

### MAY 23<sup>rd</sup> - MAY 29<sup>th</sup> - AT HOME

This week seemed to disappear very quickly - and I spent time at home, met up with friends and participated in a memorial service at Walworth Methodist Church for a Ghanaian Methodist Minister, whom I had known well.

### MAY 30<sup>th</sup> - JUNE 7<sup>th</sup> - DUBAI

I travelled to Dubai on May 30<sup>th</sup> and returned on June 7<sup>th</sup> - staying with my son and daughter-in-law who are both teaching there.

I had been to Dubai for Jeremy and Sophie's wedding in 2011, but did not have much time to visit the sites. This week was a different experience, living with them in their home, seeing the school where they teach and looking around the country. Taking an open top deck bus trip and listening to the commentary, I understood more about Dubai's history and about the transformation of the desert settlement into the crowded modern and high-tech place it now is. With its skyscrapers and enormous shopping malls, its iconic sports stadia and luxurious hotels and beaches it really is an astounding place and obviously uses the most up to date technology and methods for its 21<sup>st</sup> century life.



*View from a Waterside Restaurant in Dubai*



I included the desert safari during my stay, and saw how the environment originally looked before the economy became oil rich in the United Arab Emirates. Though now, in Dubai, the income from oil is only a small percentage of its national wealth -with about 90% being produced from its financial services and trade.

## JUNE 7<sup>th</sup> - JUNE 30<sup>th</sup> - BACK IN CLAPHAM

During the last month of the sabbatical it had been my intention to complete the other aim of my prospectus, which was to improve my computer skills. I'd already had one session with a tutor, before the sabbatical started. However, I had not completed the Superintendents' Skills for Supervision course and had been told that the written work for this - about 3,000 words consisting of a completed journal, a reflection on a verbatim report and a summary of what had been learnt - was needed by mid-June. I had asked for an extension of the original deadline, as I knew my travelling would be occupying my time and thoughts and had been told that if the written work was not submitted by this generously extended deadline, then I would not be able to say that I had completed the course.

This written work took much longer than I had thought it would and occupied the major part of my first week back in Clapham.

It made me realize that my thought processes were not in the routine mode - and by the time the written work had been completed I felt as though I needed to re-adjust so that I would be able to come back at the beginning of July ready to resume my normal ministry pattern.

Consequently I didn't undertake any more computer lessons, for as well as being occupied unexpectedly with the submission for the skills for supervision course I had also spent quite a bit of money on my travels, which would have made the £40 a session fee a bit more difficult to find.

I went to three evening meetings - a Labour Party meeting at the Town Hall, a meeting of the Clapham Society and the Rotary President's Valedictory Evening at Reigate. I also had the opportunity to spend a lot of time reflecting on my sabbatical experiences and thinking about my ministry and my personal plans for retirement.

I went to the Church Office on Monday July 1<sup>st</sup> - to try and catch up with all that had happened since April 1<sup>st</sup>.



*Pupils at the Christian Restoration School, Trench Town,  
Kinaston, Jamaica*

# *THANKS*

For all those who enabled this three month sabbatical to take place -

**The Methodist Church - both Connexionally and District-wise**

**The Sabbatical Group District Committee**

**The Circuit** - with special thanks to Rev Arlington and colleagues, the Circuit Stewards and the Sabbatical Support Group

**The Officers and members at Clapham Methodist Church** - for managing perfectly well without my being around, for giving me such a generous financial help and for all your interest, support and encouragement.

**Catherine and Dave** and all my family members for their concern, care and practical support and for putting me up in Dubai.

**The Visiting Preachers** - who ensured the Sunday Services were so well led and for **David James** who helped with the Pastoral Visiting.

**Clapham Churches Together** - for supplying preachers, for organizing the trip to Rome and giving such welcomed friendship.

**The hosts in Jamaica** - who freely gave me accommodation and who showed me around and introduced me to so many interesting people and interesting places.

**All who helped to ensure a worthwhile and thoroughly enjoyable Sabbatical.**

*Norman Grigg - July 2013*