a very successful and entertaining Variety Show at the local theatre in Stevenage, raising money for Bridge Builders. Pam Rhodes compered the evening which highlighted local talent—everything from a speed-stacker to a tenor, to children's ballet. It also featured 'Gabz' a Stevenage born singer/songwriter who was a finalist of Britain's Got Talent in 2013. A huge thanks to Ken, as well as everyone who was involved in the event.

Fundraising and Friends

The FBB get together to pray for Bridge Builders once a month, but they also get involved with local fundraising efforts (see below for events in the past year) and assisting with catering at some of our events. A number of the 'Friends' who work as volunteers in our office each week.



Some fundraising events which were supported by the Friends in 2017-18 were the annual quiz night held at St. Paul's Methodist Church, which was a great success as always; Bunyan Baptist Church held their annual coffee morning and also hosted a their very popular Christmas Brass Band Concert. The proceeds raised at both events came to Bridge Builders. Thanks to the Welwyn Garden City Brass Band for a wonderful evening.

Sheila Smith, a previous Bridge Builders Director, leads the Friends of Bridge Builders. They meet on the first Thursday of each month at St Paul's Methodist Church, between 2-3 pm, to pray for the work of Bridge Builders. Refreshments provided.

If you would like more details, please contact our office on 01438 314314.



The Easter Journey and The Christmas Journey

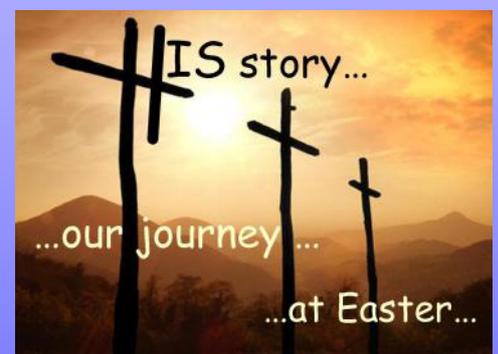
Our Journeys are church-based interactive events for primary school children. The Easter Journey has been developed for children in Year 6 whereas the Christmas Journey is for children in Year 2. Each Journey takes approximately 90 minutes and they are hosted by churches throughout Stevenage, Knebworth and Hertford. Schools can book their sessions online for a church of their choice. It takes more than 20 volunteers to run a Journey session—volunteers range from storytellers, time-keepers and craft organisers to the refreshments helpers.



Both our Journeys are well received by the local schools. During the Christmas Journey 2017, we welcomed more than 1,100 children from 21 schools to our four hosting churches. The Easter Journey 2018 was hosted by six churches in Stevenage, Knebworth and Hertford. The project reached more than 1,200 children from 28 schools.

The aim of The Easter Journey ...

is for every child to hear about the life of Jesus and the events of Holy Week and Easter and be encouraged to consider, question and explore the key questions: 'Why was Jesus a Saviour?' and 'Why did He die?'



Every child receives a notebook at the beginning of the session. They move around the church and visit five stations where they hear about the teaching and miracles of Jesus and the events of Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday. At each station they are encouraged to reflect on what they heard, in discussion with the group leader.

Before moving to the next station they complete an activity in their notebook. The children take these notebooks home to remind them of what they learnt on their Easter Journey. As the session draws to an end the children gather together for a conclusion and the opportunity to give feedback and ask questions.



The aim of The Christmas Journey...

is that every child not only hears the Christmas story but also begins to understand some of the significance it has for Christians today.



Before the event, the children receive Christmas Journey passports on which they draw a picture of themselves. Upon arrival in church their passports are stamped as they cross 'Passport Control' and join the Christmas Journey team who will take them back in time to meet the main characters of the first Christmas.



In small groups the children hear the story from each character's perspective and then ask them questions. The children meet the Wise Men, the Shepherds and Anna & Simeon in the Temple.



After seeing each character, they complete a craft activity which attaches to their passport. The children take these passports home and can be used as tree decorations as well as reminding them of the Christmas Journey story and to share with family and friends.



To conclude the Christmas Journey experience, the children come altogether to visit Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the stable, where a lively Christmas song is sung before they make their way out back through Passport Control and onward back to school.



"All the (...) volunteers were very friendly and enthusiastic"

"Thank you for the opportunity to ask questions!"

"The interaction between the children and the adults was lovely!"

"You provide coverage of a subject that is so undervalued, in an interactive and enjoyable way that means something to the children!"

"A unique way to experience the Christmas Story – Thank you"

"The church looked beautiful!"

Payments and Receipts (£) for the year ended 31 August 2018*

Receipts	2018	2017
Grants and gifts received	£44,083	£43,979
Tax refunds under Gift Aid	£2,788	£5,034
Other receipts	£10,172	£13,677
Total Receipts	£57,043	£62,690

Payments	2018	2017
Employment costs	£36,083	£40,984
Rent	£4,800	£4,874
Insurance	£1,108	£1,152
Office expenses	£2,820	£3,697
I.T. equipment	£4,805	
Legal & Professional	£2,682	£3,144
Project and funding event costs	£3,754	£2,410
Other costs	£517	£554
Total Payments	£56,570	£56,815

Net Receipts	£473	£5,875
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Assets	2018	2017
Cash	£48,660	£48,187

Represented by General Fund	2018	2017
Balance brought forward	£48,187	£42,312
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	£473	£5,875
Balance Brought Forward	£48,660	£48,187

*The accounts this year were submitted for examination on a cash basis. As the previous year's accounts were on an accrual basis the figures for 2017 shown above have been adjusted for the change of basis. The full set of accounts can be seen on the Charity Commission website. Transactions made in the following year but applicable to the 2017—2018 financial year were "Gift Aid not yet received" £1087 and "unbilled fee for independent examination" £930.

All Change Again

This year has flown by. Much has happened. We were sorry to lose two important members of staff in the year. As a result we have had to change our organisation again, and we have had to withdraw one of our major services. However we have made some important advances in another direction.

Earlier in the year Anita Orton was called elsewhere to serve children in other ways, and at the end of the Summer Term 2018 Mandy Branders relocated to the Midlands. Both were key operatives in our MAPS project (Mentoring and Pastoral Support). We have been unsuccessful in seeking to fill these two vacancies; this area of work requires an increasingly qualified and regulated team of people. This has meant that we have had to step back from our MAPS commitments, leaving six primary schools to seek alternative help for the many children we had been supporting.

During the last year however, Mandy was able to run a pilot programme of RE lessons/workshops in a small number of schools, designing the lessons in line with the newly adopted school curriculum. It seems there is a demand for this service and we are planning to offer RE lessons/workshops to more schools, and to more children, during this coming year.

As well as managing MAPS, Mandy was also involved in all aspects of ExploRE, including organising assemblies and lessons, and overseeing the Christmas and Easter Journeys. Steph Knell, currently the Administration Manager, has been accepted as ExploRE Manager for Schools and will continue the work with assemblies and lessons. In the early part of the Autumn term Steph combined both her old and her new job but from 1st December she officially moved into her new role and we have advertised for a Resource Centre Manager to replace her. We also have the budget this year to recruit one or two Schools Workers to work as Steph's assistants. Inga Voss will continue as ExploRE Manager, Journeys.

During 2017/18 we have been awarded a grant of £6,450 from Allchurches Trust to assist with our major IT project. For this project we needed to replace our server with its unsupported operating system. We also needed to buy a small number of up to date laptops for our outreach workers. In addition, our IT Manager has been working on improving the bookings system we use on our website and to introduce a catalogue and hiring software system to enable churches and schools to borrow our available props, books and equipment for assemblies and lessons.

We are also grateful to Ken Moore who, together with a small band of volunteers, produced and organised a very successful fundraising concert in June, at the Gordon Craig Theatre, which raised much needed funds for our work.

In every line of work there are always changes and challenges but it is good to know that God always provides the real answers and resources we need for every challenge. With the funds donated and raised last year we go into the new year well funded and ready to grow the numbers of children to whom we introduce the gospel.

Peter Gordon, Honorary Director

The Bridge Builders Team

Patrons

Cllr. Sharon Taylor, O.B.E

Mr Stephen McPartland MP

Right Revd, Dr Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford

Trustees

Mr Anthony Taylor (Chair)

Revd Don Dowling

Revd. Steven Cooper

Mrs Alexandra Horlock

Project Managers

Mrs Stephanie Knell: ExploRE Manager—Schools

Mrs Inga Voß: ExploRE Manager—Journeys

Chaplain

Mr John Forster

Honorary Director

Mr Peter Gordon

Resource Centre

Mrs Stephanie Knell: Administration Manager

Mrs Janice Hawketts: Finance and IT Manager

Mrs Amanda Bryant:: Communications Officer and Administrator

Many Thanks to:-

Allchurches Trust, Bunyan Baptist Church, Churches Together In Stevenage, Hertfordshire County Council, Holy Trinity, Great Ashby Community Church, Ravenstone PCC, St. Andrews Church Hertford, St. Hugh & St. John, St Martin's Knebworth, St.Mary's Graveley, St. Mary's Shephall, St. Nicholas, St. Peter's, Sirius Digital Solutions, Stevenage Borough Council, United Reformed Church, Trinity Church Knebworth, Verulam House Trust and individual donors for your generous support.

Bridge Builders Christian Trust

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