

Autumn 2014



*Dear praying friends,
The harvest is past...*

A very busy few months have passed by, and with them, many opportunities for sharing the gospel. Opportunities with children in our soccer and netball schools, with parents at the awards services, with teenagers who gathered voluntarily at the end of every day at a couple of the soccer schools to play us at football, with players at the 5 a side tournaments, with German teenagers at a soccer camp and with Austrian players on the recent Classics tour!

The summer has ended....

Time to sit back and put our feet up? **Not yet** as there are so many more opportunities ahead of us! So many still need to hear and be saved. Our leagues are up and running – football, netball and 5 aside – giving the platform for the **Good News** to be shared weekly. A team of ladies leave for Austria on Sat 25th October for a week, playing football almost every day against the local Austrian ladies teams, and sharing Jesus! 2015 looms ahead and much planning needs to be done to put the New Year's programme in place! More opportunities!

The harvest truly is great....

Please pray on for everyone involved with every aspect of SportsReach that we will continue to sow the seed and that the harvest would truly be great. I hope you are encouraged as you read reports from the summer...*Will*

Soccer and netball schools:

Just short of 300 children attended the six soccer and netball schools over the summer. Each one went really well and we saw not only enthusiastic children taking part during the week but also full churches on the Sunday mornings for the awards services. Netball took off at both Bethersden and Staines and we saw an increase in numbers at most places. **A huge encouragement** was working with the teenagers from Bethersden who came each afternoon to play us at the end of the day and to sit and listen as we shared the gospel with them. They even ventured into church on the Sunday morning for the awards service and then they travelled over to Sandhurst each afternoon the following week and spent time with us there. It was amazing to see their attitudes change over our time with them and we trust that some of them will take the step of receiving Christ as Saviour soon.

Bodenseehof Soccer Camp 6th – 13th September. 46 teenagers met us at Bodenseehof for a great week. We have known some of these teenagers for a few years now and it is great to see some of them growing in their faith and being willing to share it with their friends. Over the week we saw God touch and challenge many of them.

The leagues are a great encouragement with on-going relationships being built which are vital as well as the messages being shared. It is so encouraging to hear of and see folk beginning to go along to church as a result of what they are hearing and seeing on a regular basis. Several players have attended Christianity Explored and Alpha courses in recent years while others are just beginning these courses. Pray on for this vital part of the ministry.

Football League - The new season kicked off with a new team, Fleetwood, joining us making 9 in total. Also Heysham and Kendal have joined us for our Cup competition. Praise God!

Netball Leagues:

North - Again the netball grows!! There are now 17 teams split into the two divisions. Great to see how more contacts are being made and just how much players enjoy playing the games and the fellowship as well as the amazing outreach opportunity. New teams are Heysham Halos, Style (St Thomas'), a second team from Westhouse, and third teams from Chipping, Garstang and Quernmore.

South – sadly the league in the south hasn't grown yet and the teams involved are struggling for players. They are going to look into playing in an evening instead of a Saturday morning to see if that helps. A huge positive though is the impact the gospel is having though.

5 a side Leagues

Men's 5 a side - Seventh year of the 5 a side league at Carnforth and 9 teams are involved this year. Fantastic that this is reaching some guys who aren't involved in our Saturday league.

Ladies 5 a side – Due to start 8th November @ University of Cumbria, Lancaster, 5pm-6pm.

Austria Classics Tour – 26th September – 3rd Oct (See photo above of Classics v Schlading)

Small but very select team travelled to Austria. Another great time, and huge encouragements with the teams there. Meeting together with them in the clubhouses after the games deepens the friendships and the messages are very well received with good conversations with many. One player was far more warm and friendly than he had been before and shared that he had Jesus in his life. His son also shared how his mum is always telling him how important Jesus is. Another player has really been touched by Sue's testimony and had tears in his eyes as we spoke with him.

Please pray...

Come and join us!

Contact us...

For the leagues...

Men's 11aside Saturday afternoons

Men's 5aside Wednesday evenings

Women's 5aside Saturday evenings

Netball Wednesday evenings

ALSO...

Austria Ladies Tour 25th Oct – 2nd Nov

Soccer school prep for 2015

Classics friendly matches

Development of hockey

Sunday services and other outreaches

WEEKEND AWAY SOUTH

20th – 22nd February 2015

@ Carrotty Wood, Tonbridge

WEEKEND AWAY NORTH

27th Feb – 1st March

@ Knock, Cumbria

For anyone involved with

SportsReach!

Bible teaching, sport, fellowship

and lots of fun!

Forms available from the office

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Summer Soccer & Netball schools 2014

Reports from the churches...

BETHERSDEN This was our fourth year of football and our first year of netball and what a great time we all had. Over 50 children came through the doors this year, our biggest number yet. It was such a privilege to talk to the kids about who Jesus really is and to share about what He is able to do in their lives. **And what a joy at the end of the week to see a number of those children put their faith in Jesus.** Praise God!

It didn't end there! SportsReach were kept busy in the evenings as some of our local teenagers would come along at the end of every day for a football match. And, of course, this was followed by a gospel message. We and SportsReach have built up a good friendship with these lads. At the beginning of the week, we had prayed for God to do the unexpected, and He answered! On the Sunday morning, in the back row of the chapel sat all these lads, probably the first time they've been to a church service. **Please pray for them.** Thank you, Lord, for another fantastic week.

STAINES SportsReach returned to Staines this August for the third time, arriving in force to run five days of both football and netball schools. We managed to muster **43 children**, some from Church families, but largely children of families who wouldn't normally grace the inside of a Church. The team of leaders provided by SportsReach were truly superb; they oozed their love not only for the sport they were instructing, but also their love of Jesus and a keenness to share their faith. The coaching and the game play were all very well organised and without exception the children really enjoyed their time playing football and netball. More importantly than that, the majority really enjoyed the bible times and talks; out of the group, **5 children asked Jesus to come into their lives** for the first time. It was a real blessing for us that many of the children from church families also declared their faith publicly for the first time (a real surprise to some of the parents!). All in all, **a great blessing**, worth it just for the reassurance of knowing our own children have got 'the message', but, as ever, **to see a child come to Christ for the first time is absolutely priceless.**

WRAY 37 children joined what one member of the church calls Wray's mission week as we see all these children coming and bringing their parents too. What a great opportunity to share about the love of Jesus and who Jesus is to each one of us. During the week the children were given the chance to think about who Jesus is to them and we saw 1 child go into group 1 (to find out more about Jesus) and the majority of children in group 2 (who are already Christians). Prayer is important before and during soccer schools but it is also important to **remember to pray for the children and their parents after the week is over;** to pray they will continue to think about who Jesus is to them, to pray that if they have questions they will find a suitable person to ask and to pray that they will become part of the church family and the family of God.

SANDHURST Just over 11 years ago, a passing comment was made to Liz about an outreach to young people through football. Feeling this may be God's leading for SBC, Liz rang Will Marsden. Soon after this Will and Sue came to visit and the rest as they say is history!

In 2003 our first Soccer School took place, then later netball and a group for older teens. The word spread to **Battle Baptist Church** and to **Union Chapel, Bethersden** who caught the vision and SportsReach is now well-established in those places. Our **Saturday Soccer** and **Ladies Netball League** are also a direct consequence of SportsReach coming to Sandhurst.

Many young people and adults have heard the gospel message since 2003 and many Christians have been encouraged in their walk with God.

CLAPHAM Yet again what a wonderful SportsReach we had. 54 children - 15 for Netball and 39 for Football. The sport was great but greater still were the meetings and Bible times. What **wonderful opportunities** we had to share the **Good News** with these precious young lives. Please pray for one young girl who had given her life to Christ at Wray Soccer School, pray that she will know a real assurance of faith in the coming days. Also pray for a young lad who has come into group 1, to learn more about becoming a Christian, many times. He knows the truth but is reluctant to make that final step of commitment. The Sunday awards ceremony was fantastic - much fun and fellowship were enjoyed. Sooty brought the gospel message to us and we pray that a seed will have been sown in many lives.

Thanks to all who encouraged the team through prayer and practical support. Whether making brews and providing coaches lunches, first aiding, toilet running, BBQ-ing or providing food, we worked as a team and to use a topical phrase **"We are better together!"**

GREAT ECCLESTON This year we went for the last week of the holidays instead of the first, and what a great week it was! Numbers were good, weather was great, and children made a decision to follow Jesus! And one thing that we are really giving thanks for is that 6 teenagers, from the soccer and netball school are now regularly coming along to youth club on a Friday evening! Praise God and please continue to pray for these young people.

