

FOCUS

Magazine of

SANDES Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

April - June 2016



For such a time as this



Young female recruits in Sandes at Pirbright demonstrate the changing face of the Army.

Since 1869 Sandes has been an integral part of the military community. Over the years we have provided homes, centres and other provisions for the soldiers when, where and however it was needed. Each generation of servicemen had a different challenge and Sandes had to adapt to those changing needs and yet be consistent in our care and ministry. In the early years there was a need for Homes where soldiers could find a place to stay.

Soldiers were often far from home and vulnerable and so the Homes provided a safe place and a sanctuary. You read stories of how local policemen finding intoxicated soldiers in the street would bring them to Sandes for safekeeping. Perhaps our ladies in the Mission should have been nervous dealing with such situations but there was always the greatest respect shown by soldiers to these motherly women working in Sandes.

--- A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ---

Sandes Annual Conference 15-17 April 2016

at Glenada, Newcastle Co Down.

Guest speaker will be Pastor Val English.

Please come along and hear about the work of Sandes.



It soon became apparent that Sandes Soldiers Homes were needed in many far-flung corners of the world. Senior military personnel requested the presence of Sandes and did all they could to facilitate the establishment of new Homes. The boredom and drudgery of barrack life was alleviated by the homely presence and the maternal devotion of the ladies in Sandes. In the South African war there was a need for Homes under canvas which were flexible enough to be quickly moved to where the need was greatest.

In 1914 Sandes Homes were needed more than ever and during WW1 they were reorganised and enlarged to cater for the mass mobilisation of troops. Thousands of Bibles and comfort parcels were dispatched to soldiers at the front and temporary Homes were established near to the battlefields at places like Amiens, Boulogne, Calais and Soissons. Women went on board the troopships before they sailed handing out postcards and pencils for soldiers to send what could be a last message home.

In the 1920's, following the establishment of the Irish Free State, a few Sandes Homes including the Curragh continued to function there. Eventually there was some debate on their future as they were seen as evangelical and essentially British. A local Irish colonel wrote in their defence *'In justice, I must say that Sandes Home is well run and fills a real need. Young soldiers are made to feel at home and not faced with the cold commercial atmosphere of the canteen. A good feminine influence meets a real need where young soldiers are concerned, and the only place where some of the young receive anything approaching a motherly care is in Sandes Home.'*

Then in 1939 WW2 brought another surge in the need for Sandes Homes. Troops from all allied nations benefited from the care and facilities of Sandes during this period. Special Homes were opened to cater for the build-up of troops as the Allies prepared for the liberation of Europe. In Ballykinlar an extra Home was opened in the area

designated for the American Troops. Post war we opened Homes in places like Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong as British troops were still being deployed to deal with issues far afield.

Then in 1969 old sores began to bleed again as the terrorist campaign started with a vengeance in Northern Ireland. Sandes were kept busy caring for the troops and policemen involved. We were targeted when an IRA bomb destroyed the Home at Ballykinlar.

Throughout its history Sandes changed and adapted to meet the challenges. Social habits change and welfare provision has improved but within the framework of the welfare package Sandes has always found its own unique niche. By being responsive to current challenges Sandes has always been right for 'such a time as this'.

The Army knows the value of Sandes to soldiers and their families. An open door to everyone regardless of background and helping anyone in need with the same grace and gentleness. However, no matter how well we meet the social needs of those within the military we still have a deeper and more meaningful role in our pastoral role which drives the work of Sandes.

Perhaps the face of Sandes has changed through the years but the heart remains constant and unchanging. As an Evangelical Christian Mission we know that in all we do our aim is to glorify God and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can we still say that Sandes is 'for such a time as this?' Absolutely!

In these days of unbelief, uncertain values, and conflict people are searching for peace and reconciliation that is real and enduring. By turning to Christ we can find forgiveness and victory over our sin and reconciliation with our Father in heaven. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we can have a new, empowered and purposeful life with a peace and hope that will endure not just for this life but for all eternity. Only by standing on such truth has kept Sandes relevant for yesterday, today and forever.

There is a time for everything



Dave & Ali Hossack who are leaving the Mission

It is with sadness, but great excitement to see what God has in store as we depart from the Sandes Mission. For just over five years we have journeyed with like minded brothers and sisters in Christ to share the Good News and the Love of God through the work of Sandes Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres. We have many fond memories of our time in Pirbright, Ballykinlar and at the Sandes annual conferences in Rydal Hall and Newcastle.

It has been a privilege to support young Army Recruits. For most it was one of the most challenging times of their lives. We have seen young men come to faith and have been part of their journey. We walked with them through the challenges of training and seen their determination and hard work pay off as they marched past in the pass-off parade.

We have also had the pleasure of working with non-Christian workers, the value of which must never be underestimated. Our obedience to Christ is revealed through loving others, and how we live our lives on a day to day basis is one of the most powerful testimonies for sharing the Gospel (1 Peter 1:13-15).

As a team in Pirbright, we were all invited to the wedding of one such worker, Mandy to Phil. Whilst they too have since been posted elsewhere, we have remained in contact and share scripture on every

opportunity. Please uphold them in your prayers that they too will surrender their lives to Jesus.

During our time in Sandes we have forged many relationships, some lasting, whilst others merely for a specific time and purpose. Being motorbike enthusiasts we have enjoyed occasional rides out with military personnel and many conversations with security staff which have also provided opportunity to share and demonstrate our faith.

It has also been a pleasure to meet so many people who have worked for the mission or are connected to somebody who has. It is wonderful to think that we too are part of this amazing history of Kingdom building.

Our time in Pirbright concluded with the completion of the long awaited renovation of the Sandes centre there. You may recall, there were so many people who were involved in raising funds for that project. However the two that stand out for us are the fantastic cycle ride completed by Matt Woollard and the team, of which it was an honour to be part; and the other was a 'pie & pea supper' event organised by my mum (Mavis) and late Aunt Liz. It is encouraging to see that Sandes remains highly valued among the personnel in Pirbright and we pray for an increased awareness of Encounter on Friday evenings.

One of our richest memories of being in Sandes Ballykinlar was working with the children in Sandy Cove. It was both challenging and rewarding and we had the pleasure of being able to take a few of the children to Newcastle Baptist Church with us for a short time. Our prayer for these children in particular, would be that they will remember the teaching and that they would be guided gently back to Sandy Cove in Lisburn and subsequently trust in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Fortunately, we have a very patient and

understanding Heavenly Father who never changes, but is constantly forgiving our failures and moulding us in the process. During the five years we have been with the mission there have been many trials, some good others not so good, but through them all, Dave and I have grown closer to Him, and to each other, and for that we are very thankful. One of our guiding scriptures has been "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord and not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24). Not

least because that whilst it is a risen Christ that we serve, we must never forget the pain and sacrifice that He first endured for our sin, because without that, the resurrection and subsequently our faith is meaningless.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who Love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). So in closing we say thank you and a fond farewell to you all, but certainly not Goodbye.

With love in Christ.

Dave & Ali Hossack

Remembering Wendy



Wendy and family at the Sandes Home in Delhi

Wendy Wilkins, who worked for Sandes in the late 1960s and 1970s passed away on 22 November, 2015, in the care home in Falmouth where she had lived since 2010.

Wendy was born Wendola Hezlet in Eltham near London, where her father was a gunner seconded to the Ministry of Munitions. She was educated at the Royal School, Bath, a school for the daughters of army officers. At 18 she accompanied her parents to India, where her father had been appointed Deputy Master General of the Ordnance. There she met and married her first husband, Andrew Parke Hume of the Indian Civil Service. It was in India that Wendy first made her acquaintance with Sandes Homes and spent a summer in the Rhaniket home.

Wendy, Andrew, and their three children, left India in 1947, first to Scotland and then to Nairobi in Kenya, where Andrew held two government positions. They returned to England in 1960 to look after Andrew's father in Norfolk.

After she was widowed, Wendy moved to Yorkshire to live with her son. Before long she joined the Sandes Home at Catterick Garrison as a volunteer, working with Len and Iris Hall. She then managed the Belfast home, before serving with Sandes in Singapore, where she met and married her second husband, Fred Wilkins.

They retired to Portaferry in NI, before moving to Northamptonshire to be nearer Fred's family. When Fred died, she lived alone for a while and then moved to Falmouth to be near her daughter, Andrina. Eventually she moved into Langholme, a Methodist-owned care home. She attended the local Salvation Army as long as she was able, and in the care home she played the piano for the weekly service. She died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 98. Her daughter Jessica said at her funeral, Mum had a simple, almost child-like faith in Jesus, arising from a deep conviction in the goodness and love of God for all of us.

She is survived by her three children, seven grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

Alexander Hume

Precious memories of Sam & Anna



Ex Fusilier David writes about Sam & Anna

I recently returned to worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ after being in a backslidden condition for 34 years. Despite an illness that makes my memory very poor, there were two names the Lord has never let me forget. They were Sam and Anna Irons whom I met during my posting in 1981 to Palace Barracks Holywood.

In 1980 I was saved and baptised in an evangelical Baptist church whilst stationed in Germany. I arrived in Holywood as a 21 year old serving with the 3rd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. It was a difficult time for me as my mother had just passed away and on top of this there was the escalation of the Hunger Strikes and the subsequent riots to deal with.

During my stay at Palace Barracks I cannot remember what drew me to the Sandes Home but there was something special about it. Even though it was nothing you could see, you could feel and sense a real warmth like the abiding presence of the Lord. During this difficult time I found great comfort and inspiration in Sam and Anna's strength in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sadly my best friend in the Army died of

cancer and others friends were killed or badly injured. In my weakness I fell into a relationship with a young woman when on leave in Germany. My shame led me to avoid all contact with other Christians when I returned to Palace Barracks and I sought refuge in the things of the world. I was backslidden and running away from God.

For 34 years I was in a spiritual wilderness but God was faithful. The conviction of the Holy Spirit started to work in my cold disobedient heart. I started to realise that God had never stopped loving me and would not allow me to forget that I was His. My sin and shame had come between us but as I repented and sought His forgiveness, I felt the burden lift once more. Praise God that in the midst of my current physical weakness the Lord has restored me spiritually.

Throughout my years in the wilderness I always knew that God was real because so often I had sensed His presence when I met to worship with Sam and Anna in Sandes and in other places around the Province. I have a lot of pain and illness now but still thought I should get in touch with Sam & Anna. I prayed about how I should write this message because I would simply like to thank them for their faithfulness in days past and to encourage them that all they have trusted to the Lord will bear fruit in due season. What a wonderful God.

David Young March 2016



*I have fought the good fight, I have finished
the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7*



The Ballykinlar team at Christmas 2014

A friend of mine recently shared these words from an unknown author *“There are two days in every week about which we should not worry - two days that should be kept free from fear and apprehension. One of these days is yesterday with its mistakes and cares, faults and blunders, aches and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed. We cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone! The other day we should not worry about is tomorrow. Tomorrow’s sun will rise, whether in splendour or behind a mask of clouds. Until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow. It is yet unborn. This leaves only one day - Today. It is when we add the burdens of two eternities - yesterday and tomorrow that we break down. It is not necessarily the experience of today that disturbs one’s peace of mind. It is often the bitterness for something that happened yesterday and the dread of what tomorrow may bring. Let us therefore live one day at a time.”*

This is good advice and is one that we have had to take here in Ballykinlar as we never know what a day will bring. Since The Rifles moved to Lisburn we have had a mixture of busy days and quiet days. Unfortunately there have been too many

quiet days with sometimes as little as ten people coming on a day. Sandes have had to take the very difficult decision to reduce the opening to a part time basis. Even more sadly we’ve had to end Dave and Ali’s employment with Sandes due to necessary cutbacks within the Mission. They joined us in Ballykinlar in September 2013 after coming over from Pirbright. We would like to thank them for their hard work and support during this time, especially last year when the centre in Lisburn opened. They have continued to travel daily from Lisburn to Ballykinlar (a 50 mile round trip) to keep the centre open. We wish them God’s richest blessings and trust they will know His guidance in the days and years ahead. They have a great passion for sharing the Gospel and we know that God will use them to be a blessing wherever He leads them.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who have helped over these last few years too. Alan, Frances, Margaret and Sally who have been not only a great help but an invaluable source of encouragement for us.

Although there are many quiet days we still get bookings for evenings and weekends for cadets, recruits and soldiers using the ranges. These evenings can be very busy but are usually quite fun and the chance to come into the centre for some down time. For the next few months we have a few evenings booked and we also hope to get some bookings for day time openings. Jan and I will be covering both centres with the help of our casual staff. We will be challenged on how best to use our resources and to how to manage the perishable stock etc. We will just have to trust God and ask Him for His Wisdom, and as Scripture tells us to seek His kingdom first and foremost and He will give us everything we need.

Trevor & Jan, Dave & Ali

Young and developing work in Lisburn



Two of our youngest users in the family room at Sandes. Aria - 8 days and Olivia - 8 weeks.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity...For there the Lord bestows His blessing. Psalm 133:1-3

In church lately we have been looking at revival and one of the things I have been greatly challenged about is living in unity with other believers. I am not saying that we have to agree on everything, we may actually believe the opposite on some points but that doesn't mean that we cannot live in harmony. In Philippians, Paul says "I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement", so even within Christian circles there can be conflict.

I watched a film called "The War Room" in which a Christian lady was fighting with her husband, when an older lady reminded her that her enemy was the devil not her husband. We often waste time and energy fighting the wrong enemy. Yes, Sandes is unique in many ways but we still work alongside and along with other agencies. Over the years we have had good working relationships with Colonels, Padres, SASRA workers, mental health workers, Welfare teams and other agencies.

Some of these agencies may not have the

same beliefs as us and some of them use different techniques in dealing with the problems presented. However we do have a common concern for the soldiers and their families and whilst not compromising on our faith and the truth of the gospel we can put aside some differences and work together for the benefit of the soldiers in our care.

Another reason to praise God for is for His protection. On two occasions recently we had near disasters and were saved only by God's timing. The first was a burst pipe in the main water supply in the gents toilets. This happened at around 3pm on a Friday afternoon when we were still in work. An hour or so later and the water could have been flooding the centre for most of the weekend. The second instance was on a Saturday afternoon. We don't often call into the centre on Saturdays but we had purchased some provisions for the Centre and decided to drop them off on our way out for the evening. When we went into the kitchen there was a strong burning smell. The fridge temperature read 100 degrees!

The door was burning hot with black smoke coming from the melted rubber seals. The temperature inside was hot enough to melt cheese and the plastic containers. An electrical fault caused the automatic defrost cycle not to cut out and the fridge was effectively an oven. If we had not called into the Centre, it would have caught fire and possibly burnt the building down. We praise God for His timing.

Jan has been meeting with a Christian nurse on camp and going on prayer walks around the camp on a weekly basis and this has been a blessing to both of them as they have fellowship together and pray for the needs of the camp. A group of women also come into the Centre every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to have a time of prayer which Jan is able to attend providing the Centre isn't too busy.

We have had lots of chats with people during the last few months concerning a wide range of life matters and spiritual things and we have been praying about these issues and how we can better help in these situations. As a result we plan to show a film in the centre on 7 April. 'God's Not Dead' is a movie based on true stories of young people who take a stand in USA universities which are teaching that there

is no God. We have been meeting together on Thursday evenings to pray for this event and we hope that we will have a weekly meeting where we can meet with soldiers and talk about the things that they are going through and see how God can help through His word.

It has been an eventful quarter and we are thankful for God's provision and protection and for the prayers and encouragement of our supporters. Jeremiah 29:11 is one of our favourite verses : *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* With all the new things happening we need to ensure that we are following God's agenda and no one else's because it is His plans that prosper.

This verse also is relevant for this incoming period as our daughter Kerri will be getting married to Joel on 11 May. We trust that they will be greatly blessed as they follow God's plan for their lives. Megan, our youngest daughter has to make a decision on which University to attend. We just want her to go where God wants her to be. Please continue to pray for all the work and for our family. As well as being greatly appreciated, it is much needed.

Trevor & Jan Pinkerton



Volunteer Amanda with Illy in the Sandes kitchen.



Prayer Diary



8th April	Sandes AGM: The Beacon @ Noon
8th April	Sandes Committee Meeting
15th - 17th April	Sandes Annual Conference, Glenada
28th April	Sandes Finance Meeting
20th May	Sandes Prayer Meeting : The Beacon @ 8PM
17th June	Sandes Prayer Meeting : The Beacon @ 8PM



And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Ephesians 6:18

April 2016

Please pray for:

- 1** Dave & Ali Hossack to know God's leading as they leave Sandes today.
- 2** a real breakthrough as we see people being saved within the military community
- 3** believers to be divinely inspired as they contemplate the risen and living Christ
- 4** rest and recovery for our teams who may be on leave for the Easter break.
- 5** growth in our support base as we face shortfalls and an unsustainable financial position.
- 6** wisdom for Trevor and Jan on the future opening hours at Ballykinlar.
- 7** the showing of the movie 'God's not Dead' in Sandes Lisburn tonight.
- 8** the Sandes AGM and committee meetings today.
- 9** for our speaker Val English and his wife as they prepare for next weeks Conference.
- 10** God's provision for the work in finances and Godly couples to work in Centres.
- 11** all the Bibles and other Christian literature being distributed thorough Sandes and other agencies.
- 12** plans for the post Easter event with Good News Club and Youth Club in Holywood
- 13** opportunities for Bible Quiz and other outreach as we see footfall improve in Harrogate.
- 14** Ongoing internal discussions within Army on CVWW issues including housing and licensing.
- 15** those travelling to the Sandes Annual Conference today
- 16** inspiration, encouragement and a sense of family unity at the Sandes conference.
- 17** renewed commitment and expectation from everyone at the Sandes Conference today.
- 18** good fellowship and effective teaching as our workers meet for a training day.
- 19** marriages within military community under strain because of separation and post deployment issues.
- 20** the organisation of the Sandes committee to face the future challenges of the Mission.
- 21** opportunity to follow up with outreach meeting in Lisburn following on from movie night.
- 22** fresh faces to come to the Encounter fellowship meeting in Pirbright tonight.
- 23** God's leading on Trevor & Christine Brammah as they leave Sandes today.
- 24** the Holy Spirit to move within the military community awaking people from spiritual apathy.
- 25** effective outcome for the project to recreate our web-site and send out applications to trusts for financial support.
- 26** God's favour through those in command for the work of Sandes
- 27** people suffering physically and emotionally as a result of military service.
- 28** for the evening opportunities with the cadets etc in Ballykinlar.
- 29** wisdom on how to sensitively develop legacy support for Sandes.
- 30** deputation for Sandes at Jennymount Church in Belfast.

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. Luke 18:1

May 2016

Please pray for:

- 1** the health and well being of all the staff in Sandes.
- 2** new opportunities with the Welsh Guards community in Pirbright.
- 3** the planning of a Holiday Bible Club in Hollywood.
- 4** fellowship and single purpose for all Christian agencies within the military.
- 5** issues relating to CVWW being discussed by Army including provision of housing and payment of licenses.
- 6** finances for a reorder of Sandes regimental and scripture dog tags.
- 7** the evening and weekend openings in Ballykinlar would bear fruit.
- 8** inspiration for Padres taking services today in the Garrison Churches.
- 9** diligence and excellence in our administrative responsibilities throughout Sandes to ensure Mission is well run.
- 10** Godly wisdom for those in command and government making decisions on future military structure and deployment.
- 11** Trevor and Jan as their daughter Kerri gets married today to Joel.
- 12** people to prayerfully consider supporting Sandes Mission through their legacy planning.
- 13** encouragement for the Pirbright team with new people coming to the Encounter fellowship group tonight.
- 14** unity and single purpose for those presenting the Gospel to Armed Forces.
- 15** encouragement and blessing for those who faithfully support Sandes.
- 16** the group of wives meeting in the mornings to pray in Sandes at Lisburn.
- 17** opportunities for Bible Quiz and other forms of outreach with Junior Soldiers and staff in Harrogate.
- 18** long term Sandes worker Arthur McCurdy as he prepares to leave Sandes.
- 19** God's provision for the work in finances and Godly couples to work in Centres.
- 20** the Sandes monthly prayer meeting this evening
- 21** encouragement for all Christians serving in Armed Forces and boldness to live and share their faith.
- 22** the Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 23** Sustainable footfall with more outreach opportunities in all of the Sandes Centres.
- 24** sustainable futures and renewed sense of purpose on all the Christian Agencies in the military.
- 25** Godly volunteers to help in all of our centres.
- 26** breakthroughs and opportunities with the 1 Scots community in Hollywood.
- 27** opportunities to help soldiers and former soldiers who may carry the emotional scars of conflict
- 28** reorganisation of Sandes committee and staff to face the future challenges of the Mission.
- 29** wisdom and leading on new and sustainable ways to develop the work of Sandes.
- 30** a breakthrough as we see people being saved within the military community
- 31** the physical, emotional and spiritual well being of all our Sandes kitchen staff.

*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man
avails much James 5:16b*

June 2016

Please pray for:

- 1** Sandes to remain both financially solvent and spiritually effective.
- 2** the planning with CEF for the Holiday Bible Club in Holywood.
- 3** for soldiers to come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4** more volunteer help for Trevor and Jan as they run both the Centres at Lisburn and Ballykinlar.
- 5** marriages of those in the military which face tremendous challenges.
- 6** all the Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 7** Army housing to accommodate a future Support Couple in Harrogate.
- 8** protection and promotion of Christian values within military and the Government.
- 9** grace and wisdom in dealing with those promoting the secular agenda in the military.
- 10** encouragement and a breakthrough at the Encounter Fellowship tonight in Pirbright.
- 11** grow in the support base for Sandes to enable the work to continue into the future.
- 12** encouragement today for all those Christians serving in Armed Forces to live and share their faith.
- 13** new opportunities to help and care through the friendship ministry in all of our centres.
- 14** fundraising initiatives to be effective in raising much needed funds for Sandes mission work.
- 15** hope for those suffering emotional distress as a result of military service.
- 16** new breakthroughs with the young Junior Soldiers and staff at Harrogate.
- 17** the Sandes monthly prayer meeting this evening
- 18** a move of the Holy Spirit bringing conviction within the military community.
- 19** God to call the right people into the work of Sandes at all levels.
- 20** favour with those selected to rewrite the CVWW charter re housing etc.
- 21** renewed opportunities with the Rifles community in Lisburn
- 22** reorganisation of Sandes committee and staff to face the future challenges of the Mission.
- 23** solutions to the difficulties found when trying to restart Sandy Cove in Lisburn.
- 24** opportunities with the Welsh Guards and their families in Pirbright.
- 25** sustainable and manageable footfall through the Centres o help support the work of Sandes.
- 26** our existing volunteers and for new Godly volunteers to help us in all Centres.
- 27** for the Commanding Officers and their teams in all our camps
- 28** for all the Sandes Vice Presidents who faithfully represent the work of Sandes within the military community.
- 29** ring fenced protection for Sandes as PAYD catering is negotiated in NI.
- 30** a deep and sincere conviction to fall on Sandes and all Christian agencies so that we may see it overflow in revival.

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice Psalm 141

*Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden
and I will give you rest for your souls. Matthew 11:28*



Children attending the The Good News Club in Sandes at Hollywood.

A place of rest. When I was pastoring in America, I remember one evening sitting on the porch of a farmer who attended the church. As we sat there talking and admiring the view, I noticed a lone tree in the middle of one of the fields; its branches reaching up and spreading out. I soon learned that the tree was left there for a purpose. Farmers long ago traditionally left one tree standing so that they and the animals would have a cool place to rest when the summer sun was beating down.

At times, we all need a place of rest and we like to think that Sandes is that lone tree standing for a purpose in Palace Barracks, a place to find refreshment, strength, encouragement;. A place for the weary. A place not only for the body but most importantly for the soul's refreshment,. A place to find the One who was crucified on a tree. It is here at Palace that the Lord enables us to be that tree of rest of all who enter.

Once again, Marlene and I would like to express our thanks to all those who earnestly and fervently pray for us and the

work here at Hollywood. Since 1 Scots arrived, they have been away continually on manoeuvres; always preparing for the dangers that seem to be continually on the news and in our newspapers. As we look at the world today they need always to be in a state of preparedness, but hopefully by the time you receive these notes those who are away at present should have returned from their various postings. Many of them, upon their return, make Sandes one of their stop off points looking forward to that place where they can find peace and quiet and of course that long-awaited for Ulster Fry.

A place of rest for all. We praise God for the opportunities we have had with some of those who have remained behind to keep things running smoothly on camp, opportunities to share our faith and to pray not only with soldiers but also with the wives, children and civilians.

Pray with us for all the literature and Bibles that have been personally handed out and for those that have been taken quietly. Pray especially for the soldiers and their

wives who have taken the new booklets, which deal with a range of issues concerning not only life in the military but also life in general. Booklets that deal with issues such as depression, overcoming debt, anger, resentment and family life.

Pray for the civilian who came to ask for prayer as he was struggling with the illness of his brother-in-law. For a number of weeks he repeatedly came into the Centre to keep me informed and to pray together and on those occasions we talked about spiritual issues. Sadly his brother-in-law passed away, please remember him and his family at this time of bereavement.

A place of rest for the children. What a blessing the Good News Club has been over the year. The club has been well attended and even some of the parents have stayed and taken part in the club. We thank God for all the children and parents who have come along and been faithfully taught. It is a real joy to see them drinking in God's Word, answering the questions on the Bible story and saying their memory verses for the most part without any help. We thank God for the opportunities to have one-off specials with the Youth Club which

are very successful and continue to grow. We appreciate the help of Julie, Kerry, Joyce and Stephanie from CEF who have given sacrificially of their time and talents. Please continue to pray with us for all the boys and girls who have been reached through the Good News Club and the specials and for the parents who have stayed to listen that God would do a work in their lives young and old alike.

A place of rest for visitors. When you begin a new day and open the doors of the Centre, you just never know who will pop in and bring a word of support and encouragement. It was good to welcome Mr Paul Clark MBE into the Centre. He had been visiting the camp and had some free time and decided to call in. I enjoyed being able to spend a few moments together talking about the work and life in general. I was able to give him some Bibles. Thanks for the visit Paul, it was greatly appreciated.

Pray with us that Sandes will continue to be that lone tree, standing for a purpose, to bring encouragement, refreshment and strength. A place of rest to the weary.

Chris & Marlene Wilkinson



Local Television personality Mr Paul Clark receiving a Bible at the Sandes Centre Holywood

Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Matt 13:8



Jilian with a healthy and beautiful baby Mia

When the snowdrops push their green spears through the earth I know that spring has arrived, and each year I think what a miracle it is. No matter how long the winter, how hard the frost or how deep the snow, Nature triumphs. No season is awaited so eagerly or welcomed so warmly as spring. 'The language of flowers', Sheila Pickles

Spring is one of my favourite times of year. Snowdrops and daffodils bursting into life, trees budding and fields full of lambs, the promise of new life. But it is important to remember that before we can get to spring, we have to endure the cold dark nights of winter and all that it may bring. Just the other day we were reminded of this when Padre Mark Henderson and his wife Caz came in to the centre with their baby Mia for a coffee and a chat. Just over a year ago Mia was born very early at only twenty weeks. When we visited her she only weighed about one pound and was just the size of my hand. Her skin was so fragile that

it could be damaged just by touching it. To see her in the special care baby unit was like looking at a tiny miracle. The early weeks and months were worrying and uncertain but little Mia fought so hard. The family was covered by prayer and Mia now has outgrown the problems associated with such a premature arrival and is a strong healthy and beautiful little girl. Springtime is God's inspiration and in the darkness of winter when we are beset by challenges we must keep trusting God that the hope of spring is coming.

We received some wonderful news recently about Jacob who featured in our report way back in 2013. We got to know him at Church on his first week of training and he then attended Friday night fellowship almost every week. He has continued to seek God and was baptised a few weeks ago in his local church. His Mum contacted us to tell us and she told me how he spoke about how Sandes had influenced him during his

time at Pirbright. When he joined the Household Cavalry in Windsor he was a little disappointed to find very little in the way of Christian fellowship and he felt God was leading him to put this right. He started a Morning Prayer session which is growing in numbers and a 'Burger fellowship Evening' which very popular, particularly with newcomers. We are thrilled to know that the seed sown in Sandes over two years ago have borne fruit and that Jacob himself is planting the same seed into the hearts of his colleagues.

Our new CO, Lt Col Green has taken over from Lt COI Denning, who was a wonderful support to Sandes. He recently paid a visit to the Centre to meet some of us from Sandes. It was very encouraging and he has pledged his ongoing support for Sandes and we are really looking forward to working with him. We also had a visit from an old friend of Sandes, Lt Col Baz Melia MBE. Baz was a huge help when the centre was refurbished in 2013. He is now based in Edinburgh and it was so nice that he took the time to pop in and see us. It is always encouraging when we have people come

in to see us who have been at Pirbright in the past. We recognised one young man who was just starting out here as a PTI. He passed out from Pirbright four years ago and when we spoke to him he reminded us that we had put up his wife and five children at our house for his passing out parade. He is now a corporal and has nine children. It was fantastic to see how his career has progressed and amazing that he has come full circle and is now an instructor here.

Summer is just around the corner and we are once again looking forward to Barbecues with the recruits in the Sandes garden and a Sandes family fun day on the back fields with lots of stalls and attractions. Most of all we are looking forward to new opportunities to continue spreading those all-important seeds that will bring forth new life in the Lord Jesus Christ for those who believe. Please continue to pray for the work of Sandes in that it would know the Lord's provision in finances and people but most of all that we would know and experience the empowerment and leading of the Holy Spirit In everything we do.

Phillip & Jillian



Jacob at his recent baptism

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

The most precious gift of time



Junior soldiers finding a relaxing home in Sandes at Harrogate

Not many people like change but when you have been in Army life as long as Jim and me you become accustomed and start to enjoy it. Although our kitchen is always spotless with top marks for hygiene it didn't stop us doing an extra special deep clean over the half term. As part of this we revamped the kitchen, trying another new layout. The rest of the team laugh because they never know what to expect when they come back from leave.

As part of this redesign we put a nice new wall clock to match the bright yellow sunny walls. It got me thinking that whether we like change or not, time is the one thing that we can't make stand still and it is constantly on the move. We are at the age when we have begun to ask where all the time has gone. From the highpoint of our sixties we can now look back through the years and look at some of the milestones of our life. Thirty years ago Jim was given up for dead by the hospital who gave him only two hours to live when he was battling cancer. But God... He had different plans for us. He gave us more time together for a purpose and we were really privileged to

have been called to be His ambassadors here in Sandes.

Being a Sandes superintendents means that time is not really your own and we must constantly look for God's purpose for the day ahead. Understanding this it makes it easier to go the extra mile to help people. I can see God's pleasure in the smile of a young soldier as he gets a special sandwich. I feel God's compassion as I spend time listening to their problems. I express the Father heart of God when He opens a door of opportunity for me to tell someone about the Lord Jesus and how they can be reconciled to their heavenly Father. With time in this life being finite it is one of the most valuable things we can give to His service. So we must take the time to care and do it with all our hearts.

The great thing about time is that every day it is new and not a replay of a previous day. We have had some tough times over the past number of years but we kept trusting God that we would see the spiritual climate change here on camp. There is a real sense of optimism now here as though the dark clouds have rolled back. There is a

feeling again of us being part of the college rather than sitting on the margins. Step by step we have seen things improve and it is only when you look back along the trail you begin to realise just how far we have come. We are once again excited about coming into work and that in turn helps infuse our sixty something bodies with the energy and enthusiasm essential to this work. God is faithful.

As I am writing the college is preparing for the new intake as A and B companies form up once again with new junior soldiers. They all arrive with so much expectation and excitement. It is challenging and some may find it difficult. The training staff do all they can to encourage and get the best out everyone but not all make it through to the pass off parade. Some may receive injuries that mean they have to stay a while longer. It is hard for them when their buddies move on to phase two training and they have to join another company to finish their training. We can spend more time with them and encourage them to keep going until they too succeed and finish the course. Already we miss those from the last courses and we trust that they are all well settled into their phase two training.

The Centre is beginning to work towards its full potential in terms of attendance as the footfall has started to increase. There is even a new policy of introducing the junior soldiers during their initial two weeks of training which never happened before. We have the dates and times when they will come and to say that we are delighted would be an understatement. Our senior chaplain, Padre Andrew Earl is a great encouragement to us both and both he and Father Cumming are regular visitors to the centre. He is championing the cause of Sandes and we are so grateful for that support. We thank the Lord for a real answer to prayer and the many blessing we have experienced recently.

We are so grateful to the permanent staff, junior soldiers and civilians who support

Sandes every day. The friendship is precious and the banter can have us laughing in tears. It is the special times like that which shakes off the weariness and fatigue and fill us with renewed vigour and joy. The junior soldiers in particular warm our hearts and we feel like we have an enormous family of teenagers. Many would cringe at that prospect but we find it an absolute privilege. The support we are now finding is clearly demonstrated by five members of the Quartermaster department who are taking part in the Viking Gauntlet on the 26 March to raise money for Sandes here in Harrogate. Hopefully we will have some more nice photos of this in our next magazine. We wish Giles, Gary, Paul, Dermot and David God's blessing and trust they will stay safe. A big thank you for thinking of us.

We are looking forward very much to the Sandes conference in Northern Ireland in April down by those beautiful Mourne Mountains in Newcastle. It will be great to be with all our fellow workers and fellowship with the rest of the Sandes family. Thank you for your prayerful support for the work of this Mission.

Jim & Maryjane McCracken



The guys doing the Viking Challenge



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As a Christian Mission we depend on your prayerful and financial support to sustain this work. Please consider making a donation or joining our mailing list. Stand with us as we seek to bring Christian love and witness to those within the military and help us secure this little foothold for the Gospel.

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