

# FOCUS



SANDES Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres  
July – September 2020





**CAN YOU ...**

mop floors,  
wash dishes,  
help prepare food,  
serve tea and coffee,  
and still look cheerful?

**CAN YOU ...**

counsel a young Christian,  
share the Gospel 1-to-1,  
pray and love every day,  
and trust God for the  
results?

**IF SO ...**

would you think and pray  
about working or  
volunteering with SANDES?

**For further information please contact  
Sandes Head Office on 028 9050 0250**

## **Dear Friend and Supporter,**

Welcome to the third issue of FOCUS in 2020. This issue will be slightly different from our previous issues, it will be a bit shorter and with no photographs! Each of the Centres have given an update on how they have managed during the closure and what has been going on "behind the scenes".

We had to close all of the Centres on March 23rd as the lock-down was announced, and nearly all of our staff were placed on the Furlough Scheme. As the weeks passed by we were able to still maintain contact with many of the soldiers and their families through social media, and this has been a real encouragement to so many. Inevitably, Sandes is missed when it is not open! By mid-April we were receiving requests for special openings in Pirbright as morale on camp was so low without Sandes being open! In Lisburn requests were coming in to see if Sandes food could be delivered to soldiers in their homes outside Camp! The numbers of ladies joining with Jan for Prayer on Tuesday mornings has actually increased since going on-line!

In May, Pirbright re-opened for a take-away only service "on request" on a couple of evenings, and is now open every day, also on a take-away only basis. By the first of June Harrogate was open, again on a take-away only service. Both Centres are very busy not only serving good food, but sharing the Good News as well. We are hopeful that both the Lisburn and Hollywood Centres will be allowed to re-open by the end of June or early July. The work on the new Centre was put on hold once the lock-down started. David and Lynn have been building relationships with those around them in Aldershot, and have been able to start preparing the Centre for the work to start there as soon as possible.

All of us in Sandes are truly grateful for your prayers and encouraging support during what has been a very difficult time for the Mission. Time and time again we have been very aware of God's unfailing love and provision for the Sandes family, and we look forward to the times when we can all sit safely around the table to enjoy fellowship together.

Be blessed,

**Gary**

**"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

I must be honest, sometimes it's the "all" in that verse that gets me. Most of us can be thankful, for lots of things, at lots of times, but in "all" circumstances? That can be tough, and especially when we are experiencing what we have been going through since March this year!

What about when you find yourself suffering illness, or defeat, or you're walking through huge loss...what about when a loved one leaves this world too soon and you still can't see past your tears...or when you've been praying for your prodigal loved one to come home and it seems like the prayers are unanswered...what about when you're discouraged, disillusioned, and struggling with disbelief...or when you're overwhelmed, overextended, and just fighting being over-stressed...what about when the needs mount high and the way doesn't look clear...or when people are cruel, life seems unfair, and the enemy's breathing down your back...what about when the storms come, and the car breaks down, or the air conditioner stops working on a holiday weekend (true story)...

Yes, these are the "all" things that can be hard to find gratitude in,

whether it's huge losses or just life irritations. But God's Word never changes to fit our circumstances. His Truth rises above our circumstance, so that we can too. He doesn't say give thanks "for it", but "in it all," for He knows He's building more deeply into our lives and character than He could ever build without the hard times.

We're gaining strength. We're gaining perseverance. We're being reminded that true joy is never based on how we feel or our outside situations. We're understanding that God's ways are bigger, His thoughts are higher, and we can be assured that He holds us in His hands.

And He is with us.

Always.

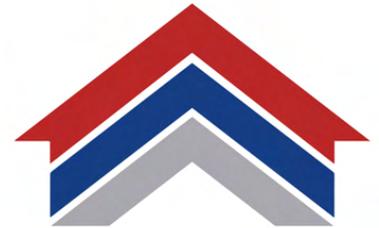
No matter what you might be facing, the good news is this, you woke up. He's given us today. And if we're still here, living and breathing, may our every breath bring honour to Him.

Be assured my friend, we never fight the battles alone. Stay strong. Choose joy. Choose to be grateful in it "all." For He is building greatness. He's working things out for good. He hears our prayers, He sees all, and knows all. He has purpose for our pain, and brings hope for our tomorrows!

# FOCUS

on

## Aldershot



**SANDES**

The soldier's friend  
since 1869

The lockdown has caused us all to slow down! what has emerged is a real sense of KNOWING that is both rich and satisfying... this has caused us to reflect and connect with the inner knowing of "Christ in us". Having a routine has kept us sane! Yes, Joe Wickes before breakfast, a walk at midday and a bicycle ride most evenings has created order in our day ... However the bigger picture has been time to be Still and KNOW "God". We have encountered him in so many ways and it's been good to have time to appreciate his presence. Each evening we have found it very positive to make declarations about God's goodness, his faithfulness and above all his presence.

One of the phrases that I often speak over myself is to be 'surprised by joy' and this new venture we are embarking on has certainly done that!!!! We feel we are walking into something radical, exciting and full of possibilities, there are

many soldiers and young families in the area we now live - who I think will really benefit from the emerging project.

As we prepare the new Centre here in Aldershot, the sense we have is that the river of LIFE is beginning to flow and our local community will be infected with this very healthy presence ...

We received the keys to the Connaught Centre towards the end of May. The Lockdown has put everything on hold, however, yesterday we convened a meeting with the Garrison Commander and a couple of his support staff where we talked vision and practicalities. It was very encouraging. As people slowly return to work things are beginning to get moving. We are just one part of the changes in the building - there are a lot of pieces in this jigsaw that have to be put in place!

In the meantime, we have the green light to start building

community with our neighbours, we live on the doorstep of the Connaught Centre, so we plan some (socially distanced) picnics and coffee mornings either on the field outside the centre or in our own garden.

We have a growing connection with some of the Army Welfare Officers and there is great anticipation of what this new opportunity will present, the vision is taking shape. If you were able to drop in you would probably find us filling a skip, clearing out a room or with a paint brush in hand. Next week we will host an important stakeholders meeting with the

Garrison Commander to bring together all the users of the facility and contractors to engage with the vision.

So we move forward with some excitement and some trepidation as God leads us into this exciting new adventure. If we have an encouragement it is that God clearly has a plan for the soldiers and families in this community... the Kingdom of God is advancing and lives are going to be changed... We appreciate your prayers and encouragement.

**David & Lynn**

## Deputations

Would you like someone from Sandes to visit your church group and talk about the work that Sandes does with the military?

Learn of the history of Sandes and what goes on at each of our Centres.

See the materials and literature that we distribute in the U.K. and across the world to support our soldiers.

Join the hundreds of people who support the work of Sandes. Stand with us as we seek to bring Christian love and witness to those within HM Forces.

To arrange a suitable date and time, please call  
Head Office on 028 90 500 250 or email [admin@sandes.org.uk](mailto:admin@sandes.org.uk)

# FOCUS

on

## Harrogate



The soldier's friend  
since 1869

We send you happy greetings from Harrogate..... thanking God for his safe keeping and answered prayer is what we do in a daily basis. Since our last report our little world has changed and for some it has been, and still is, a very frightening experience. Our wee soldiers and staff were all dispersed home in March, as were we, at the start of the long lock-down with no end in sight at that stage.

But as I write this report we are back at the centre and on week two of reopening! It is different and not at all what we are used to but Jim, Denise and I work together to provide the good food, good news and good care for the soldiers and staff who have returned to training. Making the changes to the Centre for social distancing etc. was made easy by the help we had on hand and Jim got his saw and tools out to make us a great screen for the counter. We are doing takeaways for the foreseeable future and going forward one day

at a time. It does our hearts good to hear the delight in the voices on the other end of the phone as they place their orders because we are there and he or she can have their favourite food, just how they like it. It is a real blessing indeed. Over the weeks of lock-down we have been counting our blessings feeling so thankful.

In May I (MaryJane) celebrated my 65th birthday! It was very strange to say the least, but I had a lovely birthday and lovely gifts, even though I could only see my family at social distancing to receive my gifts. But my best gift was to know everyone was safe and well and Lord willing there will be other birthdays to celebrate.

And what about our tomorrows? Well you know something, they are in very safe hands! Nothing is a surprise to God. We are so thankful to those who have come into the Centre since our reopening and supported Sandes and also for those behind the

scenes who always encourage us.

We are all well and look forward to when we are back as a full team but as we have learned, things can change so quickly. We'll take one day at a time and see what tomorrow brings. One big change we have made in Sandes is that we now have a contactless card payment machine which has been big hit with everyone. One of the soldiers commented "my you have come up in the world and into the 21st century!" It has been a great help and we are very happy to have it now.

Everyone is taking all changes in their stride and the aim is to get the junior soldiers to the pass off graduation day which will be a bit different this time. It will still be a very

special day for those taking part and I'm sure 2020 will be a year that many of us will never forget for all kinds of reasons. I know we certainly will not forget it!

I was sharing with someone just this week how God looks at our hearts. In the Bible God's word says in Psalm 37:3

Trust in the Lord, and do good;  
dwell in the land and enjoy safe  
pasture.  
Delight yourself in the lord and  
he will give you the desires of  
your heart.

We wish you God's blessing and  
thank you for your support and  
prayers for us all at Harrogate.  
Keep safe!

**Jim & Mary Jane**

# Prayer Diary

## Prayer Requests

**Pray for all of our teams as they navigate their way back to re-opening the Centres under the new regulations and restrictions**

Pray for the Head Office team as they provide support to all the Centres

Pray that the monthly Prayer Meetings will be permitted to resume soon

Please pray for our Superintendents and Support Workers:

Jim and Mary Jane McCracken  
Mark and Sally Nieuwoudt

Harrogate  
Harrogate

Chris and Marlene Wilkinson

Holywood

Trevor & Jan Pinkerton  
Leanne Briggs

Lisburn/Ballykinlar  
Lisburn/Ballykinlar

James and Michelle Loubser

Pirbright

David & Lynne Webb

Aldershot

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

# July 2020

## Please pray for:

1. God's blessing as our Centres start to return to normal
2. the work in Aldershot to regain its momentum
3. Chris & Marlene and their team in Hollywood
4. the value of Sandes to be recognised and supported by all of those within the welfare elements of the Army
5. divine inspiration for Padres taking services today
6. opportunities with recruits coming into Sandes on Sunday evenings for worship and praise times
7. for those affected by the virus, that God will heal were needed
8. people to prayerfully consider Sandes in their legacy planning
9. a fresh anointing as we face the challenges of this age
10. James & Michelle and their team in Pirbright
11. new opportunities for Sandes to grow and to share the Gospel
12. rest and restoration of all the Sandes team
13. a breakthrough as we see people being saved within the military community
14. local fellowships and spiritual support for all the workers in Sandes
15. a new generation of Sandes supporters to arise
16. the safety of our troops on deployment
17. those in the Army who continue to support and promote the work and value of Sandes
18. the still on-going review of the CVWW Charter
19. Trevor & Jan and their team in Lisburn
20. a sense of freshness and newness for those who encounter the message of hope in Sandes
21. thanksgiving for our Superintendents and Support Workers
22. encouragement for Christians in the Armed Forces to share their faith
23. growth in the support base of Sandes
24. increased usage of the Sandes Centres, and opportunities to share the Gospel
25. the right people to come forward as volunteers in all the Centres
26. Jim & Maryjane and their team in Harrogate
27. those in the Sandes family who need a healing touch
28. Sandes to be relevant to today's Army
29. wisdom for new initiatives
30. the funding applications that have been made and are under consideration
31. David and Lynn in Aldershot

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

# August 2020

## Please pray for:

1. courage and confidence for Christians serving in the Army
2. Bibles, literature and dog tags being distributed through our Centres
3. those needing support through being affected by the virus
4. spiritual refreshment for all the Sandes team
5. our Vice Presidents and others working behind the scenes to create the platform for Sandes outreach
6. patience to adapt to the "new normal"
7. encouragement and blessing on those who faithfully support Sandes
8. those coming into Sandes with life issues
9. Jim & Maryjane and their team in Harrogate
10. opportunities with recruits coming into Sandes on Saturday evenings
11. divine inspiration for the Padres taking services today in the Garrison Churches
12. David and Lynn in Aldershot
13. God's leading for the future of Sandes
14. Chris and Marlene and their team in Holywood
15. fresh ideas and effective ways for outreach within and beyond the Sandes Centres
16. Trevor & Jan and their team in Lisburn
17. breakthroughs as we see people in the military being saved
18. all the little seeds of faith planted through Sandes, that they would grow and bear fruit
19. protection for our troops serving and training throughout the world
20. relationships with Army Welfare and closer working relationships with them
21. new opportunities to grow the number of Sandes Centres
22. good rapport with all soldiers coming to the Centres
23. increased footfall in all our Centres
24. for those affected by the virus, that God will heal were needed
25. protection for the Sandes Mission against spiritual attack
26. James & Michelle and their team in Pirbright
27. encouragement for Sandes workers as they see people being saved
28. people to consider Sandes in their legacy planning
29. success in bids for funding from trusts to help Sandes
30. opportunities to reach out to military families
31. Sandes to be effectively led and empowered by the Holy Spirit

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

# September 2020

## Please pray for:

1. the growing work in Aldershot
2. settled and committed teams in Sandes
3. Jim and Maryjane and their team in Harrogate
4. the well being of all of the Sandes family
5. Sandes to remain financially solvent and spiritually effective
6. Divine inspiration for the Padres taking services today in the Garrison Churches
7. the financial needs of the Mission
8. a Harvest of the seeds of the Gospel that have been planted through Sandes
9. protection and promotion of Christian values within the Army
10. the Commanding Officers and their teams in our Camps
11. Chris and Marlene and their team in Hollywood
12. encouragement for all the Sandes staff
13. growth in the support base for Sandes
14. Godly volunteers to supplement and support our workers in all the Centres
15. all Christian agencies working within the military
16. James & Michelle and their team in Pirbright
17. new initiatives taking place in Pirbright
18. growing relationships with the Padres on Camp
19. the work of Sandes to bear fruit with lives being changed and people being saved
20. David and Lynn in Aldershot
21. the continued commitment of all the Sandes family to the work
22. courage and confidence for Christians serving in the Armed Forces
23. the team in Head Office
24. wisdom and grace for all our workers in how to deal with the various agencies and ranks within the Army
25. that all the seeds that have been planted through Sandes would grow and bear fruit
26. Trevor and Jan and their team in Lisburn
27. for the financial needs of the Mission
28. for those affected by the virus, that God will heal were needed
29. the kitchen staff who do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour
30. those in the Sandes family with health issues

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

# FOCUS

on

## Hollywood



Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever. Deuteronomy 4:40

Have you ever heard of a singing bowl? I myself had not, until recently when I read an article about an artist and scientist called Michael Flynn. He designed a singing bowl for display in an international art competition held in Michigan, USA. The bowl requires no electricity but it does require something that is in short supply - co-operation.

During the display it was observed that the people trying to make the bowl sing had not bothered to read the instructions about the need to gently rock the bowl. Instead, impatient to make music they kept trying

their own ideas and after a short time they walked away, I suppose disappointed, thinking there was some defect with the bowl.

I wonder how many times we become frustrated that life is not working out the way we think it should? We keep trying ways that seem right to us, but to our disappointment it keeps turning out wrong. Could it be that instead of reading the instructions - following God's word - we continue trying to find our own way?

The singing bowl reminded me that we cannot expect life to go well if we continue to ignore the instructions of the designer. "Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you" Deuteronomy 4:40.

I am sure we have all discovered that failing to obey divides us from one another and separates us from God. Therefore to fulfil his plan for the world and make

I am sure we have all discovered that failing to obey divides us from one another and separates us from God. Therefore to fulfil his plan for the world and make the way of salvation known. Psalm 67:2 "That your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."

We need to follow His instructions about living and walking peacefully together. When life does not go well, it may be that we have stopped following God's plan. Someone once wrote the word:

Sure it takes a lot of courage to put things in God's hands. To give ourselves completely, our lives, our hopes, our plans. To follow where he leads us and make His will our own, but all it

takes is foolishness to go the way alone.

How much better it is to follow after the Good Shepherd:

My sheep I know, they are my own, I leave them not in trials alone. I will be with them to the end, their hope, their joy, their dearest friend.

May we all continue to follow God's word and walk in His way instead of our own.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement through your prayers.

**Chris & Marlene**

## Gift Aid

**Gift Aid is a tax relief allowing UK charities such as Sandes to reclaim an extra 25% on every eligible donation made by a UK tax payer.**

For every £1 that is kindly and generously donated to further the work of Sandes, HMRC will increase the value of your donation by 25p (25%). This extra amount makes a huge difference to the work of Sandes.

When you donate, please circle "YES" on the donation page to confirm whether or not you are a UK taxpayer. Please note that Gift Aid can only be reclaimed on donations made by individuals who pay UK income or capital gains tax at a rate at least equal to the amount reclaimed on their donations in the current tax year.

If you have any queries, please contact Sandes Head Office on 028 9050 0250 or via email on [admin@sandes.org.uk](mailto:admin@sandes.org.uk)

# FOCUS

on

## Pirbright



We recently received an email with the following opening address:

**Ca va Bien Aller! Things will get better!**

All through the last unbelievable few weeks, we have been holding onto this profound little statement which we know is indeed true as believers in Jesus. Romans 8:28 promises that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. There may still be difficult times, challenging situations and even hard circumstances but knowing that God is there working in all things for our good, is the comfort that carries us daily. As we look back over this time, we already see so many good things emerging: friendships being formed through isolation, sharing love through social distancing and provision when shelves are empty.

Friendships through isolation: With lockdown some recruits and soldiers found themselves isolated from family and friends in the camp. As Superintendents, living 'on the patch', we were still allowed to go into the camp to be at the Centre. Along with catching up on many unfinished jobs, we just loved to be getting our daily exercise by walking up to the centre. On days we didn't go up, we took the opportunity to take a daily walk in the surrounding area. On these occasions we found that we would cross paths with many taking their daily activities, as singles or as families. We were overwhelmed with the amount of folk who we recognised and would stop just to chat. We have grown closer to so many of these precious folks even though we were living in isolation.

**Love through social distancing:**

We got to hear about different

needs through our close relationship with Welfare. It is amazing what a WhatsApp or message can do, just to let people know that you are thinking of them or praying for them. A note or little parcel on the doorstep displayed so much love and care – not just from us, but others also blessing us.

### **Provision when shelves are empty:**

Obviously, this time has caused financial concern for so many people. However, we were totally blown away when a member of the Guildford borough approached us and offered us the opportunity to apply for a grant which was followed through by our Mission Director. A couple of weeks later an amount was

given towards the Mission. The CO of the camp also allowed us to open on a take-away basis which allowed us to maintain our relationship in a strange time with Pirbright camp. Many still come in and ask if we are doing ok and we can honestly say that God provides!

As Superintendents we have come to realise even more during this time, how much we love what we do and how much we want all who serve in Pirbright camp to know that Sandes is home from home for them and that things will indeed get better!

**James & Michelle**

# FOCUS

on

## Lisburn & Ballykinlar



**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8**

What a strange time we are living in! The entire year there has been “strange” occurrences all over the world, wild fires in Australia, Plagues of insects in Africa, earthquakes and not least the pandemic that has such wide reaching and devastating effects, tearing many families apart and now there have been world-wide riots. There are many questions that we have when we see major news stories. Many people are looking to blame politicians and world leaders; many are panicking or hiding away. When we look at all these things they can all take our focus and can occupy our minds, they are very serious matters and not something that we should ignore but if we let them dominate our thinking we can become paranoid, fearful and they can

have a serious effect on our mental health. As Christians we have a wonderful privilege in that we can take our concerns and troubles to Jesus in Prayer. We can speak to him of our concerns and take refuge in His words, I am told that there are 366 times in the bible that the phrase “Do not fear” appears– One for every day of the year (even in a leap year). I also remember a little chorus I learnt as a child in Sunday school which simply says “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full on His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His Glory and grace.” When the weight of the world seems to be getting to you turn to God and he will be the help you need.

During lockdown we have had to close the Lisburn and Ballykinlar centres which has given us a different focus on how we reach out to people. With the help of

technology we have been able to keep our wives prayer meeting going via online “zoom” meetings. Wives have been joining us from Northern Ireland, England and even Gibraltar. We have also been able to put together “boxes of morale” for members of the 2 Rifles that are on duty in Afghanistan, these boxes include sweets, toiletries, sachets of coffee etc. and reading materials. We are also delivering little gifts around some of the families that we know from our centres. Jan has been doing lots of home baking and we have been putting cookies, buns and little activity books together and giving them out to those we know and receiving some lovely goodies too from wives who have been baking also.

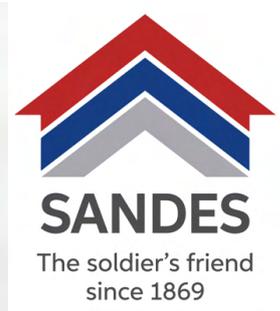
Leanne has officially started with us and although we are not open she has been joining in with the prayer meeting and we have been regular online chats and she has also done online training like her health and hygiene certificate and Jan gave her a virtual tour of the kitchen and pictures of our menu and the layout of the till so she can familiarise herself with it. It was great to meet up with her in person in Wallace Park in June,

and get to know her a little bit better.

We have also been keeping up our contact with the welfare services on camp too, being in regular contact with Chaplains, welfare officers and other agencies as we seek to serve the community in the best way possible. It has been really encouraging to be included in this network with some contacting us to ask if we can “touch base” with individuals that need a “little bit of loving” and are going through difficult circumstances.

At the time of writing we are thinking of how we can best re-open the centre to meet the needs on camp while sticking to the guidelines around social distancing etc. we hope we will soon be able to back in work and also it will be great to see Leanne working in the centre and strengthening the team even more. Even though we are in very strange times we can build on the certainty of the verse above that we serve the Unchanging Jesus as we seek to share His unchanging Love.

**Trevor & Jan**



# SANDES

The Soldier's friend since 1869



As a Christian Mission we depend on your prayerful and financial support to sustain our 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 foothold for the Gospel.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Town/City: ..... Post Code: .....

I would like to help and support the work of Sandes  
and enclose a donation to the value of:

£ \_\_\_\_\_

Q320

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

Please tick here if you would like a receipt:

We can claim Gift Aid on your donation if you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax. For every £1 you donate, the Inland Revenue will give us 25 pence back, effectively increasing your donation by a further 25% !

(It is important that we keep our records up to date, so please advise us if there is any change in your tax status or address).

You can also donate by:

- Direct Debit
- Standing Order
- Payroll Giving
- Bank transfer
- Leaving a Legacy

Please contact us if you would like more information on ways to donate.

I would like to receive ..... copies of Focus at the above address.

If you would like to arrange for a speaker from Sandes for your Church Group, please contact Sandes Head Office on 028 90 500 250.



**Patron:**

The Duchess of Kent

**Vice Presidents:**

General Sir Roger Wheeler G.C.B. C.B.E.

General The Lord Dannatt G.C.B. C.B.E. M.C. D.L.

Major General R J Porter M.B.E.

Major General A N Carlier C.B. O.B.E. B.Sc.

Brigadier R Thomson C.B.E. D.S.O.

Col. R G R Hall M.B.E. Q.G.M.

Air Commodore D N Case MSc MRAs RAF

**Council:**

**Chairman:** Rev. Desi Paul

**Vice-Chairman:** Mr. William Johnston

Mr. Wesley Ballantine

Mr. Norman Boyd

Mr. William Clauson

Mrs. Paula-Anne Knox

Dr. Richard Murphy

Major General R J Porter M.B.E.

Mrs. Joan Scott

**Mission Director:**

Mr. Gary Robb

SANDES SOLDIERS' & AIRMEN'S CENTRES  
Unit 7, 30 Island Street, Belfast BT4 1DH  
Tel: 028 9050 0250 Fax: 028 9022 6233  
[www.sandes.org.uk](http://www.sandes.org.uk)