

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### The Faith of a Deacon

Elder Massimo De Feo, Italy

Area Seventy

I still remember with emotion when, at age 12, I was called by my branch president into his office on a Sunday morning and he told me the Lord desired that I be ordained a deacon. I remember the profound emotion I experienced at the thought of receiving the priesthood, being an official representative of the Lord, authorized to act in His name. It was such a profound emotion that I felt the Lord was truly talking to me through my branch president. I remember believing I heard the voice of the Lord gently saying, “This is the will of the Lord; it is He who is talking to you.” It was such a profound emotion that it changed my heart forever.

During that interview, the president explained that the most important thing for me was going to be passing the sacrament on Sundays, or else helping the Lord with the most sacred ordinance. I felt a great responsibility, which the Lord Himself was entrusting me with. Then, when the branch president laid his hands on my head to ordain me a deacon, I felt a great joy and the authority to act in the most important thing for the Lord and for me.

I still remember how every Sunday morning, while walking to church, I prayed to be called on to pass the

sacrament and to thus be able to fulfill what the Lord Himself had asked me, which was to help Him in the most important thing for Him and for me. Then whenever I heard my name called with others to pass the sacrament, I would think, “The Lord has answered my prayer once again this Sunday.” It mattered little if there were only two or three deacons—always the same ones—being called on every Sunday. It didn’t matter to me at all. For me it had nothing to do with numbers or human logic; for me it was always a matter of the Spirit. I knew it was the Lord calling me, and to me every time that was an answer to the prayer I offered while walking to church. I firmly believed that He needed me, without realizing that instead it was I who needed Him really.

By pondering these memories, I learned three principles on spiritual self-reliance.

The first one is that when we participate in the sacrament actively—whether we take it or pass it—and do it with sincerity of heart and with full intent, we can feel a real power in our lives which touches our hearts and opens our minds and allows us to grow spiritually. This peculiar power is connected to the ordinances of the gospel, as the Savior taught:

“Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.”<sup>1</sup>

Each time we participate in the ordinances of the gospel, like the sacrament or those of the temple, we can feel the power of godliness in our lives, a real power which renews our spirits, changes our hearts, strengthens our faith and helps us become spiritually self-reliant. President Uchtdorf said, “Living according to the basic gospel principles will bring power, strength, and spiritual self-reliance into the lives of all Latter-day Saints.”<sup>2</sup>

The basic gospel principles are closely linked to the ordinances, and every time we take part in them, we receive more power and we become more spiritually self-reliant.

The second principle I learned is that service for the Lord, like the one I offered as a young deacon, strengthens us every time we respond to His call. In other words, the more we give to the Lord, the more strength and power we receive from Him, or in other words, the more we serve, the more we become spiritually self-reliant.

Lastly, I learned that faith in Jesus Christ truly is the first principle of power. He said, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you.”<sup>3</sup>

The faith of a young deacon who prayed while walking to church that



Elder  
Massimo De Feo

he could do the most important thing that the Lord had asked him to do has grown enormously since then. The more I have drawn nearer to Him, the more He has drawn nearer to me, helping me to always be spiritually

self-reliant. For this I will be grateful to the Lord forever. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Christlike Attributes—the Wind beneath Our Wings," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 100.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 88:63.

#### LOCAL NEWS

## York Helping Hands Meet HRH Prince Andrew during York Flood Crisis

By Sandra Kimberling

On Boxing Day the Foss Barrier, one of York's major flood defenses, was lifted due to electrical problems. This resulted in 687 York homes and around 200 businesses being flooded. When Caroline Kimberling of the York First Ward heard about this, she decided to do something about it. Along with a few nonmember friends, Caroline gathered together badly needed items for the evacuees, and the following day she and friend Helen Woodall went to deliver two carloads to a local collection centre.

Local volunteer Stefanie Finch had secured a very small hall to act as a collection point, but by Sunday when Caroline and Helen arrived, it was already full. Caroline called President Bill Kimberling, second counsellor in the York stake presidency, to ask if the Church building could be used as a

collection centre. Approval was given and work began.

A notice was put on Facebook announcing that the chapel would be open for donations, and the following day, Monday, contributions

**HRH Prince Andrew chats with Mormon Helping Hands volunteers from York.**



DARREN HARVEY

of food, cleaning materials, hygiene products and clothing from more than 300 visitors poured into the church cultural hall. In addition, many local and national businesses sent deliveries or food for volunteers working at the church.

After three days, the hall was bursting at the seams, and while Church leaders liaised with York City Council, volunteers from within and without the Church sorted, categorized and got everything ready for action. "The response was heartwarming," explained President Kimberling. "Members and nonmembers worked side by side like old friends to alleviate some of the suffering."

One volunteer wrote on Facebook: "(Have) been down helping at the LDS church this afternoon. This has easily been the best part of my Christmas. Everyone willingly helping with a smile on their faces. Volunteers are here and have been all day; they will stay as long as they need to. I have never seen anything like it. Thank you to everyone who has helped here and anywhere else today. You are all legends! Proud to be from York."

The flood victims were advised that they could return to their homes on Thursday, which brought a new set of challenges. Furniture and carpets needed removing, homes needed cleaning, care packages needed delivering. More than sixty volunteers



*HRH Prince Andrew engages with Mormon Helping Hands volunteers from York.*

## Selsdon Half Marathon

By Shawna Denny

David Eaton's love for running knew no bounds, except when it came to the Sabbath. "I was disappointed that at the time most running events took place on a Sunday and I could never participate, so I decided I wanted to host my own event," Brother Eaton said.

Brother Eaton wanted to give members and nonmembers who enjoyed running the opportunity to take part in a half marathon that could enable them to keep the Sabbath day holy, so he went to work with the full support of the bishop and his local ward members planning the first Selsdon Half Marathon.

Although small at first, the Saturday-hosted event that took off in 2009 has grown each year as more and more members and friends have become aware of its opportunity. In fact, the event, now in its 7th year, has had the support of participants from all over the UK, including from other countries.

"It is without doubt one of the most friendly and welcoming events I participate in during the year," past entrant Paul Townsend said.

The 13.1-mile run starts and finishes at Brother Eaton's home ward, the Selsdon Ward meetinghouse, in the Maidstone England Stake, and weaves

from both the Church and the community donned Helping Hands vests and united to assist in the cleanup operation.

"There were touching, inspiring and humbling scenes as volunteers met victims," said President Kimberling. "They joined with other volunteers in the city and all worked together whilst making new friends along the way."

Over the following few days, missionary couple Elder and Sister

Culbert continued to work with local leaders to coordinate the relief effort. In all, Church volunteers enthusiastically donated around 3,000 hours of service.

Six members were later asked to represent the group when they met HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York. The Prince asked the group for details of what they had been doing and also if social media had played a role in the relief efforts. We all know it did. ■

through the picturesque Surrey countryside. The course includes downhill and flat stretches but is probably most remembered for the one or two challenging hills thrown in. Nevertheless, the Selsdon Half Marathon attracts runners at all levels of experience, from the elite athlete to the novice beginner.

Although not an officially measured or timed UK Athletics recognised event, the half marathon is a fun opportunity to join with other runners and support good causes. The Selsdon Half Marathon supports two charitable causes: the South East Cancer Help Centre, based in Purley, who do

a magnificent job of supporting those with cancer; and Reach the Children UK, a charity that works to provide impoverished children in Africa with opportunities to become self-reliant by strengthening families, neighbourhoods and communities.

Finishers receive a medal and a goodie bag, including a T-shirt. Brother Eaton,

along with Bishop Adam Hawkins, other ward leaders and a host of more than fifty marshals, will be holding the 2016 Selsdon Half Marathon on Saturday, 19th of March 2016. Interested participants (sixteen years and older) must register on the event's website at [www.selsdonhalfmarathon.verycool.co.uk](http://www.selsdonhalfmarathon.verycool.co.uk). ■

#### NEWS FROM IRELAND

## Bob Crawford Awarded Legion D'Honneur Medal

By Linda Coulter

Ninety-two-year-old Bob Crawford from the Cavehill Ward, Belfast Northern Ireland Stake, has been awarded France's highest decoration, the Legion D'Honneur. His medal came with an accompanying letter stating that he had been appointed to the rank of Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Legion D'Honneur in acknowledgement of his military engagement and steadfast involvement in the liberation of France in WW2.

In 2010 Brother Crawford travelled back to Normandy, where he had served during the war. His visit to the Ranville War Cemetery there was a very moving experience for him as he remembered those who had not returned home.

Brother Crawford proudly wore his medals at the Sunday session of the Belfast stake conference held on Sunday, 8th November. ■



NEIL GARRATT

**Last year's winner and current record holder (1:12:28) Kevin Quinn is recognised for his achievement by Bishop Adam Hawkins of the Selsdon Ward.**



SISTER CRAWFORD

**Brother Bob Crawford with the Legion D'Honneur award, France's highest decoration**

## Ulster Hall Hosts Conference

By Linda Coulter

On Sunday, 8th November, the Ulster Hall in Belfast was the venue for the annual Northern Ireland conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Remembrance Day tribute was led by Nigel Moffett, whose son Nigel Junior was killed in 2009 while serving in Afghanistan. He spoke of John McCrae's famous poem 'In Flanders Fields' and then recited a moving poem which he wrote himself after his son's death. This was followed by two minutes' silence in honour of those who died defending our freedom.

Elder Kearon, Europe Area President, addressed the congregation and encouraged them to put aside the pain of past hurts and move forward, exercising faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He thanked civic and Church leaders for the work they do in the community and expressed the Church's commitment to work alongside them for the benefit of everyone in the area. ■

**Elder Patrick Kearon, Europe Area President, at the Northern Ireland conference**



EVE O'CONNOR

## Aberdeen Members Climb Kilimanjaro for MND

By Sandra Wood and Jim Dressel

Jim Dressel, a member of the Bridge of Don Ward in Aberdeen and a retired Robert Gordon University social work teacher, along with his granddaughter Kiera-Leanne, climbed up and down Mount Kilimanjaro in 6 days to raise funds for MND Scotland. At midnight on the fourth day they set off on the final part of the ascent and reached the summit, Uhuru Peak, at 9am, then descended quickly within a day and a half.

On 26 March 2014, Keith Turnbull, Jim's best friend and a Church member, died from motor neurone disease. He was a fun-loving and friendly person. He was a family-orientated man who enjoyed serving within the community. He was also a humble and forgiving person, energetic and competitive. When he was younger he enjoyed a life of sport, including cross-country running, hockey and sailing.

Keith's dream to get to the top of Mount Bennachie in Aberdeenshire was achieved in June 2014. Jim, with a group of Church members from the ward, adapted a wheelchair and pulled and pushed him to the summit. Jim commented, "It was a terrific experience for the group being able to assist Keith and to be of practical support to raise £5172.00 for Motor Neurone Disease Scotland."

In celebration of Keith's life and to be of assistance to the community, Jim and Kiera-Leanne decided to join the challenge presented by MND Scotland to climb Kilimanjaro. They participated with 27 others who had experienced the death of a relative or friend from motor neurone disease. The group have now raised in excess of £183,110.15.

Jim remarked, "The climb was a major physical and emotional challenge but an absolutely wonderful experience which could not have been done without the support of the 27 others in the group." ■

**Jim and Kiera-Leanne at the summit of Kilimanjaro to raise funds for MND Scotland in memory of member Keith Turnbull**



COURTESY OF THE DRESSELS

# Manchester Family Discovery Day

By Sue Griffiths

RUSSELL TAYLOR



*Participants at the family history discovery day held in Manchester*

A family history discovery day was held on Saturday, 14th November, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Manchester. The day was designed to help people of all ages and abilities to start, continue and develop their desire and ability to participate in family history.

Participants were welcomed in the foyer with an interesting and extensive display on World War 2 by Christine Gilmore, which included the story of Harry Beard, who, until his death in 2006, had been a member of the Church for almost 60 years. One of the pictures, from a 1940 newspaper,

showed Harry disembarking a ship that had rescued him from Dunkirk.

After a short welcome and talk by President Daniel Liptrott, Manchester

stake president, there were several workshops which were presented three times during the afternoon. The workshops included 'How and Where to Start', which helped members to get an LDS Account and start on FamilySearch; 'Getting the Most from Ancestry/Family Search', which gave tips on finding even more information; and 'Indexing'. There were even family-history-related activities for the children which helped give them a greater love for their families.

President Liptrott said of the event, "The family discovery day was a wonderful opportunity for all members of a family to learn and develop techniques to assist them in finding and discovering their ancestors. Learning more about the history of our families helps us to understand more about who we really are."

Attendees went away feeling inspired to search out their ancestors. Plans are already being made for a similar event next year. ■

## The Dennis O'Brien Story

By Lorna Worley

"Look on the bright side" is a phrase that typifies the optimistic attitude of Dennis O'Brien, a member of the Leeds Second Ward. He is always keen to take part in any event suggested

to him, in spite of his 89 years and an extensive medical history, comprising angina for the past 38 years, a heart bypass, kidney disease, a hip replacement, prostate cancer for 12 years, skin

cancer for four years, and arthritis in his shoulders, back and arms; and now he's unable to enjoy his food to the full due to a deterioration in his taste buds.

In 1978, Dennis and his son, Peter, investigated the Church. Peter was baptised but Dennis was not. However, Dennis came to church each week for several years to support his son as he attended sacrament services and all the regular lessons. Most of the members there assumed that Dennis had been baptised and didn't know that he wasn't actually a member.

In 2011, Dennis's wife, Joyce, became seriously ill, and Dennis and his son, Peter, became her carers. As anyone who has been a carer knows, it was an exhausting time for them, and Dennis found it increasingly hard to cope. He couldn't see how his life could improve. In that year, he contacted Peter Kite, a member at Leeds Second Ward, for help in explaining some building plans initiated by his neighbour, and Peter was able to alleviate his concerns. Later Dennis rang Peter again to say he felt that he had neglected the spiritual side of his life and wanted to feel right before the Lord.

In September 2011, Dennis came to church again and began the investigator lessons with the missionaries, who included Elder and Sister Weston from Logan, Utah, who at that time were serving a senior couple mission. They played a large part in leading him to the waters of baptism.



STEVE WORLEY

***Dennis O'Brien, right, pictured with his son, Peter, at the controls of a replica Spitfire at a recent regional conference weekend in Leeds***

Dennis's first visit to the Preston England Temple was in August 2013 on a new members' temple trip when he witnessed baptisms being performed for those on his family tree. Members in the Leeds Second Ward had been researching his family history and eventually found over 100 names. Dennis was impressed with the temple grounds on his visit, as he had been a landscape gardener at one time. When he stood and admired the grounds he felt like "he was in heaven." He noted the conically shaped trees running down both sides of the temple and appreciated the work that had gone into making them so neat.

In July 2014, his beautiful wife, Joyce, passed away. Many members supported Dennis and helped him through this sad time.

In October that year, Dennis began the course of preparation lessons for the temple. He felt it truly was the house of God and it was a privilege to go there. In March 2015, accompanied by about 20 ward members, Dennis took out his own endowment. Following that, his friends from the ward had been busy getting the temple work completed in his family tree so that he could go in November to be sealed to his wife and for both of them to be sealed to their parents.

On the Thursday before the Saturday that he was due to go, Dennis experienced chest pains and was rushed into hospital by ambulance. Everyone thought that his temple trip would need to be cancelled. He was kept in hospital overnight, but by Friday, although feeling very tired, he was keen to come home. He informed members that he would confirm on Saturday morning if he was well enough to attend. He rang them early with undiminished enthusiasm and the trip went ahead. As the ceremony took place, Dennis's joy was full.

Commenting recently about their missionary experiences, Randy and Debi Weston remarked, "We met Dennis and were immediately impressed by him when the elders brought him to church for the first time while we were serving a mission in Leeds from 2010. He was so happy to be in our Gospel Principles class and had many thoughtful insights to share as we learned together. As the months went by, we learned to love Dennis and appreciate his sincere efforts to learn more and to do whatever he could to show the Lord his love and willingness to keep the commandments and accept the restored gospel. We were inspired with his determination to keep coming to church in spite of difficult circumstances at



**Elder and Sister Rueckert, Europe Area self-reliance specialists**

home and health challenges. But come he did, and his testimony and love of the word of the Lord touched and taught us all. We count it a sacred privilege to know and to have been with Dennis during his investigation

process, and know that he instinctively has had a strong and living testimony since he first heard the message over 40 years ago. He is indeed a valiant and wonderful spirit and we love him!"

Today Dennis is an inspiring, much-loved member of the Leeds Second Ward and enjoys participating in everything that he possibly can. ■

### Correction

In the January 2016 issue of the UK pages of the *Ensign*, the photograph that is said to be of Elder and Sister Rueckert, Europe Area self-reliance specialists, is incorrect. We apologise for the error. The correct photograph appears here. ■

## Editors' Note

The editors, **Jason Watling** and **Debbie Twigger**, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to [ukiensign@ldschurch.org](mailto:ukiensign@ldschurch.org). Stories should be in Microsoft Word, 350–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer and author, is required for the Church to use the article.

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