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will find past issues of News and  
Views.*



## *NEWS & VIEWS*

### *The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb*



***DECEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2022***

**PLEASE TAKE ONE**

## HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

(United Reformed and Baptist)  
Central Square, London, NW11 7AG  
[www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk)

**Sunday Services:** 11 a.m. (and 6.30 p.m. when announced)  
Holy Communion is celebrated at Morning  
Worship on the first Sunday of every month.  
The Junior Church meets at 11am every  
Sunday

**Minister:** **Revd Dr Ian Tutton**  
The Manse, Central Square, NW11 7AG  
020 8457 5898  
[itutton@aol.com](mailto:itutton@aol.com)

**Correspondence  
Secretary** Penny Trafford  
020 8959 3405  
[ptrafford07@gmail.com](mailto:ptrafford07@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** Joe Fryer  
07814 532049

**Director of Music** Peter Hopkins

**Children's Advocates** Lilian Coumbe  
[coumbe\\_lilian@yahoo.com](mailto:coumbe_lilian@yahoo.com)

Stephan Praetorius  
[Stephan@acceleration.biz](mailto:Stephan@acceleration.biz)

### 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***

- |    |         |   |
|----|---------|---|
| 9  | 11.00am | Family Service  |
| 11 | 7.30pm  | Deacons Court   |
| 16 | 11.00am | Family Service  |
| 18 | 7.30pm  | Trustee and Elders<br>Court   |
| 23 | 11.00am | United Service for<br>Week of Prayer for Christian<br>Unity at HGSFC                |
| 23 | 3.00pm  | Golders Green<br>and District Churches Together<br>United Service at HGSFC          |
| 28 | 1.00pm  | Piano Concert by<br>Asagi Nakata in Free Church, 12.30<br>light refreshments served |
| 30 | 11.00am | Family Service  |



### NEWS AND VIEWS



PRODUCTION  
DISTRIBUTION  
EDITORIAL PANEL  
TYPESETTER  
EDITOR

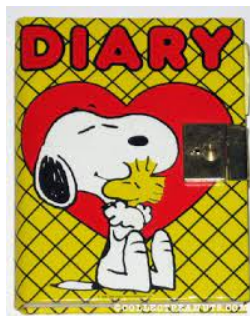
John Ditchfield  
Jill Purdie and others  
Joan Holton and Marion Ditchfield  
John Ditchfield  
Marion Ditchfield

The next edition of News and Views will be published on Sunday 7th February 2022. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, ([john\\_ditchfield@hotmail.com](mailto:john_ditchfield@hotmail.com)) by Sunday January 17th  
*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](http://www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk) where  
you will find past issues of News and Views.***

## DIARY

The church is open. The services will also continue to be live streamed on FACEBOOK and made available later via YOUTUBE and TWITTER. We are choosing to maintain some social distancing. Face masks are optional.



*All services taken by Revd Dr Ian Tutton unless indicated.*

**Monday** 10.30am to 11.30am Studying together in Church

**Wednesdays** 10am to 12 noon Toddler and Parent/Carer group in Church

**Saturday** 10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open

**Thursday** 8.00pm: Dec 9<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>, Jan 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, Choir Practice in Church

**Christian Meditation** - Meditators meet here. For further information, contact: Georgia at [gmrtutton@aol.com](mailto:gmrtutton@aol.com)

## DECEMBER

- |    |               |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| 4  | 10.00-12.00pm | Church Cleaning, any help appreciated                                   |
| 5  | 11.00 am      | <b>Family Communion Service</b>   |
| 12 | 3.00pm        | <b>Christmas Community Nativity</b>                                     |
| 13 | 7.00pm        | Carol Singing round the Suburb (meet in the church car park)            |
| 14 | 7.30pm        | Joint Elders & Deacons Meeting  |
| 15 | 7.30pm        | Christmas Jazz Café evening by Lyn Dobson and Aurelius Sciuka           |
| 17 | 2.30pm        | Join in wrapping presents for Dennis Scott Unit, and tea and mince pies |
| 19 | 11.00 am      | <b>Festival Service of Nine Lessons &amp; Carols</b>                    |
| 25 | 11.00am       | <b>Christmas Day Family Service</b>                                     |
| 26 | 11.00 am      | <b>Family Service</b>   |
| 31 | 11.30pm       | <b>Watchnight Service New Year's Eve in Church</b>                      |

## JANUARY 2022

- |   |         |                                 |
|---|---------|---------------------------------|
| 2 | 11.00am | <b>Family Communion Service</b> |
|---|---------|---------------------------------|

## NEWS & VIEWS

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



NO 774

DECEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2020

### Dear Friends,

Christmas Day this year is on the 25<sup>th</sup> December, just as it was last year and just as it will be next year. This year it is on a Saturday. It could be any day of the week, but it is always the 25<sup>th</sup> December. Given what is happening locally and globally it is about the only thing we can say for certain about this Christmas. In spite of Government reassurance that this year it will all be about tinsel, turkey (or nut roast) and trimmings, no one can be that sure. Last Christmas, from a church point of view, was surreal. Conducting a Christmas Day Carol Service via FACEBOOK, with just Tony and Hossein for company was not what how I imagined it would be. But this year? Who knows? By the time you get to read this, the 'Omicron' variant of the Corona virus may have either ripped through the population at such a rate that everything will be locked down all over again, or else it will have proved to be a false alarm and we will be getting on with organising Christmas as we always hoped it would be. And of course, we cannot afford not to take seriously the advice we are given, however onerous that might be. As a church, we have a duty to ensure that we comply with what the law requires, that we do all we can to ensure the safety and well-being of all who enter our buildings, and that we take every opportunity to counsel caution as far as our own interactive lives are concerned...

...Anyway, let us hope for the best, because another 'online' Christmas will be hard to take. Which leads me on to shopping. More specifically, Christmas shopping. I'm not the biggest fan, I have to admit, but even I have to accept that shopping isn't shopping unless you actually go shopping. Just as 'on line' worship is lacking in so many ways, so too is 'on line' shopping. Of course, it may be what we will have to do, but let's hope not. My Christmas would not be complete without that frantic, last-

minute chase around Brent Cross, or wherever, desperately seeking out that one last surprise present that will make somebody's Christmas complete...

...And we've been warned, online shopping runs the risk of not being delivered on time. We all live in fear of that postcard dropping through the letter box explaining why something couldn't be delivered and which has now been returned to a depot from where we are welcome to retrieve it...

...Which brings me to the other certainty as far as Christmas is concerned. Santa will make sure that everything will be delivered on time, if we just leave it to him. Who needs AMAZON anyway – other on-line retailers are equally disreputable – when you can rely on Rudolph and his fellow reindeers to come up with the goods...?

...But seriously, whatever happens, be assured that the Christmas message will find its way into the world again this year, by whatever means necessary. And it will find its own way to be heard. However hard some may try, you can never take the Christ child out of Christmas. Ignore Him if you will, deny Him if You dare, ridicule Him even. There is no Christmas without Christ. God's gift to the world, delivered on time, every time. All we have to do is say 'thank you.'...

...In that Spirit, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas, however we get to celebrate it. And in the midst of the ever-increasing uncertainty may each of us 'hold fast to the truth', - 'God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved.'

*Ian Tutton*



## JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: SWIMMING

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

SWIMMING  
POOL  
LAKE  
SEA  
RIVER

BREASTSTROKE  
SIDESTROKE  
BACKSTROKE  
CRAWL  
BUTTERFLY

DIVING  
LIFESAVING  
WATER POLO  
RELAYS  
MEDLEY





## WORDSEARCH: IN THE BLEAK MID WINTER

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

ANGELS ARCH-ANGELS ASS BLEAK-MID-WINTER CAMEL  
 CHERUBIM EARTH FROSTY-WIND HAY HEAVEN-AND-  
 EARTH IRON JESUS-CHRIST KISS LAMB LONG-AGO  
 MANGERFUL MOAN MOTHER OX SERAPHIM SHEPHERD  
 SNOW SNOW-ON-SNOW STABLE -PLACE STONE WATER  
 WHAT-CAN-I-GIVE-HIM WISE-MAN WORSHIPPER

*A question is posed in the first line and the answer lies in the remaining letters when all the clues are found.*

*Answer: Give my heart*

## THE OXEN

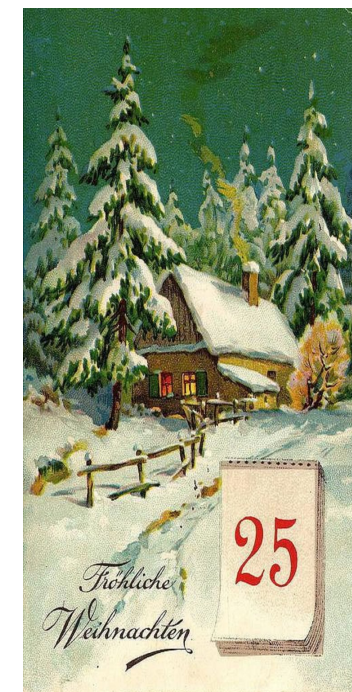
Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock,  
 'Now they are all on their knees.'  
 An elder said as we sat in a flock  
 By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
 They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
 Nor did it occur to one of us there  
 To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave  
 In these days! Yet, I feel,  
 If someone said on Chistmas Eve,  
 'Come: see the oxen kneel!

In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
 Our childhood used to know,'  
 I should go with him in the gloom,  
 Hoping it might be so.

*Thomas Hardy (pub 1915)*



**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND  
 GOOD WISHES FOR 2022 TO  
 ALL OUR READERS AND  
 CONTRIBUTORS**



## OVARIAN CANCER

Recently, our Minister was asked the following question, “Were ovaries involved in the virgin birth?” He politely said, ‘Let me think about it.’ To date he is still thinking about it. Although, in his defence, it’s not the sort of question he gets asked every day...And why was he asked the question? The answer to that question, sadly, is easier to provide as, hopefully, my short article shows:...

‘...You may wonder why I have an interest in ovaries. After all, being the mother of two boys and being post menopausal, the days of when my ovaries were to be of particular importance should be long behind me. However, I am on a mission to let people know about ovarian cancer - the silent killer...Over 7000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer every year in the UK. The symptoms are vague and often associated with irritable bowel syndrome, a urinary tract infection or back pain. These vague symptoms have significant overlap with other conditions leading to late diagnosis. Your local GP will only see a case of ovarian cancer once every five years. Smear tests do not detect ovarian cancer. This leads to ovarian cancer being diagnosed in an advanced stage where survival rates are low...’

**Lilian Coumbe**

*Lilian is one of those many women for whom diagnosis of their condition came ‘too late.’ It is her wish that through this short article anyone who might be exhibiting symptoms can get checked out sufficiently early to allow for effective treatment where necessary.*

*If you know of anyone who has the symptoms below, please ask them to mention the possibility of Ovarian Cancer to their GP. Early diagnosis of Ovarian Cancer leads to a better survival rate.*

*If you need further information, please call Ovacome 0800 008 7054.*

*Sometimes, there will be questions that cannot be answered. But, more importantly, there will be circumstances that should not be ignored. Lilian and her family need our prayers right now. More than that, they deserve our respect. Out of respect for Lilian, do what she asks!*

**Ian Tutton**

## JOHN BIRCH’S COMPETITION

### **Competition No. 40: Places and their associations.**

*Can you put the place and association together?*

#### **PLACES**

Blackpool	Newquay	Spalding	Lincoln	Worcester
	Brecon	Salisbury		
	Southend-on-Sea	Coventry	Crewe	

#### **ASSOCIATIONS**

Tower	Cathedral	Bulbs	Trains	Pier	Surfing
	Sauce	Plain	Lady Godiva	Beacons	



### **Answers to Competition No 39: Counties and Towns**

Shropshire and Shrewsbury  
Ceredigion and Aberystwyth  
Pembroke and Fishguard  
Kent and Folkstone  
Sussex and Hastings  
Surrey and Guildford  
Hampshire and Bournemouth  
Dorset and Dorchester  
Somerset and Taunton  
Cornwall and Redruth  
Devon and Tavistock



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

are not particularly expensive to implement (Norway for example is well on the way to having all electric vehicles - thanks to a tax policy which effectively subsidises them and makes them price competitive with non-electric vehicles - and this in a country whose wealth is founded on gas extraction)! The problem in the UK is an ideology which sees the state per se as an enemy and which believes that market forces should be allowed to get on with developing the necessary measures to combat the problem.

Whether or not it genuinely believes that these market forces will be sufficient is an interesting question. And very possibly irrelevant. For drawing on its neoliberal heritage (which believes that a certain amount of market based corruption is preferable to any state intervention) it may genuinely believe that it is better to tolerate the effects of global warming (whatever they might be and however disastrous) than to run the risk of re-empowering the state. Up to now that would certainly seem to be the case.

*John Ditchfield*

## TWO THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Writing around the time of the United Nations Day of Tolerance, two quotes from of Helen Keller's (American author, disability rights advocate who became blind and deaf before the age of two) seem appropriate:



‘Tolerance is the greatest gift of the mind - it requires the same effort of the brain that it takes to balance on a bicycle’.

and

‘Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them, but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness and insight’.

*Sourced by Rosemary Birch*

Recognise the  
signs of ovarian cancer.

**B.E.A.T.**

- B** is for **BLOATING**  
that doesn't come and go
- E** is for **EATING** difficulty  
and feeling full more quickly
- A** is for **ABDOMINAL** and pelvic  
pain you feel most days
- T** is for **TOILET** changes  
in urination or bowel habits

**0800 008 7054**  
**[www.ovacome.org.uk](http://www.ovacome.org.uk)**

Symptoms of ovarian cancer can vary from person to person. It is far more likely that these symptoms will be due to something less serious. If they persist, keep a diary of your symptoms for a couple of weeks and then talk to your GP.

Smear tests do not detect ovarian cancer.

Ovacome is a registered charity that provides support and information for anyone affected by ovarian cancer.

**ovacome..**  
ovarian cancer

## THOSE GREEN SHOOTS ARE HIBERNATING

I'm sure you all have those moments when life seems completely 'out of sync' with you. You're in different surroundings; no object is where you expect it to be; you are surrounded by boxes; you can't walk from one area to another; your patience is wearing very thin with yourself and anyone in the vicinity; the two cats (one of whom has to have special medication for a urinary condition and needs a mild sedative to keep calm) swap over dishes and the little cat then disappears for several hours only to appear yawning her head off, then promptly disappears again by getting shut in the broom cupboard until heard by a scratching at 3 am - my patience levels seem to have plummeted altogether.

And then a miracle -- off the corner of the desk falls a palm cross, reminding me I'm not in this alone; I've got Jesus in my boat even when the waves are getting particularly high. If I haven't patience with this situation for a few days, then how on earth has God had patience with us when we constantly turn away from his example of love towards each other, our lack of care for the planet etc? I was reminded of an article I wrote years ago when I was also at a low ebb, trying to catch up with the ironing etc, and on finding a bump in a shirt pocket, opened a screwed-up paper to find a quote from George Herbert's hymn:

'A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgerie divine:  
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
Makes that and th' action fine.'

So, just at the moment, those green shoots are hibernating and gathering strength for the Spring; they just need time to recover and to reinvigorate themselves. I had forgotten just how exhausting moving can be. How could we possibly have accumulated so many 'goods and chattels?'. But looking back, we had so much help. After 60 years in London, and six years in our present flat, leaving was a wrench. But we knew it was for all the right reasons and the right time. The removals team of three strong guys didn't appear to 'bat an eyelid:' beside the packed boxes, there was an odd collection of plants, plant-pots, saucers, an outside guinea-pig run, a wooden tortoise run, a garden statue etc; they just packed the lot - bodily lifting my electric scooter in - and anything not packed was shoved in a box, including the odd water bottle (with water in). In fact, the flat was cleared and everything held safely for us overnight.

## *The attack on the state*

Thus few now have a good word for the state. This is unfortunate, because it confuses two things - the state as the enabling arm of government on the one hand and, on the other hand, the ideology or set of beliefs that underpin that government at any particular time. Historically, the UK has been extremely fortunate in having an efficient state apparatus capable of delivering the different ideological requirements of different governments - from the post-war socialist government of Clement Atlee to the early right-wing neoliberal governments of Margaret Thatcher. In either case, the necessary policies were rigorously implemented by a well-educated and conscientious civil service. But from the 1980's onwards, the state itself as an enabling structure started coming under increasing attack - largely because it was realised that it might, one day, be used to challenge or even reverse the (by now) deeply privileged position of neoliberalism. Thus, over time, the powers of local government were severely curtailed, the civil service reduced and politicised through outsourcing and privatisation, police force numbers severely cut, as were other public services such as border staff, environmental protection staff and so on. (The effects of these policies could be seen during the pandemic with the difficulty of enforcing the necessary restrictions when the police force had been reduced by some 20,000 front line officers, as well as the severe cuts to civil service and border staff, making it difficult to restrict and track people coming into the country at airports and ports, and, of course in a reduced and under-funded health service).

## *Conclusion - the UK and the problem of climate change*

But where the UK is concerned, it also means that what are called 'the low hanging fruits' of measures that can be taken to mitigate climate change are made more difficult to implement. Basically, these are the kind of changes that can be done fairly quickly and fairly cheaply if there is enough 'push' from an effective central government - and which have a reasonable 'pay-off'. For example, encouraging and subsidising the installation of solar power wherever possible, encouraging and subsidising the changeover to electric powered vehicles together with the necessary infrastructure of recharging points etc, encouraging and implementing domestic insulation wherever possible (as recommended by the Extinction Rebellion movement), encouraging and facilitating the substitution of gas fired heating by alternative means such as heat pumps), subsidising alternative sources of energy - particularly wind power. There is nothing which is particularly technically difficult about these measures and they



of the 2020 pandemic restrictions, when carbon emissions were temporarily reduced, or at least held steady, the carbon count and global warming continued to rise. This suggests to some that we may already have reached a point where global warming is on a self-sustaining path - ie a tipping point has already been reached. If so, then that would be a game changer and strategies would have to be rethought. For now, it is probably best to keep smiling and to assume that we can still influence or limit the extent of global warming.

But if we want to influence or limit the extent of global warming, then (as previous issues of News and Views have explained) it will require us to be everything we are not - be it pursuing genuine global cooperation, putting an end to consumerism, minimising inequality (domestically and internationally), prizing collective values over individualism, valuing the long term over the short term, rebuilding powerful state mechanisms capable of undertaking such action, and so on.

### ***The state as an enabling mechanism***

The latter - rebuilding powerful state mechanisms - is key to the whole enterprise. This is because only the state has the size, power and authority to challenge and counteract the influence of the huge global corporations and their associated pressure groups that stand in the way of effective action against climate change. Voluntary groups and NGOs can educate and put pressure on politicians (and very effective they can be as Greta Thunberg has demonstrated) but only the state has the power to challenge and ultimately compel corporations and individuals to do what is necessary. The wartime analogy is apposite: the last war was not won by local initiatives or voluntary organisations (however worthy) trying to persuade people to pay for Spitfires or new tanks or finance new regiments of soldiers - it was won by a powerful state structure under-pinned by an agreed 'ideology' of winning the war.

Unfortunately, years of neoliberal ideology have taught people that the state is a bad, or very bad thing and that its size and powers should be limited as much as possible: only the market should ever be allowed to identify society's goals and ambitions and how best to achieve them. It has been a central article of faith ever since the founding fathers of neoliberalism started their long journey from obscurity in the 1940s through to their present dominant position today. The centrality of this belief cannot be underestimated. Even those on the left of the political spectrum prefer to play down the role of 'the state', emphasising instead the importance of localism and local initiatives in the fight against climate change or economic equality - or whatever needs to be done!

It then took another six hours to pack the car with all the animal cages etc. Every small space was filled and we couldn't have done this alone; the young couple from the flat above packed and packed and absorbed one or two items that simply wouldn't fit anywhere.

Many would say we were slightly mad to travel overnight but, if you know the road, it can be more peaceful with less traffic (except lorries) and allows one the ability to pull into several service stations and have a deep refreshing nap! Arriving at 6 am, we were able to have unpacked before the removals van arrived at 12. It was quite an experience for them - from civilized London to a windy cottage with just a road between us and the sea. (The team consisted of two men from Eastern Europe and a third from Afghanistan.)

So here we are ready to start a new chapter. We were overwhelmed by all the lovely comments in your letters, cards and what Ian said at the 24<sup>th</sup>. October Service. John and I are very, very human - 'warts and all.' Here we have to start on a slightly different footing with John working from home (no daily commute) in one room, while I have set up my 'work-station' in the big room overlooking the sea. And now our biggest challenge is to learn about patience - patience with each other and patience with ourselves. I didn't realize how much we rely on familiar objects and life-styles and how difficult it is to accept and adapt to change. This week, the Daily Service has been particularly appropriate for us with its theme on tolerance! Canon Steve Williams talked about the subject of patience - on how to choose to live with someone different; to accept changes in our time-tables; our way of life and our horizons. He talked about the traffic problems in his local road which becomes an obstacle course at certain times of the day. He decided to make the trip along this road a spiritual journey in patience instead of an obstacle course. He said "I had to make a conscious decision to tolerate the other drivers - in fact even esteem them - to have patience in a situation in which I had to accommodate to them". He continued, "The quality of patience lies at the start of tolerance". There is an old Greek proverb which states, "One minute of patience equals ten years of peace." He finished the service with two further quotes. One was from the Bishop of Geneva in the 17th century who said 'Patience with all things but first with yourself. Never confuse your mistakes with your values as a human being.' And from Nelson Mandela who said, 'Don't judge me by my successes but judge me by how many times I got down and up again.'

So for a little period these green shoots are reinvigorating themselves and trying to echo the words of Joshua Bell and Graham Maule's chorus:

Take this moment. sign and space,  
take my friends around,  
here among us make this place  
Where your love is found.

Take the time to call my name,  
take the time to mend  
who I am and what I've been  
all I've failed to tend.

Take the tiredness of my days,  
take my past regrets,  
letting your forgiveness teach  
All I can't forget,

Take my talents, take my skills,  
take what's left to be;  
Let my life be yours,  
and yet, let it still be me.

*Rosemary Birch*

\*\*\*\*\*

## BIBLE STUDY: THE INCARNATION



*Given the time of year, for our Bible Study this issue, rather than continuing to explore the Book of Joshua – to which we shall return – this is a consideration of what is meant by the 'Doctrine of the Incarnation'... Christmas is all about the incarnation of Jesus. A humble birth story and a simultaneously stunning reality, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. This incarnation, God himself becoming human, is too conveniently*

regard a church as what is becoming a rare thing in an increasingly privatized society, a public space which anyone can enter and thoroughly enjoy for a very modest outlay.

*Verity Smith*

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## CLIMATE CHANGE AND VALUE CHANGE V: A PERSONAL VIEW

*Cop 26 is now over. On a scale ranging from complete failure to outstanding success it is probably slightly to the left of the mid-point. It was good to see China and the US agree to cooperate on climate change measures in the future (including an agreement do something about methane emissions), less so to see China and India refuse to commit to phasing out coal emissions by a certain date - only to phasing down. (But bear in mind that China tends to under promise and over deliver). The fossil fuel industry thus managed to hold the line! (By far the largest contingent of delegates at the conference were from the fossil fuel industries!) Rich countries also managed to avoid committing to any reparations to poorer affected countries for the damage global warming has already inflicted on them. Compensation liability was successfully avoided. In other words, payments will be made but there will be no legal obligation to do so. In this respect, the failure to fully meet the mitigation and adaptation payments promised to poorer nations at the Paris summit in 2015 is particularly egregious. And partly explains India's reluctance to commit to phasing out coal emissions by a fixed date. The conference also managed (just) to reaffirm the Paris 2015 target of aiming to keep global warming to 1.5 Centigrade.*

### *The 1.5C limit*

It would be interesting to know how many delegates really believed that the 1.5C limit was at all realistic, that the measures necessary to meet that target had the slightest prospect of being implemented. Probably, vanishingly few. Firstly, at the very minimum, it would be necessary to put countries on a pseudo war footing - strict rationing (a carbon limit per person strictly enforced), no unnecessary travel or consumption, and so on. This is not going to happen. Secondly, we come up against the troubling problem of feedback loops. Both the Paris accord and Glasgow 2021 assume that nature operates in a more or less linear way (which is very unlikely) - ie so much extra carbon, so much extra heating in a more or less straight line fashion. But scientists have noted that even at the height

## OUR CHRISTMAS BAZAAR (13 NOVEMBER 2021)

After the general gloom, social paralysis and other deprivations of last year's lockdowns which, of course, deprived us of our Bazaar in 2020, it was most reassuring to be able to return to our customary ways and to hold what is – in secular terms at least – the most significant event in our annual calendar. Significant because it shows how The Free Church has deep roots in the Suburb community and it is the number of people from the neighbourhood who support this event and clearly enjoy it that always guarantees its success.

I do not know whose idea it was to hold this year's Bazaar in the church rather than in the church hall as has been the custom in the past. However it struck me as an excellent one because the breadth of the church allowed everything to take place in the same space. In the past the café was hived off into a small room where owing to the high demand for food and beverages, space was at a premium; this crowded area also tended to be hot and noisy. It also struck me as something of an anachronism that the catering team was expected to provide a three-course meal, something that placed a considerable burden on a very few shoulders. At a guess, this meal was a survival from a period when the church had a much larger congregation and a different demographic. As people this year ate a slice of Pavlova or some delicious cake, did they really miss this meal?

This year with all the stalls on either side of the church there was also plenty of space in the middle for tables. This also meant that an easy inter-action could take place between those who were buying and selling and those who were enjoying cake, coffee, company and leisure at a table. I was selling books and puzzles together with Steve Welch who had come all the way from his new home in Bedfordshire to help us. I have behind me the experience of selling books at the Oxfam shop in Muswell Hill and they charged quite high prices for their goods. I found that Steve was much more generous and taught myself to say when someone asked, "How much?" to reply: "Ask my colleague as he'll give you a better deal." This said, our Bazaar raised £3000 which sounds like a record, although I've yet to check. Over a period of three hours at the bookstall, I really enjoyed the conversations I had with several different bookworms. As I saw Ian moving around in genial mood I reflected that he must be thinking very frequently now: "This is the last time I do this here." It was good to see Georgia with him in our church.

This really joyful occasion made me think that in secular terms you can

*overlooked. Accordingly, it would do no harm to pause and to think seriously about what is meant by 'The Incarnation', especially at this time of year...*

The incarnation wasn't a random act, an accidental occurrence. It was predicted in the Old Testament. Perhaps the clearest text predicting that the Messiah would be both human and God is, '...To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace....' (Isaiah 9, 6). In this verse, the prophet sees a son that is to be born, and yet He is no ordinary son. His extraordinary names point to His being more than just another son. These are characteristics more suited to the understanding of the nature of God prevalent at the time of writing. Taken together — the son being born and the description of His nature and purpose — point to him being the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not aspire to kingship. Jesus didn't come to be served. Instead, Jesus came to serve. This was the most dramatic contrast He drew between those who would be His followers, and the 'Gentiles', the 'others'. His humility was on full display from the beginning to the end, from Bethlehem to Calvary. In what is likely to have been a very early liturgical proclamation, Paul recognises that true glory lay in the humility of Christ when he records that, '...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross...' (Philippians 2, 6 – 8)

The paradox that is the Incarnation ensures that the nature and purpose of God, whilst laid bare before the world at Bethlehem, by very definition demands it be shrouded in mystery. Indeed, we do well to remember that the teachings of Jesus, indeed, the whole of Scripture, and even the accumulated wisdom of the church do not necessarily give us answers to all of our questions. Some things are destined to remain mysterious. '... The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever...' (Deuteronomy 29, 29)...And so, answering how it could be that one person could be both fully God and fully man is not a question that is easily or straightforwardly answered. Indeed, it is best understood as an article of faith. The early church fathers recognised this, and so even when they pronounced on the question, they

were careful to preserve this mystery. And so, for instance, at the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) they declared that Jesus is to be “recognized in two natures [God and man], without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ.” A complex, some would say convoluted attempt, however laudable, to provide a satisfactory explanation for what is essentially unexplainable.

The incarnation is essential to the fulfilment of God’s plan of redemption. As has been noted, “The blood of Jesus is blood that has the requisite efficacy and virtue only by reason of the fact that he who is the Son, the effulgence of the Father’s glory and the express image of his substance, became himself also partaker of flesh and blood and thus was able by one sacrifice to perfect all those who are sanctified.” This is the message which finds its clearest exposition in the Letter to the Hebrews concerning the efficacy of the sacrificial system as carried out by human beings, and that of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus.... ‘had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people...’ (Hebrews 2, 17). The incarnation God has to be an eternal God, yet One who was born in a stable. Not a distant, withdrawn God; a God who is a humble, self-giving God, not a selfish, grabbing God. God is revealed to be a purposeful, not a random, reactionary God. A God who is far above us and whose ways are not our ways, not a God we can put in a box and control. A God who redeems us by his blood, not a God who leaves us in our sin. ‘...There was no other good enough to pay the price for sin, He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in’.

*These are just some ‘random’ thoughts concerning the Incarnation. It is all too easily discarded as an anachronism to be superseded by other ways of appropriating the Christmas message, ways that are more appealing as far as the wider population is concerned. One understands why that might be thought to be reasonable given that we are living in times more suited to such a way of thinking. But we as Christians needs must beware, at Christmas more than at any other time, or we risk throwing out the baby with the bathwater.*

*(With thanks to Joseph Scheumann of Arkansas, whose original article prompted me to write this).*

*Ian Tutton*

eyed presence of her mother, who has come to stay. In the guest room in which she is put, a vase of freesias sits atop a rickety table that Harold made himself. “Careful, it’s not too sturdy,” I say.” At the end of her narrative, Lena hears the sound of breaking glass and enters the room to find the table collapsed and the vase shattered. A hundred pages later, at the end of her mother Ying-ying’s narrative, we are back in that room, a moment earlier, listening with the mother’s ears to her daughter’s lifeless conversation with her husband. “I know a thing before it happens. She will hear the vase and table crashing to the floor.” With the crash, her daughter will come into the room – to be told the sad secrets of her mother’s two marriages.

The reader has immense compassion for the mothers as they recount their cruel, sad stories. Only one uses her intelligence and cleverness to escape the fate decreed by her family. She uses the superstitions of her young husband’s family to convince them that she herself is bad luck and must be rejected (with proper recompense) when in fact she wants to leave the repressive household and find her own fortune.

Some readers have found the many tales of cruelty and sadness too overwhelming but I found the bright sparks of happiness in the book shone all the more strongly when they did appear. For example, one daughter/mother couple - Waverley and her mother - bitterly quarrel over many years, punishing each other relentlessly; but Waverly rediscovers her love for her mother when she thinks she has died. She rushes back to her mother’s house and finds her alive but small, tired and weak and waiting, it seems, despite all her seeming strength and harsh words, “for her daughter to find her.”

Another example is the last section of the book; Jing Mei’s mother has died and she and her father go to China to find her twin half-sisters, abandoned by their mother as babies under the most terrible pressures, fleeing from war. Jing Mei has terrible anxiety that she will be rejected by these newly discovered sisters and their family, because she is bringing the tragic news that their mother is dead. In the event the meetings with her newfound Chinese family are welcoming and loving: “My sisters and I stand, arms around each other, laughing and wiping the tears from each other’s eyes. The flash of the polaroid goes off .... although we don’t speak, I know we all see it: together we look like our mother. Her same eyes, her same mouth, open in surprise to see, at last, her long-cherished wish.”

*Marion Ditchfield*



## BOOK REVIEW

### The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (Minerva Paperback)

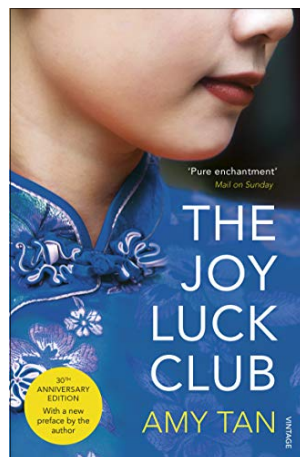
There is no doubt of the vivid story-telling abilities of Amy Tan in this book. Evidence of this is the reaction of readers when contacting her; the stories come over as immediate experience, readers assume they are autobiographical. They ask her, 'How is she managing since her divorce?' Her answer is that she has been happily married for many years. They ask, 'How does her daughter react to her cruel, forthright mothering?' She answers, 'I have no children, only dogs.' The book is an artfully constructed group portrait of four mother-daughter relationships that endure not only a generation gap, but the more unbridgeable gap between two cultures.

The Joy Luck Club is an informal "institution" started by Suyuan Woo upon her arrival in San Francisco in 1949. Suyuan finds three other Chinese immigrant women to play mah jongg, cook and consume special foods, tell stories, gossip, invest in stocks, and plan for joy and luck. In the years that follow, the club links the four families, enabling them to pool resources and keeping them in touch with their past as they take on the challenges of adjusting to a new country.

The relationships between mothers and daughters are fraught with years of misunderstandings and accumulated pain. A mother's hopes and expectations become a daughter's sense of failure. A mother's advice is received by a daughter as rejection of who she really is. The mother, in return, feels her daughter knows nothing about her and has learned nothing from her mother, the one who loved her best.

The four daughters are undoubtedly greatly influenced by their four mothers; whether they resent them or rebel against them, they are forced to acknowledge their Chinese backgrounds. At the same time, the daughters must deal with the very different American culture they are immersed in.

Each mother is convinced that, while "American circumstances" may be preferable, "Chinese thinking is best". Events in the different narratives intersect. In "Rice Husband", daughter Lena describes her marriage to the mean-minded Harold, its unhappiness made all the clearer by the sharp-



## NEWS OF PEOPLE

We were both shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Simon Croft. Simon passed away in the Royal Free Hospital at the end of November after a very short illness. Simon could be described as 'one of the pillars of the church'. As an Elder and Trustee he played a key role in ensuring that the church was able to prosper and flourish in the way it has. He was an enthusiastic member of the choir, and most recently had taken it upon himself to organise our second hand book stall which in a short time has become an essential element in the work and witness of the church. He described himself to me once as 'an exile from the Church of England'; well I was glad that he was able to feel 'at home' in the Free Church, and that now his faith has been rewarded in that final homecoming which is 'The Father's House'. Our prayers and loving concern are with Suang Eng and Charlotte at this time...

*Ian Tutton*



## JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

*Borridar* (phonetic spelling) is Welsh for "Good Morning" a frequent greeting as we get out and about in Borth High Street each day. Borth is what is described as a longitudinal village, basically just one long street, about 1200 yards from one end to the other, from the lifeboat station to the railway station, with a mini super-market at each end, various shops, cafes and pubs (3) in between. Although we are only now beginning to live here, there is an association going back over 100 years. At the time of writing it is just less than a week since we moved and most of the unpacking remains to be done - no constraint which means we can take our time in sorting out, also reflecting on the many good wishes we received from Church members and friends. We were already acquainted with a few of



*Borth Railway Station*

the villagers which will be a great help in settling in.

The Suburb obviously had, and has its attractions. Here life is different but, from our early experiences, just as stimulating. Living in the world's first purpose designed Suburb was great, here we are in a much smaller community but one which is just as varied in its personalities and attractions. Like the Suburb, the longer you are part of it, the more it is appreciated and becomes part of you.

We've been relieved to find that *face mask rules* are being adhered to. Reaction in 'some places has been strong and negative but generally not as bad as the Shanghai billionaire who objected to being ordered to wear his by withdrawing all his 'considerable savings' and insisting that the cash was counted note by note, a long job as his savings were in 'tens of millions.'

More news to add to '*We've been around for a long time*' in the last issue. What are claimed to be the oldest human bones, dated to have been alive 330,000 years ago, have been found in China, just snatching the record from Morocco of 315,000 years

There are many "*what I did in lockdown*" stories circulating but few (if any) which exceeds the efforts of Beaver Scout Isabelle Drummond who amassed 113 badges (to add to the two she already had). The new badges ranged from digital to sailing. Two of our grandchildren are involving their Mums to sew on a few hard-earned badges - apparently after space is used up on the arm they are sewn on the front but Isabelle's must have moved to the back and sides as well!!

A new *blue plaque* is now in position at King's Cross to honour Samuel Jackson, Britain's first black train-driver. He had worked for British Rail for 10 years before graduating to driver in 1962. The plaque was unveiled by his daughter Polly.

**Cop 26** dominated the headlines for several weeks and then happened without much publicity - basically because it seemed to be all talk and little reliable commitment. The only hope is that contacts and ideas will be turned into actions. What must happen from this high level event (from which China and Russia were missing) is the recognition that, after a relatively short period, there will be no reasonable future for our world,



*Samuel Jackson driving the locomotive Neil Gow, which was in operation from 1924 to 1963.*

and of him even as we sang our carols. Don was one of the best of his generation. There was no doubt about that in the minds of those who wrote letters to his bereaved parents. As I sat in the room he knew so well reading what comrades had written I realized that the tragedy of one home was being repeated all over the world. Such is the wickedness and waste of war.

It would be easy to fill all my space with reports from far and near. As that is impossible, we must be content with a few brevities. Mrs Hoyle and her daughter send greetings from Halifax to all their friends. They seem to be full of good works. One very personal sentence will be appreciated by many, especially by young men in the Forces: "How proud John would have been of his boys: how I wish he has been spared to help and advise!" Mr George H Rose sends a long, interesting letter from a tiny village near Ipswich. His home seems to be the centre of local activity. He and Mrs Rose and their friends are proving what I have always maintained, that people need not rusticate in the country. The next letter comes all the way from Iran. It is from Reg Hunter and ought to be kept as a record of thrilling experiences before and after British and Russian troops marched into that country. Perhaps these words that I am writing will reach him and his wife: if so, they convey our best wishes. There is another descriptive letter from Donald Gabriel, in India, who ends with a native salutation to show us that he is wrestling with the language. All the others must go unmentioned - which is unsatisfactory but inevitable..... Frank H Ballard

PS We warmly congratulate two of our friends who appears in the New Year honours. Mr J B Abraham receives the KBE and Colonel Gold the CB. We rejoice to know that their distinguished services to the State have thus suitably been acknowledged. - FHB.

*Anne Lowe*



"ALL WE'RE SAYING IS, WHY CRAM ALL OUR GUIDED LEARNING HOURS INTO JUST ONE NIGHT?"

*Church lectern: it was donated in memory of Mr J B Abraham who lost his life over the Atlantic. (The reference to Libya probably reflects the siege of allied forces at Tobruk which was finally relieved in December 1941).*

## December 1941

### From the HGS Free Church News Letter

My Dear People, There is still a month to go before Christmas arrives, but it is natural that I should begin with greetings for that usually festive season. Some greetings, together with parcels, were sent months ago - that is to men overseas. I want to assure them, if they receive this letter, that we are thinking of them more than ever now. We are watching events in Libya with the greatest concern and I can assure any of our friends who may be in the fighting that we are not indifferent to their hardship and danger. Rarely do we meet as members of the Church without remembering them, and hardly a day passes in our homes but we pray for their success and safe return.

Similar parcels are now being prepared for men and women with the Home Forces. We hope that everyone is included who should be included, though we realise that the list might easily have been extended. So many people who are not in the Forces are serving their country just as nobly as those who are in uniform that a line drawn in any particular place may seem arbitrary. I am quite sure that friends in Government offices, in the land army, and so on will appreciate our difficulty. But I should like to take this opportunity of sending good wishes to all evacuated from this neighbourhood. We have many reminders, often in very practical form, of their concern for us. Now I assure them of our continued interest in them.



## January 1942

### From the HGS Free Church News Letter

The Christmas season has been an inspiration. The Festival of Lessons and Carols was more successful in the Hall than ever it was in the Church. Perhaps it was the presence of the Mayor and his party, or the admirable singing of the junior choir, or the large number of people packed into a restricted space; certain it is that the service will be long and gratefully remembered.

But hearts have been saddened too. They have ached especially for Mr and Mrs Mammen whose son has been killed in Libya. We thought of them

unless differences are forgotten and concentration focusses on finding and 'enforcing' whatever practical action there might be. Sarah Wiggins (Tearfund Climate Campaign Lead) writes: 'More people are speaking out about the climate crisis than ever before and the movement is growing. Almost 40 nations and institutions joined the UK. in committing to end international support for coal, oil and gas projects. For the first time the final COP agreement gave the signal to end fossil fuels. - a small sign of progress that many have prayed for. We knew all along the work wouldn't end in Glasgow.'

Creation must not end because of human bickering and failures - and we must all realize that the onus is also on us to make every effort and play our part.

**Not out!** I'm not particularly interested in cricket but it must have something to produce such a remarkable person as Eileen Ash, now in her 111th year. She attributes her long innings to yoga and a glass of red wine. She's also the world's oldest international cricketer, having played for England in the 1930's/40's .In the War, she worked with the intelligence service.



**Spudtacular!** At 17 lbs a New Zealand couple are claiming a world record. No chips from this potato. It is to be turned into potato vodka: hope there are no hiccups!

**"Your wound is healed".** There is now a smart bandage which indicates when a wound has healed - stopping your dressing being taken off too early.

**Cooks do care a toss!** The largest number of 'hits' on on-line recipe charts - 368,000 a month - are for pancakes.

**Removed from the gallery** Not for the first time, a picture has been taken off the wall because the person portrayed had a life style not accepted in our day and age. The National Museum Wales in Cardiff have removed Thomas Picton, who was hailed as a hero after being killed at Waterloo, but as Governor of Trinidad had abused slaves he owned. History is history and you can't change it, but you can learn and make certain there is no repeat.

**John Birch**



## From the Archives

### December 1921 and January 1922

*The extracts from December 1921 and January 1922 show the continuing need for donations of clothing to a distressed Europe following World War I, especially Russia.*

#### December 1921

##### From Work and Worship

Relief of Distress in Europe

The working party has recommenced with very encouraging success, and one large bale of clothing has already been dispatched. The urgent need of help, especially in Russia, cannot be overstated. The Friends Relief have already sent 461 tons of goods to the value of £42,000. This has safely arrived at its destinations, being sent on from Reval in sealed railway trucks supplied free by the Russian Government. From the Friends' representative in Moscow comes the wire "Appeal sewing parties make 50,000 infants and children's simple warm under-clothing, also socks and stockings all ages, boots most urgently needed."

Money may be sent c/o Mrs A Brooks: parcels c/o Mrs Parley Free Church. Wool for making scarves and socks can be supplied; also cut out clothing for making up at home.

#### January 1922

##### From Work and Worship

The Relief of Continental Distress

The Work Party has met as usual and has made encouraging progress. Much clothing that has been sent has proved to be in such good repair that time has been devoted chiefly to the making of new garments. There is a noticeable need for men's clothing, for all sorts of footwear, and for oddments suitable for hospital use.

### December 1931 and January 1932

*The first of the two items from the 1930s give us an insight into the children's Christmas parties of those days and the second - the letter - shows the joy of the younger children in making and giving presents to the Cradle Roll babies.*

#### December 1931

##### From the Free Church Magazine

The Parents' and Teachers' Association are arranging the usual Christmas

Party for 120 poor children (60 girls and 60 boys) on Saturday, January 2, next year.

The general arrangements will be as in previous years, an endeavour being made to limit invitations to girls and boys who would otherwise go without a Christmas Party.

The expenses involved in the hire of omnibuses to convey the children to and from the party, and in the provision of tea and a Christmas gift for each child, are necessarily heavy. It is hoped that our Sunday School scholars and their parents will welcome this opportunity of contributing towards these expenses as one way of expressing gratitude for the high privileges they enjoy as members of our Sunday School and Church and as residents in this favoured district.

#### January 1932

##### From the Free Church Magazine

Dear Sir, One of the happiest scenes I have ever witnessed was in our Beginners' Sunday School on Sunday morning, December 29, when they welcomed the Cradle Roll babies to their Gift Service.

For the past four weeks the Beginners have been very busy making calendars for their parents, and necklaces, rattles, woolley balls, scrap books and stuffed animals for the Cradle Roll babies.

After singing their little song of welcome, the new babies were enrolled, and we all thanked God for baby brothers and sisters, mummies and daddies, Christmas and Baby Jesus.

The curtains were drawn and the candles lit on the Christmas Tree, upon which the presents the Beginners had made were hung. These Mrs Binns kindly distributed.

It was a happy thought that Mrs Gudridge should come from the Church to present the Enrolment Certificates, and the welcome and praise she gave the children was instantly reflected in their joyous smiles.

I can only recommend anybody who despairs of the modern child to reserve their judgement until the next Gift Service. (Yours faithfully, Marie L Tindall).

### December 1941 and January 1942

*As mentioned before, services during World War Two were held in the Church Hall to save fuel and ensure black-out more easily. The Church had members in the armed forces all over the world - Libya and Iran are mentioned for instance. There is interesting background on the Free*