

NEWS & VIEWS

The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb



MARCH-APRIL 2021

PLEASE TAKE ONE

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

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

Sunday Services: *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**
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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***

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



NO 767

MARCH/APRIL 2021

Dear **F**riends,

It was during March of last year, 12 months ago, that the Coronavirus Pandemic took hold in this country. Before the month was out, the country was plunged into total lockdown. It was something of a novelty, and with the weather favourable, in an area like the Suburb, it was relatively easy to 'make the best of it'. Even though the nightly news bulletins were filled with horror stories concerning hospitals at breaking point, with daily deaths topping the 1,000 at the peak of what we now refer to as the 'first wave', unless there was a particular reason to have been impacted personally, it still all felt somewhat remote. Summer sunshine saw us all decant ourselves on to the Heath Extension, and then came July. It was over. Fast forward to January of this year. A 'second wave' breaks; even more devastating than the first. By now the novelty of being locked down had well and truly worn off. The Heath extension is far less attractive when you are ankle deep in mud, in the driving wind and rain, and there are only so many jigsaw puzzles one can do...

...But now, there is hope for the future. Slowly but surely restrictions are being eased in the hope that within three or four months, life will, in large part, be back to how it used to be. We as a Church feeling able to resume Sunday worship in the presence of a Congregation is a big step forward for us. It will be so good to be able to meet with one another 'face to face' once again – although it's been so long, we might not immediately recognise each other – Indeed, there will be much to catch up on, as we 'get to know each other' once again. All of us will have our stories to tell...

...It may be just coincidence, but there does seem to be a certain significance attaching to the fact that our emerging from lockdown is

happening just as Spring is evident all around us. Nature emerging from its own 'self-imposed lockdown' – the days lengthening, the sun's rays becoming warmer, the flowers blooming, the birds singing – and just as the natural order is awakening from its slumber, so the world waits for Eastertide, to be reminded that new life can awaken even from the sleep of death. Jesus foretold His own destiny when He noted that 'unless a seed be thrown into the ground to die, it cannot bring forth life.' There is a sense in which the church, every individual congregation such as our own, is being roused from its slumber. Not that we have been dormant throughout this period; the opportunity to broadcast worship using social media has been a blessing to many. But the church is nothing if it is not about providing opportunities for people to worship God in the company of one another, providing an opportunity for people to 'congregate'. Given all that has happened during this last year, it may well be that our celebration of the Easter season this year will be unlike any other...

...And yet we have to be sensitive to those for whom this whole time has been nothing but 'hell on earth'. Those whose circumstances were nothing like as 'comfortable' as ours. Most especially, the many who have been bereaved, or who themselves have been gravely ill. There will be those for whom life will never again be anything like as it was. Those who will always be living in the twilight of life as a consequence of what they have had to endure. Our hearts go out to them... You, reading this may be one such person... My heart goes out to you...

...Yet, notwithstanding all of this, to everyone I say, a 'Happy and Blessed Easter to you all'.

Ian Tutton



Bible Study: Joshua

Joshua chapter 14 continues the description of how the land was to be distributed amongst the Tribes of Israel. The land to west of the River Jordan was to be divided thus; *'... The following are the possessions which the Israelites acquired in the land of Canaan, as Eleazer the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the families of the Israelite tribes allotted them...'* (Joshua 14, 1). Verses 3 – 5 remind us of what we learned in the previous chapter; that the land occupied to the east of the River Jordan had been allocated according to the command of Moses – to the Tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-Tribe of Manasseh – whilst the Tribe of Levi the Priestly Tribe, received no allocation of land. *'...So, the Israelites assigned the land according to the Lord's command given to Moses...'* (Joshua 14, verse 5). But before we are told about the more general distribution of the land to the west of the Jordan, the rest of chapter 14 is given over to a particular individual and his 'reward' for having rendered a particular service on behalf of Moses prior to the actual invasion of the land itself. *'...The tribe of Judah had come to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You remember what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God concerning you and me at Kadesh-Barnea."...'* (Joshua 14, 6). Kadesh was the place where the Israelites had made camp prior to their invasion of the land. It was from there that Moses sent 12 spies into Canaan to spy out the land. Caleb, together with Joshua were two of the 12. In Numbers 13 we have a description of the report they brought back to Moses and to the people. And while we are given a very detailed report, it is best summed up in the words of the chorus which I, and no doubt many others who went to Sunday School, would have learned; together with the actions!

 '... Twelve men went to spy out Canaan,
 (Ten were bad, two were good)
 What do you think they saw in Canaan?
 (Ten were bad, two were good)
 Some saw giants, big and tall!
 Some saw grapes in clusters fall,
 Some saw God was in it all.
 (Ten were bad, two were good)...'

And of course, the other one of the spies who brought back an encouraging report was Joshua himself. But it was Caleb, who in spite of the seemingly overwhelming odds against the Israelites succeeding in their quest to occupy the land, sought to rally the people to the cause, ‘...*Caleb silenced the people for Moses. “Let us go up at once and occupy the country”, he said, “we are well able to conquer it.”...*’ (Numbers 13, 30). It was because of Caleb’s positive account that Moses had made a promise to him and his descendants, ‘...*Moses swore an oath that day, “The land on which you have set foot”, he said, “is to be your holding and your sons’ after you as a possession for ever; for you have loyally carried out the purpose of the Lord my God.” ...*’ (Joshua 14, 9). So now Caleb has come to Joshua to ask that the promise made to him by Moses prior to the invasion and occupation of the land would be kept. It would not be easy for Caleb and his family, we are told that ‘...*the Anakim [giants] were there and their towns were large and fortified, [nevertheless] perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out as he promised...*’ (Joshua 14, 12b). We learn later that Caleb promised his daughter Achsah in marriage to the one who would rid the area of the ‘giants’. This was accomplished by Caleb’s nephew, Othniel Ben Kenaz. (Judges 1, verses 12 – 15). And so, ‘...*Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron for his holding, and that is why Hebron remains to this day [the time of writing] in the possession of Caleb, son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. It is because he loyally carried out the purpose of the Lord the God of Israel...*’ (Joshua 14, 13 – 14). Yet, it was not quite as is described here. The city of Hebron had already been designated as a ‘city of refuge’, ‘...*The Israelites designated the following towns out of the tribes of Judah and Simeon for those sons of Aaron who were of the Kohathite families of the Levites... To the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, a city of refuge...*’ (Joshua 21, 9 – 13). And so, it needed to be clarified that, ‘...*they gave the open country near the town, and its hamlets, to Caleb son of Jephunnah as his holding...*’ (Joshua, 21, 12). And so, this short chapter ends. Another example of the compiler’s determination to reaffirm the continuity between the time of Moses and the time of Joshua; between the events that preceded the conquest of the land and its subsequent invasion and occupation. A particular illustration of what is at the heart of the unfolding narrative of the history of the Israelites as recorded in the Old Testament. The further the people moved away,

World Day of Prayer

At the time of writing, the World Day of Prayer on 5th March is set to go ahead digitally in many places with restrictions on church services. It will be led by three women on Vanuata, a group of some 80 islands in the South Pacific, on the theme of “Build on a Strong Foundation,” a reference to Jesus’ parable of building your faith like a house on a rock, instead of on shaky sands. Vanuata is one of the first countries to start to pray on the Day of Prayer, helping to set off the world-wide wave of prayer.



Honor Orme and Marion Ditchfield

chronologically, from the events of the past, the more necessary it was to ensure that the events of the past did not become forgotten. The rationale behind the continuing understanding of the existence of the ‘Jews’, the ‘Israelites’, ‘the Hebrews’, as being within the unfolding providence of God relies upon its appeal to an unbroken history that can be traced back to Abraham, the Father of the faithful, an unbroken history which within the Christian tradition we believe to be continuing in, through and beyond this present time...

Ian Tutton



LOVE ‘THE MANY SPLENDURED THING’.

Although this magazine is the March/April issue it means we are just leaving the short month of February with the all important date of the 14th St. Valentine’s Day. John and I feel we must be becoming more mature as, for the second time, we have sent each other the same card from the Traidcraft selection – a beautiful sea scene of waves crashing in a beach. Obviously the artist has studied their subject matter carefully as you can imagine the white curve of the wave, travelling along a long stretch before it crashes in beautiful symmetry. This observation of our increasing maturity follows our first snap episode several years ago when the appropriate card was of a large pink hippotamus - I leave any psychiatrists to draw their own observation!

The Sunday Morning service on BBC 4 that morning was entitled ‘Facets of Love’ and the Baptist minister the Rev Richard Littledale led the service along with contributions from Rev Peter Howell-Jones, the Dean of Blackburn Cathedral; Rev Sarah Hills, Vicar of Holy Island and the Rev Sharron Dinnie, Rector of Kwasa College in Springs, Johannesburg. The theme ‘God is love’ was explained by Rev Littledale as ‘a love that stands tall and gracious when all around is chaos. It is a love that gives of itself for the sake of others ... The extent to which we love a God whom we cannot see, is measured by the extent we love those whom we do.’ Rev Howell-Jones explained that by imitating Jesus in his way of engaging ordinary people on the fringes of society and as a way of showing their love, Blackburn Cathedral was opening its doors and providing a long-term home for one of the nation’s vaccination centres. He continued: “opening our doors to hundreds of people on a daily basis was our way of revealing something of the love of God - a love that is quietly stretching out to the wider community, to reveal something of the generous hospitality of God today. A love that recognises the anxiety and suffering of so many and choosing to respond to a country in crisis by offering the only thing we can, becoming a channel through which the generous love of God can be poured out unconditionally.”

By way of contrast Rev Hills, Vicar of the Holy Island in Northumberland, explained that love in a time of lockdown meant sharing in such a way that a community, cut off from the mainland, could sustain itself. A small community of 150 people, which is cut off twice a day by the tide (we remember it well) has learnt afresh “how to live together. We have set up the Holy Island Support Group, offers of firewood, help with food

shopping, takeaway fish and chips once a week delivered to your door in all weathers. A food pantry in the Church porch for anybody to help themselves". What they have found in this time of pandemic the realization that 'we need each other. We need to give and we need to receive. It is in these ordinary acts of kindness that love is found'.

Another example of this amazing sharing of His love was told by Rev Dinnie who explained that "a home-made village on the outskirts of an abandoned mine near Johannesburg is no place to be when all visible support is cut off." She continued "a few weeks into our first lockdown I drove to our school chapel with donations of food and clothing. We were met by a group of women, one of them saying 'we've run out of food, and people are in pain.' We unloaded our gifts together and she immediately halved everything and sent the young children off with one half. 'Where are they going' I asked, initially concerned. 'They are going to the village to share what we have been given with the people there as they are hungry.' More than 1000 people live in shacks and informal housing near our school. From then on, even though we could never feed everyone who needed help during lockdown, whatever our school was given was halved and shared out with our neighbourly community. Then the community members halved whatever they were given to make the food go further."

This last example reminded me of the parable Jesus tells of the servant who owed money and was forgiven - but didn't understand the idea of forgiveness as he then went and demanded what was owed to him by his own servant. We need to understand the selfless love which both giver and receiver needed.

Those wonderful stories of dedicated love shared by the speakers' communities made me wonder what on earth can I do to show this amazing love? Then I realised that during this pandemic we have all heard of incredible acts of caring sacrifice - from the NHS' caring teams; from all the workers that have kept food deliveries going; from those looking after neighbours (we shall never forget the kindness of a near neighbour, only rarely spoken to before except to make comments about his lovely dogs, but who regularly did odd bits of shopping for us, saying it was no trouble at all - that kindness and concern meant so much); the dedication of transport workers - even our oldest son driving double-decker buses down narrow Somerset lanes realised the importance of a cheery greeting to an oldie which might be the only greeting during their day; and so many more examples....

Sometimes, an apathy can swamp us and make us think we can't make

much difference, but we can; I have learnt over the years there's always someone worse off than myself and each one of us can do something. The statement that Jesus made about treating each other as we would like to be treated, acts as a great incentive; for example, if you think 'I would like a phone call', then make one and cheer someone up or 'I would like to receive a letter' - then send one first. I have a sister with dementia down in Devon. Once a month I write a letter to her. I know I shall never get a reply but that doesn't matter because I know she enjoys receiving one and in this country there's always something to write about, perhaps the ever-changing weather! By showing someone you care, by showing your love, this gives hope to the receiver, a small green shoot of hope saying they count .. they are of value, they are not forgotten, they are loved. I'll end with verses from one of the greatest gospel songs ever written which gives us such amazing re-assurance of a God who freely gives and freely loves if we come to Him. Written by the Scot, Horatius Bonar after a visit to Palestine and - following the calling of many of his ancestors - as a youth who devoted himself to the 'the Service of God.'



Horatius Bonar

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad.
I found in him a resting place,
And he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
"Behold I freely give
The living water, thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

Rosemary Birch

‘Seeing Salvation’ and Easter in Spain

In 2000 the BBC broadcast a series called ‘Seeing Salvation’ in which Neil Macgregor explored images of Christ in Art. For my 50th birthday I was given the beautiful book which accompanied the series. During lockdown I have had the time to reread the book and enjoy looking in detail at the illustrations of the paintings and art. The book starts with the ‘Birth



of God’ and the nativity scenes and then the ‘Suffering of God’ through Christ’s Crucifixion culminating in the ‘Risen Christ’. Jesus came from the Jewish tradition which did not allow images of God and there are no contemporary accounts of Jesus’ appearance. But through European history the paintings and art provide a reflection of the spiritual world of the artist and the desires of their patrons. Over the centuries a likeness of Jesus has emerged that we all now recognise, particularly the baby Jesus as a symbol of hope.

In the chapter ‘Passion and Compassion’ Macgregor explores the development in Spain of the life-like gilded or polychromed wooden sculptures that are carried today in the Easter Processions. In Easter 1988 we had our first visit to Spain staying with an extended Spanish family that we got to know when one lived as an au-pair with my family. My mother was Department Head of English as a Foreign Language and through the years we had several members of this Spanish family stay with us as they ran an English School in Elde, inland from Alicante. In the week leading up to Easter we followed the nightly ‘Semana Santa’ processions through the town. Penitents wearing cone shaped black hoods (resembling Klu Klux Klan) accompany the floats. These processions developed during the sixteenth century with penitential confraternities (groups of laymen devoted to prayer and good works) carrying life size sculptures dressed in real clothes. Today there are brotherhoods which carry the elaborate floats representing different scenes from the Passion story similar to the Stations of the Cross. People do not need to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land they can follow the footsteps of Christ as they come out of their homes or watch from their balconies. It reminds people that Christ is still among us

today, in our streets, suffering and dying for us.

On Easter Sunday we stood in the town centre and watched as two processions arrived from two churches on different sides of the town. Eventually, the float carrying Mary, the Mother of Jesus, came face to face with the float carrying Christ. Mary's black cloak of mourning dropped away and the accompanying ladies showered Mary's float with the bunches of flowers that they had been carrying. After a short prayer, the priest announced 'Christ is risen', and the onlookers burst into applause with rifles being shot and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah played over loudspeakers.

In 1977, the National Theatre created a modern reworking of the Medieval Mystery Plays with a three part promenade production from Creation to the Last Judgement. We vividly remember being in the audience for 'The Passion' shouting 'Crucify Him' with the crowd as we mingled with the actors. The actors wore cloth caps and overalls, reminding us that the mystery plays were originally created by craftsmen. One of the soldiers, having crucified Christ and drawing lots for his purple robe, cried out, "The gaffer wins and we get nothing". In 2011 Michael Sheen portrayed Jesus in the Passion, which was enacted across Port Talbot with the Crucifixion taking place in the centre of a roundabout. By taking part in the re-enactment of Christ's Passion and Resurrection we become part of the Easter story and we are reminded that God loves us so much that he sends his son, Jesus Christ to earth to die for us and take away our sins.

Jenny Stonhold



An Easter Editorial

This is the editorial for February /March from "Allo-Montrouge" the magazine of our twinned Church in Paris, the Eglise Protestante de Montrouge, written by the Pastor Laurence Berlot.

"So I am going to take her into the desert again; there I will win her with words of love; there I will restore her vineyards, turning the Vale of Trouble into the Gate of Hope, and there she will answer as in her youth, when she came up out of Egypt..." Hosea 2: 14-15

For a year we've been deprived of much of our freedom: and this has made our lives feel as arid and empty as a desert. Our plans have been put on hold and we've been unable to see our friends. We hear about the effects these deprivations have had on some people - socially, economically and psychologically, and we ourselves have been touched. Our normal lives have been put to the test - deprived of family meetings, leisure and cultural activities, the little things which make us human. It's hard for us to turn our eyes to what is left for us and not to keep thinking of what we have lost.

The time in the desert goes on and on, like the time of fasting which starts on Ash Wednesday, 17 February and ends with Easter on 4 April. We become more aware of what we are missing, we long for things to return to normal, to reconnect with our previous life, to the things we used to enjoy doing, and we hope for this with all the power at our disposal.

Jesus was tested and tempted in the desert for 40 days. (In Greek the same word denotes test and temptation.) There is an echo here of the 40 years when the people of Israel wandered in the desert. The desert is at the same time a place of testing and a place of meeting. Hosea received the word of God (quoted above) - that God loves his people, even when they are disobedient. The desert is the place where we can meet and be reconciled to God.

Not because God is more present there but because it's a place where I can discard my shell; where I can cast off the armour which protects my weaknesses, a place where I can question the truths I have lived by. Hosea the prophet tells us that God wants to speak to our hearts with love and tenderness. He came to repeat the message through the life of Jesus. So as we feel the loss and the emptiness, let us allow God to be open to us, so that he can come to visit us, to talk with us, to tell us of his love, to give us his peace. Isn't this what the resurrection means? A powerful jolt in the middle of daily frustrations. A breath which lets us go forward with hope.

Laurence Berlot Trans. Joan Holton

JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY

My grandma used to say “you can choose your friends but you can't choose your family.” I don't think this was a barbed remark, just a reasonable general observation. It came to mind when one of our neighbours – who had come around to pick up a parcel left with us – said that he had no regular contact with family members. With us, it's inevitable with six children and numerous grandchildren. The grandchildren are particularly important: from my experience it's often easier to talk to a grandparent than to your parents. Grandparents are slightly more remote whereas parents will always be parents, however old you are. For Rosemary and me, it's a privilege that they involve us, if they wish, in their lives, problems and aspirations. Although we wish we had ‘face to face’ contact more often with the family being scattered across much of England and Wales, this, at present, is not possible. We have adapted to technology and can at least get vision and sound through Zoom. (We have adapted so much as to become brave enough to play a remote version of Bingo with one part of the family. Not being put off by one grandson, using an app to make it appear as if he was wearing a halo and then putting a pencil through it and then appearing with his brother to swing upside down - those factors did not stop Grandad winning.) It's amazing how much life has changed over my life-time: for my first seven years, my Mum and Dad lived with her parents in a down-the-passage mid-terrace house with gas (but no electricity) and an outside toilet. Then we moved to the “lap-of-luxury,” a new three bedroom semi-detached council house, with a large garden, my home until I came to London - a very different place from Shrewsbury which was, and is, the county town of Shropshire with a population then of about 40,000.

‘Working from home’ Writing this month is very little different from my Diary for the February issue. In the past “working from home” was, sometimes, a euphemism for not having much to do. This has now become a necessity during the various lockdowns including the present one. Thankfully, technology now means that many tasks can be done remotely. As an aside, this is especially important for my business as an Estate Agent: every property we take on immediately has a video “walk around” produced and shared online. This at least means anyone can get a



reasonable idea of the property and then go on to ask for any particular extra information and arrange a viewing – which happens in accordance with the strict lockdown requirements. The most memorable request was “Where’s the nearest sauna?”

Addresses and Places Postcodes are nowadays very much a part of life, whether we are addressing a letter or putting in information to our smart phone/computer. Thankfully, common sense can still prevail: a letter addressed to Tracy Fitz Somewhere at the ‘Top of Town’ St Ives, Cornwall arrived with the right person. When my letting business first started many years ago, a letter from the USA with “Agents from £50 per week in Marylebone” was safely delivered to Birch & Co in Marylebone Lane.

The “*ab and other matters*” Rosemary and I had our first jabs on Sunday 24th January at 8.20 and 9am at our local surgery. What to expect? Firstly, we didn’t think there would be a queue, but there was, snaking down the pavement and around a corner - moving at a reasonable pace, with everybody dressed for the cold and having a friendly chat at a social distance apart. The arrangements were well organised with an open-air ‘check-in’ (everyone was well-wrapped-up) - then indoors into a series of three adjoining tents for paperwork to be completed and on to one of a team carrying out the injections - people, mostly volunteers, who knew exactly what they were doing, acting quickly and accurately. As with everyone, we are now waiting for the appointments for our second jabs. In the meanwhile, lockdown life, for the present, continues.



‘Setting a good example’ We have all been inspired over the last year by the story and example of Captain Sir Tom Moore, a modest man who provided focus and hope for our nation. His life has made me realise that each one of us will have known a person or persons who were self-effacing but who are remembered as extraordinary individuals. There are, for me, three such people whose memories I treasure and whose life had an influence on me: two of them have connections with our church. **Nellie Dean.** Those in membership for many years will remember Nellie. She had years of Christian service, having in the 1930’s, been secretary to the head of the London Missionary Society. This was at a time when Gandhi was in London negotiating for the Independence of India. There was a connection between the LMS and Gandhi, and Nellie met with him. In later years she was contacted by Radio India and gave her memories in an interview. She lived just beyond her 100th Birthday which was

celebrated with the fervour of a 21st Birthday. She came with us on various outings. I remember a picnic in Windsor Great Park. Before we could get around to open the car door for Nellie and Rosemary's mother, she was already out, full of excitement, and promptly walked into a tree with overhanging branches. She insisted on sitting down on the ground with everyone else – and, with some decorous gentle rolling, getting to her feet again. We also took her down to the West End to see the Christmas lights for her first time and she was thrilled. She had been a Suburb resident for many years and had the ability, which is rare, to get on with everyone and anybody and all this with the impediment of a cleft-palate, which made speech more difficult and sounded slightly slurred. She is remembered by Rosemary and myself and all our children.

Neville Lee was a business colleague who I first met in the late 1970's. He was a few years older than myself. We got to know each other well when, jointly, we had the idea to form a professional organisation for letting agents which became ARLA (Association of Residential Letting Agents - still going strong.) Neville had long connections with India - he worked in tea plantations as an alternative to National Service. He was an active Christian and in later years went on a pilgrimage with others from his church in Brighton to the Balkans. He told me of the strong effect of reading words written by St. Paul in the exact place where they had been written. His services to residential lettings were recognised by an MBE.

Millicent Slack. As with Nellie there are those who will have fond memories of Millicent. Her husband, the Rev Kenneth, was one of the founders of Christian Aid - in fact he suggested the name. Millicent was an inveterate traveller: I have a postcard she sent from Singapore after a 31 hour journey back from the Pacific. She was as ebullient as someone half her age. She was so full of life and willing to lend a hand wherever she could - even in later years by serving teas and coffees at the Bazaar. She encouraged us greatly on our yearly coach trips, Thursday Fellowship and the monthly Saturday morning coffee mornings - and when numbers were low we certainly needed her input. There's another connection with Millicent, though not remembered directly by myself. Millicent and my mother used to push prams and exchange news together when Millicent's husband had his first ministry in Shrewsbury. Both mothers recognised each other years later in the 1980's when my mum came to visit the Free Church. It's commonly said that if you met seven complete strangers you'd be able to find a close link with one of them, so Millicent and my mum were one of those strange coincidences - the same thing happened when the late Arthur Over saw his former French teacher from Wrekin College sitting in Church (alias Rosemary's Dad!).

John Birch

From the Archive 1921

Editorial from Work and Worship March 1921

As now, visiting ministers were invited to preach during the time when the church was without a new minister. In this instance, the gap was between Rev Rushbrooke and the appointment of Rev Major Scott.

The preachers who are occupying the pulpit during the month of March are men of mark and striking ability. We would especially call the attention of the Church and Congregation to the visit of Dr Selbie - Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, and an ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union. Dr Selbie is so well known that it is needless to assume that his presence with us on March 13th will ensure large congregations both morning and evening. His deep and abiding interest in the Churches of our Order is such that his first visit to the Garden Suburb Free Church, with all the possibilities that this Church has in the building up of a Spiritual Fellowship in a rapidly increasing and important neighbourhood, should make this day a memorable one in our history.



Mr Rushbrooke's Farewell Jan 31st 1921

The Rev Rushbrooke was leaving to rebuild the Baptist Alliance and to help bring relief to the suffering in Eastern Europe following the First World War. As early as 1920 he had written from Riga: "My dear friends, I am writing from a city that knows much of the sufferings of war: Germans, Russians and Bolsheviks had wrought their will here"

We all knew he was going. When he made that memorable journey through war-stricken Europe, he realised the kind of work that was demanded from **somebody** and must be done by **somebody**, though at that time he had no feeling that **he** must do it. But when his brethren in America and in England said with one voice "you are the man" he had to listen.



From Work and Worship April 1921

The 'tramp' referred to below would be a 'hike'. One wonders what they would make of their route today? They tramped through rural Herfordshire villages and farmland - today's commuter belt, now sliced through by busy

motorways and main roads (A41, M1, A1 (M), A10, M25, A406 ...)!

Eleven of the "Rovers" belonging to the Garden Suburb Troop, accompanied by one of the Seconds, spent Easter tramping over the country, comprised roughly in a radius of say 20 miles, round the North of London.



They took the bus to Watford on Friday morning and walked to St Alban's, visiting the Abbey and reached Hatfield before nightfall. Here they obtained permission to sleep at the Dairy Farm. On Saturday they received a great favour, being granted a private view of the reception rooms, the famous paintings and the many other interesting features of Hatfield House, the home of the Marquis of Salisbury. They were invited to visit the gardens, and of course entered the maze and found their way to the centre and out again with more or less ease and excitement.

On Saturday night they reached Hertford, and on Sunday, via Ware and Rye (where they visited Rye House, rendered infamous by Titus Oates) they tramped to Hoddesdon, obtained accommodation and attended service at the Parish Church. It was a very "low" service; they were placed adjacent to the choir and thoroughly enjoyed the singing; the Vicar was most attentive in welcoming them previous to the service.

On Monday they reached home via Cheshunt, Enfield, New Barnet and Whetstone - having thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the tramp of over fifty miles.

1941

The last part of the Minister's March News Letter 1941

Inevitably, during the Second World War, news of people was more dramatic than news of people in today's News and Views.

.... Finally, we come to what is probably the most interesting part of these monthly letters - news about individuals, especially members of HM Forces. First, let me say what a pleasure it has been to welcome Mr F H Herrmann back to the Suburb. Like hundreds of others he was interned (last June) at Liverpool and afterwards in the Isle of Man. At last the authorities have been persuaded that we spoke the truth when we said he is entirely loyal to this country, and has been released. Oliver Close has joined up in the pioneer Battalion. His brother Michael received his commission a considerable time ago and is now believed to be in Africa. Douglas McCallum has sailed from these shores to an unknown destination, and Dudley Youatt has arrived in an unknown port abroad. Frank James is now

a 2nd Lieutenant, Evelyn Down an ARP Warden, and Michael Robbins a father. Some people, as will be seen below, have ventured into matrimony and there are rumours that others are considering it! Congratulations to all whom congratulations are due! I have received numerous letters to which I hope and believe I have sent answers. If anyone has been omitted please make the necessary allowances. Without permission I am going to make a quotation from one of these letters: "One sad case is that of a Norwegian chap with whom I have built up a great friendship. He was in peacetime a chief steward on a Norwegian merchant liner. When Hitler invaded Norway he was at sea and volunteered with the rest of the crew to sail to England. He gave up his job and joined our Navy. No news is permitted to reach him from Norway and he does not know whether or not his father, mother and wife are alive or whether the child he was expecting has been born. I feel deeply for him, but he will not worry - or shall I say show that he is worrying. He often says to me 'George, you British people have a motto and I have borrowed it - Keep Smiling!' This war then, ghastly as it is, will not be in vain if it brings these fine qualities out of us and teaches us to share each others sorrow, as I do his." Ever yours sincerely Frank H Ballard

From the Minister's News Letter April 1941

.... Looking ahead the chief thing that calls for comment is the great festival of Easter. We shall not attempt the Three Hours Service on Good Friday, but there will be a service at 11 am for about an hour. I shall be taking part in the united service at St Mary Woolnoth in the afternoon. The in the evening we shall have an opportunity to demonstrate the unity of the Christian churches in the Golders Green area. There will be a service at Hodford Road Methodist Church at 6.45 pm preceded by a procession of witness from St Alban's Church at 6.15. The procession will be headed by the Salvation Army band and will include the clergy and ministers of the neighbourhood together with many lay representatives of the congregations. Will you see to it that there is a goodly number from the Free Church? Don't be shy of walking for once in a procession! The only announcement that needs to be made about Easter Day is that there will be Holy Communion following Evensong. Some people might prefer the Sacrament in the early morning, but as I explained in a previous letter, the evening hour is most in line with the Apostolic practice. Worship the following Sunday will be conducted by the Rev Norman McCallum, one of the old boys of our Sunday School.

Last Sunday I began my ninth year as your minister. I will say nothing about so personal a matter except that I am glad I came. Ever yours sincerely Frank H Ballard

Anne Lowe

Church Flowers



To all our Church friends who kindly provide funds each week for the communion table flowers. On behalf of the Free Church flower team, I'd like to thank you for your ongoing support of us over so many years. Your donations have enabled us to enhance our beautiful building and given so much pleasure to so many. During these strange times of lockdown a few simple flowers have been put, as a token, each week on the communion table for the Sunday recorded service. Hopefully, when we are able to meet up again in more normal circumstances for Sunday worship, we will be able to instigate the flower rota once again when your donations would be very welcome. In the meantime, keep well - despite the arctic conditions at the time of writing. Spring is around the corner!

Maureen Schuricht

And on the theme of flowers and Easter

THOUGHT FOR TWO MONTHS: SPRINGTIME JOYS

Everywhere we look spring has come alive;
Periwinkle, daffodils, hostas, growing on the hill.
Many flowers blooming and bees are zooming.
Course Spring has sprung, while all nature sings, bringing forth its young.
There's no doubt that God has put love into springtime;
Spring-time is like a new beginning that has come alive.
Just like the hope that has grown within my heart;
Just like the sunshine of His Word can cause much faith to thrive.

When we grow in grace, we grow to be like Him.
When we grow into Jesus, into his power and his might.
The more seeds we sow, the more in Him we'll grow;
Growing forth in his goodness and mercy within his light.

Marvellous are the blooms of Spring-time's joy,
Just like the joy of Jesus blessing our hearts as we pray.
The joy of Jesus shines when we praise Him.
The joy of the Lord is our strength as we trust each day.



*Poem by Susan Y. Niketenko 2016.
Sourced by Rosemary Birch*

TRAI DCRAFT

With the aim in its name - ie bringing aid through trade - Traidcraft for the past 40 years, has been following three themes: - Trade Justice (counteracting the incredible power imbalances in international trade); Social Justice (being passionate about equality whether it be in gender, religion, opportunity, regardless of background or heritage); Environmental Justice (being increasingly concerned about the effect of climate change).

Where the latter is concerned, Traidcraft is making all orders more environmentally friendly by taking small steps such as using air film pillows to protect orders in transit instead of paper packaging; using paper tape to seal the orders instead of plastic tape; using vegetable and water-based inks when putting together the catalogues; using DPD as the delivery firm whose green policies are similar to Traidcraft's (ie using electric vehicles, waste management and solar power). Carrying on the eco-conscious theme, all goods arrive by boat instead of air unless extremely delayed. In deciding what crafts and fashions should be sourced through third party suppliers, Traidcraft considers carefully the ethos, sustainability and environmental impact of the components used. The latest material being used is seacell - a progressive new fabric made from knotted wrack, which is a common sea-weed and has some remarkable properties - namely nutrients from the sea-weed which are retained in the fabric, including iron, calcium, magnesium and vitamin E - all of which are transferred to the skin when worn. (And the end product is 100% bio-degradable!)

The pandemic has had some kind of effect on all of us, whatever our status and wherever we are in the world. It stopped everyone in their tracks, putting lives on pause, but as with everything, not everybody was affected equally. Honduras at the best of times feels in many ways neglected with inadequate water and electricity supplies, poor infrastructure and little schooling for children. Lockdown made life very difficult with very small food supplies which in some cases tripled in price. Traidcraft teamed up with Roasters United and financially supported the coffee farmers of the Combrifol co-operative, helping those with the greatest need, such as single mums and their children. Firstly, food packages and seeds were provided for immediate relief and then a cooperative nursery was set up to raise seedlings of fruit and vegetables to enable growers to become self-sufficient in the future.

Café Direct purchases 100 % Fairtrade coffee, tea and cocoa. As well as paying the minimum Fairtrade price they also pay an additional Fairtrade

BOOK REVIEW: "REBECCA" by DAPHNE du MAURIER

I had not read "Rebecca" since my school days, so it was a pleasure and a surprise to re-read it. A pleasure because Daphne du Maurier is such a good story teller, a surprise because I had completely forgotten what a mysterious and challenging novel this is - right to the very last page.

Du Maurier is masterly at setting a "Gothic" scene, full of mystery, intrigue, horror. Her characters are very few in the whole novel (400 pages in my edition) but all the main protagonists are well delineated - some lovable and down-to-earth, others mysterious, some menacing. The two main characters are Max de Winter, a wealthy landowner, and his wife (she is never named) who is the writer of the novel, not forgetting their beloved dog Jasper.

The two meet quite unceremoniously in a Monte Carlo hotel where she makes her living by chaperoning and meeting the needs of a wealthy widow, whose daily excitement, apart from her evening hand of bridge, is



premium. From the start of the pandemic, this premium has been paid to the producer communities to buy personal protective equipment and hand sanitizing stations. Claire Rhodes, CEO of Producers Direct, comments that: "There is a serious and significant risk that Covid-19 will cause major food shortages and long-term chain sustainability issues. It is absolutely critical that we support the livelihoods of small-holder producers in Africa and Latin America."

So, at the time of writing that is the situation. Husband John and I still carry a selection of tea, biscuits, chocolate etc in the boot of the car. There is a new selection of the most attractive greeting cards and, at the appropriate time, a very small selection of Easter cards. We will be parked in the Church car-park between 10.15-10.45 Sunday mornings (the same time as when you can drop off food bank articles) but we are quite prepared to park outside your house, with our car-boot open and all socially distant, if you need any supplies.

Rosemary Birch



to notice, identify and target well-known and wealthy visitors to Monte and to the hotel. So, the elderly widow is thrilled when she recognises Max de Winter staying in their hotel, and makes a beeline to get to know him, which he accepts reluctantly.

A few days later her employer becomes indisposed and the narrator becomes friendly with Max, who is recovering from the traumatic loss of his wife Rebecca the previous year; they begin to eat dinner together. They also decide to spend their days driving around the area and enjoying each other's company - unknown to the writer's employer. Gradually they find they are falling for each other. Max proposes to her unexpectedly, as a means of extracting her from her employment and to the disgust of her employer. But our friend the narrator, who, by now, is deeply in love with Max is delighted and overcome. The two return to England and to the estate of Manderley where, as his wife, she becomes the chatelaine, a role for which she is completely unprepared. So the scene is set for a series of unlikely and unexplained events which surprise, frighten or delight her, and have the same effect on us, the readers. The house is dominated by the presence of the housekeeper, who knew Rebecca and was close to her. It is never clear who in the household knew the real Rebecca, with all her faults, since most of the local people were in awe of her, and benefitted from the largesse of the family, especially the annual ball for all the estate workers and local people which was avidly anticipated each year.

And so it comes inexorably to the ending, but only in the very last page does the denouement take place. If you are not quite sure about the ending I suggest you do as I did and re-read the first few chapters, which explain all. It's an intriguing, cleverly written novel - back to front, as it were, with many questions answered before you begin, and before their relevance becomes clear. But it is so well written, so well planned, with the suspense and mystery building up gradually, that the reader is impelled to read to the end.

Joan Holton

Subjects or Citizens? 1649 and all that! Part II

Introduction

The last issue of News and Views looked at the problem of English attitudes to authority and whether or not we thought of ourselves as 'subjects' or 'citizens'. It showed how the Civil War of 1642-1649 and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 had replaced an authoritarian monarchy and symbolic parliament with an authoritarian parliament and symbolic monarchy. It showed how this ambiguous settlement had



resulted in an equally ambiguous notion of divided sovereignty and how this had been dealt with by the strange idea of the 'King/Queen in Parliament'. It then showed how this ambiguity had created a long-standing problem of whether the English could regard themselves as 'subjects' or 'citizens'. Finally, it showed how Parliament had been made all the more powerful by the absence of any formal written constitution and how that inevitably limited the possibilities of genuine local democracy.

This piece deals with a fourth consequence of the Civil War and the settlement of 1660 - the historical lack of any constitutional recognition of, or accommodation of, or even much interest in, the proper political representation of the great bulk of ordinary people - the populace. For example, there is nothing equivalent to the American idea of the 'representation of the people, by the people, for the people' or the French idea of 'liberte, egalite, fraternite' for all citizenry. Ordinary people have never entered the English constitution in this way. To the extent that their interests have been represented at all, then it has been at the behest of, or as the gift of, Parliament - and not as an inalienable or constitutional right which Parliament is obliged to uphold. How has this come about?

(The following account relies on the analysis of the Marxist historian Christopher Hill in his 'Century of Revolution' and is generally regarded as among the most authoritative).

The Fragile Alliance

Traditionally, the victory of Parliamentary forces in the Civil War has been thought of as a victory of the people (however defined) over monarchy (however defined). But this is entirely misleading. At no point was it ever a conflict concerned to enhance or improve the representation of the ordinary populace. Rather, it was a conflict between two groups of people with



rather different economic and political interests - but who came from broadly the same social classes. On the one hand, there was the Ancien Regime of the court, its hangers on, the traditional landed aristocracy, the Anglican church and Bishops, the Royal Monopolies (which gave central control over guilds, wage rates, employment conditions, etc); on the other, and reflecting the enormous economic and social changes of the first half of the 17th century, there was a whole class (or classes) of people with

an interest in opposing this status quo - large merchants and many landed gentry (particularly Puritan gentry) who had their own sources of income, Finance and the City of London (sometimes known for shorthand convenience as 'Presbyterians'), many smaller gentry and yeomanry, free traders, common law lawyers and "below them the great mass of consumers and craftsmen, who also opposed monopolies but had little else in common with London merchants and gentlemen clothiers." (sometimes known for convenience as 'Independents').

It was always a fragile alliance but under Cromwell and the New Model Army it managed to win the day and Parliament became the effective government of the country. Then after an extraordinary display of bad faith and recalcitrance the King was (reluctantly) executed and England became a Republic. But like many conflicts, the war had unintended consequences. One of these was growing pressure from a number of groups for wider representation of the population - ie an extension of the franchise to encompass sections of the population that had never before even figured in the English story.

Unintended Consequences - the 'Diggers' and 'Levellers'

One of these were the 'Diggers' a group determined to represent the interests of the propertyless. They were the most radical and egalitarian opponents of the feudal social order and advocated a kind of rural communism backed by direct action. They argued that 'the victory of the people' had freed the land of England, which was now theirs to cultivate. In a phrase that has a loud contemporary ring, their leader Gerrard Winstanley declared: "This is the bondage the poor complain of, that they are kept poor by their brethren in a land where there is so much plenty for everyone." But attempts to dig up waste land in various parts of the country seemed to provoke as much local hostility as support and being a strictly non-violent organization, the movement came to nothing.

Much more significant were the Levellers who had considerable influence in the Army which saw itself as the guardian of the revolution and existed more or less side by side as a rival to Parliament. Composed of a wide assortment of people from different socio-economic groups (petit-bourgeoisie, many yeomanry and artisans, small merchants and shopkeepers, agricultural labourers, etc) they had nevertheless been responsible



Plaque commemorating three Levellers shot by Cromwell at Burford

for helping push through some of the most radical achievements of the Parliamentary cause - abolition of the monarchy, confiscation of Church, Crown and aristocratic estates. The apogee of their influence was probably the famous Putney debates in 1647 when they discussed a proposed Leveller constitution - the so-called 'Agreement of the People.' But this came to nothing and neither did their proposed extension of the franchise or their various economic and social demands. Then, following an unsuccessful revolt in 1649, their leaders were shot. The 'push back' had begun. Hill summarises the failure with these two quotes: "The Leveller Rainborowe wanted manhood suffrage, because he thought "the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he." Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, summed up the Grandees' case when he said: "Liberty cannot be provided for in a general sense, if property be preserved." Property won!

Restoration and Settlement

However, the shooting of the Levellers made a restoration of the monarchy ultimately inevitable because this breach of the bourgeoisie and gentry with the popular forces of the Revolution meant that stable government could only be maintained in the long run either by the Army (which remained heavily subject to Leveller and popular influences - and was very expensive to boot) or by a compromise with the surviving representatives of the old order. After all, Parliament had largely achieved its aim of removing the old feudal regime's checks and hindrances which they felt stood in the way of their legitimate aspirations. This was achieved in 1660 when the wealthy bourgeoisie and gentry made it clear they would accept Charles II as monarch (subject to good behaviour) if he would accept them. In the meantime, the Army had been purged of its more radical elements and brought firmly under the control of Parliament. Charles II was duly installed in May 1660.

Reconciliation was made much easier by the fact that the lines of the civil war division were drawn within a class that shared much the same cultural and social norms despite differences in their political, religious and economic interests. Hill quotes the diarist John Evelyn when he tried to persuade the Governor of the Tower of London to declare for the King: "He noted that his negotiation was 'to the great hazard of my life but the Colonel (ie the Governor of the Tower) had been my schoolfellow and I knew would not betray me.' This early appearance of the old school tie was symbolic."

The irony is that in many ways the Civil War had been a modernizing influence that had propelled England into pole position in Europe for the coming century: there had been the experience of establishing and running a modern army, the creation and financing of a hugely enlarged navy (that would later be used as a means by which English merchants would monopolise the wealth of the colonies), a civil service with ministerial responsibility, a common law adapted to the needs of a capitalist society. And the Putney debates had shown there to be a lively awareness of political thought and the demands of democracy equal to that of anywhere in Europe.

The missing piece was, of course, any participation by ordinary people in the settlement. In that respect the revolution had been only half a revolution - the other half had been still-born. Perhaps it had been too soon for such a development - the age of feudalism having only just been left behind. But it meant that the brave new world that England was about to embark upon would be one that would be enjoyed by the rich and powerful and one to be largely suffered by the rest of the populace.

Summary

Thus the Army had won the war for Parliament - but Parliament had then won the war for wealth and property - while making sure that any agitation from below could be safely ignored. From then on, the way was clear for what Hill calls 'the flight to property', the world of rule by the landed classes and the gentry, the squirearchy, Finance and the City of London, the world of enclosures and land clearances creating a landless proletariat that would eventually feed the Industrial Revolution, of gentry-dominated local government and gentry-dominated courts handing out punitive punishments, the world of Jane Austen, of upstairs and downstairs and Downton Abbey, of domestic servitude - and a wait of two hundred years before Parliament would 'allow' any serious kind of representation of the people. The favourite historical question then becomes 'why did ordinary people accept this state of affairs for so long?' ***John Ditchfield***

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No 33: Unique Locations in the UK

1. Where did Alfred the Great burn his cakes?
2. Where does cheese rolling take place and when?
3. Who first lived in Paviland Cave on the Gower Peninsula?
4. Where is the shakiest area in Wales?
5. Where is the oldest working railway station in the world?
6. Which natural expanse of water has the largest volume of fresh water in the U.K.
7. Where is the Rhubarb Triangle, the area where the most forced rhubarb is grown.
8. Where is the highest (100 feet) single drop waterfall in England?
9. Which town in Yorkshire owes its existence to the railway?
10. Which model village, started in 1893, was built on the profit from chocolate?



Answers to Competition No.32 (Nearest town to Places of Interest in the UK.)

1. Penzance
2. St. Ives
3. St. Austell
4. Lynton
5. Warminster
6. Salisbury
7. Cowes
8. East Grinstead.
9. Edenbridge
10. Dover.

We look forward to your answers – send them either by email to jbirch1821@gmail.com or by post to J. Birch 26 Holden Road, London N12 8HT



WORDSEARCH: SPRINGTIME

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APRIL APRIL-FOOLS-DAY BIRDS-CHIRPING
 BULBS-FLOWERING CATERPILLARS
 CATKINS-WAVING EASTER EGGS
 FLOWERS-BLOOMING GOOD-FRIDAY
 LAMBS-PLAYING LAWN-MOWING LENT
 LIGHT LONGER-DAY MARCH MAY
 MOTHERS-DAY NEW-LEAVES REBIRTH
 SNOWDROPS SOWING-SEEDS SPRING-
 CLEANING TADPOLES WARMTH



Put the remaining 12 letters together to find the day when Lent finishes.

Answer: Easter Sunday

DIARY

The church is open again from March 7th. The services will also continue to be live streamed via facebook.

Following a Risk Assessment, the Trustees of the Church have implemented Health & Safety protocols in line with Government and Denominational advice and following the Steps and suggested dates in Covid 19 Response of Spring 2021

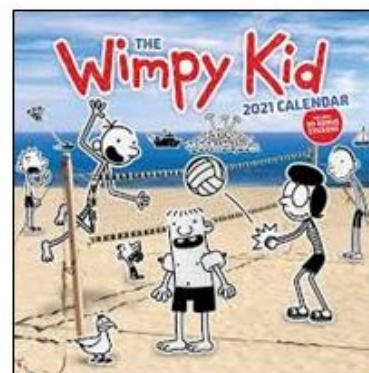
Please observe two metre social distancing.

Sanitise your hands on entry & exit.

Wear a mask.

After the service please promptly 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 (restarts as part of Step 2, April 12th)

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

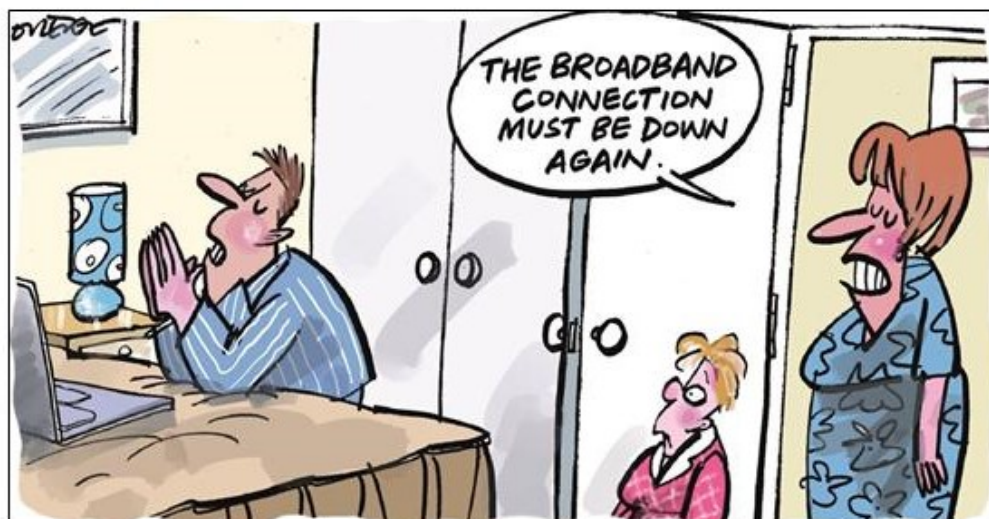
MARCH

- 5 2.00pm World Day of Prayer Service via zoom
Subject "Build on a Strong Foundation" reflecting on Vanuatu
- 7 **11.00am Family Communion Service**
- 14 **11.00am Family Service for Mothering Sunday**
- 16 7.30pm Elders Court
- 21 **11.00am Family Service**
- 26 1.00pm Music Recital in Church, no audience, live streamed if possible
- 28 **11.00am Palm Sunday Family Service**

APRIL

- 1 **8.00 pm Maundy Thursday Communion Service**
- 2 **6.30 pm Good Friday Preaching Service**
- 4 **11.00 am Easter Sunday Family Service with Communion**
- 11 **11.00am Family Service**

- 13 7.30 pm Trustees Meeting & Elders Court
- 18 11.00am Family Service
- 25 11.00 am Family Service
- 30 1.00pm Music Recital in Church, no audience, live streamed if possible



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 May edition of News and Views will be published on Sunday 2nd May. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday 18th April.

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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