

# Eastern Winter Study

## December 26-29, 2014

Mary Benson

**T**HE UK EASTERN Winter Study was a new venture for 2014, organised by a group of eight brethren and sisters, and supported by the Norwich Ecclesia. It took place during the winter holiday period in a former stately home in the heart of rural Norfolk.

Letton Hall is now a Christian Conference Centre, but its present owners have preserved much of its original grandeur and period character. As such, it was a lovely setting for around fifty or so brethren and sisters, both full-time residents and day visitors, to share a long weekend of study and fellowship around the word of God. Even the wild weather of the first night we were there—with a cold winter wind that found all the cracks in the old sash window frames in the bedrooms – could not cool the warmth of renewed friendships and lively discussion; and the helpful staff did their best to ensure we were as comfortable as possible.

The cosy library with its roaring fire proved a draw for young and old alike during free time, providing plenty of space to talk about the studies, to play board games, do jigsaw puzzles, or to amuse the toddlers. As we were self-catering, all were involved at some point in the kitchen too, stirring the



porridge, scrubbing the potatoes or washing the dishes. The bright, sunny Sunday afternoon beckoned some of us out to enjoy a walk in the grounds and the surrounding area.

The theme of the weekend was “Jesus’ teaching about life”, being based on Luke 12-14. Brother Eric Marshall from King’s Lynn was the study leader, and his aim was to get us all to read more carefully and think more deeply about a section of scripture we might think we know quite well, and to take on board the implications and challenges for our own lives. Through Brother Eric’s thought-provoking workshop-style approach we were led to investigate, for instance, just what

“treasure in heaven” might be, and how it can be ‘laid up’; what the precise meanings of some of the Lord’s parables are, and what implications they had for disciples of those days and still have for ourselves; and to ask how we might count the cost of discipleship, and the importance of doing so.

The daily readings were taken during the afternoons in small groups, and this ensured some lively discussion. There was also an opportunity in the evening for informal singing of hymns and other items for those who enjoy gathering around the piano.

On Saturday evening Brother John Woodall presented an illustrated talk on “Personal



perspectives on conscientious objection”, and it was most interesting to be reminded of the stand that was made by our brethren against military service, as seen through the personal accounts of some of those brethren. There were many that were thankful for the foundation that was laid by brethren in the First World War establishing that Christadelphians are genuine conscientious objectors on the grounds of their allegiance to Christ and their citizenship of the kingdom of heaven. Our young people would be well advised to consider their position should such a situation arise again before our Lord returns; and we all need to think about the implications for our lives in other areas where we might have to make a stand against the ungodliness of this world.



Being such a new venture there were areas where it was felt things might be improved in the organisation of the weekend, but despite any small niggles all went home feeling that an enjoyable and worthwhile time had been spent amongst like-minded brethren and sisters around God’s word. The

Eastern Winter Study certainly proved successful, thanks to the hard work of the organisers and all involved; and if the Lord remains away we shall very much look forward to next time, God willing!

*The committee has received valuable feedback to help with plans for the future and are working towards plans for 2015, when Brother Peter Forbes from Glenfield will give talks based on the time of the Judges. The dates will be December 27-30, God willing, and bookings will open in May.*