

FOCUS

Magazine of

SANDES Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

January - March 2018



People for Such a Time as This



Our Superintendents and Support Workers pictured at last years Sandes Conference

Throughout our history there have been times of war and peace, prosperity and want, division and unity, victory and even defeat. Despite uncertain circumstances, a prosperous United Kingdom still managed to develop. How and why did this happen? Each of us could point to different events in history that we personally believe may have been significant in the nation's development but regardless of our viewpoint we can all see clearly that there were special people who came along and steered the course of our history. One such person was Winston Churchill. He came to prominence when Europe was being strangled into submission

by Hitler's war machine. Our Army had been pushed into the sea, our allies had surrendered and the Axis powers were getting stronger. Standing all alone with our Army in tatters, defeat looked inevitable. Would Britain plead with the Nazis for a settlement? If ever a man was in the right place at the right time it was Churchill and history smiled on him. Believing this was his time and destiny, he refused to surrender and set about leading the nation in a bitter struggle for survival. This was a fight to the end and he promised the people nothing but blood, sweat and tears. There was to be no more talk of defeat and the

--- A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ---

Sandes Annual Conference 13 - 15 April 2018
at Glenada, Newcastle Co Down.

Guest speaker will be Mr Paul Young
Please come along and hear about the work of Sandes.



nation was galvanised under his leadership. Against all the odds he held back the tide of history until eventually it changed in our favour. We could speculate on the outcome without Churchill. Someone else may have stepped up to the mark. We will never know.

There was a young Jewish women in the Bible called Esther who changed the history of her people. There was an edict from the King of Persia that on a certain day all Jews would be killed. Her cousin urged her to intercede on behalf of her people. She was very afraid. Maybe deliverance would arise from another place if she had not responded but this was her time in history. She had come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Despite the odds being stacked against her, she managed to convince the King to save her people. There were many well-known characters in the Bible whose actions helped shape history. I am also convinced that there are many more individuals not recorded in the Bible who in some less prominent way contributed to the shaping of the Jewish nation and later the new Christian Church.

So what qualities did this young lady Esther have that enabled her to make an impact in the court of the most powerful king in the world at that time? First of all she was sincere. The status of becoming a Queen did not change her heart. She was shaped more by the love of the family and friends who had helped her when an orphan. She would not take praise for saving the king's life but rightly gave credit to Mordecai. She would feel the pain of others in mourning.

Esther was uncorrupted by power or status. Her humble spirit allowed her to take good advice and win favour in the palace and eventually with the king himself. She had no personal ambition but used her exalted position to help and bless others. There was a sacrificial attitude as she agreed to risk her life in approaching the king because she put the safety of her people before herself. Esther put her trust in God and asked everyone to join her in a three day fast. She humbly acknowledged her weakness and sought God's leading, favour and strength.

Esther was not alone in this story and her life is woven together with others. Adopted and raised by Mordecai she was then shown favour and instructed in court by Hegai before winning the king's affection. God worked through divine appointments and timely revelation so that eventually we see 'all things work together for good'.

In the history of Sandes we see people who made a significant contribution to our Mission. This work was built on the firm foundation of faithful service, personal sacrifice and a deep trust in God. It is easy for some to say that Sandes is less relevant today and that our work is finished. I don't believe that for one moment. People are struggling to find answers and purpose to their life. In the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ we have found it. World values change but the hope we have is timeless and eternal. Sandes may not be able to steer world history but we can direct those in the military community to that hope we have in Jesus. Every act of kindness, word of encouragement or prayer of faith changes the spiritual climate around us. Sandes' work still makes a difference.

Today it seems more difficult to find the right people to work in Sandes. We need Support Workers, Centre Assistants and Volunteers. The work is challenging and needs commitment, perseverance, serving attitude and a caring heart. It is God's work that needs both faith and vision. If believers don't step up to the mark then we leave it to the world to change things in its own image. The book of Esther says that if she wouldn't help then God would bring help from 'another place'. How sad would it have been for her to miss her destiny in God?

Esther was told 'Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Today we need God's people to support Sandes, so please consider joining as a worker, volunteer or supporter. You may not change the world but you will make a difference for our young soldiers. Sandes work may not be recorded in the pages of history but it will be remembered in eternity.

God's patient preparation for a harvest



Soldiers and staff in Lisburn enjoying the hospitality in Sandes.

Sometimes our articles for the Focus magazine may appear a little out of date by the time you receive them. This is because the time of preparation from writing to publishing and then distribution can be up to two months. This had made me think about how patient God is in preparing us for what lies ahead in this work. In our report we try to look back to what has happened as well as looking forward to what is planned in the near future to try and keep you up to date. So although you will be reading this in January, I am writing it in November just after the Remembrance Day services.

We watched some of the media coverage of the Remembrance services which included footage from both World Wars. Seeing soldiers in the trenches reminded me of the verse below. In WW1 trenches became defensive positions for the soldiers but were also the starting point for offensive action against the enemy's positions.

Our verse below indicates a different purpose in that these ditches or trenches were to be reservoirs for collecting fresh water that God had promised would come to a dry and needy land. So often in life we go through difficult situations when we can feel tired, dried up, even as if we are in a desert place. I believe these can be very valuable times of great instruction and if we are obedient to God's teaching they are often followed by times of great blessings.

Many of the characters in the Bible had difficult wilderness experiences. Moses spent forty years on the run being a shepherd; Joseph spent a long time in a prison for a crime he didn't commit; David spent years hiding in caves when he was trying to escape King Saul and even our Lord Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted by the devil. There are many more examples whereby times of trial were preparation for God's future purposes in their lives.

And he said, thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. 2 Kings 3:16

I believe in my heart that in the days ahead there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and perhaps any difficulties we currently face are preparing us for this. A deeper awareness of God's holiness leading to a plea to God to 'create in me a clean heart' and remove all those things that hold us back. A growing desire to surrender all to Him and to know more and more the leading of His Spirit rather than our own understanding. This is God's work not ours. We long to see a fresh anointing on Sandes whereby the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit would work both in us and those we reach out to so that in due season we will see a harvest with many lives touched and saved.

During the last quarter we have remained fairly busy even though lots of the soldiers have been away on deployment and exercise. The 2 Rifles are a very busy battalion with deployments and exercises in Iraq, Gambia, South Sudan and many other places. A unit of the Royal Signals based here have been on a three month tour of Afghanistan. Some days we have been very busy and on such a day one of our volunteers from Ballykinlar called up for a social visit. He ended up rolling up his sleeves and doing the dishes here in

Lisburn as he has done for thirteen years in Ballykinlar. We thank God for all our volunteers who are a real blessing. We have also seen some old friends in the Centre and it was a great surprise to see Henry and his mum Maggie come in. They now live in England but were over visiting friends and called in to see us. Little Henry used to be one of the kids in Sandy Cove and now he towers over us at near six foot tall. It is always good to catch up with old friends.

All parts of the Centre are being well used with increased use of the prayer room for meetings, interviews, chats and even just going in to get some peace and solitude for five minutes. The games room is busy with guys during their breaks and is even being used for the occasional sports afternoon for table tennis and pool competitions. The family room has been a hive of activity with increased groups of mums and children using it to meet up with each other. We also see husbands coming to join them during lunch breaks. It is also good to be a support to some of the mums who come in by themselves and are maybe struggling with their husbands being away on exercise. We can provide a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on, and also help out in practical ways



Henry who used to attend Sandy Cove children's club in Ballykinlar.



Cadets enjoying themselves in Sandes at Ballykinlar

whenever the need arises.

We have been continuing to help the welfare services on camp in their support and counselling of soldiers with gambling problems and addiction. Trevor was able to give a talk on gambling addiction in the WRVS centre to about 60 soldiers from the 2 Rifles. Also a good friend Justyn Rees Larcombe gave five talks over two days to over two hundred soldiers. He is a former Army officer who lost everything due to his gambling addiction but now works for a charity offering advice on the dangers of gambling. Jan and I were also able to attend. We are also discussing with the mental health team on camp the possibility of a support group and other ways we can help soldiers with the problems that can arise from this addiction.

We have now been included in the induction package for new soldiers arriving into the battalion. Each new soldier will be brought into the Centre, where we can have a brief chat with them about the history of Sandes and the services we provide. One of the most popular services, apart from the food, is the airport runs where we offer a free lift to the local airports. This provides the soldier with a known person who is security safe and it also offers us a chance to get to know the soldiers better.

Ballykinlar remains sporadic in its use although the period between September and Christmas has been one of the busiest with the various cadet groups asking us to open most Saturday evenings. These can be very busy with queues stretching back to the door, but they are always enjoyable. The cadets love the dog tags that we have on offer with the different cap badges of the various regiments on them. They also take advantage of the free Bibles and books that we have on our counter. It is always a delight for us to see the cadets not only taking the Bibles but also sitting at the tables reading them. Some even ask us questions about what they read, which is encouraging. There have been a lot of changes on the camps lately with the introduction of the new Pay As You Dine (PAYD) system and we also have a new contractor taking over the cleaning pool on camp. There are also changes ahead in terms of the Chaplaincy and Command within the 2 Rifles. In the midst of this we in Sandes try to maintain a real sense of a home in the Centre with good food, friendly staff and a welcoming environment. Most importantly we try to practically show the love of God to people so that they will then allow us to share our hope of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Trevor & Jan Pinkerton

The most wonderful time of the year



Junior soldiers enjoying doing the Bible quiz in Sandes at Harrogate

'It's the most wonderful time of the year' says a popular Christmas song and I have to admit that it really gets me excited. I am always on the countdown from about July to the time when I can start to decorate the Centre. When it has eventually been done it just seems to bring a smile to everyone who comes in through the door. It just feels like a warm and welcoming home and the Junior Soldiers catch this excitement and start to look forward to Christmas leave and a reunion with their families.

Over the years we have come across some who have hated the Christmas season. A few of these may be like Ebenezer Scrooge and have a 'Bah Humbug' mentality in that nothing would ever please them. There are others however who feel a lot of stress trying to meet other people's expectations in what they buy and how they behave. It can become a major financial burden just trying to keep up. In the midst of the busyness, commercialism and anxiety, the wonderful and yet simple message of Christmas can be lost. It is not about the

myth of Santa. The Christmas story is true and yet is infinitely much more incredible.

It is about the birth of the Christ child. The Bible tells us that God came and dwelt among us in the person of the Lord Jesus. The prophets of old had told of His coming hundreds of years before. Angels heralded His birth with shepherds and wise men sharing in the joy of the event. Angels declared 'I bring you good news of great joy'. The good news was that Jesus was a saviour and the great joy was that he could set us free.

The Bible also tells us that each of us are born in bondage to a sinful nature which separates us from God 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God'. Nothing we can do in ourselves could ever remedy this. But Jesus made a way for us by His own sacrifice on the cross. John 3:16-17 says 'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His

Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him'. The true meaning of the Christmas season is the celebration of this incredible act of love.

Without understanding the true meaning of Christmas it becomes an empty façade. People are smiling but are broken inside and are just glad when their pretence is over for another year. They approach the New Year hoping for a better future without realising the message of Christmas is that hope they are looking for. I trust God will open the hearts of many in the days ahead to receive this very special gift.

Meanwhile here in Harrogate we are still privileged to be serving the Lord in this little lighthouse of hope. We never take for granted the special trust put on Sandes to care and minister to the Junior Soldiers and everyone else on camp. Every time there is a new intake I am amazed at how young they all look but perhaps that is a symptom of my advancing years. When I see them my heart melts and I just want to take care of them. Nearly all the new intakes have made it into Sandes for their inductions and

it is a great opportunity to tell them about our work and why we are here. They all said they would be back to Sandes and true to their word many have been. It feels like the clock has been turned back when we see them once again queuing out the door. Some of you may remember the name Louie Walsh who was with us last year and was a great wee character. Well this year we have a Tom Jones. They may have well known names but they are not famous. However they are still very special to us.

As most of you know Jim served in the Royal Irish Regiment for twenty three years and on a recent reception day here at the college he met a former colleague in Major McCann. He was bringing his grandson Gary to start his training as a Junior Soldier. Another soldier from his time in the regiment was Pipe Major Dodds who had two grandsons starting in separate intakes here at the college. One of them was joining the RLC and the other following the family tradition into the Royal Irish. The older brother Gary came back from his phase two training to welcome his younger brother



Junior Soldiers, all pals together having a little bit of recreation time in Sandes



Gary coming back from phase two training to welcome younger brother Norman to Harrogate

Norman to Harrogate. Gary was a regular in Sandes and Norman is now proving to be the same. We are sure both grand fathers are proud of their grandsons. For our part we appreciate their trust and will do all we can to look after and support them during their training here in the college.

On these cold dark nights it is nice and cosy in the Centre and everyone is getting more excited about Christmas leave. We have a few new Gospel tracts some which are specific to Christmas. They are on the tables and a few have been taken away whilst others have been read and left behind for others to pick up. We still find the recruits are very keen on the Sandes Dog tags and we have our little table with Bibles and Literature available to everyone coming into the Centre. We try to do our little Bible quiz every week and it is a blessing to see the enjoyment it brings to all who take part. It is good to see them take an interest in the Bible even if it is only to find the answers to the quiz. It sometimes leads to discussions on the answers and wider conversations which are a real blessing to us.

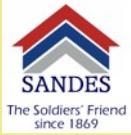
Since our last report we have a new Commanding Officer Lt Col R. Hall. He had served in the College many years ago and

has now returned as CO. He has been a great encouragement to us and has told us how great it is to have Sandes on camp. I feel it has been a great year. Mark and Sal have settled well into life here at the AFC and are growing in confidence. We are so grateful for their support. Denise and Kara continue to be a real blessing and together we all work well as a little team. As for Jim and me, we will be starting our fifteenth year here in Harrogate. I can't believe it! So many soldiers have come and gone and the memory of some will always be in our hearts. We have had our ups and downs but through it all we have come to trust in God's faithfulness to us and the Sandes Mission. It is with great expectation and hope that we embrace all that 2018 brings our way as we continue to labour for the Master here in Harrogate.

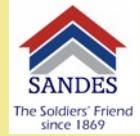
Every day is a fresh start and a new opportunity and we keep looking to Him knowing that 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness' Lamentations 3:22-23

Thank you for your support and we trust the Lord will bless you abundantly in 2018.

Jim & Maryjane McCracken



Prayer Diary



19th January	Sandes Prayer Meeting : The Beacon @ Noon
22nd January	Sandes Committee Meeting
16th February	Sandes Prayer Meeting : The Beacon @ Noon
6th March	CVWW meeting in London
16th March	Sandes Prayer Meeting : The Beacon @ Noon

Friends recently Promoted to Glory:

Mr John Hannigan - former Superintendent Pirbright and St Athan

Mr Phillip Orme - former Superintendent Pirbright

Miss Joan Garwood - Sandes Supporter

Mrs Maureen Walker - Sandes Supporter

Special Prayer Request

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:37-38

There is an urgent need to find a Support Couple and Centre Assistants for Pirbright and we would encourage all our supporters to pray that the Lord would call the right people into the work. There is also a ongoing need for Godly volunteers throughout the work.

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

Please pray for: January 2018

- 1 rest and restoration for all the workers of Sandes.
- 2 soldiers and their families suffering from the consequences of conflict.
- 3 God's favour and blessing on all Christian ministries to the military.
- 4 renewed sense of vision and a fresh anointing on Sandes in the year ahead
- 5 the new draft CVWW charter due out soon would confirm Army housing without charge for Sandes.
- 6 courage and confidence for Christians serving in the Armed Forces.
- 7 God's favour on Sandes from all Commanding Officers in the camps where Sandes has a presence.
- 8 the team in Pirbright as they return to work today still looking for new staff.
- 9 those in the Sandes family who need a healing touch from the Lord.
- 10 marriages and family life of soldiers which come under great strain.
- 11 the 'Still Time' prayer meeting in Sandes in Lisburn today.
- 12 for the right couple to come forward as new Support Couple in Pirbright
- 13 wisdom on future of Ballykinlar Centre as Trevor and Jan continue to run it on a part time basis.
- 14 continued protection for Sandes against all spiritual attack. Isaiah 54:17
- 15 opportunities for the Bible Quiz and other outreach in Harrogate.
- 16 encouragement and blessing on those who prayerfully support work of Sandes.
- 17 new Centre assistants in both Pirbright and Lisburn.
- 18 God to make positive outcomes from the difficult challenges facing Sandes.
- 19 the Sandes monthly prayer meeting in the Beacon Church today.
- 20 Godly volunteers to supplement and support our workers in all the Centres.
- 21 work of Sandes to bear fruit with lives being changed and people being saved.
- 22 wisdom for the Sandes Committee as they meet today
- 23 finance team as they prepare year end accounts and prepare for annual audit.
- 24 the children's Good News Club being held tonight in Sandes at Holywood.
- 25 the Lord's financial provision for the work in the year ahead.
- 26 wisdom on any new opportunities which may be presented to Sandes.
- 27 a secure spiritual climate on camps and especially in our Sandes Centres
- 28 for the Bibles, literature and dog tags being distributed through the Centres to be effective.
- 29 God's leading on the future of Sandes during this year of change and transition.
- 30 hope for those in the military suffering from emotional distress.
- 31 a move of the Holy Spirit in convicting and drawing people unto Himself from within the military community.

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

Please pray for: February 2018

1 Martin and Sal from Harrogate as they provide temporary cover as Support Workers in Pirbright

2 Sandes presence at the Lisburn Missionary Convention this week-end.

3 the safety of our soldiers who are deployed in various places throughout the world.

4 Sandes report being presented at Lisburn Missionary Convention tonight.

5 new CVWW charter to confirm entitlement to free Army housing for Sandes.

6 Sandes deputation at the Branagh Hall tonight in Belfast

7 new commercial outlets in Pirbright would not result in Sandes being marginalised.

8 wisdom on any new initiatives or opportunities presented to Sandes.

9 Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres

10 those within the Sandes family that need a healing touch.

11 Divine inspiration for Padres taking services today in the Garrison Churches.

12 a breakthrough in our recruitment that Godly people would come forward for all available positions.

13 Trevor and Jan as they run both the Lisburn and Ballykinlar centres.

14 a real and significant change in the spiritual climate within the military community.

15 the children's Good News Club in Sandes Hollywood tonight.

16 the Sandes monthly prayer meeting at 12 noon today.

17 good opportunities to hold the Bible Quiz in Harrogate

18 breakthroughs as we see people being saved within the military community.

19 accounts team in Head Office as they prepare for Annual Audit and accounts

20 growth in the Sandes prayer and financial support base to enable the work to continue and grow.

21 the marriages and family life of soldiers which come under great strain.

22 the 'Still Time' prayer meeting in Sandes in Lisburn today.

23 for our vice presidents, committee and others who work behind the scenes to create this platform for Sandes outreach.

24 recruits in Pirbright to once more engage in a Saturday night fellowship group.

25 a fresh anointing on all the Christian Missions and agencies within the military community.

26 settled and committed teams in all of our Centres with sufficient workers and volunteers.

27 all preparations for this years annual conference in Glenada.

28 Sandes Deputation tonight in Carryduff Presbyterian Church

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

Please pray for: March 2018

- 1 all Christian agencies working together to bring the hope of the Gospel to our Armed Forces.
- 2 military families living with stresses of deployments and new postings.
- 3 the right people to be employed as Support Workers in Pirbright
- 4 encouragement for Christians in the Armed Forces to live and share their faith.
- 5 Sandes deputation today with Lisnabreen PW group.
- 6 Christian agencies meeting as CVWW today in London
- 7 wisdom on any discussions relating new initiatives or opportunities presented to Sandes.
- 8 Sandes would know a fresh anointing as we face the challenges of this age.
- 9 opportunity for a Bible study or prayer group to start in Holywood.
- 10 Godly volunteers to help our workers in each of the Centres
- 11 soldiers and their families to come to a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 12 Sandes to remain both financially solvent and spiritually effective.
- 13 new opportunities with the 2 Rifles community for the team in Lisburn
- 14 wisdom for those serving on Sandes committee as they plan the way forward for the Mission.
- 15 new opportunities to help and witness despite the busyness of running centres.
- 16 the Sandes monthly prayer meeting at noon today.
- 17 those suffering either physically or emotionally as a result of their military service.
- 18 Divine inspiration for Padres as they lead Church services today.
- 19 complete, committed and settled teams in all the Centres.
- 20 Sandes footfall to remain sustainable despite new commercial outlets on camp.
- 21 Good News Club in Holywood and special Easter events with Youth Club.
- 22 the marriages and health of the families of Sandes workers.
- 23 successful completion of annual audit and year end reporting.
- 24 new opportunities for Saturday night fellowship meetings in Sandes Pirbright.
- 25 all the Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 26 the Lord's continuing provision of finances and workers for Sandes.
- 27 goodwill support from the Commanding Officers and their teams in all our camps
- 28 opportunities for team in Harrogate today as they host Junior Soldiers and staff
- 29 ongoing preparations for our Annual Conference in Glenada next month.
- 30 deep sense of conviction as we remember the Lord's sacrifice today.
- 31 Opportunities to restart a Saturday fellowship in Pirbright.

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice Psalm 141 :2

Let us not become weary in doing good



Mildred who volunteers in Sandes at Holywood celebrating her special birthday.

*We are what He made us created in Christ Jesus for good works,
Which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:10*

I would like us to focus on the last four words of the above verse, "our way of life". Following a search I discovered some interesting results, many of which focused on things people felt were threatening their 'way of life'. The top three were climate change, terrorism, and government policies. Well that begs the question what is our way of life, as followers of Jesus? Is it what makes us comfortable, secure, happy, or something else?

As we turn to the scriptures in Eph. 2: 4-5, Paul reminds the believers of the mind blowing way God had transformed their lives. He said 'God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us. Even when we were dead through trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved'. The result of God's work is that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life (Eph 2:10). Doing good works, helping others giving, loving and serving in Jesus'

name. Paul is saying this is to be your way of life as a believer, they are not optional activities for believers but the very reason God has given us life in Christ. In this changing world in which we live, God has called and empowered us to live a life that reaches out to others and honours Him. When you think about it this is indeed our way of life here at Sandes. Doing good works by serving, caring and reaching out to the Military community. It's all done in Jesus' name. We are indeed touching lives.

Touching the lives of the children by helping them to understand the message of the Gospel. Over the last year we have had the privilege of ministering to the boys and girls through our own Good News Club, the Christmas special, Easter special, and Holiday Bible Club. Some 14 to 20 children were reached on a weekly basis through GNC and numerous others were reached through the other events organised. Please pray with us for the seed that has been sown in these young lives. Sadly we will be

saying good-bye to many as the regiment continues to leave Holywood. Over the time they were here it has been a joy to see them grow not only physically but spiritually as well. Recently one little three year old boy joined us and he was able to quote his memory verse word perfect without help.

Touching the lives of the soldiers. Recently I have spent time being that all important listening ear as some unburdened their heavy hearts. Hopefully in our time together they have gone away with lighter spirits as I have sought to give guidance and help. Some have kept me up to date on how things have progressed, and thanked Sandes for just being here for them. In those times of darkness it has been a privilege to pray for them, and be able to share how faith in Christ can bring hope in all situations. We have also had opportunities to talk with some from overseas sharing details of local churches. Although several have considered coming along to the church I attend, none have so far responded to the invitation.

Touching the lives of the civilians. Over the last few months some have asked for prayer. This included health issues with themselves or someone else. We have also been asked to pray into difficult family situations. We were then able to give them

Bibles and other Christian literature. Pray for a moving of God's Spirit in their lives. One of our volunteers Mildred, has just celebrated her 80th birthday. Mildred has been faithfully volunteering for the last six years. We really do appreciate all her help in the centre as she washes dishes and ministers to people by drawing alongside them in her own quiet way. Some have said she has such a comforting and encouraging way as she listens and shares her own life experiences, and how much the Lord has meant to her throughout her life.

Touching lives with the vision of the work. Recently I had the opportunity to speak on the work of Sandes in a local church and we spoke to a ladies' group in Albertbridge Congregational church. The ladies were both touched and challenged by what they saw in the DVD and heard about the work here at Holywood. These meetings are important as it makes people aware of Sandes and our need of the prayerful support of His people.

We look forward to a New Year with expectation and hope so please pray that "our way of life" will be effective in touching the hearts of those on camp as we seek to help, give, love, serve and touch lives in His name.

Chris and Marlene Wilkinson

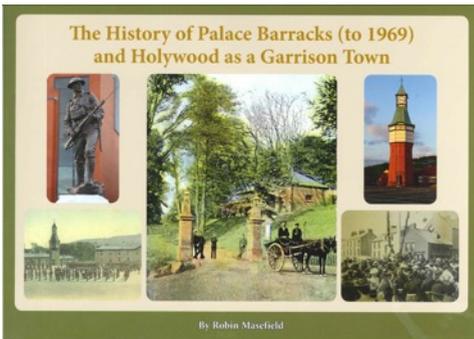


Some ladies from Albertbridge Congregational Church waiting to hear about Sandes work

Building on the legacy of others

In recent months we have seen the passing of a number of our former Sandes superintendents. John Hannigan and Phillip Orme were both former superintendents in Pirbright. Our thoughts and prayers are with both Pat and Jillian in their time of loss. Looking back we can see how everyone leaves a mark in the work and a legacy for others to build on. We will never know the full impact of their labours this side of eternity but nonetheless we can appreciate the faithfulness and perseverance shown by those who worked in Sandes in the past. Today as we continue in this work we have to be aware that we follow in the footsteps of Elise Sandes and all those who faithfully took on the mantle in the years that followed. We now have the opportunity to leave footsteps for others to follow by building on that wonderful legacy we have inherited.

This was brought home to me recently when a book was published on the history of Palace Barracks. It makes interesting reading especially with its many references throughout the book from the old Sandes magazines 'Forward'. There is also a whole chapter dedicated to the work of Sandes and its specific contribution to life on the camp. Profits from its sale will be shared by Sandes and SSAFA. It is on sale for £10.



The foundation stone for the new Hollywood Sandes Home was laid in 1903 by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. It was stated that the great work which Miss

Sandes has done in establishing Homes had received 'hearty approval of HRH, Earl Roberts, Viscount Wolseley, and a large number of distinguished officers who are known for the deep interest which they take in the men under their command'. It was with such clear endorsement that Miss Sandes and friends were able to develop the work throughout the world in providing their caring Christian Homes for soldiers. This same goodwill and approval is equally important for Sandes work today.

This legacy was emphasised by two letters received recently, one from an old soldier and another from a former worker in Sandes. It shows that we are part of something that is enduring and which can continue to have an impact within the military community.

Dear Sir, it is approaching the anniversary of my life changing spiritual experience in December 1959, and daily the memory comes afresh. I was based in Singapore during the Malayan emergency. I had gone to Church in the Isle of Man and was confirmed and played the church organ but not really been changed by the Holy Spirit. Aged 18 I decided to join RAF to see more of the world, and my first major posting was overseas to Singapore. Social life on camp was mainly around drinking which was not my style. Although I became Church organist again there was no real life in it. I spent a lot of my free alone in the Station Church. On the side table were various pamphlets and one stood out and sounded good to me. It started 'A Home from home in a quiet Christian atmosphere'. I made my way on a day off work and found this beautiful modern hotel-like accommodation with such lovely gracious staff. It was run by a Miss Symes, Mr Perrott, and a Mrs Forster. On Sunday evenings there was a Christian Service and I became their pianist. This night the speaker was Ted Framton who had a powerful testimony and basing his sermon from Isaiah and the

fulfilled prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit in a flash lit up my soul and He has never departed. Next morning as I lay on the lawn the heaven above was brighter blue and earth around was brighter green. So it remains to this day and I am now 79 years old. I am so thankful that God continues to use your ministry in Sandes and I pray many lives will receive the life changing experience of Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Eric Collister Isle of Man (Dec 17)

1964 was a very significant year for me. In August I came to faith in a Gospel Mission held in a hall in my local community of Bovevagh, County Londonderry. Before the eight week Mission was finished the evangelist had me involved reading the Bible, doing quizzes and telling children stories. I had felt called by God to Christian service at the age of twelve but it was not until I was eighteen that I decided to commit my life to the Lordship of Christ in that Gospel Mission.

I had been working in a grocer's shop in Limavady but had a strong desire to serve God in some meaningful way. Someone gave me a copy of the Christian Herald and there was an ad 'Sandes Homes require Christian Workers.' I sent off a letter to the office in Clifton Street in Belfast and soon found myself travelling there to be interviewed by Miss Helen Jeffrey. I was accepted to work in Sandes. Things moved very quickly and I went to work in the Sandes Home at RAF Ballykelly with Tom and Edna Hamblin.

Ballykelly was only a few miles from my home but was a totally different world. I was a little rough at the edges and Tom and Edna sure had their work cut out knocking me into shape. I will always be indebted to them for their patience, support and encouragement. After a few months at Ballykelly, Tom and Edna dispatched me to the Sandes Home at Catterick where Len and Iris Hall were the Superintendents. Back in 1965 the Sandes Home in Catterick

was a very busy place. I gained so much experience in many different areas from serving in the canteen to barrack room visitation. We had the most amazing children's meetings on a Friday afternoon. It seemed like every kid in the camp descended on Sandes at Camp Centre. We sang 'Catterick Friday Special is the place for me!' Apart from all the daily working in the canteen (Cafe) we had a large games room with snooker tables and also an indoor swimming pool. Sandes in Catterick was a busy, vibrant Christian Community. We had a dedicated core team of resident Christian workers supplemented by the local day staff. Sundays were very special. After attending local churches we had lunch with Len and Iris plus daughters Susan and Heather. Kerry and Sheba, the two dogs, were always on the scene.

After lunch we engaged in barrack room visitation followed by our Sunday afternoon meeting in the library. After tea we showed Moody Institute of Science films and had a great sing along with the sharing of testimonies and the good news of the Gospel. It was joyful to see soldiers commit their lives to Jesus. I had the privilege of joining Len Hall when he spent some time in the Ballykinler Home during a period of major transition. I learned so much from Len who was a man full of grace. Those years were great times and I have special memories of dedicated and wonderful people.

My three years in Sandes were great preparation for further service. I left Sandes to undertake a theology course at the Irish Baptist College. I was privileged to serve God with the Baptist Church and then as a Youth Officer for seven years followed by exciting opportunities managing in key charities.

I look back with gratitude to the work in Sandes and the privilege of serving in a practical and caring way. I thank God for what He taught me, for the friendships formed and experiences of enabling grace!

Peter Quigley (Sept 17)

'The Lord will guide you continually'

Isaiah 58:11



A time of blessing as recruits gather in Sandes prayer room for a fellowship meeting

This time last year Deise and I arrived in Pirbright not knowing what to expect but knowing in our hearts that this was God's purpose for us at this time. I will not pretend that it wasn't a baptism of fire as we tried to understand how things worked, not just within Sandes but also within the context of a military base. Everything was new to us and we didn't even know the various ranks within the Army. It made us a little tentative to say the least because we didn't know who we were talking to most times. In the beginning we felt a little lost but we both had a sense that in this midst of everything we had to look to the Lord and trust Him in everything.

At first it felt overwhelming as we tried to come to grips with each of the little tasks that are essential to the operation of Sandes. However step by step we have been able to master each of them and feel confident in the work itself. Our biggest issue is staff shortages. We do need a Support Couple to help us develop this work and we also need more Centre

Assistants that will complement those faithful workers we already have. So it is with grateful hearts that we are looking forward to Mark and Sal from Harrogate coming to join us for a few months after the new year.

In the midst of all our busyness we have seen God's blessing and provision. Saturday evenings are busy and on one particular night there was only Deise and myself to run the Centre. Out of the blue, a few Christian friends of Deise decided to come and visit. They were like two angels of mercy as they rolled their sleeves up and got stuck in to help us. Then when we were short of staff again, Kabita came to help us for a few weeks before returning to Nepal. We will miss her hard work and gentle spirit greatly and wish her and the family God's richest blessing.

Although small in number the team we do have is precious. We had a little Christmas celebration in the Centre for them and their families just to show them how much we appreciate their efforts. It good that we had

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

Mrs Vera Waterhouse along as a guest. It was lovely to see how easily she engaged with the children of the staff as she spoke to them so gently about the Bible. She is a great encouragement to us as she recalls how the Lord directed her and her husband Les in their many years of service here in Sandes at Pirbright. These testimonies correspond with some of our experiences to date in Sandes as we have already seen the Lord move in so many ways.

Looking back over the year we can see times when the Lord's work among these young soldiers is more obvious than at other times. There was period when a Saturday night fellowship grew too big for the prayer room and had to be moved to the larger TV room. Sadly, since then most of those recruits have moved on from Pirbright but we trust that we will be able to host more of these meetings sometime in the future. It is easy to get under pressure thinking that we need to make things happen and in the busyness of everything you can put yourself under a lot of stress. What we are learning is that God has called us to be faithful in serving Him and to trust Him in all situations.

When we think things are quiet spiritually we are always encouraged when we check the display table where people can help themselves to Bibles and literature. On average we are seeing fifteen Bibles being taken every week as well as other Christian literature being picked up. As we sow these into the military community we trust in the Lord's word when He says 'It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please'. Isaiah 55:11

It is great to see so many troops being brought on an introduction visit to Sandes. They are brought into the TV lounge where I am able to tell them about the work of Sandes, have a chat and then commit them to prayer. Many of them come and speak to us at different times during their training and often we get the chance to pray and share something with them. It is often the comments they leave in our visitor book

when they are leaving that lifts our spirit as we realise that we have been having a bigger impact than we realise.

Simple acts of kindness can speak volumes and we often find people rapping frantically at the door after closing time looking for something they need or others just needing a few moments to share a concern. We can never forget why we are here because these chances to help and care are heaven sent. When someone you may have only talked to a few times is leaving and thanks you for your help, we in turn can thank the Lord for those little divine appointments.

The past year has been tough but we have learned so much. We trust the Lord will bring the right people into the work this year and build a complete team here in Pirbright. Meanwhile we will continue to trust Him and lean not on our own understanding.

Martin & Deise Lewis

Are you a Stephen or a Martha?

Martha cooked and served meals to the Lord and Stephen was involved in distributing food to the widows in Jerusalem and Jesus valued their service. If you are looking for an opportunity to serve the Lord, then consider Sandes.

Support Couple required in our Pirbright Centre

This is a practical ministry in which we befriend and offer pastoral care to members of the military community. As a Christian Mission, we endeavour to practically demonstrate God's love and bear witness to the hope of the Gospel. The post is ideally suited to a Christian couple who have had some military or catering experience, however this is not essential as training will be given.

To know more speak to Martin or Deise on 01483475885 or write to the:

Mission Director, Unit 7
30 Island Street, Belfast BT4 1DH.

Applicants must be in full sympathy with the purpose and ethos of the Mission.



We depend on your prayerful and financial support to sustain this Christian Mission . 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 . Help us secure this little foothold for the Gospel.



Name:

Address:

Town/ City: Post Code:

I would like to make a donation to support the work of Sandes and enclose a donation to the value of :£ _____ Q118

*** Please treat this and any future donations to Sandes as Gift Aid - Yes / No**

** We can claim Gift Aid on donations if you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax every pound you give we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue. If your donation is to be Gift Aided please complete the details above. It is important that we keep our records up to date so please advice us if there is any change in your tax status or address.*

BOOKING FORM

Sandes Annual Conference

13 - 15 April 2018 at Glenada, Newcastle Co Down.

Guest speaker will be Mr Paul Young

£110 per person (Friday high tea to Sunday lunch)

Residential or day visitor:

Number of Adults: Number of Children:

Name:

Address:

Town/ City: Post Code:

Tel: Email:

Any special dietary requirements:

I enclose payment: (£110 per person):

— for single occupancy please add £7.50 per night) —

I enclose payment for day visitor:

— Sat Lunch £8.50 — Sat Dinner £14.50 — Sunday Lunch £14.50



The Soldiers' Friend
since 1869

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