



MHA on the Bay

No. 34
Summer 2021

This issue compiled by Wendy Francis

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

May I suggest it is because this event marks, among other things, the beginning of the answer to the question asked by many, many people; What is God really like?

In many of his cartoons the creator of the Peanuts characters poses some serious religious questions.

Our picture shows Snoopy and Woodstock in a happy Christmassy scene; it could be someone's Christmas card.



But there is another Snoopy cartoon strip which has the Peanuts characters celebrating Snoopy's birthday. They are all inside, warm and cosy. However, through the window you can see Snoopy; outside, snow covered, on top of the doghouse.

'Hey!' says someone, 'Snoopy's outside in the snow.' Mugs in hand they all traipse outside, stand around the doghouse and chorus, 'Happy birthday Snoopy. Be of Good Cheer.' They return to the warmth of their party and Snoopy remains outside in the snow. His only comment is 'Good Grief!!'

Sadly, this depicts the Christmas celebrations of many people. The Birthday Boy is left outside, ignored and forgotten. The very idea of celebrating a birthday as the Peanuts characters did with Snoopy is at best silly. Who would waste time and money celebrating the birth of someone considered irrelevant and unimportant?

But for those who celebrate Christmas with the hope and joy of entering into an ever deepening relationship with our God and Creator, for those who see in the mystery of it all a loving, caring Father beginning to reveal himself in the one form we can understand, that of a man, there's every reason to celebrate. And so we do just that; superbly expressed in the words of the carol:

***Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man
[Charles Wesley]***

May your Christmas be a time of blessing, and may you find in Jesus, the man and Lord, some answers to your questions; **What is God really like?** and **Why do we celebrate Christmas?**

Reverend Robin Wright of Annesley Gardens was invited to contribute a Christmas message for this edition of MHAOTB. This is what he shares with us at this special time of the year



The beauty of
Christmas
is not in the
presents but in
His presence

with grateful thanks for sponsorship:



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IN MEMORIAM

For the second year in a row Covid has not allowed us to hold our traditional year-end Thanksgiving Service. Just as soon as the law together as a community to praise God for His to be thankful for.

allowed us to hold our traditional year-end allows, we will once again be able to gather protection and rich blessings. We have so much

Until we can meet again in large numbers in church, we share with you the names of those residents who have passed on since November 2020.

ALDERSGATE

Ineke Hall
Ken Thomas
Joan Thomas
Ian Philp
Neil Victor
Beulah Kruger
Ian Simpson
Trevor Hayes
Joan Marsh
Pam Fox
Bill Clarke



IRVINE VILLA

Jean Watkins



ANNESLEY GARDENS /SHEARITON

Ron Clarke



CASSIA GARDENS

Gary Loftie-Eaton



CP BRADFIELD

Vicky Wegerhoff
Tienkie Mulder
Miriam Roux
Edith Harding
Norma Bovens
Evelyn Gathercole
Hester Logie
Barbara de Korte
Miroslava Cizek



CASSIA GARDENS

Gary Loftie-Eaton



MARANATHA VILLAGE

Vernon Broedelet



MARANATHA FRAIL CARE

Dorothy Reynolds
Winifred Estment
Desmond Stirling
Moira Brecht
Gertruida Pretorius
Norman Botha
Xonia Schimper
Drag Car



WESLEY GARDENS

Jenny Berry



BOB ZEISS BEDSITTERS

Jean Smith





BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND OTHER CHANGES

The Board and our CEO wish to record the following recent changes taking place:

Board changes:

- Sr Lesley Lawson informed the Board that she would retire in advance of the 2021 AGM which took place in August. Her wonderful service to MHA in various roles was duly acknowledged
- Mpumelelo Prince Matonsi has recently accepted an invitation to join the Board. Prince, who has Bachelors and Honours degrees in Business Science and an MBA, works at the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber as the Operations Manager. He will bring diverse skills and talents to the Board
- Additional Board members are being sought, to address succession planning and other demands

Management Team changes:

- Gavin Parker is retiring as Manager of Annesley Gardens/Sheariton and so Rita and he will leave in mid-February 2022, to relocate to the Western Cape
- Gavin's position is being filled by Lynné Smitsdorff, currently Manager at Wesley Gardens. Lynné and Mike will move during February 2022
- David Rose will become Manager at Wesley Gardens with effect from 1 March 2022. Dave was Manager at Epworth Close until recently. Dave's wife Ros will continue to manage Bob Zeiss Bedsitters, in her current capacity
- Fred Marshall is retiring as Manager of Irvine Villa, and Judy and he will leave at the end of April 2022, which is when his four year contract extension terminates
- Interviews are currently underway, to select a successor to Fred.

Gavin and Rita, and Fred and Judy, have played significant and often challenging roles as Managers of the two Villages mentioned. They will leave behind fond memories and tangible evidence of their labours there and be warmly remembered by the residents.

Other changes:

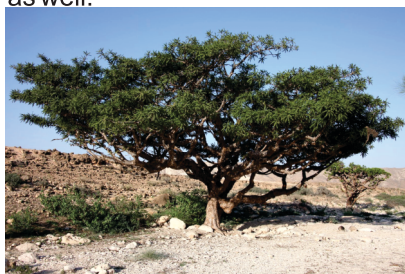
- Sadly, a decision was recently taken to close down Epworth Close, our 'assisted living' unit in Central. The residents there have been successfully integrated into our Bedsitter or Frail Care facilities. More will be shared about this in another Newsletter.
- Epworth Close and the adjacent Cragg House building (MHA's Head Office) are in the process of being sold, and new Head Office premises will be sought in 2022.

FRANKINCENSE



We all know the traditional telling of the Christmas story including a key moment where Wise Men from the East arrive and present the Christ child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This brief mention of frankincense is usually the first and most common encounter that most people have with this special substance. Few people know much about it, including myself until I lived in The Sultanate of Oman.

For nearly 5,000 years frankincense was considered to be Arabia's most precious commodity. During the height of its popularity frankincense rivalled gold, silk and gems in value and started a vital trade route that for centuries extended from Southern Arabia into West Africa and India. Both frankincense and myrrh start as a resinous sap inside a special family of trees that grow almost exclusively in Oman. At certain times of year the trees are cut with special knives, and the sap oozes out. Once the sap has dried in the sun, it is ready to be used. Harvested frankincense is burned as incense because of its pleasing aromas but historically it has a number of other uses as well.



Some of the earliest uses of the camel as a domesticated beast of burden took place in southern Arabia in order to make overland transport of frankincense and myrrh possible.

This trip across the desert to the Mediterranean was highly dangerous and was described by Pliny as taking as many as 17 stages, with some stages requiring as much as eight days. The Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Israelites and numerous other cultures used frankincense and myrrh as part of their religious ceremonies. They were extensively used in burial rituals as embalming agents, an offering to the departed and a means to cover the odour of the dead body.

The smoke from burning frankincense drives away mosquitoes and other flying insects, reducing incidences of malaria in afflicted regions.

Since the early days of Christianity, Biblical scholars and theologians have offered varying interpretations of the meaning and significance of the gold, frankincense and myrrh that the Magi presented to Jesus, according to the Gospel of Matthew (2:11). Clearly, frankincense and myrrh were widely available when the Magi visited the baby Jesus and would have been considered highly prized gifts with many uses.

The expensive resins were symbolic as well. Frankincense, which was often burned, symbolized prayer rising to the heavens like smoke, while myrrh, which was often used in embalming, symbolized death.



by Wendy Francis





BETTY GIBSON - Nonagenarian Extraordinaire!



Betty Gibson is Aldersgate's most senior resident. At 96 (she'll be 97 in January) she is an inspiration to all who know her. I'm constantly amazed at her positivity, energy and care for others.

She does all her own housework, cooks for herself and is a very accomplished gardener. She can often be seen pulling out weeds, digging in her garden or watering her plants with buckets of water. Betty loves having visitors and is so interesting to chat to.

She has so many fascinating stories to tell.

She says: "My hands are always busy" which is very true when you see the incredible needlework and knitting she has done. I visited her recently and she had some of the items she has made during the last few months, on a couch. I was astounded, not only by the number of items but the beautiful craftsmanship. All the things she has made will be sold to raise funds for charity.

Thank you for sharing your beautiful work with us.

To all the other highly talented ladies and gentlemen who make beanies, scarves, teddy-bears and jerseys for the under privileged, we salute you all.

God Bless.

by Wendy Francis



BETTY'S BEAUTIFUL CRAFTWORK



INTRODUCING OUR NEW EDITOR: WENDY FRANCIS

MY MHA CONNECTIONS

As a newish resident to Methodist Homes myself, I am, however, not a stranger to life in these incredible villages. My connection started way back when my Mom and Dad moved into Aldersgate before the extension had been built. We still heard the Apple Express heading out for the day and returning along the top fence line, blowing its whistle as it passed. There was still a pine forest where the Moffett on Main complex now stands.



I was teaching overseas at the time and came home once a year and spent many a holiday sleeping on a blow-up mattress in the spare room listening to the owls in the forest in the evenings and being woken up by the crows and haddas! So many of the wonderful people I met in those days have now passed on but there are still many who are still here and have now become my special friends.

My Mom was bedridden and had to move to CP Bradfield and my Dad moved to a cottage in Cassia Gardens to be near her. My connection with MHA continued as I spent my holiday there for many years. I have spent numerous hours visiting in CP Bradfield and have got to know so many of the incredible staff who were working there and are still there. It has been a privilege to meet up with them again now that my Dad is a resident.

There are so many people living in our villages who do incredible work for the betterment of others. I truly am blessed to be part of such a special, caring community.

by Wendy Francis

Happy Birthday

A DATE TO CELEBRATE:

On 11 January 1982
Methodist Homes for the Aged
(Eastern Cape)

was formally created as a legal entity and so MHA's 40th birthday is just around the corner. It is certainly a date and an event to celebrate. So many miracles have been witnessed since then.

To God be the glory!

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