

A Tribute to Melissa - Mike Owen

On Tuesday, I joined family and friends to celebrate the life of a wonderful lady, Melissa Woods, and I had the honour of escorting her on the next step of her journey.

Melissa was a true Sandgrounder, born in Southport 96 years ago, she enjoyed travelling all over the world but always thought of Southport as her home. She attended the first Southport Flower Show in her pram and was a loyal supporter leading to her being invited as a VIP guest in 2015. She started Girl Guides at the age of 8 and had an association with the organisation for 81 of its 100 years reaching the rank of District Commissioner.

I only got to know Melissa a few years ago when I took over as Editor of The Link. Every month after the Church service, she would hand me her latest Thought For The Month, perfectly written in her beautiful handwriting, for inclusion in the magazine. Each month she would tackle a different subject, her memory of the trips to far flung places and her knowledge of the Scriptures was amazing.

When she found getting to church more difficult, I would visit her at her flat in Churchtown and we'd spend a few minutes, talking about trips to her (and my) favourite place, The Lake District. She'd offer comfort, advice and empathy when I was going through problems with my heart - she was also struggling with heart problems - she offered support to the work me and Kay do with the young people at Church and most importantly, I'd always leave her flat feeling better about things, even if she was struggling with her own difficulties. With that in mind, the greatest compliment I can pay her is that she reminded me of my Nan.

I've been incredibly lucky to meet some amazing people in my time at Marshside Road Methodist Church and Melissa was one of them. Her faith shone like a beacon, her Christianity inspirational and her example something to aspire to.

During the service, her friend, Sue, read the poem - "Miss Me - But Let Me Go" and during his Eulogy, Cliff Hill said that without doubt Melissa would have met Jesus face to face but in true Melissa style she wouldn't boast about it.

Thank you for your help Melissa - you are now at peace with your Saviour.

Melissa's Thought for the Month

Melissa's "Thought For The Month" articles in The Link were always eagerly anticipated by the readers of the magazine. As a tribute to Melissa, I've chosen one of her contributions to re-publish in this month's Link, titled "My Favourite Things".

As part of her article, she suggests that it would be nice if other people from the Church wrote a short article for inclusion in The Link, whether that is a piece about their favourite Bible reading or hymn or maybe a memorable holiday or a personal

Testimony. I'd be delighted to receive any articles to ensure that the Link continues as Melissa's Legacy.

Thanks,

Mike Owen

Melissas's My Favourite Things

This title chose itself for my next "Thought for the Month". It was the start of the blossom season. I saw a beautiful tree full of double white cheery flowers. Strangely it reminded me of my unfavourite trees. I can't say that I really appreciate the very popular Japanese pink cherries which so quickly carpet the ground with their pink "confetti". I am sure I should enjoy seeing them a home in their native country. "At home" they would, to my mind, fit in with the architectural and artistic style. Here I love our native oak and beech as trees and the fruit blossom of apples and pears. In South Africa nothing can compare with an avenue of jacarandas covered in blooms of blue.

When I go on to think about other favourite things it is more difficult, I enjoy life in all its variety. The quotation of my title comes, of course, from what I think is my favourite show – "The Sound of Music". I have seen and heard it with great pleasure more than once. The Swiss scenery, the music, the positive attitude to life which it portrays gives a lift which is so helpful in facing up to everyday affairs with their many minor problems.

I ask myself if I have favourite colours. Certainly if I look in my wardrobe it suggests that blue and green predominate. Is that because they are such good background colour in the natural world? The green of healthy leaves and the blue of the sky and its reflection in ponds, lakes and seas. They are both "cool" colours both in the artistic and the current uses of the word.

I know I have favourite authors whose works I have re-read many times. At the moment my selection is Dorothy Sayers for mental stimulation and Jane Austen for a quieter mood at bed time. Among more modern writers time alone will tell if Billy Hopkins, Alan Titchmarsh, Wilbur Smith etc have the enduring quality.

When I consider my weekly food order I realise my preference for fish, chicken and turkey. Perhaps it is because I eat little or no red meat that I have to take iron tablets (my only regular medication). I enjoy liver and bacon or liver and onion so that too helps to balance the diet. I have written before about the importance of 'balance' and proportion in everything.

I am going to suggest that many more of you who do not feel like making longer contributions to the Link might submit a paragraph on your favourite hymn or Bible passage with a brief note about why you like it or find it helpful. Some of

these might build up a series month by month even if it meant that your “bit” did not appear in the next edition!

I remember well what was my Aunt’s favourite hymn – “My heart and voice I raise” to the tune Ascalon (Hymns and Psalms 268). Her unfavourite was “When we walk with the Lord” (Hymns and Psalms 687) – not because of the sentiments expressed but because of the chorus. I am afraid I am a bit like her because I do not like repeating the same words over and over again.

It is not easy for me to choose a favourite from the more modern hymns, but “How great Thou art” comes to mind. “In awesome wonder” so justly describes the only fitting response to the one who created this marvellous universe and who revealed Himself in Jesus. A God able and willing to experience what it felt like to be human. He Himself knows the joys, the sorrows, fun and despair, success and failure as well as suffering and death – all parts of human life “Hands which threw stars into space” nailed to a wooden cross.

Melissa.

Next Issue

The next edition of **The Link** will be published on the **Sunday the 5th of March 2017**. Therefore, items for inclusion in the next edition need to reach me by **Sunday the 26th of February**. Thanks, Mike (MikeOwen10@aol.com)