

NEWS & VIEWS

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



APRIL 2023

PLEASE TAKE ONE

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

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

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday Services: | <i>11 a.m. (and 6.30 p.m. when announced) Holy Communion is celebrated at Morning Worship on the first Sunday of every month. The Junior Church meets at 11am every Sunday</i> |
| Minister: | Vacancy Minister designate from Sept 2023; Revd Aled Jones |
| Pastoral Emergencies Contact | Derek Lindfield 07803 953483 or Penny Trafford 030 8959 3405 |
| Correspondence Secretary | Penny Trafford 020 8959 3405 Secretary@hgsfreechurch.org.uk |
| Pulpit Secretary | Carole Lindfield derekandcarole.lindfield@earlblue.com |
| Treasurer | Joe Fryer 07814 532049 Treasurer@hgsfreechurch.org.uk |
| Lettings Officer | Eddie Hayden lettings@hgsfreechurch.org.uk |
| Finance Officer | Fola Awosika finance@hgsfreechurch.org.uk |

Safeguarding Statement

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

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

NEWS & VIEWS

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

NO 786



APRIL 2023

Dear Friends

THE EASTER CRISIS

When I was in the sixth form at school my inspirational English teacher asked us to complete a story about a family that was facing a crisis. Only two in the class described the crisis that was emerging; all the rest found some unrealistic way to avoid the crisis. The lesson he taught us was that we hate crises, and do all that we can to avoid them. Yet they are often unavoidable.

Jesus of Nazareth understood this all too well. Faced with the anger of the religious authorities in Jerusalem who were determined to put an end to the unrest which his preaching and behaviour were producing, Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem and did nothing to avoid the coming crisis. His disciples, however, went out of their way to avoid the coming crisis, betraying Jesus, pretending not to know him, and becoming spectators of his crucifixion.

The word 'crisis' has its origins in ancient Greece, where it had multiple meanings all of which can be applied to the Easter events:

A tipping point

A critical point in a disease

A moment to exercise judgement

Firstly, who could have guessed that the death of yet another rebel against the power of Rome would end up undermining and outlasting the Roman empire itself? Jesus' death and resurrection was a tipping point in a process of change which, after the persecution of his followers, resulted in Rome becoming the centre of a worldwide movement of change that was political as well as spiritual.

Secondly, Jesus' death crystallised a strand of thinking that was to take

hold among his followers; that all human beings are diseased – tainted and potentially ruined by a deep-seated tendency to do what is unhealthy and life-denying, damaging ourselves and others. The word that encapsulated it was ‘sin’, and the death and resurrection of Jesus came to be seen as an historically critical moment in our awareness of that disease. And so it became the mission of his followers to address this issue and face everyone with the need to examine themselves and seek to change in the light of Jesus’ teaching and behaviour, exercising compassion, forgiveness and care.

And thirdly, it was Jesus’ decision not to avoid confrontation with the religious and political authorities of his day that ended up bringing to light the disease in all institutions, religious and political, that threaten the well-being of nations and individuals. No longer could our institutions wash their hands and refuse to accept responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions. Sin is as present in institutions as it is in individuals.

So Easter was a crisis which, when we allow ourselves to relive it, challenges our desire to bury our heads in the sand and hope for the best. It is difficult to experience the relief and hope of Easter day in our worship if we haven’t, in some way, gone through the story of the week before it. The apparent triumph of Jesus’ procession into Jerusalem, backed by an enthusiastic crowd, the time of agonising temptation and fear in the Garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal by some of the disciples and then the trial and verdict of death by crucifixion, before the silence of the tomb and the breath-taking discovery of the women disciples on Easter morning: these all cast light on the nature of the resurrection stories and hope.

It is an enormous story to take in and experience in all its aspects, and it has so much to say to us about our individual and corporate responses to the crises of our day.

- Faced with the crisis in Ukraine, it has finally dawned on us in Britain that, in going to war in Iraq, we ignored international law just as Russia is doing in Ukraine. Our hands, politically, are no cleaner than those of the disciples.

- Faced with the crisis of honesty and responsibility in our political leaders and institutions like the police force, we throw up our hands and dissociate ourselves from what is happening. What can we do to cleanse our political and social life of the racism, misogyny and violence which have become endemic?

- And what of the biggest crisis of all that we are still trying to deny and ignore? As the temperature of the planet inexorably rises, are we ready to

take the multiple decisions and actions which will give future generations a reasonable chance of survival and healthy living?

- Facing the greatest crises in the history of humanity, how are we going to react?

Surely the story of Easter, the crisis which ended up changing the world, presents us with the challenge to face the current crises, with all their conflict, misery and messiness. And it offers us its signposts to healthier, more inclusive and more hope-filled living.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and hope-filled Easter,

David Trafford

FREE CHURCH ROUND-UP

News of the Church Family

Eric and Karen Alton are settling well in Perth. We have been asked for a letter of transfer of their church membership to Forteviot and Aberdalgie Church of Scotland where they are now worshipping.

Greetings come regularly from Rosemary and John Birth (apart from their continuing contributions to News & Views which are much appreciated.) They are worshipping with a local group where they have fellowship and support for one another, and daily phone calls to make sure they are OK.

Revd Emily Kolltveit to St Jude's Parish Church

As many of you will be aware St Jude's have a new Vicar coming after Easter. We are warmly invited to join the service for the licensing of Revd Emily Kolltveit on Thursday May 4th at 7.30pm.

Christian Aid Week May 15th – 21st

Christian Aid is celebrating how their partners in Malawi are helping farmers transform their livelihoods using the humble but mighty pigeon pea: a drought-resistant, soil-revitalising, high-protein, low-cost, delicious crop.

JEN'S STORY from MALAWI

Jen, a loving mum in Malawi, dreams of her children being able to have the education they deserve. Her hard-working boys have earned places at top colleges – but Jen cannot afford to send them both. 'My heart longs to see our children finish school,' says Jen. 'These dreams are very important to me, because by doing so, I'll be sure that I am creating a good future for

the children.' My heart longs to see our children finish school.

A terrible dilemma.

Her oldest two boys have gained tertiary education places, which is very rare for young people from her rural area. One has a place at a prestigious polytechnic and one at a well-known college – it's even on one of Malawi's banknotes. Jen works hard to provide for her children. But she can barely scratch a living from the soil. Soaring costs of food, fuel, fertiliser, school uniforms and school fees are crushing dreams and keeping her family in poverty. Now, Jen has had to make a choice. One no mum should be forced to make. Rising costs mean Jen can pay for only one of her sons' college courses.

Jen desperately needs to earn more, so that her oldest son Mathew can study as well. His place at a prestigious college is reserved for a year, so Jen remains hopeful that he'll be able to start his course. The erratic weather is affecting Jen's profits. 'The result is that our harvest is very little,' she says. But Jen remains resilient. 'We say, let's work hard so that the money will help the children go to school,' she smiles. Help this strong and determined mum provide for her family's future.



Crops with amazing potential

Jen and her husband have two acres of pigeon peas, but they are struggling with the effects of the climate crisis. The rainfall is unreliable, and there are more storms, flooding and stronger winds. The pigeon pea is a tough plant, able to withstand a lot – just like Jen. But to make the most of her crop, Jen needs to plant good quality seeds and sell for the best price possible, and not to unscrupulous middlemen.



This Christian Aid Week, you can help dreams come true

Your gift could help famers like Jen plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for their crops, and build happier futures for their children.

The usual envelopes will be available in church for your gifts to Christian Aid.

The Team



Bible study for Palm Sunday

Jesus Rides into Jerusalem

21 When they came near to Jerusalem, and arrived at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead. ² 'Go into the village over there,' he said, 'and at once you'll find a donkey tied up, and a foal beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ And if anyone says anything to you, say, "The master needs them, and he'll send them back straight away." ' He sent them off at once.

⁴ This happened so that the prophet's words might be fulfilled:

⁵ Tell this to Zion's daughter:

look now! Here comes your king;

he's humble, mounted on an ass,

yes, on a foal, its young.

⁶ So the disciples went off and did as Jesus had told them.

⁷ They brought the donkey and its foal, and put their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

⁸ The huge crowd spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and scattered them on the road.

⁹ The crowds who went on ahead of him, and those who were following behind, shouted out,

Hosanna now to David's Son!

God's blessing on the coming one –

the one who comes in the Lord's own name!

Hosanna in the highest!

¹⁰ When they came into Jerusalem, the whole city was gripped with excitement. 'Who is this?' they were saying.

¹¹ 'This is the prophet, Jesus,' replied the crowds, 'from Nazareth in Galilee!' Matthew 21:1-11

(New Testament for Everyone)

Among the crowds of Galilean pilgrims arriving on foot in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, Jesus chose to make a conspicuous entry **on a donkey**. Since there is no other record of Jesus riding, this must have been a deliberate act, meant to be noticed. As Matthew makes clear, this is an acted allusion to Zechariah's prophecy (Zech 9:9-10) of the coming of the Messianic King. The disciples and the Galilean crowd recognised the allusion and turned the event into a triumphal procession. The term

“Hosanna” is from the ancient Hebrew and means “save us”. It is both a prayer and an acclamation of praise to the Messiah – the one who comes as our saviour. The spreading of cloaks and the waving of palm branches represented homage to a king.

The impact did not go unnoticed in the city; everyone wanted to know who they were shouting about. “This is Jesus – *our Jesus*” replied the Galileans “the prophet from Nazareth”. To the politically powerful in Jerusalem this would have been less than impressive – Galilee was a remote northern backwater and Nazareth an ill-regarded town (see John 1:46). It was almost insulting to suggest a prophet could come from Nazareth. Thus, the stage was set for the polarisation of attitudes to Jesus in the coming week: a saviour and king, or a dangerous troublemaker? Crown him or crucify him?

The people know what sort of king they want, have wanted for 500 years or more. A military leader who will overthrow the oppressors, presently the Romans, but they were just the most recent in a long line of overlords in this volatile region. And Jesus has been promising them freedom, eternal freedom at that. Surely, he will show his colours soon, a donkey is only a start; they don’t expect their king to remain humble.

They believe in this sort of king because this is what they want to believe. But Jesus knows that it is a lot more complicated than that. His will be crown of thorns, and his followers are to be deeply disappointed, indeed, fearful for their lives, at having backed the wrong horse. But Jesus also trusts his Father that at the end of a week of dramatic ups and downs will come the ultimate “up” and eternal freedom will indeed be available to all. What sort of king do we want Jesus to be? Do we pray only when we want something desperately? Please God – I need a parking space to visit my sick relative in hospital – I need to win that job in the interview tomorrow to be able to pay my rent – send world peace – feed the hungry...

Jesus hears and will answer our prayers. We don’t need to worry about whether we are praying “for the right thing”. There is no magic formula for prayer, no right or wrong way to do it. When we talk to God, we are developing a relationship, we are learning and growing in maturity as the dialogue progresses. But the answer is often not what we expect. If we pray for a Ferrari, we are likely to get a lesson in humility. If we ask God to feed the hungry, we may be directed to the volunteer roster at the local food bank. God hears our prayers, but he also knows everything that drove us to ask what we did in the way we did. Our real prayer may have been

something we did not, or could not, put into words; a need we did not even recognise for ourselves. God will answer our deepest needs; the answer to what we thought we asked for may be “no” or “not yet”.

What sort of king do we want Jesus to be? Do we want a king who will stay safely in a box until we want to ask for something? Do we want a king who will behave nicely, not rock the boat, work everything out just nicely without asking too much of us? A kind of ceremonial king as we have nowadays in European democracies? Or do we want a king who will shake us up, challenge out-dated church practices, take us on a roller-coaster, not paddle boat? Are we willing to trust as Jesus trusted God; no scientific proof that it will be alright in the end, but a faith built on a relationship. To trust that our God is a God of truth and love. He will nurture us in this life and bring us, at the end, home rejoicing, to his side.

We pray:

Loving God, nurture us as we develop our relationship with you, our father. May we come to a greater understanding of the kingship of Jesus – powerful, yet humble, servant, teacher and friend. May we learn from the example of Jesus to trust you for all that we need. Amen.

*Reference: Tom Wright “Matthew for everyone Part 2 chapters 16-28”
SPCK*

Sarah Beaumont



One person can make a difference - but it may take time.....

For many years, I and my trusted helper, namely husband John, have been Traidcraft representatives, setting up stalls at many different venues from small halls and churches, to outside spaces under gazebos. One of our most spectacular outside events was being asked to set up a stall in a large marquee at Capel Manor, the whole area being an arena of people and children allowed to handle animals, amidst numerous pens of show animals. It was a day to remember plus being very profitable as regards sales and letting people know about the importance of fair-trading. Closer to home, the annual sale in the Free Church Hall was amalgamated into the Christmas Bazaar and then the monthly Saturday mornings in the Church Hall were transferred to the Saturday coffee mornings at the back of the Free Church (a move for which John and I were so thankful as we were beginning to feel, and look, like pack-horse beasts of burden with all the transporting of goods!) Just as important, cupboard space was soon found for us - and our house in Temple Fortune Lane became a little less cluttered! We were so thankful that when we left London someone else in the Free Church was able to take on the stall.

Sadly, Traidcraft has now gone into administration with a statement sent out saying that they had *"been in a weak financial position for some years. The Covid 19 pandemic presented a significant number of challenges. Just as we were emerging from the pandemic, and like many other businesses, we faced the combined effects of the war in Ukraine, rising energy prices and increased transport costs."*

Many of our regular customers have been devastated by this turn of events particularly with the most popular goods, namely our greeting cards, and we would like to thank you all for your regular purchasing of goods and for all your support over the years. Our thanks must also go to those who stood in as helpers, Cherry Faulkner and Mavis Gill and Suang-Eng Croft - even a few youngsters liked helping with their mathematical skills such as Noah Tutton and Amelia Millhoff.

However, in spite of Traidcraft's closure, we must be thankful that its very existence over 40 years and its original idea of fair-trading (even before the FairTrade Foundation came into existence) made us realize we could each one of us make a change... make a difference, however small, to

someone else's existence on this planet. Yes, all of us can play a part together or individually! I can think of many such individuals who haven't just been indifferent to the plight of others but who have become actively involved in helping. Please carry on looking for that small Fairtrade logo on your grocery purchases.

In Ecclesiastes 3, we read: "For everything its season, and for every activity under heaven its time ... a time to plant and a time to uproot .. a time to seek and a time to lose." As we get older and move on, it is sometimes hard to let go of the past and move on to another season! We still are so thankful to the technicians who allow us to join the Free Church's services on Zoom. I know it's healthier for us to move on - but to see the much-loved faces of our friends (many for over 40 years) is a joy. Having financially supported many charities over the years our circumstances have changed and it's with real sadness that many appeals are now consigned to the waste-bin. But we know we have to move on - move on, yes, but not give up!

As my lack of mobility becomes more and more of a challenge, I draw great inspiration from the example of Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871) whose life showed that one person can make a difference. Charlotte was born into a Christian family in Clapham and, as a young lady she became a portrait painter and wrote poetry. When she was in her thirties, her health began to fail and she became confined to bed, often racked with pain and becoming despondent and with that awful feeling of uselessness. However, this all changed when she had a visit from an evangelist in Geneva, Dr Caesar Malan, who consoled Charlotte about her need for a saviour. Charlotte counted that day as the day of her conversion. Fourteen years later, when her brother was raising funds for a girl's school in Brighton (a school for the daughters of poor clergy), with everyone bustling about, she felt even more helpless to do anything of a practical nature - it was then that Dr. Malan's words came back to her, together with the words of the hymn 'Just as I am.'

'Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God! I come.

Her hymn was published the same year (1836) in the Invalid's Hymn of

which she became editor. Her own brother said: "In the course of a long ministry, I hoped to have been permitted to see some fruits of my labour, but I feel more has been done by a single hymn of my sister's!" At her death amongst her papers were found a thousand letters from people who had been particularly blessed by 'Just as I am'. (Just as I felt years later at a large stadium in Wembley.)

We are constantly bombarded with daily depressing news and in many cases good old common sense seems to have gone out of the window! One can become more and more isolated and wonder whether one can make any difference at all. I always feel this is the work of the devil - making us feel small, useless and of no worth. But one person can make a difference. We have the greatest example of all time in the MAN who hung on that CROSS with arms open wide and said YES I CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE - YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. It may take time. We can't necessarily control our situations but we can control the way we react to them.

In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu : "If you are neutral on the side of injustice - you have chosen the side of the oppressor." Alternatively, "If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say you are neutral, that will not help the mouse." Another saying is: "Do your little bit of good where you are; put together they will overwhelm the world!"

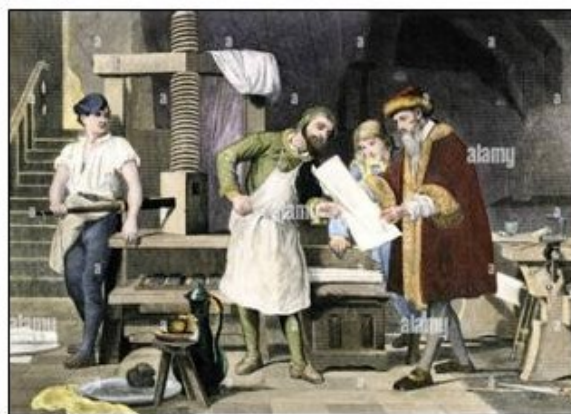
So, summing up, we can all make a difference to someone else's life or situation; every small act counts; whether it be by buying fair-trade; thinking about ways to help the environment; caring and praying for those in needy situations. None of us is immune to the call 'What you do to the least of your brothers you do unto Me' - and remember that missed moment of helping may not come again!

In a recent Sunday Morning Service on 12th March, Bishop Ken Clarke of Kilmore, Northern Ireland, recalled his first Sunday as a Bishop: "I was so nervous and had a moment of utter panic just before the Sunday Service when I thought of all the responsibilities I had taken on and that 'the buck now ended with me'. It was a moment of complete terror and loneliness. And then into my mind came those wonderful words from St. Patrick's breastplate: 'Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me.' The daily bread of God's peace and strength invaded my soul..." If a Bishop feels nervous so can you.... but look who is walking beside you ...you're not alone.

Rosemary Birch

From the Archives

This month, there are three extracts from different years with different ministers. The first extract is from 1923 (under Rev Major Scott) and shows the Free Church flourishing in receiving contributions sufficient to clear the debt of building the church in 1910, in membership growth and in a choir performance of Stainer's Crucifixion.



1923

From Work and Worship

Steady progress for the month can, we think, be recorded in all departments of the Church's activities. Interest has been aroused in striking fashion, as is evidenced by the generous gifts of the Church, notably in clearing the deficit of 1922, with its necessarily heavy and exceptional expenditure, and also in the response from the pulpit for the Baptist Sustentation Fund.

Still more cause for gratitude is the addition to the Church Membership. This is steady, and yet striking, giving abundant reason for joy in all our hearts that the message from the pulpit is owned of God and finding a lodgment in the hearts of many. May we take courage, and with the realisation that the Presence of the Eternal is in our midst, so continue to wait upon God, that the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit shall move upon all hearts and lives in still mightier power, and that the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may shine more gloriously in our Garden Suburb.

Stainer's "The Crucifixion" has often been rendered in our Church, but it is doubtful whether the spirit has ever been interpreted more completely by our Choir than on Wednesday, 28th March. One realises that Mr Webb [organist and choirmaster] has the enviable ability to get the best out of any body of singers he may train, but he is to be congratulated on the understanding that existed between the Choir and himself on this occasion. He and they deserve thanks for a rendering that was full of inspiration.

It was disappointing that so great a singer as Mr Frank Webster was prevented by illness from taking the tenor soloist's part, but Mr John Perridge, who filled his place at short notice, possesses a fine voice which

he used with considerable dramatic effect. Mr John Farrington's fine rendering of the bass part was a feature of the evening. When both soloists and chorus entered so fully into the character of the music it was natural that the occasion should be both helpful and memorable. *Rev W Major Scott.*

1943

The second extract shows Rev Frank Ballard encouraging the congregation during the Second World War, anticipating the troops returning, looking forward to Easter and asking for funds for disadvantaged children to have a week's holiday.

From News Letter April 1943

My Dear People, I think you will agree that the Annual Church Meeting held on Saturday, March 13th, deserves a leading place in this letter. It was a good meeting with a very fair attendance, an excellent spirit and most satisfactory reports. To start with we registered an increase in membership – small, it is true, but even a small increase in days like these mean much. Then there was a really wonderful financial statement showing that we are able to put money aside for the time when repairs will have to be done to our very expensive buildings. No one thought two or three years ago that we could stand up to the blizzard of war as we have done. It has meant the severest economies, much good management, and a great deal of generous giving. There is no doubt that heavy expenditure must come some day, but we are preparing for it and hope to welcome the lads home without any debt to embarrass them or us. What is equally important is that we have not only maintained but actually increased our contributions to outside objects, especially to missionary societies. I will confess that I had hoped that more people would have responded to the appeals made on behalf of the Reconstruction Fund of the Congregational Union. Perhaps I may be allowed at this point to say that it is not too late to send money or promises now.

When the young men and women come back from the Services we shall want them to take a full share in Church Responsibilities, though we shall also need to maintain a certain amount of continuity.

The next thing I must write about is the arrangements for Easter. The festival really begins on Palm Sunday with a youth service in the morning. Before the war we were establishing at least four of these special youth services, one connected with Christmas, one with Palm Sunday, one with

the Summer Festival, and one with Harvest. I know that they were eagerly anticipated, and that not by the young folks only. Gradually we are getting back into our stride, and we hope to have a happy time together on April 18th. Then in the evening of that day, according to custom, we shall have special music. I believe Mr Chamberlain intends to give us a considerable part of the Messiah – a work that never loses its appeal. Whether we shall have the organ and be in Church will depend upon the weather.

The Annual Holiday

Yes, you are looking forward to a good time, fine weather, fine scenery, fine fun and frolic, and to enjoy the fine feeling of good health and strength. – May you realise all you hope for! You will probably secure a further measure of happiness if you send a donation to one of the many Fresh Air Funds to assist in sending poor children for a day into the country, or longer by the sea. Mr Lewis H Burt, Secretary of the Hoxton Market Mission, EC, will much appreciate a gift for this purpose. He is known to us and his work has our heartiest sympathy. Such an experience for one child for a week may cost less than a day of your holiday! Please do not delay in arriving at a satisfactory decision, send to Mr Burt now, then he can plan without undue anxiety spent in finding the means. *Frank Ballard*

1953

The third extract is from 1953 under Rev Stanley Andrews and gives a column written for the Sunday School children, and mention of Bob-a-Job week for Scouts as well as preparation for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. Older readers will remember! The National Flood Relief Fund doubtless refers to the East Coast Floods on January 31st that year.

From News and Views (Large format)

For the Sunday School Children

Now that it is so near Easter I thought we might find out why we have Easter Eggs and hot cross buns too. To find out about Easter Eggs we have to go back a very long way, right to the ancient Egyptians. These people looked upon the egg as a symbol of creation, and when the early Christians wanted to find a symbol for the resurrection then they too chose the egg. You see, from the egg comes the chicken, and the mother hen lives on in the life of her chick. So an egg meant life; and we all know that is just what Jesus stands for.

I wonder what you know about the hot cross bun? We eat those on Good Friday, and there again we have to go back a long way right to the old

pagan days. Then it was the custom to offer up to the heathen idols cakes which were marked with different symbols; later on this idea was linked up with another one. You all know how Good Friday often falls at the same time of year as the Jewish Passover, and eating the Passover cake forms an important part of that ceremony. I hope you can work out now how the early Christians worked in both ideas. From the pagans they took the idea of marking the cake with a symbol, the cross; and from the Jews came the idea of eating the cake at this particular time of the year.

Scout News

It has been found necessary to postpone our revue "March Hare" until Friday and Saturday, May 1st and 2nd. We hope that we shall have the pleasure of your support on one of those dates.

On Friday, April 24th at 7.30pm all the Scouts and Cubs of the Golders Green District will attend a Service of Re-dedication Commemoration for our founder, Lord



Baden-Powell at the Free Church and Mr Andrews will be conducting the service. A similar service is held throughout the Commonwealth by Scout Districts or Counties as near to St George's Day as possible. We extend a very warm welcome to all parents and friends to join us in this Service.

Bob-a-Job Week as usual will be held in Easter week, April 6th to 11th. If any of you have any odd jobs that require doing, please contact any Scout or Cub, all of whom will have their official job card which you are asked to sign when the work has been done.

The Scouts carried auditorium collections at the Regal and Odeon cinemas recently in connection with the King George VI Memorial Fund and the National Flood Relief Fund, collecting a total of about £40.

The Scouts will be doing certain duties in connection with the Coronation, and also they will be selling the Official Programme a few days before June 6th. If you buy your copy from a Scout the whole of the money will go to the Jubilee Trust Fund. May we suggest that you order a copy from one of our Scouts especially if you intend viewing the proceedings on television.

Stanley Andrews

Anne Lowe

JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY

Our bedroom window faces across Borth Bog – not an elegant name but a protected area, one of the few remaining in the UK. Beyond the Bog, the Cambrian Mountains fill the horizon, stretching many miles from North Wales to the South. Surrounded by nature, it's easy to ignore the fragility of our natural world. I've been jolted back into thinking about this by a headline in today's Independent – 'Rivers decline exposes wider biodiversity losses' with the sub-title 'RSPB says people unaware of the UK record on protecting nature' There is a built-in problem here; nature is something that exists from within itself and will always keep going, which is an assumption both incorrect and dangerous. The reality is that once an area is reclaimed - or just neglected - it is lost for ever, which accounts for the huge difference between the extent and condition of the countryside between my childhood and the present. In one sense it seems a very long time but got into context it's just a 'blink'. The difficulty is that with a widespread problem it's easy to say "that's up to someone else," which is why the existence of so much of nature is so fragile. So stay alert, appreciate, add to and never ignore nature (and read to the end of this piece!)

When something is ubiquitous, it's easy to assume it's been around 'for ever.' Fifty years ago, Martin Cooper, then aged 44, stood on a New York Street holding *the first mobile phone* - 27cm (just over 10 inches) long and weighing just over a kilogram (over 2.2lbs).

What he started has now resulted in one of the most ubiquitous (and annoying?) products of all time – which is true but where would most of us be without one, whether it's used for business or pleasure? Certainly, to Rosemary, a mobile phone would have been a lifeline when, years ago, while looking after three very young grandchildren, all with scooters, she slipped and broke her leg in a remote area of Alexander Palace, and had to ask a complete stranger walking his dog, to help! Mr Cooper has no regrets – a happy 94 year-old on an original phone, but not for too long, as it weighs 1 kg. (OK, 2.2 lbs).

Through my residential lettings business I rented out many London homes and flats, meeting with interesting people, both landlords and tenants. I





remember an *afternoon with Ginger Rogers*, who was appearing in a production of *Mame* and had expressed an interest in living in the Windsor area - an experience for me as well - “country estates” as opposed to “London terraces.”

Having been in Wales for nearly one and a half years I am beginning to realize that pleasant, but not ‘pushy’ neighbours, are very similar here to those in London - ready to chat but not intruding. There was real concern

when our car was not parked outside for a few days - and the unusual cold spell resulted in a phone call to check we had enough heating!

Ba Ba Bright sheep. Flause is a Dutch Spotted sheep, just the right breed to show talents over and above bleating and eating. His owner, Millie, calls him and the response is a wagging of his ears and going straight to her. He responds immediately to the sound of a clicker, a training device, used more often for dogs. Following her initial success Millie is confident that soon Flause will be jumping up on the table and shaking her hand! There are opportunities as Flause lives at a farm school where many children get their first experience of country life.



Becoming rarer. Because some birds are still regularly seen you might think that all is well. The facts are very different says the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). Flocks of starlings are still a common sight but numbers have declined by more than 50 % over the last 30 years, resulting in an especially worrying situation - the starling is now a red-listed bird. The Government has, over the years, acknowledged that these population decreases are of great concern within the vital world of biodiversity. However, the RSPB’s report makes it clear that this is a systemic issue and must be addressed vigorously and systemically by all concerned, with the Government taking an active



lead. It's always especially difficult to put across the urgency of a situation which is part and parcel of our way of life, but nature must have understanding and action.

From “green and verdant” to “brown and unpleasant”. We all rely on water but probably think about it less in a country where rain seems



sometimes constant and is certainly never far away. The actuality is rather different. In the last 30 years no new reservoirs have been built even though the population has increased by 10 million. There are proposals for seven to be created but none yet started. The immense scale of these projects is probably the

reason why none have progressed from planning to reality - plus the assumption that there have been no major water shortages so far (at least none of which the general public is aware.) So why worry? Because not just concern but action must happen if a supply problem, certainly within the lifetime of the younger generation, is to be averted. The lack of new reservoirs is, to use a generally understood phrase, “the tip of the ice-berg”. This is just one facet of the problem – another is the quality of the water in our rivers; we think of them as being “clean”; the reality for many if not most, is a degree of pollution ongoing well in excess of recommended levels. “Water, water everywhere” but how much is fit for purpose?

Keeping going for the future. I’m always pleased to end on a positive note. The MSB (Millenium Seed Bank) exists and continues to do vital work in respect of the continuation of life on our fantastic planet. The MSB at Kew Gardens in South-West London, keeps alive



40,000 different plant species from all parts of the world, helping to preserve rare and threatened important wild plants. It now holds 98,567 seed collections from over 190 countries. It has been dubbed The Noah’s Ark for Plants which seems an accurate description giving some certainty in our often chaotic and sometimes unbelievable world. ***John Birch***

Michelle Obama, Becoming (2018): An appreciation (Part 2)

Meeting Barack

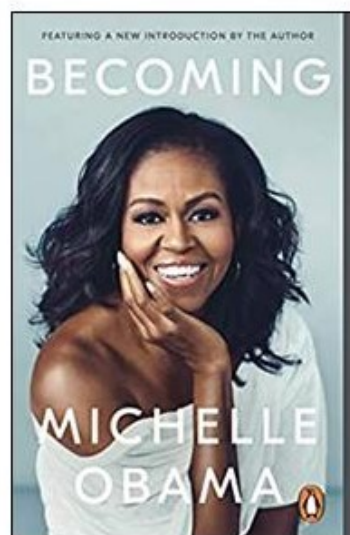
Barack acted as a disruptive force on Michelle and her straightforward goals in life. She wanted to be a high achiever with a very comfortable life-style and a large bank account. In Barack she found an unusual person with very different goals in life:

“Barack was a unicorn ...shaped by his unusual name, his odd heritage, his hard-to-pin-down ethnicity, his missing dad, his unique mind. He was used to having to prove himself, pretty much anywhere he went.”

Barack tipped Michelle's well-laid plans into the dirt, not by preaching but by the way he chose to live and work. It was perfectly understandable that someone with Michelle's background should be ambitious for herself and that she would not think beyond her family as she made her way up the legal greasy pole. But Barack's formative years were not only more privileged but unusual to the point of downright quirkiness. What with an internationally-minded mother from Hawaii who married first a Kenyan and then an Indonesian; a white granny he adored and called Toot (who he said was like our late queen); a relaxed Californian college before studying Law at Harvard, his development took the form of a zigzag path totally unlike Michelle's. Hers was a much more directed rise from a black working-class background to corporate lawyer. The coming-together of these different qualities and attitudes was, of course, to be very enriching. Michelle took the decision to give up her ambitions and turned to less well-paid work in the public sector, first at City Hall, and from there to an NGO before transferring to an administrative post at the University of Chicago.

You can see that although Michelle's love for Barack is beyond question, she - who was super-organised if not a downright control-freak - found Barack's laid-back style and dreaminess highly exasperating. When she became First Lady, Michelle said she admired the brisk manner of our late queen as she dealt with guests in a queue, whereas her husband was prone to chat with those he greeted, so causing a log-jam in the long stream of people waiting to shake their hand.

The early years of their marriage, when their two daughters were very



small, were made hard because Barack was away for four weekdays when Congress was in session at the state capital, Springfield. These difficulties were as nothing once Barack stood for the presidency and they then moved as a family to Washington. Whereas Barack in his laid-back way had developed an elephant's hide that could ignore the nastiest of criticisms, Michelle found herself much more vulnerable to spite and hate-inspired lies. One example she gives is when the English journalist, Christopher Hitchens, dug up her undergraduate dissertation and declared in a jeering way that it was unintelligible. Did he really have to stoop that low for copy particularly since sociologists are known for their abuse of jargon?

All the time, Michelle's principal concern was the happiness and wellbeing of her daughters. Once they were in the White House, Michelle was determined that despite the extremely high and intrusive levels of security, the glare of media attention and the idiosyncrasies of life in that particular mansion, Malia and Sasha should have as normal a life as possible. She was much assisted by her mother who was prepared to move into the White House with them. The presence of a loved grandmother helped considerably in giving the children a sense of security in their vast, silent home: Michelle dwells on the uncanny silence of the White House which has bullet proof windows.

Every First Lady has a project to which she gives particular attention. In Michelle's case it was to establish a very large kitchen garden which would produce vegetables for a healthy diet. She backed this particular scheme because of the alarming rate of obesity among poor Americans and their young. It was Michelle's policy to open up the White House to the less privileged and so children from Washington schools were invited into the garden to learn and to work. After a bumpy start the vegetable garden flourished and was later enlarged. Did it continue to flourish after the installation of their successor?

Michelle Obama expresses openly her grave disappointment over Hillary Clinton losing the election to Donald Trump. However she is by nature a positive person and so her final words to readers show how attitude can interpret events in either a positive or a negative way: "I grew up with a disabled dad in a too-small house without much money in a starting-to-fail neighbourhood, and I also grew up surrounded by love and music in a diverse city in a country where an education can take you far. I had nothing or I had everything. It depends on which way you want to tell it."

Verity Smith

Hampstead's Links with Slavery and Colonialism

There are many interesting connections between Hampstead and slavery which can be gleaned from the fascinating Slavery Database maintained by University College London and here is just one example.

Much of the land to the north west of the Spaniards Inn was once part of a great estate – the Firs Estate. The White House and the Chantry are part of the original estate's mansion

The Firs was owned by Sir John Bernard Bosanquet, who lived from 2 May 1773 to 25 September 1847. He was the son of the Governor of the Bank of England, Samuel Bosanquet, of Huguenot descent.

He was a distinguished lawyer – a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (a High Court Judge), King's Sergeant and Lord Commissioner of the Great Seal.

His estate was valued at £100,000 on his death in 1847. Some of his



Samuel Bosanquet



Slave Treadmill

wealth was generated from India, as he was General Counsel to the East India Company – that great paradigm of systematic looting.

Part of it came from the profits of slavery. He was the owner of sugar plantations and 409 slaves at St. Kitts. His brother Charles joined him in the plantation business and became a Lloyds Name.

The exact amount of the compensation he received from the Government

for his losses is unclear, but substantial sums were paid to the joint owners of the plantations which included James Freshfield, the founder of the well-known City solicitors' firm, Alexander Baring, scion of the banking family and Jeremiah Harman, another Governor of the Bank of England.

It was only on 1 February 2015 that the sum paid to all slave owners by the Government as compensation to slave owners – equivalent to 5% of the UK's GDP – was repaid, so huge was the amount. The slaves themselves received nothing.

Baptists can take some small comfort from the role of the Baptist Church in the abolition of slavery. The Baptist War of 1831/2, led by a black Baptist Deacon, Sam Sharpe, was instrumental in the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1832.

Ashok Ghosh

TRAIN SPOTTING AND SOLO WHIST

The previous article described the introduction of the first Britannia class locos in 1951 – and how the need to see and spot them led to a serious confrontation between pupils and headmaster at our junior school. (Which the headmaster 'won'). Our heroic, but ultimately doomed, stand reflected the enormous popularity of engine spotting in those days. We even had our own jargon: for example, you 'copped' a loco, you didn't spot it, and a train was 'pegged', never signalled – in fact, it was either 'pegged' (ie way clear ahead) or 'half pegged' (ie proceed with caution). We all had our Ian Allan books which gave us a complete listing and details of all locomotives region by region, so that you could underline or cross them out as they were 'copped.' This eventually provided Ian Allan with a publishing empire.

Of a weekend I would sometimes join an ad hoc, rather desultory, group of train spotters near the station where we would boast about what we had or hadn't seen since we last met. My chief memory of these Saturday morning sessions (Sunday was always 'out' because there were so few trains) was how we would take time off to go and buy a 'penny loaf' from a nearby bakery. They were shaped like a small brown Hovis and really did cost one old penny – which was amazingly cheap even then! (They were even warm!) There was also a kind of deserted loading yard nearby which allowed one to approach the railway line free of obstacles so that you could view passing trains inches away from your face – if you wanted to. It also allowed you to put pennies and halfpennies on the line, wait for a train to go over them, and then show your friends these wonderful oval

shaped coins. My parents pointed out that this was defacing coins of the realm, a criminal offence, and I obediently desisted! (I was not into irony then).

Our school was on the Liverpool Street Cambridge line. Unfortunately, few Britannia Class locomotives worked this line – why I am not sure. Indeed, in many ways it was a rather dull line. Even the sole named train on



The Fenman

this line – ‘The Fenman’ (London, Cambridge, Kings Lynn, Hunstanton) was never headed by a Brit. Usually it was a B17 Sandringham Class which were nice enough locos but nothing to write home about.

Soon after Junior school I transferred my loyalties to Grammar school at Cheshunt. Unfortunately, it meant undertaking a rather tedious journey by train from Bishops Stortford to Cheshunt which involved getting up about 6.20am each morning, catching the 7.20 from Stortford, changing at Broxbourne to a local train, arriving at Cheshunt about 8.30, then walking and arriving at school about 8.45am. (Ever since, I have refused to get up early unless absolutely necessary!) It might be thought that a daily journey like this would provide ample opportunities for engine spotting. But that was not the case. Nearly always, the morning train was headed by the same B17s – usually ‘Royal Sovereign’ or ‘Arsenal’ and they were nearly always met with a groan of familiarity. The trains also had the irritating habit of being nearly always on time and being very reliable. In fact they were not even delayed by the great smog of December 1952 – when other boys were having to walk to school or spend hours in buses being guided by flares!

There were some upsides however: firstly, it provided an opportunity to finish any homework left over from the previous evening and secondly, an opportunity to learn to play solo whist. In those days, solo whist was the game of choice and as soon as there were four of us together we would get the cards out and start bidding. And we schoolboys were not the only ones. Quite often we would be invaded by a bevy of ‘city blokes’ who also played the game. They would sit opposite each other in pairs, tie a cloth around their knees to use as a sort of table and deal away. We schoolboys would sit next to them, watch their games and smirk at each other. Later we would hold our inquests: “What an idiot, with a hand like that he could have called ‘abundance’ or even ‘misere ouverte,’ but he just passed!” or

‘he had an easy ‘solo’ but he just went for a ‘prop and cop.’ He shouldn’t be allowed!’ etc. To be fair, I think they were probably playing for money so they were going to be a bit more cautious than a lot of ‘nothing to lose’ schoolboys.

Over time, I made friends with a classmate from school and we decided that the Liverpool Street/Cambridge line was ‘played out’ as far as the spotting life was concerned and that we needed to look further afield. Accordingly, we would sometimes cycle over from Bishops Stortford to Potters Bar/Hatfield to ‘cop’ A4s (Mallard and similar top-of-the-range stream-lined engines) on the East coast line on their way to and from Edinburgh. This involved some serious cycling as Potters Bar was some 20 miles away as the crow flies – perhaps a round journey of 50 miles or so. But in those days we were into serious cycling. This consisted of tucking your trousers into your socks, putting a cheese sandwich in your saddlebag and off you go; there was no nonsense about donning lycra, crash helmets, and all the paraphernalia of modern cycling. The only enemies were wind and rain which could really make a journey miserable. In fairness there was much less traffic on the roads then.

It was on one of these journeys that my friend showed me an amazing ‘trick’ – ie how to make a phone call without paying. Needing to phone home he found a telephone kiosk (which were reasonably plentiful then) and demonstrated: lift the receiver, tap the rest-bar the number of times required by the number, ie for 456 tap 4 times, short pause, tap 5 times, short pause, tap 6 times, and so on for all of the numbers. It took a painfully long time to do the whole number and you had to make sure there were no errors and that the pauses were not too long. But yes, it worked and I was duly amazed! It was then that I realized that it was triumphs like this that had allowed us to build and maintain a great Empire for so long.

In time we supplemented our spotting menu by going to London and visiting different main line stations and engine sheds – in particular, Camden engine shed. Looking back, I find it hard to believe that we just wandered around this shed at will; indeed, the only time we were ‘challenged’ it was to ask whether my friend needed help taking photographs! Even more hard to believe was when my wife and I went to some sort of function or gig at the Camden Round House years and years later, remembering that I had been there when it was still a humble engine shed housing a turntable. I looked at the floor and thought ‘there used to be a turntable there.’ And bemoaned the ‘lost splendour in the grass’, and the lost ‘glory in the flower,’ etc. Truth be told, the average engine shed didn’t have much grass in it, let alone flowers! *John Ditchfield*

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No. 52: Islands and their Seas

Put each island within its correct sea

Islands

| | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Isle of Man | Cape Verde | Falkland Islands | Galapagos | Maldives |
| Papua/New Guinea | Cyclades | Iceland | Gotland | Isle of Wight |
| Malta | Taiwan | Greenland | Sardinia | |

Seas

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Irish Sea | Southern Ocean | Tyrrhenian Sea | Arctic Ocean |
| Atlantic | Pacific Ocean | Southern China Sea | Mediterranean |
| Sea | Indian Ocean | Coral Sea | English Channel |
| | Sea | Aegean Sea | Denmark Strait |
| | | | Baltic |



Answers to Competition No 51: Places and their Locations

Odessa/Black Sea
 Stockholm/Baltic
 Helsinki/Gulf of Finland
 Archangel/White Sea
 Athens/ Aegean Sea
 Vladivostok/Sea of Japan
 Jeddah/Red Sea
 Calcutta/ Bay of Bengal
 Ho Chin Min City (Saigon)
 /South China Sea
 Shanghai/East China Sea
 Accra/Gulf of Guinea
 Cape Town/Atlantic
 Baku/Caspian Sea
 Karachi/Arabian Sea



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

WORDSEARCH: TREES AND SHRUBS

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

ALDER ASH BEECH BLACK-POPLAR BLACK-THORN
 CYPRESS ENGLISH-ELM FLOWERING-CHERRY
 HAWTHORN HAZEL HOLLY HOLMOAK HORNBEAM
 LARCH LIME LONDON-PLANE PUSSY-WILLOW
 RHODODENDRON SCOTSPINE SILVER-BIRCH SYCAMORE
 TURKEY-OAK WALNUT WYCH-ELM YEWE Put the remaining 13
 letters together to find this tree. (The first is a fine animal, the second
 protects your lungs and the third has a hard case!)

Compiled by Rosemary Birch

Answer: Horse Chestnut

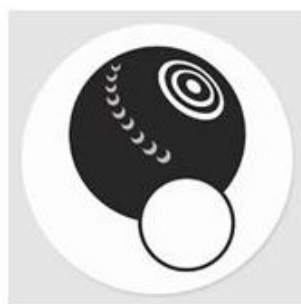
JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: LAWN BOWLS

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

BOWLING GREEN
RINKS
BOWLS/WOODS
JACK
MAT

SKIP
MARKER
MEASURE
ENDS
SCORE SHOTS

SAMES
SINGLES
PAIRS
TRIPLES
FOURS



Compiled by Liz Alsford

DIARY

Monday 10.30am to 11.30am Studying together in Church, resuming after Easter

Wednesday 10am to 12 noon Toddler and Parent/Carer group

Saturday 10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open

Thursday 8.00pm Choir Practice in Church

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

The services are also live streamed via YOUTUBE



APRIL

- 1 10-12 noon Spring cleaning the church. All helpers welcome
- 2 11.00 am **Palm Sunday Communion Service led by Sarah Beaumont, Lay Preacher**
- 6 7.30 pm **Maundy Thursday Service led by Revd Derek Lindfield**
- 7 11.00am **Good Friday Service led by Revd Derek Lindfield and Revd David Trafford**
- 9 11.00 am **Easter Sunday Family Service led by Revd Jon Dean**
- 16 11.00 am **Family Service led by Andrew Mills, Lay Preacher**
- 18 7.30pm **Elders & Deacons Meeting**
- 23 11.00 am **Family Service led by Revd Maggie Hindley, Retired URC Minister**
4.00 pm Annual General Church Meeting followed by communion
- 28 1.00 pm Piano Recital by Antonio Morabito refreshments at 12.30pm in Support of Christian Aid
- 30 11.00 am **Family Service led by Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch**

MAY

- 7 11.00 am **Family Communion Service led by Revd Derek Lindfield**

- 14 **11.00 am Family Service led by Revd John Steel, Retired URC Minister**
- 15 – 21 Christian Aid Week
- 16 7.30 pm Elders & Deacons Meeting
- 21 **11.00 am Family Service led by Sarah Beaumont, URC Lay Preacher**
- 26 1.00 pm River City Saxes, Saxophone ensemble concert
refreshments at 12.30pm in support of Christian Aid
- 28 **11.00 am Family Service led by Revd Shaun Sanders Methodist Minister**

JUNE

- 4 **11.00 am Gift Day and Communion Service led by Revd Derek Lindfield**
- 11 **11.00 am Family Service led by Revd Jon Dean, Retired URC Minister**
- 13 7.30pm Elders & Deacons Meeting



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 7th May 2023. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday 23rd 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.

LEVERTON & SONS LTD

Independent Funeral Directors since 1789

We are here to help

Full information on our website

www.levertons.co.uk

info@levertons.co.uk

**Six branches across North London including
Hampstead and Golders Green**

**Printed by CPI London, 38 Ballards Lane, Finchley
Central, London N3 2BJ**

T 020 8349 4932 www.cpilondon.com

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

