

# Badgers invade the Commission Studio

A group of young people visited the studios one evening in April. Fifteen enthusiastic members of the Scrabo Badgers, from the Newtownards branch of St John Ambulance, enjoyed an action packed evening. Together with their two leaders, Rachel Boyle and Tara Foster, the children, aged from 5 to 11 years old, recorded a short

children's Bible drama specially written by Commission's Hilary Jewhurst. If that was not enough they also had an opportunity to 'invade' Studio 2 as Juls Martin was broadcasting his evening radio programme on UCB. An enjoyable evening ended with a glass of orange juice and biscuits.

**Mervyn Shaw**



*'New trainee engineer' with Colm Flanagan*



*Scrabo Badgers, Newtownards Branch of St John Ambulance, directing operations in the Control Room.*



*Waiting for the 'Green Light' in Studio 1*





What a privilege and joy! Working with real professionals; sharing with real people; hearing of real needs and concerns. Of the above, the meeting on radio with so many concerned and anxious individuals prepared to share their journey, was a remarkable and significant experience. Thank you for allowing me to participate in your stories and, in many situations, your heartbreaks.

The night began with thanks for the provision of a 'Guide Dog' for one listener. For a fully-sighted individual it was difficult to 'stand in his shoes', but the immense joy at the Lord's provision filled our hearts with shared exhilaration.

Medical problems, physical and 'soulical' (my own word for expressing matters more than physical) persistently came through to the Team. As I always try to do, I sought to empathise and where appropriate offer Scripture before engaging in direct and relevant prayer to God on the issues. I had sought the Lord in prayer for many hours prior to the live broadcast but the expectancy of having an answer (when one is deemed to be needed) is a most daunting experience; however, I am so pleased to say – at least from my perspective – the resultant feedback evidenced that our God was very much in charge.

Working environment issues also came to the fore with redundancy; zero-hour working;

part-time working featuring prominently. Again, I was so thankful to our Lord God for the opportunity to delve into my previous engineering training and at least, if not hitting the nail on the head, to sit where these callers sat.

Financial matters consistently were expressed. Whilst some listeners were experiencing trying and difficult scenarios I detected a strong resilience of determination to bring the matter to God's interested attention and seeking thereby resolutions.

However, by far, the greatest needs to be shared centred on relationships. The sheer complexity and intricacy of the anguish of our callers was soul searching and heart-breaking. Assurance of God's own involvement in family and personal matters were evidenced by the parable of the Prodigal, and, on occasions, I gleaned the references to such a situation experienced by the Father Himself, offered assistance and support to each struggling participant.

To all listeners and callers and the Team at UCB, a personal word of gratitude from me to you all – it was such a sensitive and challenging time, and I pray the Lord Jesus has been uplifted and glorified.

**Ronnie Gibson**  
**Studio Guest**

# Drama Team report

At the start of the year we were a bit concerned about the situation as regards writing, in that we had no new series complete; with any team times come where life "outside" has complications, and writers need time and space to do their rather lonely work. So, we decided to rejuvenate a script which I wrote 20 years ago, on St. Paul, a major Bible character. The original wasn't a bad script but I believed we could both improve the standard of the writing (it had been my first effort) and we now have new studios, and a bigger and better drama team. The main problem was that the scripts had been written on a VERY old computer, long consigned to the bin, and we had to get them re-typed into a current format before any remedial work could begin.

"Paul - Running the Race" started at the end of April and, being a 13 part series, will keep us busy until the end of the year. In the meantime Hugh Finlay has written a new series on "Daniel" and a previous script on Barnabas, recorded over the winter, is nearly complete, so we have a schedule until well into 2016. Jennifer Hobson will be producing "Daniel", starting work in the autumn, and it's good to see how the Lord provides ideas and people when we need help. We're also pursuing contacts with some possible new writers and hope that this will help us keep the stream of material without which Commission's core operations in drama would be unable to continue.

**Colm Flanagan**

**Commission has eight serving Trustees. Here we profile three. More profiles will follow during the year.**

## Harold Harvey – Trustee

I served my time with Commission, starting around 1976. Sure, in the intervening years I've practiced as a public health professor in the UK and Africa to bring in a few Pula and raise the family, but my real apprenticeship is with Commission. Over the years I've dabbled in most radio jobs, starting with the knocker on the tardis, then graduating to opening and closing the door. Acting followed alongside some writing, presenting, production and leadership of the used-to-be Community Radio Group, a great crew which won the Christian Broadcasting Council award in 1994 for the Concrete Bunker Children's series. I've learned so much from so many talented people during my nearly 40 years at Commission and laughed so much, not uncommonly at out-takes due to my own mistakes. All in a great cause of course. After a few years on the Executive Committee and a spell as Publicity Secretary I was pensioned off to the Trustees! But my



apprenticeship is not complete - I want to start all over again.

I'm an elder at Whiteabbey Presbyterian, married to Marion and we have two daughters; Laura is a speech therapist in Aberdeen and Rachel a dentist in Lisburn.

# Jennifer Hobson – Trustee

Jennifer Hobson is one of the longest serving volunteers for Commission, having started as a voice in 1971 as a student teacher. Thus began a journey where she was a voice and became a Trustee over twenty years ago. Her role as a producer began two years ago and she has completed a series on Samuel, Nehemiah and Elijah.

She became a Christian when she was seventeen and is thankful to God for placing her in a position to serve him through drama. There have been many changes over the years and she recalls the faith needed to proceed with the new studios at Ballyoran Lane as a miracle.

In all aspects of radio she is always learning. She is a lover of reading, a hockey umpire, a walker, a skier, an enthusiastic fundraiser



for NSPCC and loves her dog Murphy but the sense of serving God has been constant over the years and she counts it a privilege to be part of a great team.

# Hugh Finlay – Trustee

Hugh is one of our Trustees, and writes for Commission. He spent some time in the Army before joining the Police in what was then Northern Rhodesia, and later when he returned to Northern Ireland, the R.U.C. He met Christ through the example and guidance of the late Rev Cecil Kerr and others in 1974. Always interested in amateur Drama he worked with Dunmurry Drama Club and Bangor Drama Club before joining Commission in 2002. He served as Chairman of Trustees for several years from 2003 till 2012 before being forced through family circumstances to limit his activities. He still serves as a Trustee but now concentrates on writing Bible Drama for Commission and being 'a voice'. He has written a series on Ruth, Esther, Barabbas, Samuel and Abraham as well as a 13 episode fictional work called Vicit, and other shorter pieces. He worships where he finds the Lord Jesus



and dislikes any attempt to label his church affiliations. He is a keen recreational bowler and supports Newcastle United and Norwich City football teams. He enjoys acting and theatre.

# Owls fly in to take UCB Backstage Tour



*Brownie pack light up Studio 2*

At a recent UCB Backstage Tour, members of the 95th Brownie Pack from Stormont Presbyterian Church Belfast visited the Broadcast Centre. Sara Kenny (Brown Owl and leader of the pack) brought with her, Night Owl, Snowy Owl, Little Owl and fourteen excited Brownies. A fun filled and informative evening was experienced by all.

## **Dennis Aicken**



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## **International Religious News**

The weekly recording of International Religious News (IRN) continues. A small dedicated team of nine people meet on a rota basis to record news items from around the world, reflecting topics of a religious and moral nature. Recently, a new member joined the team as a voice and has very quickly established himself as one of the team. John McCreedy, a former reporter with the BBC and UTV, offered to help us and we are delighted to welcome him and to use his undoubted expertise. Approximately six stations throughout the UK continue to broadcast the IRN each week.

**Mervyn Shaw**

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# Venue52

The past year has continued to see Christian music go from strength to strength in the UK as HMV introduced a dedicated Christian music section in their high street shops in 2014 and we have had plenty of new material on Venue52 from the likes of Worship Central, Bluetree, Tenth Avenue North and Moriah Peters. But as always alongside the big names, the aim is to play music that is a little bit different and on this side of the pond that has included a young British duo called Daughters of Davis who came on the show to chat about their new album British Soul and their unique approach to touring: travelling and living in a campervan and allowing people to sign up online to sponsor them a meal a month to feed them while they're on the road. Then there has been The Bright Expression - a young band from Southampton pushing the boundaries of UK worship music with their debut album. And from the States, as rapper Lecrae sailed straight to the top of the Billboard 200 mainstream charts with new album Anomaly, we've also been able to introduce new, young and diverse acts such as Lexi Elisha, SafeKept, Dream By



Night and Josh Guthrie. Recently Northern Irish singer/songwriter Aaron Ferris returned to the studios to do some recording in our new music suite. Aaron has featured on Venue52 over the last few years and had previously recorded an acoustic session on V52. He is currently working on some new music. Similarly, if you are a musician/ band and would like to record, feel free to get in touch with Mark or Dennis on [mail@commissionradio.org](mailto:mail@commissionradio.org)

## Mark Todd



Many will be aware that all organisations carrying out the types of charitable work set out in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, are now required by law to seek registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. This process started back in February 2011 and I am pleased to report that Commission's November 2014 submission was successful and we are now registered as a charity with the Charity

Commission for Northern Ireland. It is good to have finally completed the task and consequently continue to receive the many benefits of charitable status.

## Dennis Aicken

## Finance

Thank you to all our 'Friends of Commission' who continue to support us financially. The day-to-day running of the studio and our on-going radio missionary outreach is only made possible by your valuable commitment.

**STUDIOS: Commission Broadcast Centre, 6A Ballyoran Lane, Belfast, BT16 1XJ**

Commission is 'Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101642'