

NEWS & VIEWS

***The Free Church
Hampstead Garden Suburb***



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

PLEASE TAKE ONE

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

(United Reformed and Baptist)
Central Square, London, NW11 7AG
www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk

Sunday Services:	<i>11 a.m. (and 6.30 p.m. when announced) Holy Communion is celebrated at Morning Worship on the first Sunday of every month. The Junior Church meets at 11am every Sunday</i>
Minister and Pastoral Emergencies Contact	Minister Revd Aled Jones 020 4531 2055 Minister@hgsfreechurch.org.uk
Correspondence Secretary	Penny Trafford 020 8959 3405 Secretary@hgsfreechurch.org.uk
Pulpit Secretary	Carole Lindfield derekandcarole.lindfield@earlblue.com
Treasurer	Joe Fryer 07814 532049 Treasurer@hgsfreechurch.org.uk
Lettings Officer	Eddie Hayden lettings@hgsfreechurch.org.uk

Safeguarding Statement

Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church believes that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all those who are vulnerable (children, young people and vulnerable adults). We expect all of our leaders, volunteers and those who use our premises to share this commitment and value the support of those who worship here in achieving this.

***The Elders (Trustees), Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church
January 2016***

NEWS & VIEWS

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB
FREE CHURCH
Central Square,
London NW11 7AG



NO 799

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

Dear Friends

The Manse, August 2024

Our summer church family barbeque turned out to be an excellent success, and the weather in North London was dry and mild despite the deluge 215 miles away in Paris. Around fifty church members and their families — as well as representatives from the many groups which use space in the church and the Northway halls — enjoyed a feast as we spent time together in the hall garden. Many of us then watched the (drenched!) opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics on a screen in the small hall. I am so very grateful to all those who made our evening together a success. We are experiencing our first full summer in England as a family for nearly thirty years, and I glad to say that the Manse garden has enjoyed a good deal more fine weather recently. The General Election is behind us, and the Olympics and Paralympics will soon be a memory. I do hope that *News & Views* readers will be able to find some time for relaxation at this time of year.

September will, of course, bring a welcome return to our regular church activities. As a church we are also embracing Jo Kendrick's initiative to invite service veterans and others with mental health needs into the church for sessions of community hymn singing. SingAlive is planned to take place in the church on the following dates during the autumn from 2 until 3.30 p.m.: 12th September, 10th October, 14th November and 5th December. In addition to extending an annual welcome to the families of Henrietta Barnett School admissions candidates on 3rd and 4th September, we are teaming up with the school for a number of Tea & Tech sessions in the church. Everyone is welcome to come along between 1 and 2 p.m. on 17th September, 17th October or 15th November. Girls from the school are volunteering to give help with phones, tablet computers and laptops. So bring your devices, and get the answers you need over a cup of tea.

Later on in September — on the weekend of the 21st and 22nd — the Free Church will once again open its doors to visitors to the Open House Festival. This annual event is a London-wide festival that opens up and celebrates the city’s architecture, special places and neighbourhoods, with free open days and events taking place across all 33 London boroughs between 14th and 22nd September.

As I intimated in last month’s *News & Views* and at the church meeting on 14th July, the autumn will also give opportunities for members of the Free Church family to give their input to the church life review. Please come along to the first of these discussion meetings on Saturday morning, 28th September between 10.30 and 12.30. This first get together will help to set the direction for the rest of the church life review process.

Our church meeting on 14th July also came to a decision about the scheme to renew the audio-visual system within the church. We decided that we will install a desk at the back of the church to house the necessary equipment, and that there will be a new sound system and video screens facing the congregation, as well as new fixed positions for the live feed cameras. The vestries will also have television screens, which will be looped to the church’s AV system. My hope is that the necessary electrical and installation work can be carried out within the next few months.

When we gathered together for our Holy Communion service on 4th August, we listened to Jesus’s familiar words being read once again: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6 v. 35). He tells the crowd who have followed him to Capernaum that faithfulness to God means “[believing] in him whom he has sent” (v. 29). As disciples of our Saviour Jesus, then, we rejoice in the fact that he satisfies our every need as we believe in him.

The Neath-born poet Anna Laetitia Waring first published her hymn ‘In Heavenly Love Abiding’ (*Hymns & Psalms* 678) in her 1850 collection *Hymns and Melodies* under the title ‘Safety in God’. The latter two verses are, of course, based on Psalm 23 v. 4, but the hymn begins with a reference to John 15 v. 10: “If you keep my commands, you will remain [AV: abide] in my love”.

In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here:
The storm may roar without me,

My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

As we reflect on these words, we rejoice that God our Saviour keeps those who trust in him safe — ‘for nothing changes here’.

With my best wishes,

Aled Jones



The Henrietta Barnett School **'Tea & tech'**

Need help with your devices / phones/ tablets or laptops?

Coming soon from The Henrietta Barnett School

'Tea and Tech' lunchtime sessions at The Free Church, Central Square

Bring your devices and get the answers you need over a cup of tea

Time 1pm – 2pm

Tuesday 17 September 2024
Thursday 17 October 2024
Friday 15 November 2024

The flyer features several icons: a tree logo for the school, a chocolate cookie, a cup of tea, a red polka-dot teapot, a smartphone, and a laptop.



Dates For Your Diary

HB Examination Days

The examination days for Henrietta Barnett School are on Tuesday Sept 3rd and Wednesday September 4th. As usual we shall be opening the church during those days from 8 – 6pm to offer refreshments to the candidates and families. A rota will be put up on the noticeboard at the back of the church with two hour slots for people to help. Please also bring cakes and goodies to sell.

Open House Weekend

The church will be open as part of the London Open House on Sat Sept 21st 10.30 – 6pm and on Sunday Sept 22nd 1- 4pm.

There will be a rota at the back of the church to sign up as stewards.

Memorial Concert for Masa Tayama

Sunday Sept 22nd 4.30pm – 7pm

Rhiana Henderson, Masa's wife, is arranging a Memorial Concert for Masa which will be a varied classical programme with performers, all with their own connection to Masa, and each one speaking a little about how they had known him and well as playing a tribute. Masa was a great friend to the Free Church and we are sure many of the church family would like to come and hear of his life and support Rhiana.

Church Life Review Saturday Sept 28th 10.30am-12.30pm

The purpose of the Church Life Review is to have time to consider how we see the future of our church family, our vision and mission, our relationship to the community around us, our challenge with our church buildings and much more.

Please come and take part in the discussions the first of which will be on Saturday morning 28th September.

Harvest

Harvest Festival is on Sunday Oct 6th followed by lunch in church.

“Render Unto Caesar”

The incident recounted in all of the synoptic gospels of the trap set for Jesus by the Pharisees (or, in Luke, by lawyers) [Mark 12:13-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26.] in which Jesus says those words is, perhaps, one of the most misunderstood passages in the New Testament.

The Pharisees attempted to trap Jesus by asking Him if taxes should be paid to the Roman authorities. If he had said no, the Romans would have arrested Him and if he had said yes, he would have lost credibility.

Jesus did not say pay your taxes and he did not say always obey the authorities; neither did he say that God’s kingdom was not of this world – that there are two kingdoms, secular and religious.

Jesus does not reply “render unto Caesar whatever he asks for”. He only said “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”.

Furthermore, he could have left it there - but he did not do so. He added “and render unto God the things that are God’s”.

What is due to Caesar is nothing compared to what is due to God. God is sovereign over all, including Caesar. God is owed supreme allegiance. The claims of God always have precedence over the claims of Caesar – over all the claims of the rulers in this world. Where the two claims clash, Christians must always obey God, even if it costs them their life.

Two further points – the question asked by Jesus – “whose likeness appears on the coin?” – echoes Genesis 1:26 - *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (eikon in both instances)*. It is not God’s likeness on the coin but Caesar’s.

And the other part of Jesus’s question – “whose inscription?” – uses the Greek word *epigraphe* which is only used elsewhere in Mark in referring to the ironic inscription above Jesus on the cross – “the King of the Jews”.

Note also that Jesus does not carry the Roman coin (the denarius) – but the hypocritical Pharisees do – even though it has the sacrilegious inscription – “*Augustus Tiberius Son of the Divine Augustus*”.

Ashok Ghosh

Eats and Drinks galore -the Church Barbecue

Fifty members of the congregation and representatives of church user groups gathered in the church hall garden on Friday 26th July to enjoy a BBQ. We also welcomed former church director of music Ken Dougall and his new wife visiting from New Zealand, and Ken kindly played the organ for us at the next Sunday service. Guests contributed to a wonderful array of salads and desserts and Guy, Richard and his team did the cooking. Many thanks to all volunteers who set up and tidied away afterwards.

Julia Fryer

..... Goodness me - we know how to keep the multitude happy on a balmy summer's evening.....invite them to the garden of the Church Hall, ply them with delicious cold drinks, and offer them lots of gorgeous food to eat! What a spread awaited us as we arrived, hungry, thirsty, looking for friends to talk to, meeting new visitors.

Tables were soon filled, extra chairs were squeezed into place when friends arrived, introductions were made as they brought partners, people who use our premises during the week came along and introductions were made. There was a happy buzz of conversation.

And the food! Many people had contributed, many tastes were represented: some preferred a light salad, others a more substantial meal, sausages, meat patties in a bun, egg sandwiches; all enjoyed the wide variety of salads, with sauces and mayonnaise. Then the sweet course! Large bowls of strawberries, raspberries, bilberries, chopped apples, all topped off with a choice of creams and yoghurts, and washed down with such a variety of fruit juices as had not been seen before!

But there was an alternative attraction to be had. In the Hall on an enormous screen we could watch the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, the stately line of boats travelling down the Seine, all with an excited gathering of people, even in the rain (it does rain in Paris!), all having a whale of a time, some boats enormous, holding huge teams of people ready to take part in the Games, other boats tiny, with perhaps only a handful of folk, representing countries I'd never heard of!

So, a happy evening was had by all. It was indeed a cornucopia, a feeding of the five thousand of an evening - a Church family of an evening.

Joan Holton



Paris 2024 and the Eric Liddell Centenary

As the Paris 2024 Olympic Games began, Laura Wright was in Edinburgh for the Songs of Praise broadcast on 28th July to celebrate the faith of Olympians and Paralympians past and present. At St Giles' Cathedral, she joined a special service to commemorate Eric Liddell, 100 years after he dramatically won gold at the Paris 1924 Olympics. The story of Eric's 400 metre triumph was later made famous in the 1981 Oscar-winning film, *Chariots of Fire*. Eric's eldest daughter, Patricia who lives in Canada, where the family settled, told Laura about her father's great faith and shared the story of him choosing not to run in his favoured 100m as the heats fell on a Sunday. Liddell competed in and won gold in the 400 metre race, setting an Olympic and World record. Liddell said, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure". Prior to the race Liddell's trainer handed him a note that read "Him that honoureth me, I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30)

In 1925 Liddell became a science teacher at the Anglo-Chinese Christian college in Tianjin, run by the London Missionary Society. He was ordained as a minister in 1932 while home on furlough in Edinburgh and took Bible studies at his home church, Morningside Congregational Church (now united with Church of Scotland). Here there is a stained glass window commemorating his Olympic Gold race. This year the Church is opening a peace garden in Liddell's memory. When Japan invaded China in 1937 Liddell continued his missionary work in Xiaochang hospital cycling across hostile areas to reach sick people. In 1943 he was interned in a Japanese prison camp and in 1945 died of a brain tumour in the camp. When he was dying he asked for the Salvation Army band to play 'Be Still My Soul' outside his window.

I have always been interested in Liddell's life story as my great Aunt Polly Barraclough was a missionary in China from 1891 to her death from typhoid in 1909. I have inherited a photo of her and her last letter written from China. The Princess Royal is Patron of the Eric Liddell 100 initiative and she reflected on Eric's achievements and values, and what they can teach young people today. The EL100 includes a programme of events and activities to recognise and celebrate Liddell's life, sporting and community service and an exhibition at the Edinburgh Festival. The exhibition will also travel to Hong Kong and then to mainland China. Liddell is a celebrated figure in China; a foreigner who put the needs of Chinese people before his own. Having been born to Scottish missionaries in China he is regarded as China's first Olympic medallist. *Jenny Stonhold*

The URC General Assembly 2024

The General Assembly 2024 (GA 24) of the United Reformed Church (URC) recently took place, bringing together representatives from congregations across the UK as well as ecumenical guests. During the four-day gathering, urgent issues facing the church and society were addressed with thoughtful discussion and prayerful discernment.

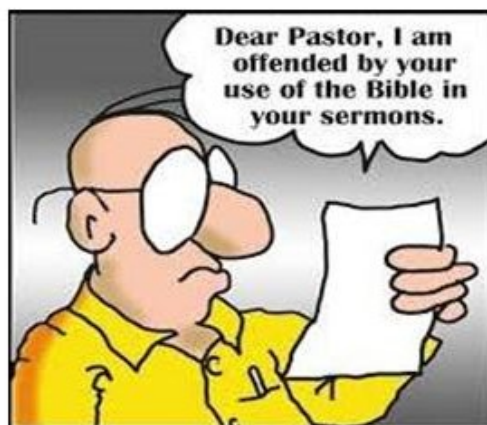
Key topics deliberated included: the Church's environmental policy, which seeks to encourage the Church to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, emphasizing our shared responsibility as stewards of God's creation; the importance of embracing diversity and inclusivity within our congregations; issues affecting Ministers and ministries, including pastorates and scopings, and the Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR), which was introduced as a tool for churches to have an annual reflection on the direction they are going in, and to help ministers review their own call and service.

GA 24 also reflected on ways to deepen our commitment to social justice, addressing systemic inequalities and standing in solidarity with marginalised communities in our society, with a report on the work of the Legacies of Slavery steering group, which has overseen the provision of anti-racism training to those in positions of leadership in the URC.

A highlight of GA 24 was the Community Awards awarded to six church projects offering outstanding service to their communities. Another highlight was the Moderator's address. The Moderator, Revd. Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson poignantly reminded the Church, "In everything we do, we are required to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. And we can do this together."

As delegates returned to their local churches at the end of GA 24, the hope is that they carry with them a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to living out the values of love, compassion, and justice that lie at the heart of the URC.

Muna Leván-Harris, Elder of HGSFC



The Epistle of James

Keeping the faith in stressful times

The seven New Testament letters following Hebrews — James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude — have often been designated as the General Epistles. This term goes back to the early church historian Eusebius (c. 265–340 AD), who in his *Ecclesiastical History* first referred to these seven letters as Catholic (meaning ‘universal’) Letters.

These letters may be said, for the most part, to be addressed to general audiences rather than to specific persons or localised groups. By contrast, Paul addresses his letters to such recipients as the saints at Philippi, or the churches of Galatia, or Timothy or Titus.

As Eusebius noted long ago, one interesting fact connected with the General Letters is that most of them were at one time among the disputed books of the New Testament. James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John and Jude were all questioned extensively before being admitted to the canon of Scripture. James — the epistle under discussion today — was only accepted as canonical at the end of the 4th Century.

More recently, James was severely castigated by the 16th Century German reformer, Martin Luther. He characterises the letter an ‘epistle of straw’, and wrote that James ‘mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture’. Reading James 2: 14–26, Luther understood the passage to claim that good works should be put before faith: “faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (v. 17). This section of the epistle, which apocryphally led Luther to tear the letter of James from every Bible he came across, has often been seen as a direct attack on Paul’s central doctrine of justification by faith, whereby people are saved by their faith, not by their deeds.

But it is reasonable to argue that the author of James was using the terms ‘works’ and ‘faith’ in a different way from Paul. In James, ‘works’ could mean acts of charity, rather than Paul’s sense of strict (but not necessarily sincere) adherence to the letter of the Jewish Law. Similarly, ‘faith’ in James may simply mean belief in the existence of God, rather than the total commitment to and trust in God that is Paul’s understanding.

Viewed in this light, the issue in James becomes less theological than practical: essentially, the author is discussing the merits of hospitality in a Christian, as James stresses in verses 15 and 16. ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

Paul and James's use of key terms with different meanings, and the different problems with which they are concerned result in their arguments passing each other's by, like ships in the night. Either each is unaware of what the other is saying, or one of them is responding to a misunderstood form of the other's teaching.

Luther's polemical attitude to James has, though, been enormously influential in Protestant scholarship. As a result, the epistle has been left on the margins of Christian teaching since the Reformation.

The letter of James is traditionally attributed to James, the eldest of the brothers of Jesus listed in Matthew 13: 55, and the leader of the early Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 15: 13). There are indications that it may date as early as the forties AD. It is distinctly Jewish in nature, which suggests that it was composed when the church was still predominantly Jewish. Furthermore, it reflects a simple church order — officers of the church are called 'elders' (ch. 5, v. 14) and 'teachers' (3: 1). No reference is made to the controversy over Gentile circumcision, and the term συναγωγή ('synagogue' or 'meeting') is used to designate either the meeting-place of the church, or the act of meeting itself (2: 2).

If this early dating is correct, the epistle of James is the earliest of all the New Testament writings, with the possible exception of Galatians. This early attribution is certainly viable, although many scholars think that the work may have been written by someone else, and that it dates from the end of the 1st Century AD. The letter is addressed to 'the twelve tribes scattered among the nations' (1: 1), a reference to the traditional tribes making up the nation of Israel, and so, like the Letter to the Hebrews, it is probably directed at Jewish converts to Christianity. A Jewish audience would be in keeping with the obviously Jewish nature of the letter (e.g. the use of the Hebrew title for God, Κύριος Σαβαώθ, 'Lord of Hosts', 5:4).

Although the style contains many characteristics reminiscent of Hebrew or Aramaic, the letter is written in good Greek, and has many points of contact with literary and philosophical forms which were current in the Hellenistic world. That the recipients were Christians is clear from 2: 1, '... as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ', and 5: 7–8, '... the Lord's coming ...' It has been plausibly suggested that these were believers from the early Jerusalem church who, after Stephen's death were scattered as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Syrian Antioch (Acts 8: 1 and 11: 19).

This would account for James's references to trials and oppression, his intimate knowledge of the readers and the authoritative nature of the letter. As leader of the Jerusalem church, James wrote as a pastor to instruct and encourage his dispersed people in the face of their difficulties.

The author's prime concern, then, is the unity and harmony of the community that is evidently under a degree of stress. The letter emphasises the positive value of the testing of faith and endurance, and the danger to the wellbeing of the community that arises from gossip, backbiting and envy. Rich people who seek to behave as if they were superior to their poorer fellows are roundly condemned.

The letter implies that the believers who receive the letter were mainly poor people who were caught up in a situation of considerable social tension. Oppressed and taken advantage of by wealthy landlords (5: 4–6), and hauled into court by rich people (2: 6) who also scorn their Christian faith (2:7), the readers are exhorted to be patient and reminded that the coming of their Lord, the judge is imminent and that delivery is at hand (5: 7–11).

In the meantime, the trials they are suffering are to be met with steadfast endurance, so that their Christian character might reach full maturity and their reward, 'the crown of life', be secured (1: 2–4, 12).

But while the situation of the church in the world provides the background for the letter, James's concern is with the world's values getting into the church. He warns his readers that 'friendship with the world is enmity with God' (4: 4), and highlights as one key ingredient of 'pure and undefiled religion' that Christians should 'keep themselves unstained from the world' (1:27).

James has a simple plea — 'Do not merely listen to the word ... Do what it says' (1: 22) — and he knows that it is often questionable whether this injunction is actually being lived out among Christian believers. He presents a call for profound moral earnestness through his powerfully simple call for repentance, for action, and for a consistent Christian lifestyle where concern for the poor and oppressed is central.

Stress is placed here on the keeping and living out of faith in difficult and testing circumstances; this is urged both in face of a hostile, alien world and ultimate testing, and also in relation to mundane, everyday difficulties and temptations. James carries forward some of the central aspects of Jesus's message and teaching, including from the Sermon on the Mount. In this letter is preserved something of the vision of the Kingdom and the new age — the gospel is on the side of the poor, and God is on the side of the vulnerable.

However, of course, James needs to ruthlessly expose the glaring contradictions of the church and individual Christians, especially the lack of correlation between faith and practice — 'Do not merely listen to the word ... Do what it says' — and a church threatened by the fact that its everyday life can often contradict its profession of Christian faith.

The need to hear this message anew is acute in our modern, secular, pluralistic age. If we are to live out our calling, then doing what God's word in Jesus asks of us is as crucial today as it always has been. *Aled Jones*

I HOLD AND AM HELD

Another strange title you'll be thinking - but these words are the inscription beneath a stained-glass window depicting a hand holding up, and onto a cross. This window was above a staircase in a Baptist College in South Northwood and was mentioned by the Rev Richard Littledale in a daily BBC Service (18th July). The theme was 'striving ahead and forgetting what's behind.' The caption, below the window, conveyed the hope that He who calls us, will also hold us, enabling us to look forward to things ahead and not just things behind. Christian hope is the propelling force of moving forward. Richard said, "Whatever today holds, hope is the siren call above the clamour - that shaft of light through the gloom. Hope is not so much to cling onto but to push through, knowing that God is greater than life and all other things." Richard, a Baptist minister, has himself known great personal sadness in losing his wife, Fiona, after a seven year battle with cancer. Out of his grief, he and his family set up the Fiona Fund, a charity to provide grants to nurses who have demonstrated a personal commitment to educate and develop their skills. Richard explained that Fiona dedicated her life to empower others to be the best they could be: "Sometimes this idea of always striving forward can be so challenging for we all need some security, some sameness about us. Is it too challenging for us? Does this really put our faith to the test?" On 5th July in the Service Canon Edwin Counsell's theme was 'Faith not adversity - Everyday faith.' He spoke about how the Ukrainians in his area were putting on an art display, how out of their suffering (many losing all they had), they were able to display the joys and sorrows around the war, how they wanted to share their culture, their skills and their faith. Edwin likened this to chapter 3 in Ecclesiastes; could this disruption in their lives be likened to "To everything there is a season" - "A season for everything under Heaven." Is this what Richard implied when he said we must strive forward and not look back?

As we grow older and life becomes more and more challenging, I have to adapt and think, take one thing at a time. Every morning, my first prayers of the day are those of praise - of thankfulness; then I ask for forgiveness for things I have done which hurt others and the things I have left undone which I should have done etc, but thirdly, and equally important, I ask for patience as I become more bent and objects all seem to grow taller, when life needs to slow down to go at my speed - patience, as life becomes more demanding and challenging! It's at times such as these when I remind myself of that statement under the stained-glass window. I hold and am

held. Yes, we must move forward but we still have that essential attachment with our Lord.

One of the most encouraging choruses I find was written by Annie Johnson Flint (1866 - 1932). She suffered from a severe form of arthritis (how I resonate with that) but that didn't stop her succeeding – by working hard even into the night; she walked everywhere selling pies earning



money and making a store where people could buy her items. Her story is told by her grand-daughter Maya Angelou who grew up in the 1930's in St Louis, Missouri and faced the same problems as her grandmother as racism was still flourishing and it was very hard for people of colour to make a name for themselves. But that didn't discourage her, or her grandmother. The sentiments in this chorus, have been proved time and time again and I hope you can take strength from them too.

He Giveth More Grace

He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labours increase;
To added afflictions He added His mercy,
To multiplied trials He multiplied peace.

Chorus

*His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundaries known unto man;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed and the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Chorus.....

Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, available,
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.

Chorus.....

Yes, I hold, and am held in His everlasting Love.

Rosemary Birch

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Some of our church family are no longer able to come to church, but are connected to us via the live streaming and receive visits from our Minister and church friends. Two such are Michael Lay and Isobel Redmond who have been asked to write about themselves for us. Please remember all those who are housebound in your prayers.

Revd Michael Lay

When I renewed my membership of the Free Church in 2020, I knew that I should not be worshipping again in person with you all. But now, by the dedication and expertise of your volunteers, and the miracle (to me!) of YouTube, I can share your worship each week.

I live at a nursing home in Edgware, Henry Nihill House, where I am very well looked after. The Home is run by Anglican Benedictines, although there is only one nun now, and no priests, but services continue regularly. When there is a priest, we have smells and bells, the R.C. Missal with Hail Marys and more bells, the Anglican creed, prayer for the Pope (always), the king, archbishop and bishops (almost always), and when the right priest is here, for leaders of the Free Churches. I have to remind myself that the greater part of the Church has worshipped like this! The one ministerial thing I do is to say Grace at lunch!

Isobel Redmond – A Church Elder and Nurse

My Christian journey started in the Church of Scotland. From the age of five I attended the Alyth Barony Parish Church. At the age of twelve I taught five-year-olds in Sunday School. Four years later I became a church member. I was fortunate to experience the ministry of Tommy Torrance. He left to become a professor at Edinburgh University and became a very well known academic. Tommy was succeeded by Graham Hardy.

At age eighteen I left home and went to train as a nurse at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. In Edinburgh I attended the famous Greyfriars Church of Scotland, made famous by the dog Greyfriars Bobby. The minister was Stuart Lowden. There I became part of the youth fellowship.

Those training at the Royal Infirmary were entitled to a special Pelican Badge if they stayed for four years, which I did. It was then time to engage in midwifery training which was undertaken at the Western General Hospital. Sadly, it wasn't for me. I left after six months! Another

specialism called and I undertook TB training at the Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds. Marvellously a cure for the disease was discovered and the specialism was no longer required so I moved on to a medical ward and became a sister.

Whilst in Leeds I became a member and then elder at the Leeds Presbyterian Church where Albert Cooper was the minister.

There is a famous hospital in Leeds, known affectionately as 'Jimmy's'. I moved to it and was fortunate to meet my husband Joe there. We married and moved south, for his work, settling in Orpington where I joined the then St John's Presbyterian Church and became an elder there.

I was blessed with a son, Nigel. He was born in 1970 in Farnborough Hospital.

Further training called at the Royal College of Nursing in London; this paved the way for me to become the Director of Nurse Education in Bromley. I remained there until my retirement.

Sadly, after a nine-year illness, in 1987, my husband died. Friends in the church were incredibly supportive and helpful.

Derek Lindfield was minister of St John's now United Reformed Church and I served as an elder with him. A friendship formed with both Derek and Carole, and I continued to see them, when they moved on. On a visit to their then home in the Suburb the idea of moving to North London was sown. My son Nigel, his wife and children lived in Muswell Hill, and it seemed sensible to move nearer to them. Once established in North London it also seemed sensible to attend the Free Church and I became a member. I am most grateful to everyone who has made me feel so welcome.



From the Archives

1934

The two extracts from 1934 are happy and carefree, a treasure hunt and scouts travelling and camping in Scotland. The Chief, Lone Pine, was Stanley Wilson, father our church member Tony Wilson.



From Free Church Magazine August 1934

Treasure hunt

Those people who saw the announcement concerning the treasure hunt arranged for July 18 and who thought it involved a race, but did not trouble to find out, not only made a mistake but also missed a most enjoyable evening's entertainment.

The rain for which everyone had been praying chose that evening for its arrival, but the main downpour had the grace to wait until we had started on our way. Thirteen cars took part in the hunt and the levy of a shilling per head raised the sum of two pounds, thirteen shillings which will be duly passed on to the Bazaar Fund treasurer.

Three cars were successful in obtaining all the 'treasures' and if any further events of this nature are staged they will have to be made more difficult.

It might be of interest to record the list of articles which the competitors were required to obtain. They were: a coconut, St Jude's magazine, the signature of a postman, a baby's dummy, a bus or tram ticket bearing four consecutive numbers, a warming pan, a copy of 'The Manchester Guardian', a fish-head, an ear of wheat, a football.

The evening terminated at the Hall, where results were compared but owing to the number of claimants to the prize no *real* winners could be found.

Entertainments Committee.

From Free Church Magazine September 1934

Our Scouts' Scottish Tour By One of the Scouts

What a great tour - in fact the finest yet! Four hundred miles by train and then 200 miles by steamer around the Western Isles of Scotland through the famous Caledonian Canal. About 23 of us left Euston in the evening of Friday July 27, and arrived on Saturday afternoon at Tarbet, where we held the first part of our camp. Our site was on a hill looking straight down Loch Lomond with Ben Lomond rising from the opposite bank. It was

here we learned what a Scottish burn really is, its beauty and its usefulness. We rigged up a "Heath Robinson" arrangement whereby we lifted water out of the burn straight into our kitchen.

On Tuesday July 31, we moved on to Crainlarich by coach (owing to the trek-cart party missing the train!) and from there to Oban by rail.

On the following Friday we went by the "Iona" paddle steamer to Fort William where we came within sight of Ben Nevis. We climbed the latter and were lucky enough to obtain the glorious view of a "Sea of Peaks". We moved to Fort Augustus on Tuesday by the "Gondolier" which travels to and from Inverness via the Caledonian Canal. Having failed in our quest for the Loch Ness Monster we made our own, a tree trunk contrivance with sheep's horns and shell eyes, which had to be held together by ropes. Nevertheless, as any Iroquois camper will tell you, it was the best monster ever seen on Britain's sunny (or otherwise) shores. Regarding the weather, at least half of the time was wet, but not that objectionable wetness which one so often finds in England. It became a standing joke that after it has rained for half a day the people of Scotland make the remark as to what a delightful day it has been.

On Thursday we reboarded the "Gondolier" and went through Loch Ness to Inverness which we left on Saturday afternoon, arriving in London on the morning of Sunday August 13.

This year's Chief in charge was Lone Pine. Mrs and Miss Hoyle were again in Camp with the Iroquois, Mrs Hoyle having completed her eleventh camp as quartermaster. This year she achieved a great triumph by producing food for our party at the psychological moment and in almost every conceivable circumstance.

Two Rovers helped to swell our numbers and shared the common duties.

1944

The second two extracts are again from World War Two. The 'flying bombs' mentioned were the V2 rockets or 'doodlebugs.' They were much feared in 1944 and did a great deal of damage. I personally remember the beginning of 'flying bombs' and being taken in great haste from school (Garden Suburb School) and sent to safety with relatives in rural Worcestershire for the time being.

From HGS Free Church News Letter August 1944

My Dear People

I hinted last month that the August Letter might be omitted, and so far as

the Suburb is concerned the hint might well become an actuality, but I believe that many of you who are away from London will be glad to have news from this part of the Home Front. There is no doubt about it, we live in the midst of dangers, and we have been reminded again and again of the uncertainty of life.



But up to this moment I am able to give a good report. The Suburb has had its experiences, but the congregation has thus far been untouched. Our buildings stand in what seems an unusually exposed position, but they still stand, and with hardly a window broken. Work has, of course, been disorganised and numbers reduced. People have gone to safer areas, and some who remain prefer not to meet even in diminished congregations, yet the Church is still very much alive and services are less affected than might have been expected. We are all learning to take precautions and most of us have altered our sleeping arrangements, but I find little unworthy fear and no suggestion of panic. We shall all be glad when the flying-bomb is mastered, but why should men overseas have all the danger and we be exempt? A sharp reminder of what war means deepens our sense of obligation to the fighting forces and our admiration of their years of service. One of these days there will be a great burst of praise for peace and victory and preservation. That is not yet, but there is real gratitude for daily mercies.

From HGS Free Church News Letter September 1944

My Dear People,

It is three weeks ago today since we left London and cycled to Cambridge. The first week was sunny and pleasant. The second week was so sultry and hot that when a suggestion came that we should spend a few days on the Yorkshire Moors we hesitated but came. We hesitated largely because we had intended to stay within easy reach of the Suburb. We came because we felt the bracing air of the North would set us up for winter. The weather has varied from summer heat to autumn rain and cold, but we know we made the right choice. A good many cobwebs have been blown away, and I think we see a little straighter.

Naturally, we have been thinking about five years ago. We were then in Scotland waiting for every broadcast and watching the gathering clouds of war. What fears were in our hearts as we set our faces towards England! What questions arose that first Sunday in September in Newcastle – a day



Doodlebug hits Archway November 1944

that will always live in my mind alongside an August day in 1914! We were not surprised when we reached the Suburb to find it nearly deserted, and those who were there busy filling sand bags and blacking out windows. The Church

was already closed and the Hall being prepared for such congregations as might assemble. Perhaps we shall turn South again this year with some apprehension – for the flying-bomb is still a menace. We are prepared to find that many are still evacuated and some who remain are tired and preoccupied. But deeper in our hearts will be a great confidence. It is natural that September 3rd is to be set aside as a special Day of Prayer, and I think the nation will decide to make it a special day of thanksgiving. The war is not yet fully won, but victory is in sight, and whether we think nationally or congregationally or personally, there is much to be thankful for. I imagine that even people who call themselves pagans and free-thinkers and secularists will feel disposed to take part in some service of praise on September 3rd.

Five solid years of war – and now the promise of peace shines before us! That is a challenge to look forward as well as backward, to prepare ourselves for the problems and privileges that await us. Everybody is trying to make plans, and we who are concerned for the future of the Church must think as hard as others.

Frank H Ballard

Anne Lowe



JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

I've just woken up from my mid-morning nap (this is O.K. at my age). I briefly thought it was the 1930's, I was confronted by banner headlines in the I Newspaper: UK has three years to get ready for war, new Army chief warns. It cites the 'Axis of upheaval' (the usual four countries) as what makes up the "enemy." I was still a 'twinkle in my parents' eye' when similar words could have been used before the start of what we know as World War II. Hopefully it is not too great an expectation that common sense will prevail this time. Lessons will have been learnt and, most particularly, that the horrors that a conflict will bring will not be overcome by expediency and hate. It is certainly a fact that the animosity which prevailed back then, has been replaced by an innate understanding of what 'total conflict' would mean. Back to today which is grey and a bit miserable but - hey! 'full of hope and expectation.'

On the face of it the news headline "**Toy World welcomes the first blind Barbies**" does not rank in the forefront of important information, but does give an indication that we are living in more settled times, where a mere banality makes a headline in a serious newspaper (the "I" does seem to fall into this category although it is a relative newcomer.)

Back to reality - although sometimes it is difficult to separate the banal from the "definitely important." I never know when I come to the end of the first part of the articles and go onto newspaper cuttings what I'm going to find! The publicity (which legally has to be accurate) says: "It has features that allows accessible play for children with sight loss." Presumably that means it makes a noise but, even more importantly, that it looks like a visually impaired woman.

A headline (very appropriately under 'Environment') caught my eye: "**Warming is a threat to half of Kew's trees.**" Probably not a necessary explanation but it does mean half of the 11,000 trees at Kew, and not just their trunks and branches, that is 5500 trees, a mini forest in-itself! This warning comes from the experience of the drought of 2022 which killed more than 400 trees (a considerable percentage of the total). The ongoing importance of this is realized when you consider Kew is probably the best established botanical garden in the world (by age and content). They say 'to be forewarned is to be forearmed.' One can only hope that it works in this situation: one thing is certain - every effort will be made by Kew's expert gardeners.

When I first came to London in 1960 (I was much younger then!), I lodged



within walking distance of Kew Gardens: it then cost four (ie four old pence) for entry, so I often visited. For Rosemary, this peaceful and fascinating attraction was equally appealing, but had to be balanced with a tight money budget which made travelling more difficult. Indeed, on one occasion, having only the fare for one way, she walked the bus route from Paddington to Kew, with the nightmare obstacle of a pedestrian navigating the Shepherd's Bush intersection!

Research (perhaps the most interesting word in the English language) shows that, "facially expressive monkeys are likely to be tolerant leaders." The article continues, "Analysing 66 Rhesus Macaques, scientists found social connections were stronger and more evenly distributed in groups where the dominant male is more expressive." I think this applies to humans as well.

Conservation can succeed. Information published by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) highlights successes but the list of animals identified as "threatened species" is still increasing and now numbers 163,040 and, (further bad news), is an increase of about 6,000 from last year (this presumably includes better action to gather information as well as additional numbers.) The list includes the Borneo Elephant - their decline primarily due to extensive logging of Borneo's forests. Animals do come off the list including this year the Iberian Lynx - a success story whose population increased from 62 mature individuals to more than 2000 now achieved by restoring its natural scrub and forest habitat as well as increasing its primary prey, the European rabbit. Where plant species are concerned, the list includes the Copiapoa Cactus: a cactus that has long been coveted as a decorative plant, driving an illegal trade that increases as social media and traders showcase this attractive plant!



Much closer to home we can all play a part in this valuable work by our habits - our life-style; ie what we buy; how we maintain our gardens, etc. In a recent 'Spring Watch' programme we heard how red squirrels have been successfully introduced on Anglesey and a few pine-marten into our local nature reserve: it's a thrill for us to walk down our large paddock, left to go wild to attract butterflies and insects etc. This year for several reasons we don't seem to have attracted many butterflies but we were so excited to hear from one of our sons and daughter-in-law in Somerset that having rescued a butterfly from a spider's web and then checked with the local butterfly society, that this was quite a rare butterfly found in a new location!

John Birch

‘What About Men?’

Occasionally it is suggested that I do a piece on sexual equality. So far I have resisted. It is far too dangerous and controversial. It is one thing to argue that there never was an Exodus or that Neoliberalism seeks to undermine democracy, (basically nobody cares), another thing entirely to suggest that men might now be the more deprived/less privileged of the two sexes. Such a suggestion almost always produces a chorus of disbelief and the familiar litany of there being few women in key positions or not being allowed in men’s clubs. Feeble retorts along the lines of there being few men in these positions (after all it is largely a reflection of England’s class based system – how many men manage to achieve these positions and, more to the point, why would women want to join these clubs in the first place?) Nor is the internet much help either. A quick foray on the net quickly disabuses one of the idea that any sort of grown-up or informed debate on the issue is remotely possible. Even statistics don’t seem to help. No sooner has one tracked down what might seem a helpful or informative graph or set of numbers illustrating gender differences than there is nearly always a host of warning caveats/references/footnotes/learned and exhausting articles, to the effect that one cannot possibly use them to show any differences between the sexes. Any differences might be down to society’s expectations, different experiences etc - nurture, not nature. And so on. In short, any foray into the topic quickly produces huge amounts of heat and very little light.

The result is that one has two basic options – one either deals with the topic in six lines or writes a six volume treatise on the subject. A six volume treatise is out of the question, so that just leaves the odd article or two.

All the above came about because I mentioned I had been reading a review of a book by Caitlin Moran entitled ‘What About Men?’ Caitlin Moran is a well known feminist author who has written many books about the status of women. However, in Q and A sessions to promote her books she noticed that she was being asked more and more this question ie ‘What about Men?’ usually by mothers of sons. After years of dismissing the notion, she finally accepted the challenge: “No man had got around to writing a book like this, and so, as usual muggins here – a middle aged woman – had to crack on and sort it all out.” The result is an entertaining

and thought provoking attempt to balance the scales a bit. She found the perception of men (and of themselves even) had become “unsustainably limited.” “They are assumed to be suspicious, useless, simple, arrogant, cavemen or toxic narcissists. They are also the most likely to die by suicide, be victims of violence, suffer loneliness, experience homelessness or be imprisoned, die at work or in wars, lose custody of their children.



Perhaps worst of all, they are given no recourse to complain. How can you blame the patriarchy when you look like the patriarchy?”

She also has many good words for the male sex. Apparently, she admires them for their “humour, robustness, love for their mums, their way with a blow torch and a hog roast ... their patient endurance at being ideological whipping boys.”

Personally, I find these remarks somewhat patronising. This is because from men’s point of view, the problems are much more frustrating and complex than that - as mothers with husbands/partners, sons, grandsons and even great-grandsons can often testify. They are aware that for them the world is a much more challenging and difficult place than perhaps it has ever been – job and employment opportunities are far fewer than in the past (and getting fewer) and the prospect of ever setting up an independent home and family increasingly remote. And at schools and colleges there are often additional problems of drugs and gang violence – something that disproportionately affects boys and young men. It is not hard to find parents or grandparents aware that many boys now plot their routes home from school or clubs in order to avoid possible confrontations.

And then there is the problem of support for men – in particular boys and young men. The adage is that for every support group for men and their problems there are 400 for women – a trifle exaggerated perhaps but with a kernel of truth. A long time ago – it must have been in the late seventies or early eighties – I worked in the Home Office and had occasion to visit the (then) well known Children’s Department. The Head of the Department told me that quite often young women would visit her and say that they would like to work with disadvantaged young children. But when she pointed out that they would be almost certainly working with boys they quickly lost interest – testimony to the fact that ‘disadvantaged’ is almost always automatically associated with ‘female’, not ‘male.’

Men are also aware that they have been the architects of their own demise.

After all, the long road to gender equality (and ultimate redundancy) has been largely down to them. Decades of developing labour saving devices – vacuum cleaners, washing machines, dishwashers, fridge-freezers, dryers, etc – have freed women from a huge amount of domestic drudgery and helped propel them into the workforce, where, very often, they have replaced male employees. In particular, and most importantly, women have benefitted disproportionately from the electronic and digital revolutions that have taken place over the last 40 years or so – television, the internet and, in particular, social media. In short, the coming of our modern visual culture. After all, for whatever reason, women tend to be more articulate communicators than men and are certainly more beautiful! None of this is lost on employers and industries anxious to survive in a highly competitive culture.

Conclusion 1

All the above belongs to a ‘six lines’ approach to the problem. As things stand at the moment, it is probably impossible to mount a proper, dispassionate analysis of the relationships between the sexes – the current wave of feminist triumphalism still seems to have a great deal of energy left and far to go until calmer waters are reached. Perhaps in ten or fifteen years? Instead one can only hint at what a ‘six volume’ treatment of the problem might cover. For example it would have to cover the historical, social, cultural, economic and psychological dimensions of the relationship as these have varied greatly over time – often quite surprisingly so. And cutting across all these dimensions stands – of course - the basic dimension of class. (For example, the cultural and intellectual attributes expected of an upper class woman in the late 18th century are different from those expected of an upper class woman of the late 19th century and different yet again from those expected of an upper class woman of the late 20th century. Similarly for men (though slightly less so). And behind all these is the even more basic factor of our biology - our chromosomal differences - and the impact which these have on our behaviour and relationships (something much disputed, for example, within our own present culture and time-frame). And we haven’t even defined our terms – for example, are we talking about sexual equality or sameness? How do we define sexual equality – what is it exactly and does it necessarily imply sameness of treatment etc? And so on, and so on!

Conclusion 2

Back to the six lines approach and to cut to the chase – if we are interested in equality between the sexes (however defined), then the evidence suggests the needs of men and boys deserve much better provision than they currently receive.

John Ditchfield

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No. 64: Currencies around the World. Part 2

More currencies and more countries. Can you pair them together?

Currency

Shekel	Dollar	Dirham	Lev	Manat
Real	Pound	Rupiah	Lira	Ouguiya

Country

Israel	Bulgaria	Lebanon	Mauritania	Turkey
Brazil	Morocco	Hong Kong	Azerbaijan	
		Indonesia		

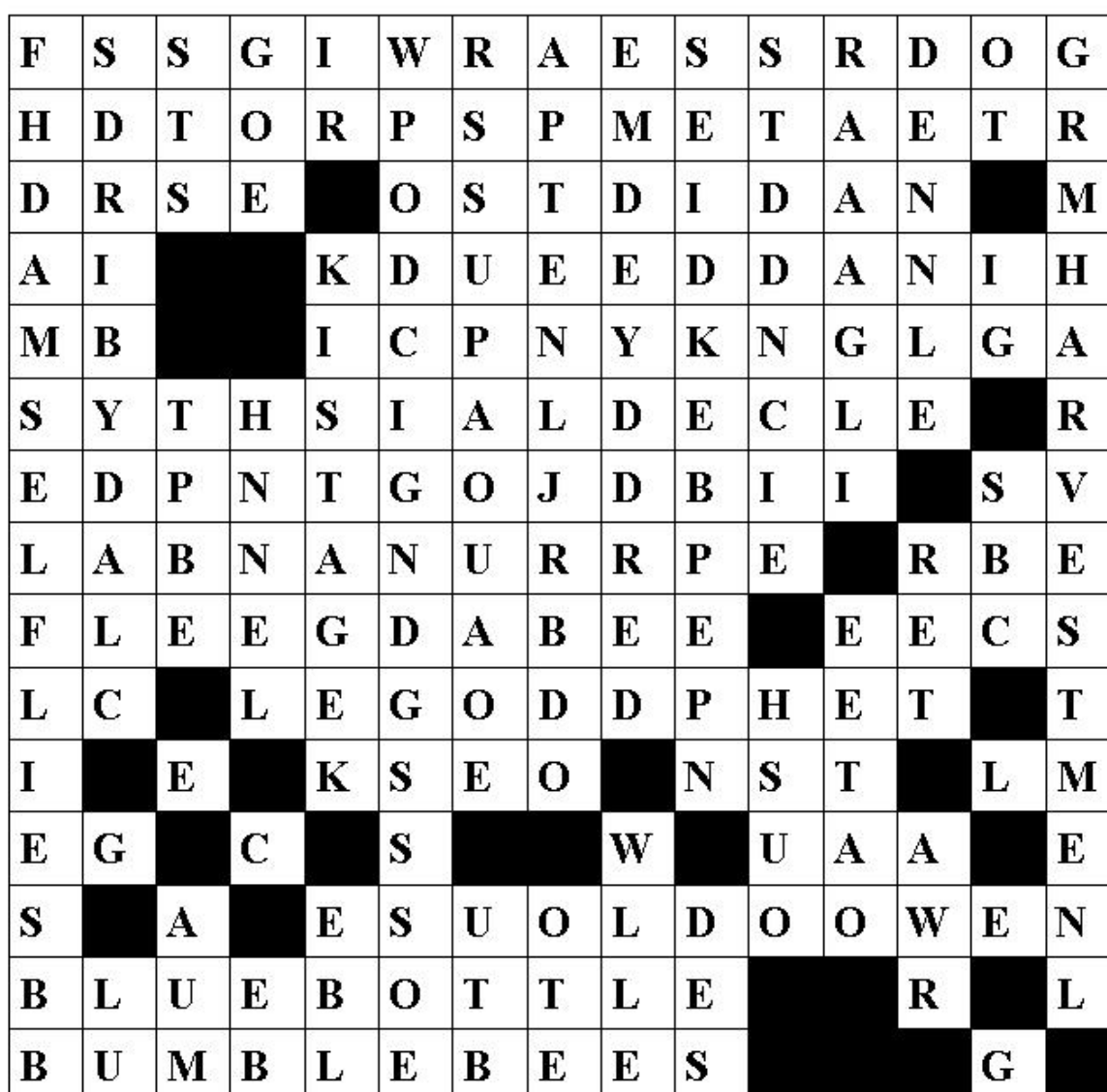


Answers to Competition No 63. Currencies around the World. Part1

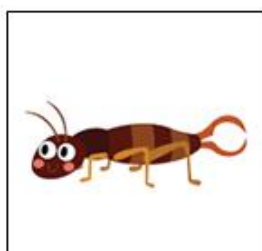
Dollar/Australia	Peso/Argentina	Krona/Iceland	
Renminbi/China	Rupee/India	Swiss franc/Switzerland	
Dinar/Iraq	Yen/Japan	Rand/South Africa	Kyat/Myanmar
Rouble/Russia	Kwacha/Zambia		

We look forward to your answers - send them either by email to jbirch1821@gmail.com or by post to J. Birch, Pantgwyn, High Street, Borth, Ceredigion, Wales SY24 5HY

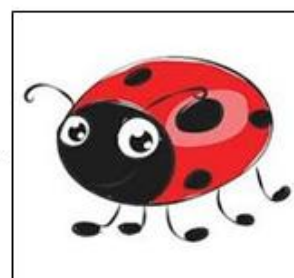
WORDSEARCH: CREEPY CRAWLIES!



APHIDS BEES BLACK-GARDEN-ANT BLUE-BOTTLE
 BUMBLE-BEES CENTIPEDES CRICKETS DADDY-LONG-
 LEGS DAMSEL-FLIES EARWIGS GNATS GROUND-BEETLE
 GROUND-BUGS HARVEST-MEN LADY-BIRDS LEATHER-
 JACKETS MIDGES MILLIPEDES WASP WOOD-ANT WOOD-
 LOUSE



Question: Put the remaining 11 letters together to find the small brown insect, the nymphs of which live in small masses of white froth attached to plants and known in country-language as 'cuckoo-spit.'



Compiled by Rosemary Birch

Answer: Frog-hoppers

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: BEACH HOLIDAY

S	P	A	D	D	L	I	N	G	S	P	B
E	H	I	S	T	E	K	C	U	B	L	E
L	R	C	C	E	G	U	R	G	Q	A	A
T	O	E	R	N	N	F	O	N	T	Y	C
S	C	C	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	H
A	K	R	P	N	T	C	D	Y	Y	N	B
C	S	E	G	O	A	E	S	L	O	I	A
D	P	A	R	V	O	X	N	F	J	H	L
N	A	M	E	T	B	L	U	E	S	S	L
A	D	S	H	E	L	L	S	T	K	I	S
S	E	A	S	I	D	E	M	I	Y	F	Z
W	S	E	D	I	R	Y	E	K	N	O	D

SEASIDE
BUCKETS
SPADES
SAND CASTLES
SEA SHELLS

SWIMMING
PADDLING
SURFING
BOATING
FISHING

BEACH BALLS
KITE FLYING
DONKEY RIDES
PICNICS
ICE CREAMS



Compiled by Liz Alford

DIARY



Sundays	<i>10.30am Prayer Meeting before the service. Everyone welcome</i>
Mondays	<i>10.30am to 11.30am Studying together in Church (back Sept 9th)</i>
Wednesdays	<i>10am to 12 noon Toddler and Parent/Carer group (back Sept 11th)</i>
Thursdays	<i>6.30-8pm Choir Practice Sept 12th and 26th</i>
Fridays	<i>6.45-8.30pm 11-14 year olds' Friday Fellowship</i>
Saturdays	<i>10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open</i>

Audio - Visual Live streaming

Sunday Services and Friday Concerts are usually live-streamed on YouTube and these will remain on the Church's YouTube channel. If you are in the building, there is a chance you might appear on camera.

Seating in the side aisles is never filmed and the Stewarding Team can assist you if you would like a seat out of shot of the recording equipment.

August

Sunday 4th	11am	Family Service led by the Minister
Sunday 11th	11am	Family Service led by Revd Jon Dean Retired URC Minister
Sunday 18th	11am	Family Service led by Revd Iain MacDonald Retired URC Minister
Sunday 25th	11am	Family Service led by Revd Ian Green, Minister Amersham Free Church

September

Sunday 1st	11am	Family Communion service led by the Minister
Monday 2nd	7.30pm	Elders & Deacons Meeting

Tuesday 3rd & Wednesday 4th 8-6pm Refreshments in Church during
HB Examination Days

Sunday 8th 11am Family Service led by the Minister

Sunday 15th 11am Family Service led by the Minister

6.30pm Contemporary Worship Service led by the
Minister

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd Open House Weekend (Sat 10.30-6pm, Sun
1-4pm)

Sunday 22nd 11am Family Service led by Rev Dr Nathan Eddy

4.30-7.30pm Masa Tayama Memorial Concert in
Church

Friday 27th 1pm Friday Lunchtime Concert – Jonathan
Gregory Organ

Saturday 28th 10.30-12.30pm Church Life Review Discussion

Sunday 29th 11am Family Service at 11am led by the Minister

October

Sunday 6th 11am Harvest & Family Communion service led by
the Minister followed by lunch in church



NEWS AND VIEWS



PRODUCTION

DISTRIBUTION

EDITORIAL PANEL

TYPESETTER

EDITOR

John Ditchfield

Jill Purdie and others

Joan Holton and Marion Ditchfield

John Ditchfield

Marion Ditchfield

The next edition of News and Views will be for October and will be published on Sunday 6th October. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday 22nd September.

We welcome articles, as well as reviews of books, films, plays etc. from members and friends. These will not always represent the views of the editorial panel or of the Church. Publication is at the discretion of the Editors.

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and Views.*

