

Keeping in Touch..... Number 15

Thank you to those who have sent in contributions this week. They are much appreciated! - do keep them coming. Lovely to have some new contributors this week!

Deadline each week is noon on a Wednesday—please send to c.a.curtis@ntlworld.com

If you are not nifty with a keyboard simply ring 01480 350787 and let Alan or Chris know what you want to say!

Early school memories from Peter Ball...

My first day at school was in September 1962. I was living in Tiptree in Essex, then a small rural village. The uniform for attending Tiptree Heath Primary School was brown and red and as you can see from the photo pretty formal. I hated the cap, tie and the blazer but seemed to have to wear it lots, even out of school. Mum often compared me to "Just William". she would send me out smartly dressed in the morning but by evening knees were dirty and cut, the tie was at an angle, all clothes were dirty and shoes lacked polish from playing football or climbing trees or fishing in the brook on the way home and the search for the cap began!!!!. There was a two mile walk to school each day. In my view probably the best part of school at this time was the walk and seeing what I could find to play with or in. St Lukes CofE Primary School was much nearer our house but as a good "chapel" family it was never an option!!!!



From Sally Banks.....

A young black girl was bullied by a group of white children. She was very upset. Looking around for somewhere to go she saw a church. She ran towards it - the door slammed shut. "Ah," she thought, "I'm safe for a few minutes". She sat on a seat near the front of the church and sobbed. A priest came towards her and rested a hand gently on her shoulder. A quiet voice said, "Can I help you child? Why are you so upset?" The girl replied, "Father, when I die and go to heaven, will there be a door for the white children and another door for the black children?" The priest said, " My child, I'll tell you something, and few people know this - God is colour blind."

It is with great sadness that we record the death of our loyal friend, George Taylor. Our sincerest condolences go to Maureen at this sad time. An obituary will follow at a later date.

What Can We Do?

Many of us have heard the analogy “We may be in the same storm, but we are in very different boats” to describe our varying experiences of the coronavirus crisis. For me, the pandemic highlights familiar unease about issues of unfair global resource distribution, and the disproportionately devastating impact on poorer communities. I am sure I share with many the need to respond again practically.

What can we do? Buying fair trade products is a practical step that I know many of us take when we can. Many ‘normal’ methods have been disrupted: visiting our Fair Trade shop etc., but we can still continue to seek out fair trade options. In fact, it is perhaps even more important to do so. The Fairtrade Foundation urges us to act to protect and support supply chains. Cancelled orders have a direct impact on thousands of families whose livelihoods depend on them. Fair Trade producers need support in helping their businesses and communities to survive.

As we have seen the pandemic has sparked creativity in our own communities. Traidcraft has had an impressive response to its new ‘Essentials Box’, described as a selection of fair trade store cupboard essentials, and is seeking new orders. Positive stories on its website (www.traidcraft.co.uk) tell of the difference we can make by building fair trade options into our regular shopping.

Let’s keep trying to find ways to act, however small such individual acts seem to be. It feels a good moment to recall Margaret Mead’s quote:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

I hope it will not be too long before we can meet again in person on a Sunday morning. Until such time I wish you health and hopefulness in these difficult times.

Mary Cox

Musing from the Musician.....

I played for my first wedding on 7th September 1957, incidentally the day Hazel and Derek were married, at the Putney Congregational Church in the Upper Richmond Road, just a stone’s throw from where the University Boat Races start - when they can be rowed.

The bride was a younger cousin of my Mother’s and her choice of music was a first time for me - each one.

The ceremony went through without crises but it was afterwards outside the church while photographs were being taken that the retired Minister found me to remark-

“The hymns were surprisingly vibrant and I have never heard Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March” played quite like that ever before!”

Clearly the remark, which could be taken any which way you choose, has not affected me as, 63 years later, I still play it often - that is when we have weddings again.

Brian Lodde

A personal note from Liz Denham

Keeping in Touch... We haven't met since lockdown, but I feel close to Irene (Carter) for her constant presence in our newsletter. My heartfelt thanks for your lovely input each week, Irene! I love poetry, have done all my life, but sadly have never been able to write it! So all power to your elbow, and I shall try to find someone else's poem to send in! So here are a few lines from the great George MacLeod's worship book "The whole Earth shall cry Glory!" He finished overseeing the building of Iona Abbey in 1967, and memorably came to preach in the Free Church (in the late 70's I think) Does anyone else remember that momentous occasion? ***Liz Denham***

*We are living in a changing day, Lord:
All the old rules and regulations for living
are slithering to the ground.
And you lived in a changing day, Lord:
all the old rules and regulations of the scribes and Pharisees
were slithering to the ground.
But it was your custom to go to the temple:
To the noisome temple
sometime to the scandalised temple
Listening to the mumbo jumbo,
but it was your custom to go
till the new temple of your body was available for men.*

George MacLeod



Char's sister Louie has been enjoying our quizzes—here is one from her....

Biblical animals - answers next week.

- 1. Neither of us must be coveted.**
- 2. I've got the desired wings**
- 3. I've got a very bony rider**
- 4. I didn't want any pearls anyway**
- 5. I benefit from children's messy eating**
- 6. He keeps eating our food**
- 7. I got lost He found me.**
- 8. The family and I are mentioned 500 times in the Bible**
- 9. Messrs Tate and Lyle used me**
- 10. People think I am a reptile but I am a bird.**

PASSING TIME

A hobby is a pastime
To pick up or to put down,
You may wish to learn and study,
Or relax and settle down
With a book and cozy armchair
And a coffee close to hand.
Imagination flying through
A world of wonderland.

Feeling energetic? There are sports
That you might like,
A round of Golf is pleasant
Or you may prefer a bike.
A boat or maybe swimming
A ramble or a hack
The thought of climbing on a horse
Is doing in my back!

Dancing? Do you fancy?
Jazz and Tap your cares away,
Or glide along the ballroom floor
And quick, quick, slow all day.
There's Chess if you are clever,
There's Draughts if you are not,
There's Jigsaws that need patience,
And Quizzes for the swot.

For me, first choice is music
It has always been that way,
I can lose myself when practising
I forget the time of day.
Piano was my first love,
And the Ukulele's fun
It's rewarding and a pleasure
Entertaining everyone.

cc IRENE CARTER

HAVE MASK, WILL TRAVEL—from Sally Runham

Returning from Huntingdon, on a Stagecoach B bus, I blended in well with fellow travellers all wearing facemasks to cover mouth and nose. Eyes smiling and nods of acknowledgement made the journey companionable.

It was my first foray on public transport since the start of the lockdown, as I had just dropped off my car at the Vauxhall garage, their depot in St Ives having closed some years ago. I am happy to use other service garages in St Ives, but this time it was for a diagnostic by experts. The garage handled hygiene well, with sanitiser stations and well-marked 2m distancing. The waiting area had chairs spaced apart. Car keys were swabbed before handing them back to owners.

Hand sanitisers and social distancing were also in operation on the buses and in the bus station, with plenty of space for people to sit apart; this service being during the middle part of the day,



avoiding commuting. It was a relief to see the buses still operational, although, I daresay, the frequency of most services has reduced.

Facemasks are compulsory on public transport and it has been easy to follow this clear rule. I am pleased that wearing facemasks in shops will be another clear rule from 24th July. Those wearing facemasks in close proximity to other people can help to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus.

Stranger to Strangers

From Sally

Stranger to strangers, shopping in town,
Some turn aside, though you smile with your eyes.
“Are you scared? Feeling vulnerable?” perhaps they think.
Most soften their stares realising it’s wise.
To venture forth needs awareness of invisible,
pervasive viruses that can lock us all down.
If we all wear our masks, it’ll be more inclusive.
And, together, we’ll breathe life into our town.

Saving the Spire—round 1!

Who remembers the first appeal for funds for the spire back in 1996/7? Also the auction in early 1998? Photos courtesy of Mary A and Alan!



Scaffolding looks a bit familiar!!

Right—the view from the top taken by Malcolm Cockcroft—brave man!



The re-gilded weather vane. Alan took it round the Day Centre for everyone to see.

Our auctioneers!!



And the auction!



Char goes into battle... At Northstowe!



This week I went with Jenny, Connie Stanley's daughter ,to the office of Homes England, the Northstowe developers, to deliver a letter asking them to show respect for mother nature .Seven storey towers are planned to surround three sides of our beautiful lake.

Whitehall directive says,

"dont let a few newts get in your way",

they call it

"project Speed".

Jenny and I look pretty confident don't we ,who wouldn't with God on your side?



We need an intense connection with nature. We have destroyed so much of our beautiful countryside in so short a time.

Its not just out there, ts lost from within us



From Char.....

Last week's photo quiz.....

The mechanism shown last week can be found in the clock chamber in the church spire. The black cylinder is a very heavy weight which hangs by a series of chains and cogs and its continuous movement up and down is what keeps the clock going. Once it has completed its downward fall, the cylinder has to be returned to the top again - ie the clock has to be 'wound up'! For the first 100 years, this clock winding was done by hand - until 1970, when it was done automatically by electric motors.

Thanks to Stewart for this.

