

Keeping in Touch..... Number 18

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

George Taylor's Last Journey—with thanks to Roy Muttram



At 12.00 pm on 7 August George Taylor's last journey ended at the Ramsey Road Cemetery. With the three or four members of his family, neighbours, friends from the Free Church and the Huntingdon Male Voice Choir gathered to say their last farewells.

The weather was such that it was possible to have a full funeral service (without hymns) and to include recorded music by the Huntingdon Male Voice Choir in which George was one of the singers.

The coffin was lowered into the grave to the poignant notes of "Last Post" as a fitting tribute to a former member of Her Majesty's armed forces - in George's case, the Royal Air force.

Some present wore tokens (a tie or medals) of their own former service as a personal tribute to a former comrade.



It was a privilege to conduct George's funeral service and pay my own tribute to a friend whom I sat alongside as part of the line of basses in the Christmas Choir.

Our love and sympathy goes out to Maureen as she now continues her life journey without George by her side..

GOOD FROM BAD

The alarm yells "Get up!", we both shout "Not yet!"
It seems much too early, what time was it set?
Dozy and bleary it's hard to awake,
Who thought this idea was a good one to make?

But!.....

We've found early morning the best time of day
Up wash and get ready shoes on and away!
Most of our neighbours sleep soundly in bed,
The Carter Clan's off for a brisk walk instead.

We walk local footpaths, some old and some new
Each day an adventure with exercise too.
Along by the river, so still and serene
We watch out for wildlife, enjoying the scene.

Sometimes Mother Nature sends wind or the rain
Which to tell you the truth is a bit of a pain,
But we jump over puddles and carry right on,
If it really gets tough well, we go later on.

There's hardly a person we see on our trip
So safety from Covid should not take a dip,
We're careful and mindful good can come from bad,
Nature's beauty surrounds us and for that we are glad!

cc IRENE CARTER

Musing from our musician....

My musing this time is not about me but rather everyone else, in particular all those who give time each week to keep the Free Church congregation in touch with itself.

Huge thanks to Chris and Alan and all those who have given time and effort to do this and what a variety of items has been set before us each week.

May I thank all those who have contributed and those who will be unlocking the lockdown measures over future time.

My fingers are being kept busy playing Bach on most days just to let the thumbs know there may still be work to do.

Love to everyone, Brian.

A couple of suggestions for YouTube links;

From Char—

https://youtu.be/fbd-YG5om_s

Mount Gulaga the sacred mountain

From Alec Wedderburn—

<https://youtu.be/Lp5r8tvQbAQ>

The year 2020 - skip the introductory ads!!

Remember we are marking 40 years since the rededication of our church at the end of September!

We will be publishing a special edition of Inspire to mark the occasion,

Please send any memories, photos etc to the office or to Mary Anthony at

m.anthony300@gmail.com as soon as possible and by 1st September at the latest.

These can include memories of the work in progress whilst we worshipped in the old chapel and also some of the early events in the newly reshaped building.

Celebrating the long ministry of Revd. Derek Alan Newton—

Part 1—The Call!

When Derek and I married he was not a 'reverend - a man of the cloth' - he was the Leader of the Church Youth Club who had recently served Her Majesty as a member of the Royal Air Force, was back home with his parents - and his job as a qualified carpenter and joiner. However, life is full of surprises, and after our marriage in September 1957, and the birth of our daughter 19 months later, Derek asked if I would support him in what he felt was a call of God, and the training this would involve.

'Where you go, I will go' was my response. In 1960 he began his training in Paton Congregational College, in Nottingham, near enough home not to need to be in residence. In 1961 our son was born - Derek won the prize for Greek studies - and in 1963 he was nominated Senior Student.

In 1964 it was time to put the training into practice and he accepted a call from a joint pastorate - Mansfield, Notts. and Shirebrook, Derbyshire. The crossing of boundaries meant double attendance at District Council meetings. He also became Hospital Chaplain. Both churches held morning and evening services.

These were coal-mining communities and one of the 'perks' was a steady supply of coal.

Almost from the word 'go' Derek learned to be prepared for anything as, on the first Sunday morning at Shirebrook, the Church Secretary, mounting the steps of the pulpit to read the Church Notices, fell - and died.

As there was no provision for young people in the village, for the 7 years of his ministry, Derek ran a Tuesday Night Club for over 30 youngsters.

No-one had thought to offer me training on being a minister's wife, so I made it up as I went along, learning immediately that in Mansfield hats and gloves were essential - both on Sundays and Wednesday afternoons at the Women's Bright Hour. Not one member of this group was younger than my grandmother, but they were kind and helpful to this greenhorn.

In 1971 we moved to the county town of Hertford, part of the Thames North Province. Derek was asked to Chair the Pastoral Committee and he also became Hospital Chaplain once more.

In 1973 the church celebrated its centenary with a pilgrimage to a church in St. Albans from where a vicar was stripped of his living and ejected, forbidden to preach with a 15 mile radius.

This came about with the passing of the 15 mile Act of 1662 which demanded adherence to the Book of Common Prayer. We saw where the dissenting vicar's name had been removed from the scroll at the back of the church.

The man travelled to Hertford with wife family, chattels and a few friends. In the Castle grounds he preached the gospel - and a Free Church was born!

During our time at Hertford Derek required surgery on his throat and was warned this might result in damage to his vocal chords. A preacher with no voice?????. Once home he was not allowed to speak for 6 weeks. A wedding service, booked many months ago was able to go ahead when I stood in the pulpit reading from the service book the words Derek was not allowed to say.

The Elders offered to pay for two weeks recovery in a hospital in Hastings - in March. Derek asked if they would consider a week in Benidorm - in the sun - and much cheaper. Whilst there - and using a note book and pencil as a means of communication - he met a Scandinavian pastor who rented an empty shop unit on Sundays, holding a worship service for any to attend.

As soon as he was home, Derek contacted friends, Rev. Ray Whittle and his wife June (parents of our Moderator) and discussed the possibility of doing the same for English speaking ex pats, holiday makers, whatever and from this beginning a small church was planted in Benidorm. We were actively involved, especially during our annual leave, until Derek was 80 and flight insurance costs rose to ridiculous levels. Until the virus closed all churches the fellowship in Benidorm flourished.

The future? Who knows? God, of course.

Hazel



Pre-beard phase!

St Ives Eco-Faith Communities initiative

This group is meeting regularly and getting to know each other and to share ideas. Representatives from several churches attended including from Churches Together St Ives (CTSI). The group links closely with the St Ives Eco Action group and members of their steering group were also present.

The aim is to take action. There will be a launch of a major awareness campaign starting with Climate Sunday on 6th September.

“A COALITION of churches and charities has launched a campaign, [Climate Sunday](#), as part of a call for action on [climate change](#).

Starting from 6 September, churches will be encouraged to have a Sunday devoted to the theme of climate change at any time during the following 12 months. The scheme was announced last Friday, to mark World Environment Day, by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It supported charities which include CAFOD, [Christian Aid](#), Operation Noah, and [Tearfund](#).”

The Eco-Faith group is keen to share experiences of each church in terms of the source of fuel they consume, the move away from investments in fossil fuels, and management of waste and recycling.

At the next meeting of the Eco-Faith group, personal lifestyle ‘carbon footprints’ will be discussed, led by St Pauls in Cambridge. This vibrant eco-church has held online topical workshops on deforestation, and what will happen after the pandemic. The church has produced a book on healthy eating using LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly-traded) ingredients. The congregation had held concert nights fundraising for tree planting, which engaged the wider local community.

The Eco Action group itself is spearheading a Nature Recovery Plan and aims, with the help of local conservationists to map local wildlife areas such as churchyards and then look at measures to protect, enhance or restore such spaces. The group is also developing a newsletter to keep residents informed, and an update of often pace-setting eco-faith activities will be included.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 8th September at 10.30am by Zoom. For an invitation, please contact either Mary (mary@jmcox.co.uk) or Helen Dye (stivesecoaction@gmail.com).

Sally Runham

Lebanon in serious crisis 🕊

Last January saw the biggest influx of new Syrian refugees since the start of the Syrian war in 2011..More than 1 in 4 in Lebanon is a refugee, and now this deadly explosion.

They need our prayers.

We ask for God’s holy presence in Lebanon, a nation facing political, health and economic crisis. Please pray for the victims and their families

For religious freedom

And for forgiveness and healing

With love Char

Char xx



This week's archive quiz.....

A Clown? A Ringmaster? What's going on?

Who are these strange looking people and what are they up to?

It may come as a surprise to some of you that Just Sharing –



The Fair Trade shop - has not been a part of the Free Church since Noah was a lad.

Many years ago – when the church had to make a decision about the shops we owned down Free Church Passage – it was agreed that we would make one of the spaces into a combined church office and a Traidcraft shop. It may come as another surprise that Fairtrade as we know it hadn't been launched then. Just Sharing became a Fairtrade shop later.

Mary Anthony ran the new office and Mary Cox and Freda Barnard ran the Traidcraft shop. And Christian Aid's area office took up residence too.



So to launch this major change in the life of the Free Church a major splash had to be made. And it was a momentous day. FURY played a major part launching a balloon race – hence the Polish icon in the chapel.

So a quiz for this week is to name some of the people in the photos and to remember the date of these events..



Eileen Forrest recently spent some time in Hinchbrook where she wrote this poem...

All Hustle and Bustle

***All hustle and bustle is life on the ward
Where all the miracle gadgets are stored
Where wonderful nurses are rushing
around
And only the patients are stuck on the
ground***

***Our ward had a window, and from it we
see***

***Some parkland, and close by, the Copper
Beech tree.***

***All hustle and bustle is life in the trees
Amongst the rustle of leaves***

Where comes the energy? Spain or Nepal?

It must be God's wind which blows on us

What the Church looks like now

In the 8th August newsletter, David Duffett summarised actions needed to ease the church into opening to the public, carefully and to minimise risk:

“Christine’s (Macleod) public health experience has been extremely helpful to us as we take further steps towards reopening the building.

Inside our church building, Nev Runham, Peter German, and our caretaker Mick Lovell have been very busy putting carefully devised plans into action. Seven hand sanitisers have been installed in strategic places. Signs are beginning to appear around the building, and there are arrows on the floor. Thanks to help from Pete Davies and Alan Curtis, we are also making good progress on the IT front, where we need to upgrade our facilities.

On Tuesday (4th), two groups of us met – one to look at the implications of reopening Tookeys and another to plan in detail the logistics around congregational worship. Thanks to everyone’s efforts, I’m almost allowing myself to get excited at the prospect of getting back into the building, rather than worrying too much about how much is still to do!”



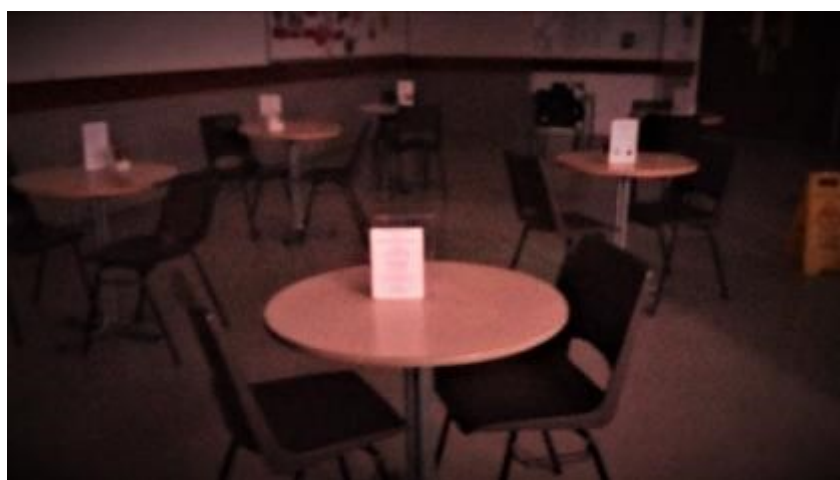
The church is being prepared for services with the first a funeral service on the afternoon of 14th August. There will also be a service of just elders on 23rd August as a dry run to see how we can best conduct a regular Sunday service in the building.

Each service has several people, elders in the first instance, acting as stewards to

direct people around the building, manage flow avoiding gathering at pinch points, and direct people to hand sanitisers. Mick has set out the brown plastic chairs at exactly 2m in the centrum.

Tookeys café is now in the hall with the smaller café tables spaced at two metres apart. We are aiming to get contactless payments up and running in due course, and Mick is sourcing transparent material for protective screens.

Those who regularly help run services may feel comfortable about volunteering to go onto a rota for the period September to December. All of these trials are subject to review, and could be changed to fit in with government and Synod requirements..



Sally Runham