

July 2016



The first two weeks of July made up for the mad busyness of June and helped prepare us for Annual Meeting. We both took annual leave from our day jobs and went on holiday to a little place near Quimper in North West France. It was a time of peace and relaxation and we were able to be still together and know that God was with us... *(Isaiah 40:30-31 NIV84 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.)*



(Above: Ken Irwin's 80th birthday party – A joyous occasion in July!)

Our return saw full attention turn to Annual Meeting and, very soon, it was upon us! Trusting God we headed to Swanwick on the afternoon of Friday 29th July and we were met with the well-oiled machine that is Annual Meeting. Bedrooms had been allocated, equipment set up and dining arrangements prepared. In a break with recent practice, Friday evening consisted of a time of worship that led into an evening of prayer. People prayed earnestly that the Lord Jesus would fill our meeting and conversations; that His Spirit would lead and guide us and that He would be glorified in the following days.

Accounts of Annual Meeting 2016 have been given more than adequately elsewhere and I am not going to add to them, except to highlight a few important points.

- The theme that ran throughout the weekend was “Learning to love as God loves us”, each session allowed us to unpack it a little more and, I believe, many received the words with open hearts. We must learn to love with that deep, sacrificial love with which God loves us: Loving Him first, with all our being, all our mind, all our strength; and loving one-another with that same love. The Lord taught us to ask for the Father to “forgive our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us” – We must not hold grudges for they lead to bitterness and bitterness holds the stench of death in our lives. We must truly love as God loves us., but we can only do it as we submit to the Holy Spirit’s purifying work in our lives.



- Fiona Bruce (MP), gave a top-class address on Saturday night, giving us personal insights to life as a Christian in Parliament – Thank you Fiona.
- Sunday morning sacrament was a sweet time of fellowship – both one with another and with the Lord. And David McDonald's nomination to President Elect was ratified by the meeting – Please pray for David as he serves in this role.

The weekend was not without difficulties, but God was faithful as always and answered the many prayers – Many went away commenting it had been good to meet together. I pray we can move forward but my theme stays with me... Love speaks not just of nice words but of the very heart of God. *(1 John 4:16 NIV84 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him).* Let us be willing to love as God loves us – For His sake and ours!

August 2016

August was spent prayerfully in the aftermath of Annual Meeting. The only formal meeting attended was Admin on the second Friday and the only preaching taken was at my home church. The Lord knows what is ahead and He provides for our needs.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:11-13 NIV84)