

NEWS & VIEWS

The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb



AUGUST 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 020 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
Interim Finance Officer	Eddie Hayden 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 789

AUGUST 2023

Dear Friends

Well, we're nearly there! We've waded through the turbulent waters of a ministerial vacancy, and are about to arrive safely on the far bank, having learned how to swim on the way.

Well, that's how it feels – a little. We knew it wasn't going to be an easy time for us when our minister of 17 years left us, along with our organist, our finance officer, and our lettings officer, all in the same month. We knew we faced a challenge. Could we fill the glaring holes our minister's departure would leave in our administrative work and our pastoral care, let alone our witness as a church? How would a bereaved company of people react?

I have to say, as a spectator as well as a participant, that our worst fears have not been realised. The congregation has not fallen apart. Services led by strangers and friends, though very different to those we were used to, have turned out to be refreshing, stimulating, and largely reassuring so that our Christian witness, and that of others, continues to be supported and confirmed. Visiting organists have also, in the main, been a blessing.

All this has depended on the vital organisational work led by the church elders and deacons. Visiting preachers and organists do not arrive without a lot of planning and contact work. But the less obvious, yet every bit as important, tasks of working together and caring for each other, and newcomers as well, have also been encouraged and supported by the leadership in the church.

And the response has been good; people have realised that we have each of us a part to play in the ongoing life of the church, and so a community that has been used to being ministered to, have learned to do the ministering to each other and to the community around us.

The huge task of seeking and confirming a new minister has been successfully negotiated, and practical preparations for that new minister's arrival with his family have proceeded according to a carefully planned and executed timetable.

Cause for some satisfaction and confidence then. But I would caution against too much of it. There is always a danger that when Aled and his family arrive we all heave a sigh of relief and unconsciously hand the burdens and the responsibilities over to him and feel we can relax. If I were in Aled's shoes I would be hoping that doesn't happen, and that the cooperative efforts of so many over the vacancy will have become embedded in the way we function as a congregation. Every one of us has a part to play in the success of the new ministry about to start.

If the Spirit of the living God could take a small disheartened group of disciples in an upper room and turn them into a force which would change the world, surely that same Spirit will be with us if we continue to commit ourselves to our God, to each other, and to the continued life of the Free Church community. In the meantime I hope you all have an uplifting and peaceful summer.

David Trafford





**HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB
FREE CHURCH**

Central Square, London NW11 7AG

INDUCTION SERVICE

Everyone is welcome to join us for the

INDUCTION SERVICE

for

Revd Aled Jones BA, BD, MA, MTh, PGCE

in the Free Church on

Saturday 2nd September 2023 at 2pm

Followed by refreshments.

For further information contact Penny Trafford

secretary@hgsgfreechurch.org.uk

News of the Family

Judy Layte is recovering from her fractured hip in Finchley Memorial Hospital. Judy's daughter is arranging for residential care following her discharge.

Alison Newton has been immobilised following a fall and is housebound for the time being.

Elizabeth Swynnerton's son Michael, who lives in Taiwan, is receiving chemotherapy. Please remember the whole family in your prayers.

We were sorry to hear of the passing of *Claudia Millhoff's* mother, rather unexpectedly in Germany. We send our condolences and love to all the family.

Congratulations to Almira Richards on the birth of her grand-daughter Cari Elizabeth on 1st June, and best wishes to mother Lucy and partner Pete.

Jamila Otuko Jamila, our newest church member, has requested to be recommended to the URC for ministry training, and therefore we thought it would be good to share some of her story.

Jamila's parents died when she was young and she was brought up by her aunts within the Pentecostal Church in Kenya, where she received training in discipleship and Christian teaching.

She attended university in Kenya, focussing on social issues, and at the same time continued to work within the local church in forms of Christian ministry. Jamila has taught children of all ages and been involved in Christian social and evangelistic outreach, seeing this as part of her personal spiritual development.

Jamila came to the UK to join the Archbishop of Canterbury's training programme for international students in this country. She has valued the training here, which has been ecumenical in nature. While holding the position of the churches from which she has come, she is very open and accepting of the beliefs of other Christians in this country.

Jamila has an awareness of the social as well as the spiritual dimensions of the church's work and life, hence seeks to live out her faith in both of those dimensions. She is keen to be involved in church services and to preach, so we will be giving Jamila opportunities to be more involved in the life and work of the Free Church.

Dennis Scott Unit

On Saturday July 15th, Finals weekend of Wimbledon, strawberries and cream were taken, on behalf of our church, to the three wards of the Dennis Scott Unit, (Adult Acute Mental Illness) and were enjoyed by 60 patients and staff.



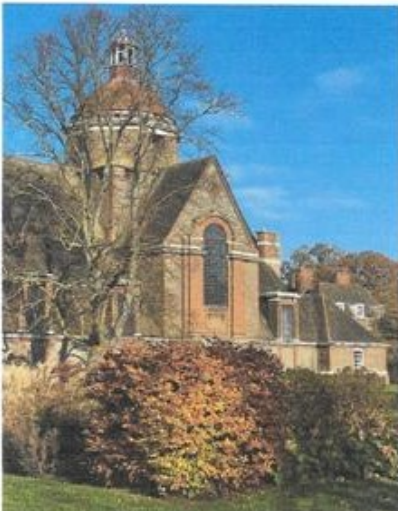
BBQ

On Friday August 18th 4-8pm we are arranging a BBQ in the Church Hall garden to welcome the Jones family to the Suburb.

We hope as many as possible will be able to join us. Please put the date in your diary!

Any offers of food to Richard Orme.

Induction of Reverend Aled Jones Saturday Sept 2nd at 2pm

	<p>HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH Central Square, London NW11 7AG</p> <p>We would be pleased if you could join us for the INDUCTION SERVICE for Rev'd Aled Jones BA, BD, MA, MTh, PGCE in the Free Church on Saturday 2nd September 2023 at 2pm Followed by refreshments.</p> <p>For further information please contact Penny Trafford, Church Secretary, secretary@hgsfreemchurch.org.uk</p>
--	---

Henrietta Barnett School Monday Sept 4th and Tuesday Sept 5th

The church will be open all day on Sept 4th & 5th, for the parents and families of those students sitting entrance examinations at Henrietta Barnett School. Refreshments will be available.

There will be a rota on the noticeboard at the back of the church, for people to sign to help with the teas/coffees and cake stall. Any cakes left over from the Induction on Sat 2nd will be sold, and any more offerings of food gladly received on Monday or Tuesday.

Please sign up on the rota! Many thanks.

The Team

Bible Study: John the Pastor

This Bible Study is based on a book review I wrote for the Methodist Recorder in June 2022 about Pastor John: Volume II by Brian Tebbutt. The main part is adaption of the book review followed by some questions at the end for further thought and discussion. Rev Shaun Sanders

John 5:1-9

New International Version

The Healing at the Pool

¹ *Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.*

² *Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.*

³ *Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.*

⁵ *One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.*

⁶ *When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”*

⁷ *“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”*

⁸ *Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”*

The healing of the man by the pool near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem in St John's Gospel chapter 5 provokes many questions. What is wrong with the man? Why has he been ill for thirty-eight years, the number of years travelled in the wilderness? Why do others get into the pool for healing before him? Why can't he ask to be healed? Why doesn't he give a direct answer when Jesus asks whether he wants to be made well? Is he not grateful to Jesus for healing?

This puzzling story was a Gospel reading in the lectionary on the 6th Sunday of Easter last year (and will be again in two years time!). **Pastor John: A Practical Interpretation of St. John's Gospel Volume II Chapters 5–9** (Wipf & Stock) by Brian Tebbutt, arrived just in time for me to go beyond traditional historical criticism and to think more deeply about this passage and my own reactions to it. It is a thought provoking

and engaging book which brings fresh pastoral perspectives to the Gospel. In particular, it looks at these chapters through the lens of a reader response and a psychodynamic approach. The real challenges in getting to grips with John can hide the depth and beauty of the Fourth Gospel.

The author, Brian Tebbutt, spent 40 years in active Methodist ministry. Realising that many “meetings” did not mean that people met at depth, he developed small groups for mutual pastoral care and training. Such group work was key to the achievements of early Methodism. As a retired minister, in two volumes, he has shared the fruit of his ministry, the fresh insights of his engaging with John’s Gospel over many years.

He is one of the generation influenced by Dr Frank Lake, founder of the Clinical Theology Association (now the Bridge Pastoral Foundation). His account of how he became involved in small group work is described in the first volume of **Pastor John**, together with a deeper reading of chapters 1 to 4 of the Gospel.

In this second volume, Brian Tebbutt continues working his pastoral exploration of John’s Gospel with chapters 5 to 9. Although he describes some of the historical background and context of when it was written, his concern is being aware of *how* we read, a reader-response approach, and in particular, the pastoral purpose for us today. “How does Jesus Christ come to me? How does he give himself to me?” Faith changes our lives at depth. The text of John’s Gospel isn’t just for John’s community in his day. We are engaged as readers in our day - uncovering *what* in us responds as we do, a psychodynamic approach. We don’t just learn more about Jesus, or John’s community. We learn more about ourselves. The Bible reads us.

The introduction outlines the approach used throughout. Chapter 5 has six “Reflections” on the narrative, including a detailed example of how bible study can move us to sharing our response to the text. It is an ambivalent story which highlights our own ambiguities. Chapter 6 explores the signs and symbols of nourishment, accessing the bread of life. In Chapters 7 and 8, there is an analysis of human society with extraordinary pictures of a search for freedom throughout which Jesus kept his integrity. He was just and grace-full, water and light. As he could say often “I am”, so could the anonymous man who cannot see, yet “sees” Jesus.

Along the way, we are not just given ideas and imagery, but also our own responses are considered and sometimes challenged. How did it feel when we were judged? Who symbolised light to us in a time of darkness? When has a moment in the present become more meaningful by understanding the past?

The book has some lovely gems. The life we have from the flesh and blood of Jesus is *zoe* not *bios*. It is vitality, and a living quality of being, rather than biological life. There's a sermon there! John works on two levels, the literal and the metaphorical, which the author illuminates. The book is the fruit of reading extensively, poetry and novels, drawing deeply on hymnody, and listening carefully to the experiences of others. He quotes widely from St Augustine to Charles Wesley, to John Masefield, Boris Pasternak, and R.S.Thomas.

This book is designed particularly for the workshops and groups of the kind which the author worked with during his active ministry. There are many questions, which are for sharing, not for discussion. It can be used both by individuals and by group leaders and preachers. The fellowship of the church will be deepened. This is a valuable resource for pastors and teachers when so much energy gets taken up by other matters. The Church needs books like this to engage us with Scripture and help us to understand who we are in these changing times. Having read both volumes, I am drawn to look again at some of the stories in the early chapters of John's Gospel. Brian Tebbutt has not only given us a rich resource to help us engage with the texts, but also encouraged us to reflect deeply on our own experiences in dialogue with the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

I didn't find any easy answers to the questions raised by the account of the man by the Sheep Gate. However in that confusing story with its unanswered questions, I discovered again the unprovoked and unmerited grace and generosity of God and I learnt more about myself.

Some questions based on John 5.1-9:

1. The man lives like this every day of his life. He actually has huge courage and hope just to keep going. Are there times when we feel we are just about surviving without realising that is a huge achievement in itself? Do we recognise the courage and resilience of those amongst us who are just about managing?
2. There is no evidence of the man's relationships with others. He doesn't seem to have formed a lasting relationship with Jesus despite the great kindness of Jesus. Maybe the man needed to protect himself. Loneliness is now identified as a major factor in poor mental and physical health, especially following the pandemic. Is this something which affects us or those close to us? Do we expect gratitude back when we offer support to others?
3. Jesus told the man to stand up or 'rise'. The Greek word here is 'egeiro'

which can also mean to awaken. It's a strong word, used also to refer to Lazarus (12.1) and to Jesus himself using the image of the Temple (2.22). There is no more waiting. Are we still waiting for resurrection? Do we need to be told to rise or awaken?

4. Does the reading provoke any further questions? We have a communion service every Thursday morning at Brookside Methodist Church in East Barnet. It's a simple half-hour service where I share some reflections on the reading and then open it to others share any thoughts. I usually find someone has an insight which I've never thought of! Scripture is a great well of Christian faith for us to draw much more deeply upon. Please feel free to share any insights with me you have of this reading. Email: s.sanders2@btopenworld.com

The Rev Shaun Sanders is a Methodist minister in Barnet.

(Copies of both books can be bought online or direct from the author Brian Tebbutt btebbutt@btinternet.com.)



Prayer Festival and Lee Abbey

In July Brian and I were privileged to join the Llandaff and Monmouth Festival of Prayer at St Teilo's Church in Wales High School. The day began with a Eucharist led by the Bishop of Monmouth, Cherry Vann. The sermon, based on Matthew 6, was given by the Bishop of Llandaff, Mary Stallard, who encouraged us to stay anchored in God during this anxious time. She reminded us that God knows all that troubles us.

In the workshop 'Sighs too deep for words' based on Romans 8 v26, Bishop Cherry encouraged us to explore different ways of praying when words fail us. In Psalm 139 we are told that God knows us and loves us as we are, so we do not need to spend time telling him our worries. We then practised sitting for three minutes in God's presence.



Bishop Cherry referred to this being similar to a loved one coming into the presence of a beloved. Rowan Williams has likened it to sunbathing; when we place ourselves in the sunshine it bathes us in the same way we bathe in the presence of God. The Quakers have a tradition of 'holding a person in the light' when praying for them. Next we practised for three minutes a breathing prayer by inhaling the presence of God and exhaling, stilling ourselves by concentrating on our breathing. For me I find saying 'Be still' as I inhale and 'Know that I am God' as I exhale also calms my mind. Focussing on a candle flame, icon, sea waves, bird song or walking slowly paying attention to the beauty of God's creation can also help to still the chatter.

In the afternoon a large number of us listened to the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams speak about 'The Jesus Prayer; an Eastern Christian Resource'. 'The Way of the Pilgrim' book was written by an unknown nineteenth century Russian peasant who tells of his constant wrestling with the problem of 'how to pray without ceasing'. Through his travels, wandering around the Russian monasteries, he becomes more open to the promptings of God and he is encouraged to recite 'The Jesus Prayer'.

The history of the Jesus Prayer; "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have

mercy on me, a sinner” goes back to the early sixth century with Diadochos who taught that repeating the Jesus Prayer leads to inner stillness. As we grow in awareness of our life in Christ and put down roots so we are anchored in Christ. Using the breath prayer technique we can slowly inhale saying ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God’ and slowly exhale saying ‘have mercy on me, a sinner’.

This reminded me of the chorus;

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul,
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

Earlier in the week we stayed at Lee Abbey, Devon for a ‘Friends Week’. Each day we heard about different aspects of Lee Abbey’s work including the International Student Hostel in Kensington, London, and the three small missional communities in Aston, Birmingham; Knowle, Bristol and Forde, Plymouth. The head of Business, David Halsey, who is also an ordained Anglican priest, spoke about Lee Abbey and the Community as a ‘thin place of grace-filled fragility’. David gave thanks for the financial and prayer support during the Covid closure and spoke about the now smaller



international community, which is supported by British Community members and Associate Community members, many of whom are retired. During the second part of the morning we prayed in small groups for the projects we had heard about. Meals provided a further opportunity to hear from Community members about their faith journey and their experiences of living in the Lee Abbey Community. During the afternoon we enjoyed walking down to Lee Bay and exploring the Lynton and Lynmouth area. We relived happy memories of August 1984 when we took a group of teenagers from our joint St Judes-Free Church Youth Group (including Peter Birch, Philipa Lowe, Philip Freeborn, Nicola Cleary, Bryan and Kirstie Hackett) for a week’s holiday to a self-catering chalet next to Lee Bay.

Jenny Stonhold

MY REST BECOMES A SILKEN THREAD

Having been a busy mother of six with a slightly workaholic husband (although he would deny it), the idea of rest was an option not often considered, except out of sheer necessity when I came to an absolute 'stop.' Oh, that I had had the determination of Charles Wesley's wife, who, with a young family, the number more than ours, would daily sit down in the middle of the kitchen and pull her apron over her head as a sign to all and sundry that this was her time of prayer and rest - to commune with her Maker. This was just her time.

John's Diary mentions how long it has taken us to become completely settled and adapted here in Wales, not just in a physical sense after the business of London life, (even in the Suburbs), but finding we didn't have that race of completing everyday tasks; in fact, we could choose when and where to move a job forward a day if necessary. What luxury!!

It was difficult not to get a guilty conscience about having a few minutes to myself. I was brought up in a generation when the concept of reading, or even thinking of reading a book during the day, was 'not on.' Novels were for evening reading only - and then only when all the tasks had been done! On top of that guilt trip has been the time gained from not helping others; eg by giving lifts to church; taking many shopping etc.

Thus it is very difficult to accept 'help' the other way round. I've always been a 'doer,' always happier working in the background, doing the washing-up, etc. Now I have to be a receiver, I have to accept help from others. It's a very humbling experience - much easier to think I'm self-reliant.

I have to learn that receiving is just as important as giving. I realized the full impact of this a few years ago when someone offered to help me set up the Traidcraft stall. I replied with my usual candour, "It's alright I can manage." As she turned away, I could not help but notice the look of rebuff, helplessness, in her expression. I felt I had really hurt her by not accepting her gift, her free gift of giving which was probably the only way she could think of trying to help. I learnt a valuable lesson that day which is that one should sometimes hold back and accept someone's help. It's a very humbling experience as it is so much easier to think we're self-reliant and can cope completely on our own! As the chorus goes:

Let me be as Christ to you,
Pray that I may have the grace,
To let you be my servant too.
We are pilgrims on a journey

And companions on the road,
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

So now having sorted ourselves out so to speak, we can concentrate on those extra spare moments – times of rest, time out. In a Morning Service (11/7) Lyndell Bywater spoke about our attitude towards rest, how we must stop our guilt feelings and view rest as a holy thing - not as an optional extra but a “sacred thread to be woven into our daily lives.” In the past, I remember how determined I was not to even stop for a rest until all jobs had been fully completed, and then stupidly realising I’d left it too late to take a rest before the family came in with all their needs. Rest then had become just an occasional treat and not a necessity. Lyndell mentioned how even God, having made the World in six days, rested on the seventh! Adam and Eve were born on the sixth day so their first day was a day of rest before having to become “fruitful and increase, subdue the earth and have dominion over everything that moves on the earth.” She continued “perhaps we need to shift our perspective to see rest as a starting point rather than the last! It’s so easy to get addicted to productivity and works to achieve something.”

The dictionary’s definition of rest is ‘to cease from work or movement in order to relax, or sleep, or recover strength’. In our every day living it can be defined as a slowing down, of taking stock and realizing what’s important and what’s not so important. Resting, waiting, being patient, meditating - all are very closely linked.

As I have mentioned before, we have a very large grassy area behind the cottage - we refer to it as a paddock (perhaps we need a goat or two)! This year we decided to let it grow, give it a yearly cut only and plant patches of wild flowers. This has involved preparing the patches, broadcasting some seeds attractive to wild life and waiting and having patience to see if anything will show this year. If not, we hope that those seeds will remain dormant and germinate next year. This ‘resting’ period is absolutely essential, and in a similar way we humans need ‘slowing-down’ time before charging onto the next thing. As Winnie the Pooh said, “Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits.” We too need to cultivate that sense of letting everything go, letting our minds go blank and just ‘being.’ As Christians we know we can rest quietly and peacefully in His ever-supportive arms.

Is this what Lyndell is calling a ‘silken thread’ linking me to the Almighty through my resting time? A meditative and chart-like hymn (author and composer unknown) sums this all up:

Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God.
In Thee O God I put my trust
In Thee O God I put my trust
In Thee O God I put my trust.

Rosemary Birch

Commitment for Life

As part of our church charitable giving, we send our Christmas Day offering to the URC project 'Commitment for Life' specifically to help people in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe – Life is always better with a cup of tea!



The resurrection bush is a native plant that many farmers grow in Zimbabwe to make herbal tea. Few plants can grow here under the baking sun. It looks like a bundle of red, dead twigs. Agnes, however, knows that with a little water it will soon spring back to life.

Agnes likens the resurrection bush to our lives. Sometimes life is difficult; at other times it is ok. But during the times when it is difficult do not lose hope. Anytime life can become good again.

Like the resurrection bush, Agnes has survived the hardest of times. A drought in her region left her struggling to grow food and what little she had left went to her son. She went from having three meals a day to just one. But Agnes did not give up hope. Christian Aid's BRACT (Building Resilience through improving the Absorptive and Adaptive capacity for Transformation) programme helps farmers to support each other and stand strong against the changing climate. With the knowledge she has gained she can now grow food and herbs that thrive even in the driest conditions. Together with women in her community she uses a solar powered pump to water beans and fresh tomatoes to sell.

Your support for Commitment for Life means that Agnes can now support women who are fighting the same struggles she once did.

Carole Lindfield

From the Archives

1943

The first extract from the Newsletter of August 1943 reminds us that it is still wartime and England is being bombed; it is an appeal for volunteers to train to use a trailer pump to put out fires around Central Square. The second extract is from Frank Ballard's letter looking forward to his travelling for a summer break, and the decision to move evening services back to the Church Hall (from the Church) because of the necessary 'blackout' for the shorter days of winter. One wonders whether this ensured that our Church was never directly bombed.

From Newsletter July 1943

Fire Guard Organization – Trailer Pump

In order to strengthen fire prevention arrangements in the vicinity of Central Square, a Trailer Pump has been stationed in a nearby garage, and is to be manned by Fire Guards.

Training, which is being given by the NFS, has already commenced, but there is a need for more volunteers.

Seeing that the Church may stand to benefit considerably by this added protection, it is thought that there may be some members who, living locally, would care to offer their services in this connection. Mr Colin Carpenter will be glad to give further information.

Training – About eight evening sessions of two hours each.

Duties – Volunteers will probably be asked to man the pump only on an alert, one night of the week.

From Newsletter August 1943

Mr Dear People

You must not be surprised if my letter this month shows signs of the holiday mood. It is Bank Holiday, and although I am in my own room, with plenty to keep me out of mischief for the rest of the day, I get occasional reminders of crowds upon beaches and on rivers enjoying good summer weather. I am not complaining, for by the end of the week we hope ourselves to be away from the daily round renewing our acquaintance with the mountains and the sea. This may not agree exactly the Government's intentions. The Minister of Transport in particular has been exhorting us all to remain in our own homes and be content with our local amusements. No doubt from his point of view he is right, but the public have had a point of view also and it must not be ignored. We have had nearly four years of war, most of us have done our utmost during that

long stretch, and if we are to finish successfully we must have some relaxation. I have been glad to find that more people have been away this year than previous summers and in some cases have found it possible to stay away for longer periods. It has caused gaps in congregations and probably a good deal of adaptation in offices and elsewhere, but I believe we shall be the better able to settle down to the demands of what may possibly prove to be the last of black-out winters. I cannot believe that the periods of relaxation are wasteful. Indeed I would like to find that all our leaders in Church and State, faced with some of the greatest questions that have ever presented themselves to piety and statesmanship, had resolved to prepare themselves with rest and change.

One thing that has been considerably debated in official circles is whether we can arrange to remain in the Church for the winter or whether we should return to the Hall. It has been interesting to listen to the many points made on both sides, but in the end one consideration proved conclusive. The Ministry of Fuel and Power is insistent that all possible economy should be exercised. Letters have actually been addressed to the heads of the various denominations advising that congregations might in some cases unite and that where this is not practicable smaller buildings should be used. When this was reported to us, even those who were most anxious to continue in the Church agreed that there was only one patriotic course open to us. We do not intend to return for the morning service until the weather makes it necessary, but the black-out will oblige us to be back in the Hall for evening worship by the last Sunday in September. When we go back we shall miss the grand piano which, through the kindness of Mr and Mrs Herrmann, we have previously enjoyed. Perhaps, however, someone else with a benevolent mind will remember some stored-away instrument and put it at our disposal?

Frank Ballard

1953

From News and Views August 1953

The extract below describes a Sunday School outing of 100 people in two large London Transport buses to Hertford.

Sunday School Outing to Hertford

Amidst tumultuous cheering the two large London Transport buses moved off from the Church Hall at 10.45. On board were some 100 teachers, scholars and parents bound for the Annual Sunday School Outing.

All through the Suburb, residents were seen standing transfixed at the sight of buses. You could almost hear the older ones saying "Dame Henrietta Barnett would have turned in her grave" evidently thinking that the

proposed bus service had come at last.

We set course for Barnet and Hatfield, after a slight pause at Finchley enabling the forgotten cricket gear to be rushed to us by fast car. The buses shot through Hatfield, until frantic work on the bell brought them to a halt. A hasty conference round the map persuaded the drivers that we were bound for Hertford and not the Hebrides, and doubling back we continued, diverting again for a low bridge and clearing another one by two inches!

We finally arrived at the William Baker Technical College at 12.30, "de-bussed" and moved down to the sports field. There, lunch was consumed, the shop thoughtfully provided by the Leaders doing a roaring trade in minerals, cakes, sweets and ice cream.

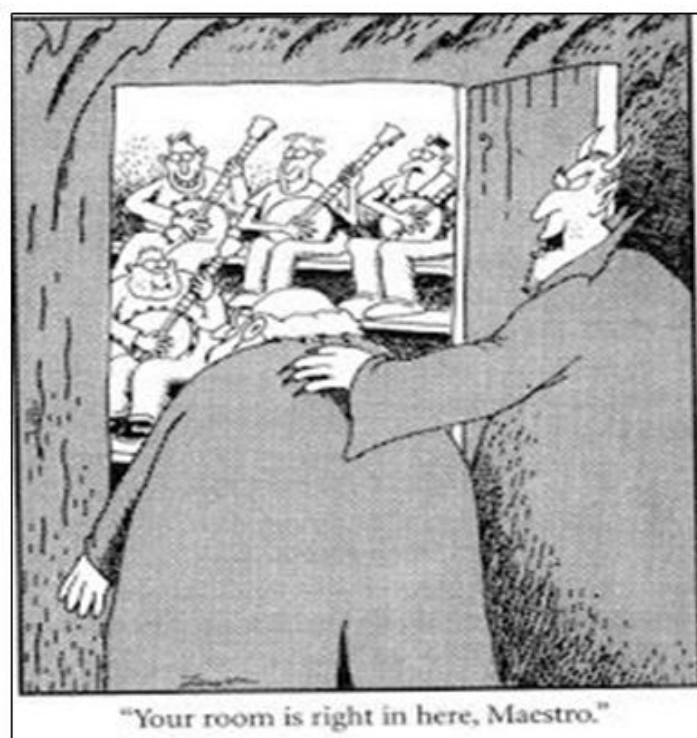
After lunch cricket and rounders were played, and later a scavenger hunt was held in which all manner of things from a pair of yellow braces to Miss Murray's autograph had to be collected.

Tea was eaten under the trees during a short shower, and was followed by sports, which included running, potato, three-legged, wheelbarrow and piggy-back events.

The party returned to the buses and set off home at about 6.30 after the usual hunt for lost satchels and blazers. The journey back was slightly less eventful, the drivers having brushed up their map reading, although a lusty sing-song was enjoyed. The buses finally arrived at the Church Hall at about 7.45 after a most enjoyable and successful day.

Our thanks are due to Dr Barnado's Homes for their hospitality, the committee for their organisation, and the drivers for making the journey so interesting.

Anne Lowe



Correspondence

From Kay Hassell, Exmouth, Devon.

Thank you so much for continuing to send News and Views.

Our association with the Free Church goes back to our grandfather Hassell's association with the church – and his daughter, our Aunt Daisy, who sang in the choir. Mind you, Grandpa shifted his allegiance from church to church for various reasons. He was Collector, Port of London, which involved moving around London a fair bit. He was appointed OBE. Grandma used to say that she would rather move house than do a spring-cleaning. Grandpa played the organ but whether he played in the Free Church, I know not.

Greetings from my brother David Hassell who has vivid memories of teaching English as a Foreign Language at the Institute under Jean Barraclough. She would bellow HALLO! to get the attention of a roomful of chattering students.

I have just celebrated my 95th birthday. David will be 98 in August.

Warmest greetings Kay Hassell

From Ashok Ghosh

I write with regard to the letter to the Editor from Arati Banerjea in the June/July edition of "News & Views".

In response to my article on Slavery and Colonialism, Arati Banerjea argues that "The English influence...freed India from the cruelties of the previous Invaders and Colonisers, i.e. the Moghuls".

With the greatest respect, her argument is misconceived.

Unlike the British, the Mughals were settlers in India. They did not exploit India for the benefit of a foreign country. They did not live apart from native Indians in segregated colonies based on a person's skin colour. Although in the initial period of East India Company rule, as Dalrymple has described in *"The White Moghuls"*, the British mingled with Indians as equals, this rapidly descended into an apartheid system promoting white supremacy.

The economic statistics demonstrate the effects of British rule.

At the beginning of the 18th century India's share of the world's economy was 23% - as large as all of Europe combined. By the time the British departed in 1947, it had fallen to just 3%. Life expectancy was 27. The literacy rate was 16% (8% for females). Indian industry had all but been destroyed. There were famines every two years throughout British rule in which tens of millions died. Life expectancy is now 70 and literacy 72%.

There have been no famines in India since 1970 and India is an exporter of food and a net donor of foreign aid.

Today India's annual GDP growth is the highest in the world at just under 8% p.a. Last year it overtook the UK as 5th in the league table of GDP, pushing the UK into 6th place. A recent PWC Report predicts that by 2050 the size of India's economy will be second only to China's.

The table seems to be turning - the gross revenues of Indian owned companies in the UK in the last 12 months was over £50 billion (Grant Thornton Report) and hundreds of thousands of British jobs now depend on Indian (and Chinese) owned businesses.

Yours sincerely Ashok Ghosh

The Clock by Maura Kelly

As another day begins to dawn
A piercing sound I hear
It is the clock beside my bed
That screams at me so near
And as I place my hand upon it
To block its constant cry
The noise is stopped at once – hoo-
ray!
So I lay down and sigh
But as I snuggle deep within
The comfort of my bed
The motion of the clock I hear
'Get up, you're not yet dead'
Tick tock, tick tock
The rhythm of the clock
As the time of day is racing by
I shout out loud 'please stop'
But the clock it does not listen
It covers up its ears
So once again I raise my voice
'Be quiet, I'm sleeping here'

Then the clock becomes defiant
As time is on its side
And as its hands turn round and
round
I slide down the bed to hide
But even in the darkness
Trapped and all alone
The calling of the clock surrounds me
In the bedroom of my home
And so we start to argue
As it tries to get its way
'Get out of bed you lazy thing
Get dressed and start your day'
This clock it does annoy me
But what is it I can do?
Then suddenly a thought pops up
I'll drop it down the loo!
Then its petty voice can't wake me
In the early morning light
And work will be a distant dream
As I roll over and say 'goodnight'!

JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY

As we settle into the routine of living here - which does take some time -we are starting to explore mid-Wales. Our most recent "day-out", courtesy of a Senior Citizens coach trip, was to Elan Valley - a series of four dams and a 73 mile-long aqueduct, carrying clean water to Birmingham. Started in 1893, it's a combination of a much-needed supply within a beautiful setting. Having helped to organize annual coach trips in the Suburb for 21 years, it was interesting to be on a coach trip from another angle so to speak. We had



always planned our day's outing, driven the route with a large coach in mind and noted all essentials - toilet stops etc. After visiting the interesting Valley centre the coach travelled along the lakes back to Aberystwyth by the 'scenic route' which consisted of a single track road with zig-zag bends in absolutely wonderful scenery (I had no idea some parts of Wales were so un-spoilt and isolated) - a stunning trip but with some slightly hairy moments when meeting the few cars (although the coach driver did assure there was a 'one-way' accepted code for coach drivers!) I did have my doubts when we crossed a bridge with a warning 'weak bridge'. Having lived 'suburban life' for many years it is restful for us both to hear the sounds of the sea-side; as I write, we hear gulls whose voices are undoubtably raucous but, most important, are a constant reminder of where we are - a view not shared by our cat!

Built and lasted. Evidence has just been found that Wales has had a human population for at least 3500 years: a "remarkably well-preserved floor" is now being fully excavated and secured in a location near Cardiff City Centre - under playing fields!

Not for the first time, the price paid for the overuse of our natural surroundings has been made clear: there is now one site only remaining where the *Marsh Fritillary butterfly* can be found, in a location near Haweswater in the Lake District. Up to the 20th Century it was endemic throughout the UK: changes in habitat have effected its existence but it should now be safe as "rare/threatened" rather than common.

Dogged care The winner for this year's "pet of the year" award (I didn't know it existed but I'm glad it does) is Belle, a two-year-old Staffordshire bull terrier. Her owner Amee, whose anxiety increased as her pregnancy progressed, was allowed to have Belle in the ward, as a comfort for her as her time of the delivery approached. Son, Olly, was born by Caesarian Section. Amee remarked that Belle's potential was spotted when she was a pup: "Belle can detect symptoms of a panic attack and does things that help me find exits in crowded places if she senses I'm feeling anxious."



Goshawks: As a start to this item let's begin with a quote from Forestry England: "As a thriving apex predator these birds tell us a lot about the health of the forest." The New Forest in Hampshire now has 45 pairs of goshawks - thought to have been extinct in the area for many years - until the first pair returned in the early 2000's. Wild life experts 'expect the population to spread further'.

Under the stage: One of our daughters-in-law was this year - as in previous years - a helper assisting at the Glastonbury Festival. (This event is huge - the outer perimeter fence being seven and a half miles long.)



Checking under the stage during performances two baby owls were found; they are now being cared for by a rescue centre who remarked that their nest had "clearly been abandoned due to the noise and disturbance." They are now growing bigger by the day and have been named Axl and Slash after the singer and guitarist of one of the featured bands (Guns N' Roses.)

The Climate Crisis is a reality known to us all and affecting us all. Humankind has an innate tendency to think "it doesn't worry me" but

climate change is something which no one can or should ignore. In our 21st Century society with so much vying for immediate attention climate change often occupies the position "second place"- there but not among the most immediate of our concerns. It is essential, therefore that there are happenings which in themselves are not of outstanding importance but focus our attention on something serious and always remains in our psyche whether we like it or not, subconsciously influencing our conscious actions and developments. The above thoughts came to me from reading the headline "Cyclist set to tour UK on bamboo bicycle." Kate Strong, as I write this, is in the throes of a 3000 mile

bicycle tour taking in all parts of the UK. Her bicycle is hand-made, constructed of bamboo and bound in pre-set steel to keep the parts together. Her aim is to concentrate thought and action in dealing with climate change - a personal commitment to highlight the importance of acknowledging and positively re-acting to something which is inevitable and affects every individual – and climate change is certainly a front runner in what the future holds for us and our planet.

“Museum” when I was young, ‘museum’ produced an image of stuffy galleries with solid glass frontal display cabinets. Not so today, and best of all, is that the majority of galleries and museums are free of charge! No. 1 in the UK list is St. Fagans, in Cardiff,



whose title “Natural Museum of History” conjures up entirely the wrong picture. No stuffy galleries, it is open air with over 50 reconstructed buildings giving a “full insight” into how our ancestors lived and worked. We have been privileged to visit twice with Sally’s family and still remember being so impressed. Set within the grounds of a Elizabethan Manor House (St Fagan’s castle), the buildings ranged from a school chapel; a clog-maker’s shop; a workman’s institute consisting of a reading room, a library, a committee room, a concert hall designed to hold 200 people; an Iron-age round house; etc - the many buildings all brought from their original sites; amongst them several pens of long established breeds of animals.

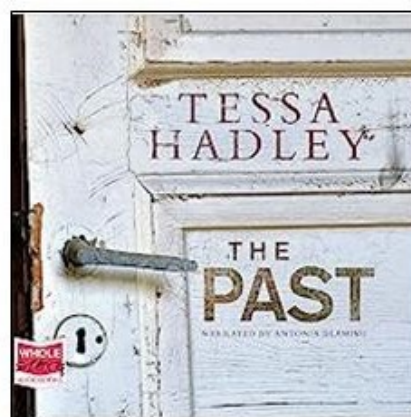
I am always especially interested in anything which involves my family name - **20 million birch tree seeds** have been scattered from drones on open hillsides above roads in Scotland, lessening the chances of landslip and creating greenery for many years to come.

The best “Put it back” Catfish. What came out of the river Po in Northern Italy was a catfish nearly 10 feet long! The catch was witnessed and confirmed by 10 people but will not hold the record because the angler (Alessandro Biancardi), after a 40 minute struggle, said “I was alone facing the biggest catfish I have ever seen in 28 years. I was very curious about the weight but I feared to stress the rare specimen too much so I decided to safely release it, hoping that it could give another angler the same joy it gave me”. As the son of a keen fisherman (in the River Severn the largest fish he caught was a salmon - 24 pounds, 8 ounces and 2 drams), I can understand the decision – my Dad did the same.

John Birch

Book Review: The Past by Tessa Hadley

The Past, Tessa Hadley's sixth novel, assembles the grown members of an extended family, the Cranes, and their offspring under one roof - 'Kington' - the country rectory in which the Cranes' grandfather was a vicar for 40 years and in which they have spent their holidays. The



house is falling apart, and none of them can afford to take it on. They decide to have one last summer vacation - three weeks' escape from their workaday lives - in order to decide what to do with the place.

There are three sisters - Harriet, a gaunt, self-punishing former radical who works with asylum seekers; Alice, an "incurable romantic," gushing, coquettish, a failed actress; and Fran, a briskly grumpy school maths teacher. The two older sisters are unmarried and childless. They are joined by their brother Roland. The next generation is represented by Roland's daughter, Molly, and Fran's two children, the "frail and exquisite" six-year-old Arthur and his nine-year-old sister, Ivy.

There are two (slightly unwanted at first) 'outsiders' to this family coterie - Kasim, the 20 year old son of Alice's ex-boyfriend, born in London but of Pakistani origin and Pilar, Roland's wife, a brilliant, beautiful, and hard-headed Argentine lawyer. They are there to help tease out some of the (supposed) traditional middle class attitudes of the English. Kasim, for example, is a hardline neoliberal constantly making fun of the family's economic opinions. Pilar ruthlessly exploits good-natured Harriet's devotion to her when Harriet interprets her behaviour as a come-on for a romantic attachment.

There is no real plot to the novel, rather it is a study of traditional English middle class mores when trying to deal with complex inter-familial relationships, history of disputes, rivalries etc which all come to the surface sooner or later as the 'holiday' goes by. The house is located somewhere we suppose in the leafier parts of north Somerset with a view of Wales across the estuary. This enables Hadley to display her undoubted talent for descriptions of nature (if slightly over-written in parts) and the rural idyll in general.

There is no doubt she is an accomplished writer and she certainly has a huge and enthusiastic following. One critic has written: "In her patient, unobtrusive, almost self-effacing way, Tessa Hadley has become one of

this country's great contemporary novelists. She is equipped with an armoury of techniques and skills that may yet secure her a position as the greatest of them. Consider all the things she can do. She writes brilliantly about families and their capacity for splintering. She is a remarkable and sensuous noticer of the natural world. She handles the passing of time with a magician's finesse. She is possessed of a psychological subtlety reminiscent of Henry James, and an ironic beadiness worthy of Jane Austen. To cap it all, she is dryly, deftly humorous. Is that enough to be going on with?"

Coming 'fresh' as it were to her writing in this novel, I found there were many things to admire, but also some problems. For example, however hard I tried, I found it difficult to 'place' all of the characters – the 'who is who'. I would have liked a list of the characters as in a play or in an old Russian novel. (Why don't books do this any more?) For example, it took me almost half way through the the novel to work out where Roland, the brother, came in the order of the four siblings. This is because the sisters treat him as if he is the youngest of the siblings, when in fact he is the second oldest. This might not matter much (and it can be objected that sisters always treat brothers this way) - but the 'order' of the brother and his sisters is quite important in the novel as becomes apparent later on. Perhaps I wasn't concentrating hard enough in the early stages?

The novel also uses the technique of having two sections set in the present and a central middle section set in the past. This helps slightly with understanding some of the present – for example, we infer that Fran the youngest sister is in fact the product of a one-night stand her mother had with a local estate agent. On the other hand, it can be confusing as one tries to remember whether certain incidents belonged to the 'present' or 'past' sections of the novel.

Finally, the male characters tend to be rather shadowy compared to the female characters. Written very much from a feminist perspective, this is perhaps to be expected, but is disappointing all the same. Often the men are absent, either having deserted their wives or being called away from the narrative by their jobs. An exception is the grandfather clergyman, Grantham Fellowes, someone who is absorbed by his poetry writing and his sermons who casts a silent pall over the household with everyone waiting for him to finish and go out before they can breathe again!

Despite these reservations, 'The Past' is a really good, well written novel and once you get the characters sorted out, you will be guaranteed a really absorbing read.

Marion Ditchfield

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No. 55: Forests and Moors in the UK.

Put each Forest or Moor beside the nearest town.

Towns				
Nottingham	Coleford	Tavistock	Launceston	
Barnstable	Lyndhurst	Crowborough	Waltham Abbey	
Bishop's Stortford	Church Stretton	Ilkley	Alston	Dumfries
Forest or Moor				
Gilderdale Forest	Long Mynd	Epping Forest	New Forest	
Bodmin Moor	Forest of Dean	Forest of Ae		
Rombalds Moor	Takeley (Hatfield) Forest		Sherwood Forest	
Dartmoor	Exmoor	Ashdown Forest		



Answer to Competition No 54: Iconic Landmarks and their Cities

Opera House/Sydney
 Leaning Tower/Pisa
 Viking Ship Museum/Oslo
 Little Mermaid Statue/Copenhagen
 Colosseum/Rome
 Eiffel Tower/Paris
 Statue of Liberty/New York
 CN Tower/Toronto
 A City of Canals/Venice
 The Shard/London
 St. Basil's Cathedral/Moscow
 Taj Mahal/Agra India
 Great Pyramid/Giza
 Lotus Temple/New Delhi
 Parthenon/Athens



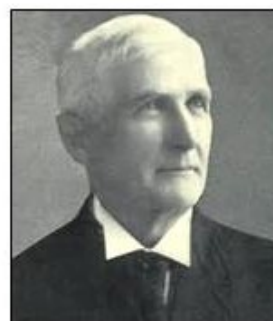
*We look forward to your answers - send them either by email to
 jbirch1821@gmail.com or by post to J. Birch, Pantgwyn, High Street,
 Borth, Ceredigion, Wales SY24 5HY*

WORDSEARCH: SUMMER FRUITS

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

APPLE BILBERRY BLACKBERRY BLUEBERRIES CLEMENTINE
FIG GOOSEBERRY GRAPE GUAVA KIWI LEMON LIME
LYCHEE MELON NECTARINE PASSION-FRUIT PEACHES PEAR
PINEAPPLE PLUMS RED-CURRENTS RHUBARB
SATSUMAS STRAWBERRY WATER-MELON

*Put the remaining 10 letters together to find the berry
named after a certain Judge ——— of Santa Cruz,
California, who, in the late 1800s, crossed a blackberry
with a raspberry.*



Compiled by Rosemary Birch

Answer: Loganberry after Judge Logan

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: EQUESTRIANISM

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

HORSE RIDING
STABLES
SADDLE
REINS
RIDING GEAR

WALK
TROT
CANTER
GALLOP
PONY TREK

HORSE RACING
CROSS COUNTRY
STEEPLECHASE
DRESSAGE
SHOW JUMPING



Compiled by Liz Alsford

DIARY

Monday 10.30am to 11.30am Study Group (re-starting Sept 11th)

Wednesday 10am to 12 noon Toddler and Parent/Carer group (re-starting Sept 13th)

Thursday 6.30pm Choir Practice in Church Aug 17th & 31st, Sept 14th & 28th

Saturday 10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open

Christian Meditation on line For further information, contact: Georgia Tutton at gmrtutton@aol.com



Audio - Visual Live streaming

Sunday Services and Friday Concerts are usually live-streamed on YouTube and these will remain on the Church's YouTube channel. If you are in the building, there is a chance you might appear on camera.

Seating in the side aisles is never filmed and the Stewarding Team can assist you if you would like a seat out of shot of the recording equipment.

AUGUST

- 6 11.00 am Family Communion Service Revd Ewan King, Interim Moderator**
- 13 11.00 am Family Service led by Revd Jon Dean, Retired URC Minister**
- 18 4-8pm BBQ to welcome Jones family to the Suburb Church Hall Garden**
- 20 11.00 am Family Service led by Revd Maggie Hindley, Retired URC Minister**
- 27 11.00 am Family Service led by Sarah Beaumont, URC Lay Preacher**

SEPTEMBER

- 2 2.00pm Induction Service of the Revd Aled Jones to our pastorate** Followed by tea in church

3 11.00am Family Communion led by the Revd Aled Jones

4 & 5 All day Church Open for families of entrant examination students HB School. Refreshments available.

10 11.00am Family Service led by the Revd Aled Jones

12 7.30pm Joint Elders & Deacons Court

16 & 17 Open House. During this time our church will be open
10am – 5pm Saturday 16th and 1-5pm on Sunday 17th.

17 11.00am Family Service led by the Revd Aled Jones

6.30pm Informal Evening Service led by the Revd Aled Jones

24 11.00am Family Service led by the Revd Aled Jones

29 1.00pm Piano Recital by Cristiana Achim preceded at 12.15
by a light lunch in support of HGSFC & Christian Aid.



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 September edition of News and Views will be published on Saturday September 2nd 2023. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday 20th August.

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**



Designed4Print Ltd

30 Novello Way

Borehamwood

Hertfordshire

WD6 5RT

Mob 07886 123591

Web www.design4print.com

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

