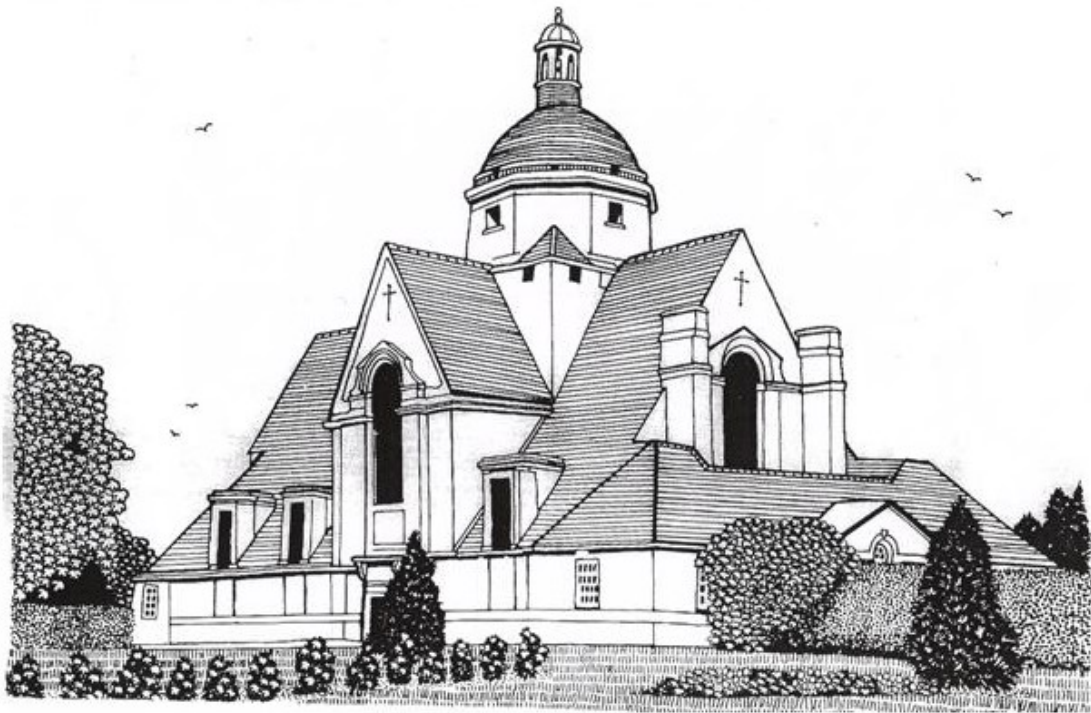


NEWS & VIEWS

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



DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

PLEASE TAKE ONE

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

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

Sunday Services: *(When services resume) 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

Minister: **Revd Dr Ian Tutton**
The Manse, Central Square, NW11 7AG
020 8457 5898
itutton@aol.com

Correspondence Secretary Penny Trafford
020 8959 3405
ptrafford07@gmail.com

Treasurer Derek Lindfield
07803 953483

Director of Music Peter Hopkins

Children's Advocates Lilian Coumbe
coumbe_lilian@yahoo.com

Stephan Praetorius
Stephan@acceleration.biz

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 765

DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

Dear Friends,

By any stretch of the imagination, 2020 has been one h**** of a year. In fairness, no one could have foreseen how it would unfold. For nearly everyone of us, a massive readjustment has been required. Much of what we had hoped for was snatched away from us. The usual family celebrations, holidays, rites of passage, all of these were necessarily curtailed, postponed, even cancelled altogether. And while we may have been brought up to 'always look on the bright side of life', such a sentiment has a very hollow ring to it right now. In truth, the actual pandemic has left the vast majority of us untouched, physically. Even those of us who may or may not have contracted the virus would have come through it relatively unscathed. But for some, directly or indirectly, it brought with it, tragic consequences. With the prospect of a vaccine looming large on the horizon, it would be all too easy to make light of the whole situation, to try and 'laugh it off', putting it down to experience as it were. But that would be entirely wrong. As somebody once said, 'those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.' And we have so much to learn from this most recent episode in our history; personally, locally, nationally, globally...

...For us as a Congregation, indeed for the Christian Church as a whole, and for every member, every believer, the events of this last year have raised many questions, posed any number of challenges, provided a whole variety of opportunities. We have had to confront our demons; facing up to doubt, despondency, disappointment, disillusionment. We have found ourselves reappraising, re-evaluating, even reinventing our spiritual outlook and with it our devotional life. Some of us have found God to be more real to us than ever, while others of us have spent all our time wondering why God was never there when needed. All of this may have happened 'subliminally' -

without us even noticing – until now...

...As you read this, the season of Advent will be unfolding around us. The triumph of Hope over Expectation. Soon it will be Christmas. A 'strange' Christmas for sure, but Christmas nevertheless. For many it will be at best a bittersweet experience; our 'limited' enjoyment tempered by the thought of 'what might have been'. And then on to the New Year, 2021, which although just another 'new day' like any other 'new day', is a day in which we invest so much. Maybe this year it won't be so much about the resolutions that we make, but more resolving to be more resolute in terms of holding fast to what is dear to us, protecting that/those which/whom we know to be susceptible to exploitation, and vulnerable to attack...

...Many congregations, traditionally, have used the first Sunday of a New Year to invite each member to 'renew' their Baptismal vows, their promise to covenant together, their intention to exercise a loving concern for each other, their willingness to give of whatever they have – money, time, talent – to the work of the church and the good causes the church supports, their determination to share with others what they believe, their desire to serve the wider community for the good of all...

...Hitherto, on the first Sunday of the New Year we have invited Elders and Deacons to rededicate themselves to their particular role within the life of the Church... Maybe this year, this New Year we should ask it of all of us... Just a thought...

...Meanwhile, in spite of everything, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us in the Manse...

Ian Tutton



TRAIDCRAFT

In an update from Traidcraft Exchange, the hands-on part of Traidcraft, Charlotte Timson (CEO) quotes: “it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change” - Charles Darwin. She continues: “the organisation has been changing trade to change lives since 1986. Although what and who we



fight for, remains unchanged, the battleground has shifted significantly in that time ... opportunities for people to speak out are shrinking in many parts of the world and, now due to coronavirus, people are being plunged back into poverty, need has never been greater, yet resourcing our work has become even more challenging” ... She adds: “We are now seeking to find ways to shift power and decision-making from our base in the UK into the hands of communities and organizations in the countries where we work.”

One such country is Bangladesh where the Santai tribal community, one of the most discriminated against groups, is plagued by debt bondage - a system of modern slavery which traps generations into debt, robbing families of their freedom, choices and basic dignities. Michail, father of three, explains that the impact of coronavirus on his family income has been immediate: “Because of the lockdown, most of the days we have been having only rice with salt or rice with one vegetable or some snails we gather from outdoors. I had to take out a 25000 taka (about £250) loan from the money lenders for my vulnerable son’s medical treatment. I don’t know how I will be able to repay this loan or how many years it will take as a debt labourer.” Stories such as Michail’s are all too common, not just abroad but in this country as well, and it is important that we do whatever we can.

As regards the Traidcraft Stall - at the moment of writing we don’t know what the future will be, but we will have the boot of the car filled not just with the usual food items but also with Christmas cards, Advent Calendars, diaries, socks etc. With social distancing in mind the car will be in the carpark, before and after services, whatever rules materialise. With self-isolation, social distancing and all the worry of the past few months, we think that this year the sending and receiving of cards has never been more important. So show that someone actually cares!

Any extra donations of money, over the cost of goods, will be donated to Traidcraft Exchange. MANY, MANY THANKS for all your support in the past and in the future.

Rosemary and John Birch

Bible Study

Committing oneself to a chapter by chapter study of a chosen book in the Bible can have its pitfalls. We noted last time that Chapter 11 of the Book of Joshua ended thus, '*...Joshua took the whole land, fulfilling all the commands that the Lord had laid on Moses; he assigned it to Israel, allotting to each tribe its share. Then the land was at peace...*' (Joshua 11, 23). And so, we come to chapter 12. Chapter 12 is summed up thus, '*... These are the names of the kings of the land whom the Israelites slew, and whose territory they occupied beyond the Jordan towards the sunrise [i.e. to the East of the River Jordan] ...*' Josh. 12, 1). Verses 2 - 5 duly list said kings. But then we are reminded that it was not Joshua and his army that captured the land in question. Rather, it was, '*...Moses, the servant of the Lord [who] put them to death, he and the Israelites, and he [Moses] assigned their land to the **Reubenites**, the **Gadites**, and half the tribe of **Manasseh**...*' (Josh. 12, 6). The details of the conquest of the land east of the Jordan is described in the Book of Numbers, from chapter 21 onwards. But then, we read, '*... These are the kings whom Joshua and the Israelites put to death on the west side of the Jordan...*' (Josh. 12, 7a). The rest of the chapter, verses 7b - 24 duly list said kings. And there really is no more to be said as far as chapter 12 of the Book of Joshua is concerned...

...Hence, we can 'fast forward' into chapter 13. It begins somewhat poignantly. '*...By this time Joshua had become very old, and the Lord said to him, "you are now a very old man, and much of the country still remains to be occupied"...*' (Josh. 13, 1). We are then given details of that part of the land that remained unconquered, effectively the far western region, the coastal areas bordering on what we know as the Eastern Mediterranean, from the south, the east of Egypt, (presently separated from each other by the Suez Canal), to the north, the region of the port cities of Tyre and Sidon, and including the Lebanon hills. But most crucially, as far as the future fortunes of the Israelites would be concerned - '*...all the districts of the Philistines... it belongs to the five lords of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron...*' Josh. 13, 2 - 3). The Book of Judges, and the Books of Samuel are dominated by stories concerning the continuing conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines...

...Having thus described how it was that first Moses subjugated the peoples living to the east of the Jordan, and then Joshua subjugated the peoples living to the west of the Jordan, it was now time to distribute the land between the various tribes that comprised the people of Israel. Israel was of

course the name given to Jacob as he came towards the end of his life, and the tribal 'names' reflect those of his children, and in some cases grandchildren, so as to ensure at the very least an etymological, but also a cultural, political, even theological connection between the era of the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – those to whom the promise was given, but whose hopes were seemingly dashed when the descendants of Jacob found themselves enslaved in Egypt, and the time of the Exodus under Moses, and the appropriation of the land promised initially to Abraham and his descendants by Joshua...

...To illustrate the enduring significance attaching to the dividing up of the land in this way; as we approach Christmas, we are reminded of the words found in the prophecy of Micah, words first uttered some 200 to 300 years after the events described in the Book of Joshua [approx. 8th Century BC]: '*... But from you, Bethlehem in Ephrathah, small as you are among Judah's clans, from you will come a king for me over Israel...*' (Micah, 5, 2). While some 200 years later, in the prophecy of Isaiah, we have these words, '*... Formerly the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali were lightly rewarded, but afterwards honour was bestowed on Galilee of the Nations, on the road beyond Jordan to the sea, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...*' (Isaiah 9, 1 – 2a)...

...At this point in Joshua chapter 13, we begin to discover who got what as far as the distribution was concerned, and that is best left for next time...

Ian Tutton



Sand

A beach never sleeps, drowned, then burning.

Wind, rain, sun, water all collide

At seas edge; unstill, always moving

Neap tides, spring tides come, flow and ebb.

Footprints wave a pattern deep and standing free.

Families with spades and buckets build a castle,

Plant a flag, sit, drink lemonade or tea.

Water creeps, washes walls and towers away.

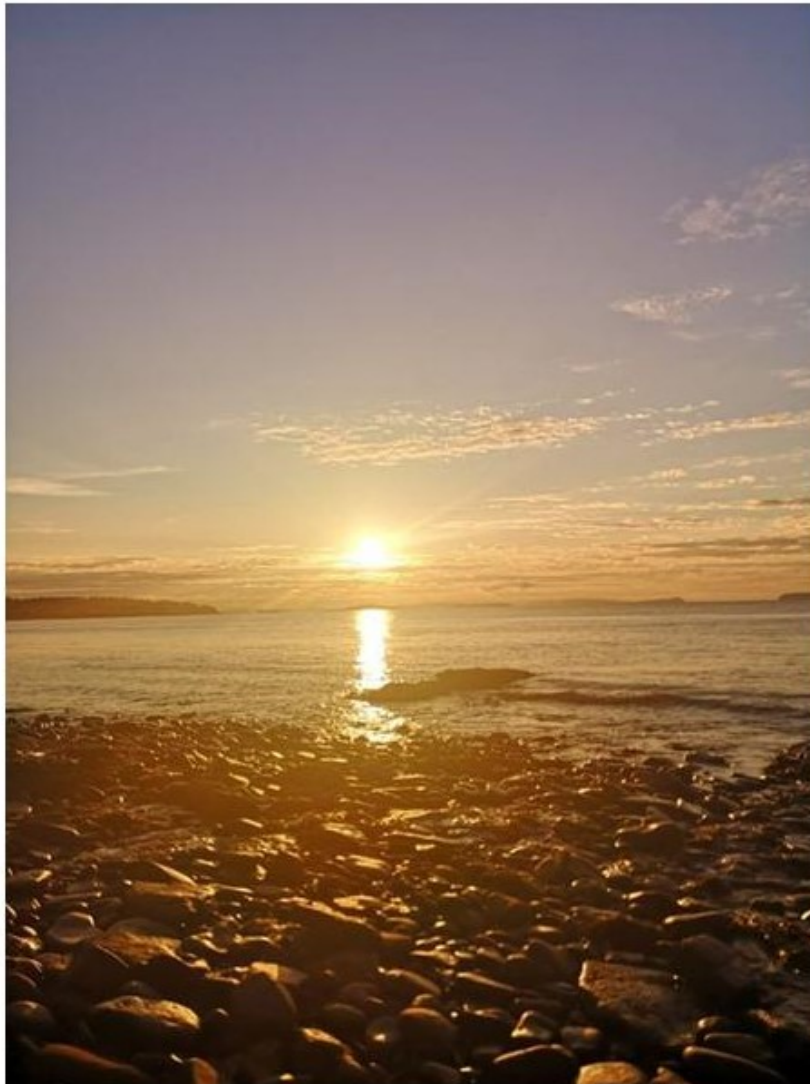
The sun begins to sink, a chill descends.

Quite empty now the sands stretch far away.

Gulls circle slowly, another day ends

As they search and pick to eat and live again.

John Birch



God.com

Every single evening as I'm lying here in bed,
This tiny little prayer keeps running through my head.
God bless all my family wherever they may be. Keep
them



Warm and safe from harm for they're so close to me.
And God, there is one more thing I wish that you could do;
I hope you don't mind me asking. Bless my computer too.

Now I know that it's not normal to bless a mother board,
But listen just a second while I explain to you, dear Lord.
You see, that little metal box holds more than odds and ends,
Inside those small compartments rest so many FRIENDS.
Lord, you know so much about them by the kindness that they give,
And this little box of metal takes me to where they live.

By faith is how I know them much the same as I do you,
We share in what life brings us and from that our friendships grow.
Please, take an extra minute from your duties up above,
To bless those in my address book that's filled with so much love!
Wherever else this prayer may reach, to each and every friend,
Bless each and every mail box and the person who hits Send.

When you update your heavenly list on your CD-Rom,
Remember each who've said this prayer sent up to God.com.
Amen

Submitted by Pam Jamieson



JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY OF LOCKDOWN No 2

Writing the Diary for the November issue, I said that a second lockdown “seemed likely”: We are now in it. Sometimes, I know something is going to happen - even though I hope it doesn't. (Hope is an interesting concept: it's not one sided - hope for the best, expect the worst, probably experience something in the middle - but, whatever happens, adapt and cope.) For me there are three elements, family, faith and personal reaction: the last is the least helpful. Presumably, like most of us, I am biased in favour of myself and can find reasons for justifying most things. It's a sign of either maturity or self-experience, of which I've had much over many years, that I'm now more questioning and less receptive to my initial reaction: this doesn't help, particularly if the reaction isn't a simple one and is subject to all kinds of doubts, caveats and back-peddalling. The solution, which requires much personal resolve (but I'm working on it) is to consider: think and take action in a resolute and thought-through way: in other words, get on with it. The upside is that it gives a mental adrenalin spurt, onwards and upwards - at least somewhere, progress or regress. Right, personal reflection over and on into the world of happenings and results.

Whatever happened to cabbage?

The country holds its breath! A poll had identified Britain's favourite green vegetable (but see the caveat below.) Brussel sprouts have marginally overtaken broccoli to secure the crown by 27% to 26%. Peas rolled in a distant third with 17%. There is no mention, sadly, of what made up the remaining 30 % but it's likely to be a collection of exotics - the survey was carried out for Waitrose. Sprouts rise to victory is the



result, states the survey, of an “image makeover”. In recent years “soggy boiled sprouts are a thing of the past”. It's somehow comforting that there is still time to investigate the oddities of taste.

Father Christmas: OK to come.

The Government, having given the matter full consideration, has rejected a petition to place Father Christmas outside Covid restrictions, on the unchallengeable ground that as he is one person, restrictions don't apply. Phew! A further potential problem was quarantine for visitors, but the current Foreign Office guidance does not require self-isolation by those from Lapland (or any other part of Finland). Rudolph and friends will be very pleased.



Goodness is catching.

A survey (a big thank-you again to all survey compilers), the annual British Social Attitudes report from the National Centre for Social Research, reviewing changes over the last five years, has found that we are now “a kinder place with people feeling more generous towards those on benefits and migrants.” The number of those who feel that benefits are too generous has plunged to 35% from 59% five years ago. “Feelings towards immigration are also ‘softening’ with 46% saying it enriches British life, up from 26% in 2011.” I’m all in favour of getting away from insularity and becoming an island nation, just in name.

Doodling comes to the fore

A great example of discovering an unknown talent and doing good! Phil Heckels (from Worthing) has become an “internet hit” and has raised thousands of pounds for charity. It began when, under the pseudonym of Hercule van Wolfwinkle, he shared drawings of dogs with “cross-eyes, wonky legs and droopy noses” for the amusement of friends and family. Within weeks he was receiving offers to buy and has so far raised £5640, by drawing pets free of charge and encouraging a donation to Turning Tides, a charity for Rough Sleepers. He has no artistic experience and is delighted and surprised by the success.

Still kicking

Guinness World Records have recognised the oldest professional football player in the world, after he played a full match just before his 75th birthday. Ezzeldin Bahader was nominated after missing a penalty as his team, 6th October (a town in Egypt), lost 3-2 at Ayat in Egypt’s Third Division. He had scored from a penalty. The record was previously held by an Israeli, aged 73.



Hiking things up (before it’s too late)

–“Any Right of Way which has not been officially recorded by 2026 will be lost.” Historical maps and documentary records are being scoured to uncover neglected and forgotten routes. A report says that 49,000 miles of little used and forgotten pathways have now been identified. Once the paths have been properly marked, local Councils have a legal duty to put up signs “to mark the way for those unfamiliar with the locality.” A big job for now but a vital asset for posterity – the great outdoors will always be essential (This might also make farmers safely secure footpaths across fields with grazing cattle and avoid injuries and deaths.)

NEWS OF PEOPLE

During this last lockdown we were very sorry to learn of the death of KAY THORNLEY. Kay had lived for many years in the Suburb, overlooking Willifield Green. Although she had been active in a number of local groups and activities, she only began regularly attending the Free Church relatively recently, and very soon became a much loved member of the church family. Just a few years ago she moved to Yorkshire, to a Residential Home to be nearer to members of her family. We extend our sympathy to her children, and her extended family. We have missed her very much since she moved, but were very blessed when she was with us, and we commend her to God's continuing love.



It is always invidious to single out particular people, but during this 'strange' year, as a congregation we have had to adapt our ways of 'being church'. Not least in devising ways to ensure that our regular Sunday Worship has been able to be accessed even when the building has been closed. This we have done by using Social Media and I want to thank *Tony Wilson* and *Hossein Nejad* for making their technical expertise available to allow this to happen. Without them we could not have achieved what we have. Also, while we have not been allowed to sing, we have been blessed by the 'live' musical contributions to our worship. And so, thank you too to *Peter Hopkins*, and to *David Trafford* for allowing their obvious talents to be put to use in the service of the church. Of course there are others, but to these folk especially, I want to say, thank you.

Ian Tutton

Pat on the back.

The National Churches Trust has published a report entitled "The House of Good." This emphasises that "church buildings across the UK contribute £12.4 billion a year to the economy and society by enabling the provision of food banks, mental health counselling, youth services and addiction support services". The report continues: "The funding that has recently announced for churches in England through the Culture Recovery Fund demonstrates that the government and the National Heritage Lottery Fund recognise the contribution that churches make and the importance of keeping church buildings in good repair." This connection, taking and giving between the churches and general good, deserves the recognition of us all, of how vital, on an on-going basis, it is.

John Birch

From the Archive

These extracts from 1920 and 1921 show how enthusiastic the Free Church was to raise money for different causes - helping famine-stricken children in Europe and the Mothers' Rest Home in Erskine Hill. Fund-raising ventures included concerts, plays and carol-singing. Of course, we have to remember the numbers in the congregation were considerably larger then.

1920 and 1921

December 1920: An extract from Work and Worship

Those of our readers who were present at the Church Meeting on December 2nd will not readily forget the pathetic appeal made by Mr Fox on behalf of the organisations which are endeavouring to find homes for the children brought to this comforting happy land from the suffering areas of Central Europe. If rightly appreciated this appeal will supplement rather than conflict with other appeals on behalf of our own young folks and it speaks volumes for the love and open-heartedness of our people that already Mr Fox has received several gratifying responses. We should remember that he who gives quickly gives double.

Carol Singing

On Sunday evening, December 19th, and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday before Christmas, the Choir will tour the Suburb and render Carols and other Christmas Music. As in previous years, a collection will be taken for the Mothers' Rest Home in Erskine Hill. The Choir is anxious this year to beat last year's record collection, viz, £38 9s 2d.

The Brownies

The "Brownies" [girls between the ages of 8-11] meet on Mondays in the Church Parlour at 6-7.15. We are now busy making toys and scrapbooks for poor children at Christmas. New recruits may enroll any Monday and will be heartily welcomed.

January 1921: An extract from Work and Worship

Special Sunday School Notice

Readers of "Work and Worship" are asked to specially bear in mind the performance of "The Merchant of Venice" to be given by the scholars of the Sunday School on the 24th, 25th, and 26th February 1921. Those who saw the performance of "As You Like It" will need no pressing to support this further venture. All profits go to the Famine Hospitality Committee. A very large measure of support is needed and anticipated in order to make a really great financial success.

A fine piece of work is being done in the training given to those taking part,



***Dame Clara Butt and
Kennerley Rumford***

and on this ground alone, and in addition to the benefit to be obtained by the children from the famine-stricken areas of Europe, a record sale of tickets is expected. Every member of the Church and congregation is asked to attend at least one performance and to bring all available friends.

***Dame Clara Butt-Rumford Concert Held on
December 21st***

It is seldom the residents have such an opportunity to hear at what might be termed their own doors, such an illustrious singer. The church was well filled and the programme acceptable to all who have any feeling for song. Mr Webb and the Choir did admirably and to receive the

commendation from such notable personages as Dame Clara Butt-Rumford and Mr Kennerley Rumford, is no small honour and they richly deserve it. Miss Evelyne King, our near neighbour and friend, it gave us all great pleasure that she was included on the programme. The Suburb can boast of talent of no mean order.

1940 and 1941

The extracts from 1940 and 1941 show that the Suburb was far from immune to the destructiveness of World War Two. They show how the people of the Suburb and the congregation were affected.

December 1940: Newsletter

Let me begin by saying how glad I am that these monthly letters are so much appreciated. Quite a number of people write and tell me that they read and re-read them and pass them on to their friends. One minister in the North of England actually used the September letter in a Sunday evening sermon, with the result that a collection was taken and twelve guineas sent to a fund to help people in London who have been bombed out of their homes. Another correspondent was most anxious that they should be carefully kept as material for historians in years to come! All of which would be very flattering if I like to take it in that sense - but if that were so this paragraph would be omitted. What it means in most cases is that people love the Suburb and the Free Church and are anxious to hear that we are safe and well. And in other cases, it means concern for London and for the universal Church. This love and this concern are always there, but it takes a time like the present to make people conscious of them. As for myself, I

count it a great privilege to be permitted in this way to extend the hand of fellowship and to be a link between scattered friends.

I must confess that the composition of the letters does not get easier. If I could address my readers as individuals, I could let my pen run on and tell them things they might be interested to know. But there is always the reminder of an invisible censor whose frown I should hate to incur. And there is sometimes a question how much people here would like to be referred to, even though enemy action causes them to flit from house to house with indecent haste. One thing I can say, that those of us who abide in this place are thankful for our mercies. I cannot say that we have been untouched since the last letter was written. One night my heart sank into my boots when I saw a house completely demolished and heard that two of our members were buried in the debris. Another night we held our breath fearing the worst. Yet in the one case the two members were released hardly the worse for their awful experience, and in the other case, though much property was destroyed, people escaped in what seemed a miraculous manner. To pass through experiences like these without gratitude would be unnatural. One wants to thank rescue squads and ARP workers and stretcher-bearers and everyone who lends a hand. One instinctively sings a little Te Deum - not a formal or audible one, but a very sincere one. The question has been put to me: Why, if we must not blame God for the evils of life, should we praise Him for the good? Why? Because the heart insists. When you or a friend of yours has just been delivered from great danger, you may logically do this or that. You do it almost without knowing you are doing it. Man may be paradoxical creature, but the truth is that one hears the voice of criticism and complaint in quiet and peaceful times and the voice of gratitude now in time of danger.

Another difficulty in writing letters like this is the possibility of giving an entirely wrong impression of what is really happening. If, for example, I let the paragraph just written stand alone some of you might assume that bombs are falling on us night and day. Such is not the case. There are peaceful nights as well as noisy ones and most of our days are undisturbed. A few quiet nights and we fancy that everyone will soon be venturing back



Bombing in London in December 1941 - the worst of the War

to London. Actually evacuation is still going on. Some folk go because they are free to go and think it is wise to do so. More go because their office or their business house goes. I hope that they will always let us know where they go, and if we can help them with introductions to other churches we shall be glad to do so.

I cannot imagine people sending out the usual numbers of Christmas cards this year, but I don't know any good reason why I should not here and now send greetings to all my friends. May I send a message especially to the children? I hope they will get some presents, and that some of them will see their parents, and they will manage to enjoy themselves. I hope that old folks will have some peaceful hours, and overworked people will get a few hours of rest, and all of us will have time to think what the world might have been if the nations had accepted Christ and what the world may still become if only men will turn to Him.' Rev Ballard

January 1941: News Letter

'Wild Thyme'

Polzeath, N Cornwall

My Dear People

The above address calls for a word of explanation. Weeks, if not months ago, my wife and I decided that we should, if possible, spend Christmas with our children, and everything pointed to the wisdom of joining them rather than bringing them to London. It was not an easy decision for me. Only once before since I have been a minister have I been away from home at Christmas time, and then I was at my post with the troops at Salonika. [World War I]

The decision to leave London for a week at least having been made, the next problem was to find a spot where we could be together. Broadcast appeals brought nothing but disappointment. Not only did all the available houses seem to be occupied, but growing demand involved soaring prices. Then at last through the kindness of a neighbour we were introduced to this bungalow perched on the Cornish coast, and here we are enjoying peace and quiet and leisure. We have not forgotten our friends in London and many other parts of the country. There are stacks of letters and cards bringing all sorts of good wishes which one day we shall start to answer. But so far we have allowed writing to pass, and instead we have walked and read and worshipped together. Yesterday we attended evensong at a tiny church which for many years was buried in the sands.* It is so small that a congregation of a hundred fills it and there must have been eighty of us yesterday I hope to be at home for the first Sunday of the New Year,

but many of you will not be there, so I take this opportunity of wishing you all happiness in 1941. And this seems to me a suitable time to express my deep gratitude to all who have been loyal to the church and helped me with their friendship during the past year.* Rev Ballard *Anne Lowe*

**Atlantic gales and constantly shifting sand dunes make for a rather precarious environment for a solitary church. From, at least, the 18th century the church was partially buried by the constantly shifting sand dunes. Locals used to refer to the church as 'Sinkinny Church.'*



By the 1850's the only way to enter the church was by being lowered down through a skylight in the north transept roof. This was carried out on an annual

basis by the local vicar who blessed the church so it remained consecrated. John Betjeman was to end his days near here and is now buried in St Enedoc Church, which he immortalised in the poem 'Sunday Afternoon Service in St. Enodoc Church, Cornwall'.

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

George Brigg's hymn begins 'Christ is the world's true light.' St John in his gospel states: "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." Eddie Askew (a former general director of the Leprosy Mission, who devoted half a century to the disease and its consequences) makes the comment: "It seems, at times, as though all the powers of the world are trying to put out the light Jesus brought – but weak though it seems, the candle flame of light flickers on – dispelling the darkness around it, ready to ignite new lights wherever there is faith and commitment." He continues: "that light promises life, freedom and an end to fear." Remember the children's chorus 'This little light of mine I'm going to let it shine.' This Christmas we can all shine - dispelling some of that gloom, and give light and hope, even with social distancing.



Rosemary Birch

JOHN BUCHAN: WITCH WOOD

John Buchan is best-known as an author for **The Thirty Nine Steps**, a novel of which there are also several film and TV versions. Some may also be familiar with his propagandistic fiction of World War I when Buchan worked for British Intelligence. These include **Greenmantle** and **Mr Standfast** which, read in a more sceptical age, are unconsciously funny. However, Buchan was a prolific writer and these three texts only to scratch the surface of his decidedly Scottish fiction. There are, for example, historical novels of which his favourite was **Witch Wood**, a work recommended by a critic in a recent BBC programme about John Buchan, and it was this recommendation that prompted me to read it.



My expectations as a reader were quite low – always a good idea when embarking on a work about which one knows nothing at all. Buchan has been extremely clever in focusing on a short period in Scottish history which could not be made more turbulent and dramatic if one tried. Here are the ingredients on which he is able to draw without distorting facts: the beginning of the Little Ice Age in Europe (which lasted some 70 years from 1645 to 1715 and led to crop failure); the uprisings led by the royalist Ear of Montrose; the powerful and sinister presence of the radical Kirk party whose followers attempted to create a “godly society” by rooting out witches and other offenders; an outbreak of the plague in the village of Woodilee and, finally, a romance between a young minister of the Scottish Kirk and the daughter of a local laird which is doomed because of the difference of social class involved. Buchan is an excellent storyteller and the ingredients outlined above ensure that there is not a single dull moment in the novel.

Witch Wood opens in a classic way with the protagonist making a journey, in this case to the village of Woodilee – lying between Edinburgh and Glasgow. He is the new minister, David Sempill, and he arrives there in August of 1644. He has just finished his training in Edinburgh and so this is his first ministry. We are told that David Sempill is replacing a minister who “was never strong in the intellectuals” and was “ower old and feeble for a sinful countryside.” So from the very start, the reader intuits that there is much mischief around for an alert minister to uncover. Possessed of an enquiring mind and a fit young body, David Sempill begins to roam the countryside. Not far from his home is a remnant of the ancient forest of Caledon known as the Melanudrigill Wood. Going through it at night, the minister is aware of its sinister brooding

atmosphere: not only does it evoke ancient times but he discovers to his horror that pagan rites are still being practiced there.

The first time the minister attempts to stop a ritual he is knocked out and after this first encounter wise heads tell him to ignore what is going on or pretend that he is mistaken. This is David Sempill's first clash with the villagers, many of whom are indulging in what anthropologists call syncretism, that is the worship of two different belief systems. He then returns to the wood for another ritual which he observes hiding in a tree. From this vantage point, the protagonist is able to recognise five women and a man (those involved in the ritual wear masks). David says to his friend Reiverslaw, who is an incomer like him, that he must report this aberration to the Presbytery. Reiverslaw warns him against adopting this formal approach in no uncertain terms: "What for maun ye gang near the Presbytery? If ye stir up yon byke ye'll hae commissioners of justiciary and [witch] prickers and the hail clamjamphrie, and in the lang end an auld kimmer or twa will suffer, and the big malefactors will gang scot frae."

And the wiser older head proves correct. David, inexperienced in the ways of the world, proceeds correctly by alerting the Kirk's Moderator and this action rebounds against him because it makes the villagers hostile to their minister. They, in their turn, accuse him – correctly – of giving shelter to a wounded follower of Montrose after the Scottish royalists have been defeated. Then when the village is struck by the plague, David Sempell ministers to the sick and by night only he is assisted by his sweetheart who doesn't want to be recognised as his helper. Her shadowy presence causes the villagers to say that their minister is being helped by a "fairy." In the end there is nothing but disaster for the minister: his sweetheart dies and he is forced to leave the village for good in ignominy. The message is clear although not forced down the reader's throat: know where you are and those who inhabit the terrain; be prudent and subtle rather than wilful. Do not proceed by the book. The narrative is what Germans call a 'Bildungsroman', or novel about personal development; in Sempill's case a most painful experience. We are not told what becomes of him after he is forced to leave the village.

Buchan chooses to be a regional writer and sassenachs need to be armed with an edition of this novel that contains a glossary since there is a great deal of Scottish dialect in it. Fortunately there is a Canongate paperback with a useful glossary. Buchan is attuned to the spirit of our age which, for better or for worse, insists on stressing the distinctive features of our "four nations." He long ago prefigured this stress on the regional with his decidedly Scottish fiction and histories.

Verity Smith

A TIME TO SPEAK



If I had been an inventor, one of the things I would try to invent would be a zip-like contraction to go across my mouth when I speak out, being so incensed by something and speaking my mind without thinking it through. I've long realised that I end up in difficult situations feet first because I haven't thought it through - letting my heart respond rather than my head. Some talks one remembers years later and one of these was a talk given by John Bird to Junior Church when he spoke about the unruly tongue and the damage it could cause. He likened speech to a tube of toothpaste - once having taken off the top and squeezed it out, there's no way you can put the paste back into the tube: the damage is done and no way can you withdraw those words; once said, that's it - however much damage it causes - however many people are hurt! On reading my Bible Study Notes (UCB Word For Today), I find the writer is also thinking about saying the right thing and uses William Penn, founder of the British colony of Pennsylvania in 1677, as an example. Penn 'formulated six principles for conversation: 1) Avoid company where it is not profitable or necessary, and on those occasions, speak little and last. 2) Silence is wisdom, where speaking is folly, and always safe. 3) Some are so foolish as to interrupt and anticipate those that speak, instead of hearing and thinking before they answer (I'm a prime offender). 4) If you think twice before you speak once, you will speak twice the better for it. 5) Better to say nothing, than not to the purpose. 6) In all debates let truth be your aim, not victory. 7) In short never speak without thinking!' The writer continues 'one of the best ways to persuade others is by listening to them. A gossip talks about others and a bore talks about himself, but a good conversationalist talks about what interests you, and listens attentively to what you have to say'. In Proverbs 15 v23, (I am still amazed at the up-to-date wisdom in The Book), it states "Everyone enjoys a fitting reply: It is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!"

So back to my problem of speaking at the right time. It is reputed that Winston Churchill never learnt Latin because he refused, when learning grammar, to address a table 'mensa - O table, thou table etc' And I really wonder at my mentality when I find myself addressing our lovely grand-father clock (which needs winding-up every eight days): "You haven't run out already, have you?" (It doesn't answer thank goodness). William Penn's seven points can really reassure one and give some guidance. I remember waiting at the school-gates, many moons ago, and not knowing what to say to a mother who had just

lost her husband - when to speak and when not to speak and just be there beside another.

I also learnt another point about speaking when I listened to a Daily Service (12.11.20) in which the Rev. Dr. Isabelle Hamlet narrated the story of Naaman, the Syrian general, and the Israelite slave girl (we're never told her name). She described the slave girl's plight: having been taken captive as a young girl and taken away from all she knew, losing her home, her country, her family, she might even have seen some of them killed. Dr Hamlet comments: "I can't imagine the pain and horror she had to face being a captive of war and being a woman likely to be treated as game by men around, perhaps even the general himself. She must have felt scared, angry, grieving and had no reason to think kindly of her master, but this young girl, astonishingly when she heard that Naaman had leprosy, volunteered information which could save him. Her mind was entirely shaped by grace with no trace of bitterness, only kindness and grace towards him."

This information was not given through gritted teeth. The girl shared with him the knowledge of the power of her God – she gives him a gift from her heart, a gift that no one could take away from her. She doesn't have to pause and think, it flows from her. She doesn't reduce him to the worth of his actions - she sees him as a person. Perhaps that's the message I have to absorb: I must look beyond myself and use the strings of my heart more. I must see a person as they really are, a child of God. If this pandemic has taught us anything it's taught us that everyone counts, no one is an island, everyone needs someone else and we're all human with fears, worries about the future etc. I'm also learning the importance of speech, the importance of thanking one another, of saying I love you, not just thinking the words but saying them. I know actions speak louder than words but words are still tremendously important. Honor, John and myself, as Junior church leaders have been tremendously inspired by receiving letters from three members of Junior Church thanking us for our talks, eg 'really inspiring me to make a difference,' and "making me want to make a mark in the world." We feel our talks have not been in vain, just as I learnt from John's talk about toothpaste! We need to speak out at the right time, not to ignore the prompt to speak - that moment will not come again - but to speak out in love.

‘We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll:
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love’
(Priscilla Owen's Hymn - 'Will your anchor hold')

Rosemary Birch

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton



This book describes the frustrated love of a New York lawyer, Newland Archer, for Ellen Olenska, the separated wife of a dissolute Polish count; her unconventional and artistic nature is contrasted with the timid but determined calculations of Archer's fiancée May, who, backed by all the authority of society, keeps him within her grasp and marries him. After marriage, she keeps him faithful to her by various means including telling Ellen, her rival, that she is pregnant even before she is sure of it. In view of the impending birth of their first child, Newland feels he must stay in New York, and in the marriage, while Ellen decamps alone to Europe. At the end of the book, as a widower of 58, Newland cannot bear to meet Ellen again in Paris. While his son goes up to Ellen's apartment, Newland stays downstairs in the square saying of this enduring love affair, "it's more real to me here, than if I went up."

The foregoing is plainly a version of one of the 'five great plots of the world' - 'passion versus marriage' - famously explored by Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina*, where it ends in the tragic death of Anna. Here, by contrast, the author tells the story from the married man's point of view - should he remain loyal to his marriage and put the emotional needs of his wife and her family first or should he 'follow his heart' and leave them for the cosmopolitan Ellen Olenska? Some critics have said that the novel proceeds from a working assumption that is best summed up by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay *Self-Reliance*: "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of everyone of its members" but this interpretation is highly suspect as she treats each character in the novel unjudgementally, not taking sides in any of the behaviours. It is true that May discourages Newland's interests in the arts and politics and stops him inviting interesting people to the house, but Wharton makes clear that this is down to Newland's supineness and failure to fully understand May's true character before they got married.

Edith Wharton and Newland Archer appear to share a sardonic and condemning view of the customs and manners of New York high society of the time (the 1870s), but her love and affection for this same society is clearly evident. She wrote the book in her fifties, living abroad, but she is describing the milieu of her youth, a world which she feels had disappeared



'The Age of Innocence' by Joshua Reynolds which inspired the title of Wharton's novel

with the First World War: "a momentary escape in going back to my childish memories of a long-vanished America It was growing more and more evident that the world I had grown up in and been formed by had been destroyed in 1914." She describes the relative position in the 'pecking order' of each character, however minor, as they appear, dominated by Mrs Manson Mingott, Newland's grandmother with her money and her force of character. The mores of the 'smart set' are lovingly described, down to the habit of the older women not to show off their new Paris gowns until two seasons later, or what to serve at smart dinners using which Sevres china.

Changes of clothing for the men are as strict and complicated as for the women, down to the right shade of gloves that should be worn at a Ball. Society at this time also dictated that a woman must not walk across a drawing room after dinner without an escort - something that Ellen was always ignoring and being condemned for.

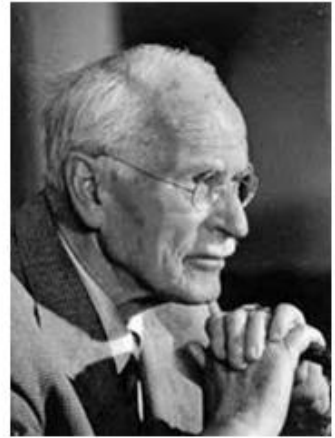
A strength of the book is the sympathetic treatment way the character of Ellen is treated who is far from the stereotype of the condemned scarlet woman. For Ellen is both likeable and moral, genuinely in love with Newland. It is simply her manners which are condemned by the smart set as unconventional and foreign. As such, we have another of the 'five great plots of the world' where the woman outside society acts to save others from hurt. In *La Traviata* for example, the heroine is persuaded to pretend to repudiate the man she loves in order to save his sister from disgrace and make a respectable marriage. Several times Ellen rebuffs Newland's subtle overtures because she cares deeply for Newland and May and feels it is wrong to endanger the marriage and their relationship by simply becoming 'his mistress'.

Another strength of the book is Wharton's style; it is wonderfully condensed and structured, highly literate in fact. (She won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1920 for this novel). Perhaps not so surprising when we consider that she had a mentor in Henry James from whom she took up the novel of manners and was friends within her Paris circle with Jean Cocteau and Sinclair Lewis. Beautifully written, it is a highly recommended read.

Marion Ditchfield

Luther, Zwingli and Carl Jung

Long long ago, shortly after the early Pleistocene, I happened to pick up and glance through a book by C G Jung - Volume VI of his Collected Works. I was deeply impressed by the sheer level of scholarship and perception in this book - 500 pages or so of in depth analysis and discussion about intellectual disputes in history - in religion (classical and medieval), philosophy, aesthetics, poetry, science, etc. Being Swiss



German, it is understandable that many of the examples he uses come from German culture and literature. But he also ranges widely and draws on Indian and Chinese examples.

And, as befits 'a son of the Manse,' (his father was a pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church) he is particularly interested in theological disputes. For example, he begins the book with the dispute between Tertullian and Origen in the early 3rd Century AD and their relationship to the Gnostics and their pursuit of knowledge. He shows how Tertullian's writings and beliefs were characterised by his passionate temperament and fanatical zeal in defence of what he held to be Christian 'truth': "Martyrdom he commanded to be sought and not shunned; he permitted no second marriage, and required the permanent veiling of female persons. Gnosis, he attacked with unrelenting fanaticism, together with philosophy and science. In rejecting Gnosticism, he counterposed his own inner reality, his own faith, his own soul". To him is ascribed the confession 'I believe because it is absurd.' Jung quotes from Tertullian's writings: 'O soul, as wondrous simple and unlearned, awkward and inexperienced, such as you are for those who possess nothing else but you, even as you come from the alleys, from the street corners, and from the workshops. It is just your unknowingness that I need'. Origen, on the other hand, was the archetypal intellectual: "With an intense yearning for knowledge he eagerly absorbed all that was worth knowing, and accepted everything, whether Christian, Jewish, Hellenistic, or Egyptian, that the teeming intellectual world of Alexandria offered him. In fact, rather than rejecting Gnosticism, Origen seemed content to absorb elements of it into his own view of Christianity. Jung describes how Origen loved to travel and to teach - being constantly surrounded by pupils eager to learn from him and how he was, perhaps, the only true scholar that the church possessed at this time. Unlike Tertullian, who placed his own inner reality and beliefs as the arbiter of his faith, Origen was entirely guided by the external world of knowledge and experience where his beliefs were concerned.



Jung then guides us through one of the major controversies of the early medieval church - scholasticism and the problem of universals - basically the dispute between nominalism and realism, a dispute going back to antiquity



of course. For example, does beauty - the concept of beauty - have some kind of reality, over and above the things that we describe as beautiful. Does the fact that we have this concept in our brain constitute as it were some kind of proof or evidence that it exists. Does truth exist as an entity distinct from things that are true. And so on. From a modern point of view this problem seems somewhat absurd (although Jung traces strong influences of this problem in contemporary German philosophy) but its importance lies in the fact that the same problem re-emerged in the medieval debate over transubstantiation, for example the dispute between Luther and Zwingli (a favourite of the Monday morning discussion group) about the extent to which the bread and wine of the sacrament can be thought of as partaking of the actual body and blood of Christ and the extent to which the whole ceremony is to be thought of in purely symbolic terms. Jung points out that Luther, a revolutionary where much of Catholic doctrine and practices were concerned, was nevertheless determined to cling to the idea that the body and blood of Christ was somehow present during communion: "For him the religious significance of the immediate experience of the object was so great that his imagination was spellbound by the concretism of the material presence of the sacred body. All his attempts at explanation are under the spell of this fact: the body of Christ is present, albeit 'non-spatially'." Zwingli, on the other hand, was quite content with a purely symbolic conception of the Communion.

Psychological Types

The foregoing are just a few examples of the disputes which Jung discusses in the history of classical and medieval thought. As noted above, the book goes on to discuss disputes in philosophy, aesthetics, poetry, etc. Jung's purpose in doing this is not to offer opinions on the respective merits of these disputes, to take one side or the other, but to illustrate their universality across disciplines and cultures and across time. His intention is to show that there is no real solution or solutions to these disputes because they are a function of the subject and not the object, ie they arise from the personal psychologies of the people involved and not from the properties (real or imagined) of the thing or things they are disputing. Hence the title

of Volume VI - 'Psychological Types'.

The Extravert and the Introvert

In making this distinction, Jung takes an enormous leap forward in our understanding of the world. For example, it is this work that first introduces us to the notion of the extrovert and the introvert: "In my practical work with nervous patients I have long been struck by the fact besides the many individual differences in human psychology there are also typical differences. Two types especially become clear to me: I have termed them the introverted and the extraverted types..... When we consider the course of human life, we see how the fate of one individual is determined more by the objects of his interest, while in another it is determined more by his own inner self, by the subject. Since we all swerve rather more towards one side or the other, we naturally tend to understand everything in terms of our own type." Jung is at great pains to point out that these dispositions are not pathological, they are ineradicable and necessary components of our consciousness. Both attitudes or dispositions are fundamental to being able to deal with the world we are born into. Neither are they mutually exclusive, we are all on a spectrum somewhere between the two - some of us more inclined towards one and some more inclined towards the other. Where we are on that spectrum can depend on many factors - the occupations and life experiences we have had to deal with (and have to go on dealing with which 'force' us one way or other, like it or not), even our age or stage in life (we seem to have a tendency to develop or expand our 'inferior' attitude later in life if we are lucky), but the basic attitude is innate.

Jung argues that the two attitudes of introversion and extraversion determine how the basic functions of consciousness orient themselves. These functions are four and irreducible: he calls these 'thinking', 'feeling', 'sensation' and 'intuition'. Again, it would be misleading to think of them as 'things'. They are simply dispositions which seek out certain content but have no actual content themselves. And again, all four are necessary to the successful operation of consciousness and, as before, we are all on a spectrum in each case.

Luther and Zwingli as Psychological Types

For example, Jung argues that Luther's extraverted attitude was not content to leave the object (ie the transubstantiation of the body and blood of Christ) as a straightforward idea but demanded it serve the needs of people to feel and sense the reality of what was taking place. Any formulation he might come up with. eg the body of Christ is somehow present 'non-spatially' can - to us - only be intellectually 'suspect', but to Luther this was

unimportant: "For him the religious significance of the immediate experience of the object was so great that his imagination was spellbound by the concretism of the material presence of the sacred body." Luther's extraversion was very much informed and directed by the functions of sensation and feeling. Zwingli, on the other hand, was quite content with a purely symbolic conception of the Communion, a 'spiritual' partaking of the body and blood of Christ which avoided all hypotheses contrary to reason: "This standpoint is characterized by reason and by an ideal conception of the ceremony." It probably appeals much more to the modern mind. The problem was that in this formulation, there was no room for what had been most important to Luther - the feeling and sensation values of the concrete experience. Zwingli's extraversion, by contrast, was characterised by the 'thinking' process.

Conclusion

The importance of Jung's theory is that it takes us forward. It shows that, in the final analysis, some of the problems we perceive and might argue about are ultimately insoluble, they have no solution. In that sense, they are not really 'problems.' They present themselves as problematic because of particular differences in the ways we habitually prefer to look at the world, the way we are innately disposed. It is a difficult idea to accept. We are quite ready to accept the fact that there are irreducible differences between us in terms of our physical and physiological makeup, our gender and so on - and that these differences are innate. It is much harder to accept the idea that there are innate differences in the way we perceive the world (although we have got used to the idea of people being 'right-brained' or 'left-brained' for example). It allows us to ask the question how much our disagreements, differences of opinion, are 'real', ie grounded in observable and verifiable fact, and how much in the way we tend to see the world, our individual psychologies.

And, for better, for worse, some of these differences are still most apparent in the realms of religion and philosophy, probably because they are areas of thought and enquiry that inevitably have to deal with abstract concepts and beliefs. It is extraordinary for example, how, after a century or more of ecumenical endeavour and agreement on a broad range of doctrinal issues, there is little will or inclination towards church unity. And, most revealingly perhaps, disagreement not so much as to the aims and object of our beliefs but how we want to worship and express those beliefs - from the quiet introversion and idealism of Quakerism to the jolly extraverted feeling of 'Happy-Clappy' Evangelicalism via all Catholic and Anglican points in between.

John Ditchfield

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

*Competition No 31 Places of Interest in the UK
(Final part: all except last start with 'W')*

1. A Fen Nature reserve, North of Cambridge.
2. A Museum for an anti-slavery campaigner.
3. The home of Lawn Tennis.
4. A Cathedral City North of Southampton.
5. The Royal residence closest to London.
6. The seat of the Dukes of Bedford.
7. Another henge close to Stonehenge.
8. A cave in the Cheddar Gorge area.
9. A Midlands Cathedral in which a King is buried.
10. Associated with the most famous Lakelands poet.
11. An extensive Roman city, far up the A5.
12. An extensive forest area West of Kidderminster.
13. Canterbury Cathedral is in the South and ---- is in the North.



Answers to Competition No.30 (Places of Interest in the UK Part 12)

1. Waddesdon
2. Walker Gallery
3. Warwick
4. Watercress Line
5. Watersmeet
6. Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.
7. Wedgwood Visitors Centre.
8. Wells.
9. Welshpool and Llanfair.
10. Wembley.
11. Westminster.
12. Whipsnade
13. Whitby.

We look forward to your answers - send them either by email to jbirch1821@gmail.com or by post to John Birch, 26 Holden Road, London N12 8HT. Otherwise see next issue of News and Views.



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 COSTUMES CRIB GABRIELLA INN-KEEPER JOSEPH
 JUNIOR-CHURCH KINGS LAMB LEARNING-LINES
 MARY MICROPHONES MILAN MILENA NATALIE
 NOAH NAOMI OUR-NATIVITY-PLAY PETER-PLAYING
 SHEPHERDS SOPHIE TREE-LIGHTS** *(When you have found all
 the clues put the remaining 13 letters together to find the carol we sing
 when switching on the small lights).*

DIARY

The church has opened again. Following a Risk Assessment, the Trustees of the Church have implemented Health & Safety protocols in line with Government and Denominational advice. Please observe:

Two metre social distancing.

Sanitise your hands on entry and exit.

Wear a mask.

Give your contact details.

After the service exit the church and talk outside.

Guidance will be updated as new advice becomes available.

All services taken by Revd Dr Ian Tutton unless indicated

Monday 10.30am to 11.30am *Studying together in Church*

Christian Meditation - Meditators meet here. For further information, contact: Georgia.gmrtutton@aol.com



DECEMBER 2020

- 6** 11.00 am Family Communion Service
- 8** 7.30 pm Elders Court
- 13** 11.00 am Family Service
- 17** 7.30 pm Christmas Community Celebration
- 20** 11.00 am Festival Service of Nine Lessons & Carols
- 25** 11.00 am Christmas Day Family Service
- 27** 11.00 am Family Service
- 31** 11.30 pm Watchnight Service for New Years' Eve

JANUARY 2020

- 1** 3.00pm New Years' Day Organ Concert by Peter Hopkins
- 3** 11.00am Family Communion Service
- 10** 11.00am Family Service
- 12** 7.30pm Deacons Court
- 17** 11.00am Family Service
- 19** 7.30pm Elders Court
- 24** 11.00am Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 29** 1.00pm Piano Concert by Lysianne Chen in Free Church
- 31** 11.00am Family Service

*A Happy Christmas and Joyful
New Year to all our Readers*



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 February edition of News and Views will be published on Sunday 7th February. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday 17th January.

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.

Remember - we are on line at www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk where you will find past issues of News and Views.

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