

NEWS & VIEWS

The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb



FEBRUARY 2022

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)</i> <i>Holy Communion is celebrated at Morning</i> <i>Worship on the first Sunday of every month.</i> <i>The Junior Church meets at 11am every</i> <i>Sunday</i>
Minister:	Revd Dr Ian Tutton The Manse, Central Square, NW11 7AG 020 8457 5898 itutton@aol.com
Correspondence Secretary	Penny Trafford 020 8959 3405 ptrafford07@gmail.com
Treasurer	Joe Fryer 07814 532049
Lettings & Finance Officer	Claudia Millhoff finance@hgsfreechurch.org.uk
Director of Music	Peter Hopkins

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 775

FEBRUARY 2022

Dear Friends,

During February the Free Church will celebrate its 112th Anniversary. From the outside it looks as if nothing has changed. Even on the inside, from an architectural perspective, apart from some minor 'rearrangement,' everything is as it was back then. Which is as it should be given that the building is 'Grade 1' listed. Of course, this can at times appear to be unduly restrictive. It can be frustrating. But actually, thanks to the ingenuity of those involved, in recent years we have been able to make certain minor, yet significant changes within the building that have made it more accommodating, more welcoming, more accessible, more 'people friendly'. It has meant that we have had to pay a higher price to upgrade certain 'facilities' than we might otherwise have done, but then on reflection it was a price worth paying. The challenge to harmonise continuity and change is one that confronts every generation. And it has been so for the Free Church throughout its history, not just in terms of its physical appearance, but also in terms of its being true to the vision that inspired those who oversaw its foundation. In that respect it is worth reminding ourselves that the Church was founded before the building was constructed. The actual foundation of the Free Church is not to be described in terms of 'bricks and mortar.' Rather, it is the Covenant that was drawn up by its first 'members' that is its true foundation. It concludes with these words...

'...and finally, we will watch and pray in the common belief that, as a church, we may be a light shining in a dark place, and as individuals, the faithful and persevering followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, unto everlasting life...'

The signatories to the Covenant are now part of the history of the church. Save for one or two exceptions, there is no longer a direct living link traceable back from today to that day in February – the 18th – when the Free Church was formally constituted...

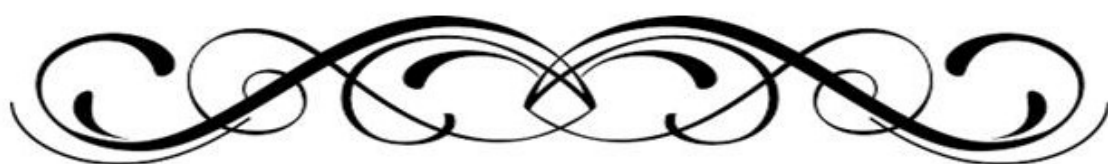
...In 1960, to mark its Golden Jubilee, a history of the Church was published. It was introduced by the then minister, Revd Stanley Andrews. As my time as Minister draws rapidly towards its close, I can do no better than reproduce these words of his...

‘...One of the greatest and most enriching experiences of my life was to be called to the ministry of the church (17) years ago, and to have the privilege of leading it in co-operation with so many loyal colleagues. The work is absorbing and calls for everything one can bring to it. This is why it is so satisfying. I would not have missed what Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church has done for me. That I should find myself as part of the recent history of the Church, standing in a great pulpit tradition, is indeed a high honour...’

But then we do well to remind ourselves that Anniversaries are as much about looking forward as they are about looking back. History is shaped by hindsight, the future determined with foresight. The temptation to keep looking back is very real. We underestimate it at our peril. It is our responsibility to bring the past with us into the present in order that the present might be properly informed as regards our future intentions. But not to the extent that the past is allowed to cast its shadow over the future. And so, back to the Church – its building and its people – these words of Thomas Kelly, written long before this particular church came into being, are for our encouragement...

‘...A building this, not made with hands;
On firm foundations, lo it stands,
For God Himself has laid them;
The workmanship of God alone,
The rich materials all His own;
‘Twas He himself that made them...’

Ian Tutton



Future Ministry

Church Meeting Feb 12th 2022 10.00am - 12midday

Following the church meeting held on Nov 6th 2021, we have arranged another meeting on Sat Feb 12th. Previously we presented and discussed the arrangements for the vacancy, the process for recruiting a new Minister and the options for the Manse.

We elaborated the various decisions that need to be made together by all the church members about the various areas of ministry.

We hope during these past few months, you have had opportunities to discuss the options with each other, and will feel able to make some decisions.

The Elders also wish to share with you the draft Church Profile for comment. Anyone who would like to read this before the meeting, which would be helpful, please email me on ptrafford07@gmail.com, or request a paper copy which I will deliver to you.

Please do come, share your views and express your opinions.

Penny Trafford, Church Secretary

Church Envelopes

The coloured church envelopes for weekly donations have been discontinued. If you wish still to give a weekly amount and to have the church claim Gift Aid on your gift, please use the white envelopes and fill in your name and address on the front.

Otherwise, you may wish to organise a Direct Debit through your bank. Please contact Claudia Millhoff at Claudia@millhoff.net if you have any queries.



Marion Ditchfield

Green shoots still hibernating—I'm afraid.

I had hoped that by now I'd be more organized, more at peace with myself, not so grumpy and irritable when what I thought was there isn't there, if you get my drift! It doesn't help with the time of year we moved to Wales and we haven't become acclimatized yet. When I get to a certain degree of coldness my fingers don't work and my brain gets more and more addled, if that is possible? At times like this, I wonder how Eskimos survive? And closer to home, how do the homeless manage or families on low incomes? (What a choice between warmth or eating, particularly if children are involved)!

Then there's all the changes - not just physical differences but differences to life-style. I've become used to a much relaxed life-style. I eat when I remember - perhaps I should get something simple as my body tells me at three in the afternoon. (Now I have to think three meals a day). Even the cats come and remind me of their empty tumms! Because of mobility issues, I've become slower: slower to respond if at all possible: slower to do things - and when I can I do several things in the same direction. Now I have to get used to a husband who has always expected things straight away - the word instant comes to mind! So yes, things have been strange; things have become a little different, but through it all a phrase keeps on going through my head: 'Do not be afraid, I am with you.'

The family have been marvellous throughout by keeping in regular touch, sending thermal vests, leaving supplies of meat and fruit in the freezer, along with jams, ordering an oil-heater, and now one branch experimenting themselves with a new type of wall-paper that allows moisture through and another branch collecting newspapers from neighbours for our cats and guinea-pigs. I never thought we'd go as low as buying 'The Sun' (not to read mind you, but only because of its large number of pages - though as John mentioned, it is under the same ownership as 'The Times').

In a BBC Morning Service, a few weeks ago, Rev. Canon Ann Easter reflected that "Christmas is often a season of wonder and awe; in the wide eyes of a child when they see a Christmas tree all lit up and the smiles of a family as they watch a little one opening a gift." She continues: "But awe and wonder are not just reserved for Christmas time; many of us have discovered that finding things to be grateful for as our day comes to an end has helped us to sleep better and thus to survive the difficulties of the past couple of years." She calls these moments of thankfulness "Wow"

moments. It described the other morning when she saw the dawn and just for a few moments the sky was absolutely crimson. I think we must have seen the same sky as we were left breathless with wonder too. A few mornings ago the morning sky was even more startling – the ground dark and foreboding, above a band of bright pink and above that a line of pale blue/white lined sky. I'm sure meteorologists would give the simple explanation of different air currents and ice-clouds etc, but to me that was a 'Wow' moment. She reflected: "Whatever it is, I believe those 'Wow' moments are gifts from God to support us through the changes and chances of this fleeting world, and we do well to recognize and cherish them."

The Service continued about people finding wonder in their walk with God. One of them, Lynda, a visual artist based in Manchester, explained how God helped her to spot beauty in even the mundane: "In the past three years, I have converted an old butcher's shop on a mini High Street into a social enterprise with art studios, workshops and projects for the local community. My own artistic practice centres around finding wonder in the ordinary, spotting beauty in places or objects that people would normally pass by or overlook, be that the kitchen table or an abandoned shopping trolley". She continues: "My aim is to bring light in the darkness, hope, even a little bit of humour, and encourage people to look again at their surroundings or circumstances and see beauty. My art tries to reflect something of how God sees us - that nothing is too damaged, abandoned or forgotten about, for Jesus to come, meet, and transform."

So back to those green shoots.....Maybe still hibernating but also growing in a different way, shaking off a few weeds; having a 'spring-clean'; trying to make room. I may moan at this having been a 'second home' and thus having two of everything (I'm determined to find a home for one set) but on the other hand, it was a means of allowing a few people to find a spot to relax in; to step aside from busy life-styles and slow down to the remoteness and beauty of this place; it was a privilege to be able to offer this 'second home' and help in this quiet way.

We are gradually adjusting to life out of London. We've now found (in Aberystwyth seven miles away) a good dentist; a local vet who is equally happy treating a cow or sheep; a large supermarket which asks the homeless what foodstuffs they need and then puts them into bags for customers to buy and donate; a 'well' along the 'Prom' for spare Water-Aid coins; a large pet store for our animal needs and a wonderful library.

Clothes will be going to several charity shops once we have worked out the slightly complex one-way driving system.

We're even getting more organized and letting companies know we've moved (slightly irritating when you have 30 properties with the same postal code)! We've also scored on house insurance by living here and even the cats' insurance has gone down to a fifth of the London price - obviously no animal snatchers in Borth and fewer vehicles - but there will be warfare, I'm afraid, when our two cats are allowed out. Even though they are not allowed out yet, a large male tabby has been stalking the kitchen window, scratching and making an ear-chilling noise!

One of the most striking differences is that people greet you first. In London we always had to make the first move but here we are greeted first, usually in English, and feel welcomed. However, to my mind, the most important difference is the closer one feels to nature, to the simple and straightforward concept that we didn't make all this - that it all came into being by God. So often we think we control the world, that we're in charge, that it's so important to keep things ticking along. And then you see a sight that makes you realize you've got your thinking wrong. This was vividly imprinted on my mind a few evenings ago when walking along the 'Prom', seeing the remains of the pre-historic tree-stumps on the edge of the tideline, and watching the sun going down over the horizon. It was like a huge orange egg-yolk gradually dipping down and I realized how big God's universe is, how amazing God's creation - and how small and insignificant we are.

Our circumstances may change but spring always comes after winter; the seasons stay constant as does God's love, hence the thought that keeps on echoing through my mind: 'Do not be afraid, I am with you.' And in these strange times with mask-wearing, various restrictions and mixed messages, when we do not know whom to trust, I'll hang onto the words of John Henry Newman in his hymn 'Lead, kindly light:'

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home.
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

Yes, one step at a time and then gradually those little green shoots will start appearing, strengthened by hibernation and His ever-lasting constant love.

Rosemary Birch

TEARFUND

For many years the Junior Church had a collection each week, and twice a year the Junior Church Treasurer, Suang Eng Croft sent a donation to Tearfund as this was a charity very close to the hearts of Rosemary and John Birch. Since Covid, when this was no longer possible, any monies received have gone into Church funds when we can make donations to Tearfund as appropriate. Suang Eng has closed the account and sent £173.55 to Tearfund. There is a thank you letter from them on



the board at the back of the church. It includes a description about a woman called Anaisha, and how Tearfund helped her.

This is Anaisha's story. Her name has been changed to protect her. Anaisha never got a chance to go to school. "I was married at fourteen," she says, "my husband is four years older".

Anaisha is from a community in India where girls are seen as a burden to the family so they are forced to get married when they reach puberty. "I regret that my parents forced me to marry early when I wanted to go to school," says Anaisha.

Now Anaisha has two daughters and one son of her own. She did not want her children to have the same experiences as she did, but didn't know how to make life different for them. When Tearfund's local partner started working in her village, she felt that God had sent someone to show her the right path. The project provided information about things like the evil of child abuse, child marriage and child trafficking, and Anaisha began to share what she had learnt with other women in her village too.

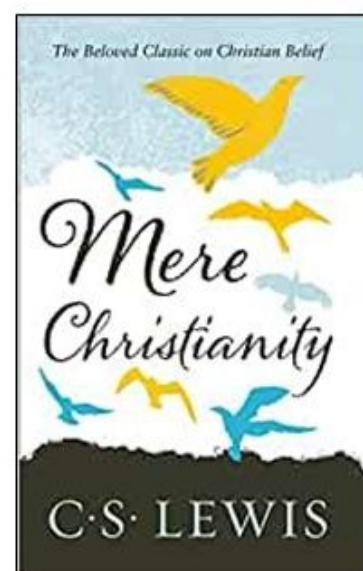
And when her eldest daughter reached puberty and marriage proposals began pouring in, Anaisha refused them – in spite of pressure from some village members. Instead she encouraged her daughter to achieve a good education. Other parents were inspired by this and five other girls in the village were able to continue with their schooling too.

Anaisha says, "I am so glad that my daughter didn't have to go through life like I did, getting married early. My hope is that she will finisher her education well and become a contributing member of the family."

Carole Lindfield

Bible Study

Usually, I write a Bible Study but for this month something different. I was asked the other day about what book or books were most influential for me as far as being a Christian was concerned. Notwithstanding the fact that I would want to acknowledge that the primary influences on me were people, nevertheless if I was to single out any one book it would be C. S. Lewis's 'Mere Christianity' and so I want to share with you extracts from that book – randomly chosen, without commentary – for you to decide for yourself just how impactful Lewis's arguments were...



"I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that though Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, yet it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond. One has a glimpse of a country where they do not talk of those things, except perhaps as a joke. Everyone there is filled full with what we should call goodness as a mirror is filled with light. But they do not call it goodness. They do not call it anything. They are not thinking of it. They are too busy looking at the source from which it comes. But this is near the stage where the road passes over the rim of our world. No one's eyes can see very far beyond that: lots of people's eyes can see further than mine.

"Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. If we do, we shall then be sharing a life which was begotten, not made, which always existed and always will exist. Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life, we also shall be sons of God. We shall love the Father as He does and the Holy Ghost will arise in us. He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has — by what I call "good infection." Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things

Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

“To have Faith in Christ means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus, if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you.

You may agree with none of this, some of this or all of this. Although I would wager that there is something here for everyone. And of course, Lewis’s influence ranged far and wide – intellectually, literally, emotionally – indeed his most enduring legacy is his Narnia series, books for children but for adults too. Anyway, he remains a great influence on me. I am forever grateful that as a teenager I was given ‘Mere Christianity’ to read... It has stayed with me ever since...

Ian Tutton

NEWS OF PEOPLE

As a Church, recently we have been shocked by the passing of three members of our congregation. **Lilian Coumbe** was someone who had served the church quietly over many years. More than that



she was a devoted wife to Guy and mother to Ben and Jack. She was the epitome of what it means to live a Christian life. A life cruelly cut short by cancer. An illness she bore with dignity and fortitude. Taken too soon, yet she will live long in the memory of us all...**Elaine Tyrrell** passed away peacefully not long after her 96th birthday! Wife to Alan, mother, grandmother, great grandmother. A true matriarch. She was someone who impressed herself upon you by sheer weight of personality. Known to a previous generation as 'Brown' or 'Tawny' Owl for her work with Brownies, she was much more than that. Very much a woman ahead of her time...**Frances Haynes** died suddenly even though she too was in her nineties. Although known to many for her voluntary work post-retirement, after a long and distinguished career in the NHS, she had only recently begun attending the church. A feisty character, nevertheless she was someone who will be missed by family and friends alike...

...And I am aware too that there are others within the congregation who have recently been bereaved. Made all the more difficult because of circumstance...We continue to pray for one another...

...But there is good news too! the birth of **MARTHA BEATRICE WYNTER OVER** - a daughter for David and Claire - and a granddaughter for Pat Over. Martha was born some weeks premature, weighing the proverbial 'bag of sugar' but she is doing well under the care of the local hospital in Bath. They too, as a family are in our prayers.

Ian Tutton

And News from Judy and Alfred Mo

Apologies for the belated greetings but we hope that your Christmas was a good one in spite of social and travel restrictions. Once again, we were not able to get to London this year to see daughters Alice and Lizzy for Christmas but are proud that they are coping and looking after each other as well as their younger cousins (who are in UK for school and university and are unable to return to Hong Kong/Malaysia to their parents). We do miss seeing our girls in person though!

We do generally miss coming back to London to see old friends; Judy also

has a sister in London. Now that it is the cold season in Hong Kong and the temperature occasionally drops to 11 or 12C, we reminisce about how 'the nice cool weather in England' is good for golfing! Unthinkable even two years ago.....but it appears that absence does make the heart grow fonder.....

We are well here, as is Irene, although in the past year it has been more difficult to go out with Irene. She does not walk as well and sometimes she is content just to stay at home and watch her favourite TV programs. We've all had our two vaccine doses as well as the booster. Judy also has not visited her parents in Malaysia for nearly two years. Although she videocalls them almost daily, it is still no substitute to seeing them in person.

Well, let's hope that in the coming year, things will be more manageable and borders between countries will be less restrictive - we look forward to meeting up with all of you again. In the meantime we wish you and your families :

Good Health, Peace and Joy in the New Year ! Warmest regards as always, *Judy and Alfred (and Irene) Mo*



JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

A crisp bright sunny Winters day. Whatever the weather Borth does it wholeheartedly - brilliant sunshine, heavy rain, winds always strong, seldom even moderate, quite often gale force. This is to be expected in our location, directly across the road from the beach - then 84 miles of open sea westwards to Ireland. The back of the house looks over the extensive and biologically internationally important Borth Bog or Cors Fochno (a great sweep of fenland or a raised bog at sea-level, a rarity in Britain, being fed by no rivers, but dependent entirely on rain water- of which there is no lack - for moisture). It is a view of which we never tire with shadows over the marsh and the Cambrian mountains - an extension of Snowdonia - beyond. In the evenings, with the sun shining directly on the hills, they become an ever-changing mixture of purples and blues - I think even a painter would have difficulty in catching the intensity of wonder and delight. Additionally, we are 100 yards from the local - well-stocked! - shop, and a few minutes' drive to the beaches of Ynyslas (by the Dovey estuary).

We are adjusting quickly to the local community - and hopefully them to us! Most we meet are "passing friendly" - a nod, a smile and, as we meet again, a "hello." Borth - one long street - is easy to navigate and small enough for us to already feel "at home." I'd expected the beach to have walkers but not bathers at this time of year. I was wrong: regularly, there are hardy souls (hopefully also with hardy soles as they cross the pebble part of the beach) wallowing, or at least jumping around, in the sea. We felt like cheering when we saw a group of seven swimsuit-clad (not wet-suited) female teenagers doing scissor jumps in unison and wearing bobble hats. Apparently, as the seasons change the sea becomes (a bit) warmer - I'm glad this is a fact and not by direct experience! We've come to the conclusion that the best way of settling in to our new home is 'slowly' - we are more likely to remember where items are if we move them as and when needed rather than going on a 'tidyness spree'. Our 'new' home has been a holiday destination for a long time which means we have already settled into a Church, seven miles away, in Aberystwyth, United Reformed, St. David's. Small numbers, but right for us after 50 years in the Free Church.

Just before writing this: It was on the radio news that Lord John Sainsbury had died. For his personal commitments he had offices in the same building as my company. He was the senior of the two brothers who

had developed the company from the mid 1940's. He had considerable connections with the music and other sectors. When we moved in I introduced myself, indicating where I was in the building, to which he succinctly replied: "Sainsbury 5th Floor."

The changing World (serious and frivolous): For the first time at the King Abdelaziz Festival in Saudi Arabia, women have been able to showcase their animals in "a camel beauty contest." They (the animals) are judged on several criteria, including shape and size of the lips, neck and, crucially, hump.

Animal Magic: (Maybe I'm the only one who remembers Johnny Morris and the long-ago TV programme but it makes a good sub-title). This time: a badger in Northern Spain, foraging for food, has uncovered a cache of over 200 Roman coins; a sea-horse washed up on a South coast beach was transferred to a bucket of water and returned to the sea in the calmness of Poole Harbour (following advice from the Sea-horse Trust: - there are many little known but important voluntary bodies), and a colony of very rare Greater Horse-Shoe bats was given a new, safe home through the action of the Sussex Bat Group. There is no future without action.



Still in flight: The World's oldest person, Japanese Kane Tanaka, has just (2nd January) celebrated her 119th Birthday. Born 1903 (same year as George Orwell and the Wright Brothers first flight), she has an ongoing passion for chocolate and fizzy drinks - so do I....!

New Year Honours; There are different opinions about the New Year and Birthday Honours which are given each year, but there can be nothing but admiration for at least some recipients: this January they included Max from Devon (aged 12) who raised "hundreds of thousands of pounds" with his epic camping exploits (sleeping every night in a tent since March 2020) and Tobias (aged 11 and the youngest ever person to be honoured), who has cerebral palsy and autism, and achieved a series of fund-raising challenges. Two of many young people who give to others. Equally deserved was the MBE received by Emma Raducanu (previously featured in this Diary.)

"Timber!" In years to come (many years with some species) this will be

the call when trees planted under a Welsh government scheme to - during this year - offer every household a free tree, is concluded. Not all householders will have space but nonetheless the concept is a good one. The aptly named Lee Waters (Deputy Minister for Climate Change) said that “households who did not have a garden or outside space would still, by the existence of the scheme be involved in this essential project”.

Whatever next? You can now buy toothpaste tablets. This is not however the end of brushing. You chew and then brush. Maybe there is a physiological aspect to this - chew and brush will make you concentrate more and lessen the likelihood of tooth decay? Only the tooth can tell.

Paulownia: From the East to East Anglia, imported for their carbon-sucking potential. It's a tree in case you are wondering. The Forestry Commission is undertaking what is termed a pioneering project, interested by the tree “reaching up to eight meters (26 feet) in five years”. I wonder if the growth rate will be the same in East Anglia as in Asia? The climate is certainly different - less rain, less sunshine.

Coral has many amazing attributes. It is a fact that coral reefs have declined worryingly fast in recent times. Coral is complex. I'm sure the scientists at Australia's Great Barrier Reef Foundation have used all their resources and knowledge to produce “turbo-charged” coral. In the past, emulating nature hasn't worked. I hope it will on this project although it's going to be some time before the answer comes.

Footprints on a Welsh beach (Penarth not Borth) are perhaps more than 200 million years old (findings of palaeontologists from the Natural History Museum). If it impresses David Attenborough it must be exceptional: that goes for the fossilized bones which turned out to be a ‘steppe mammoth’ sticking out of the ground close to Swindon and has led to three more mammoths being located on the same site - thought not to be a meeting place for mammoths, but somewhere that early man may have ‘domesticated’ these animals (prior to a Mammoth feast!) **John Birch**



From the Archives

February 1922

This first excerpt from February 1922 is taken from the interregnum while awaiting a new minister to fill Mr Rushbrooke's place. (Mr Rushbrooke had left the Church to become Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance). I liked the apple tree idea and wonder if any were bought from Suburb residents? My own apple tree - a Suburb original from 1907 - has now been weighed to the ground with an enormous crop which will last me, my family and friends probably until March.



February 1922

From Work and Worship

Foreign Missionary Work

We have recently received a leaflet giving some interesting particulars of how to help the London Missionary Society to increase their income. In the following extracts from this leaflet it will be noted that Congregationalists are mentioned, but as the particulars were sent to the Free Church we take it that it is open to anyone who is prepared to help the LMS.

"Briefly stated the mode of operation is as follows:-

1. - To purchase 1,000 choice apple or other fruit trees.
2. - To plant them out in private gardens.
3. - To sell the fruit in due season.
- 4.- To give the whole of the proceeds to the LMS.

"I am prepared to hand over these 1,000 trees as an absolutely free gift to 1,000 Congregationalists, male or female, old or young, rich or poor.

On the understanding that these 1,000 Congregationalists will attend to the culture of the trees and devote the whole of the proceeds to the LMS through the Congregational Church with which they are respectively associated - thus regarding them as Missionary trees.

"A recent incident is worthy of record. The Church Secretary of Paignton Congregational Church planted one of the trees under the scheme in his garden, twelve months ago, and it produced one apple. This he presented to the Harvest Celebration, ruefully, apologetically, and it was duly exhibited as the Deacon's Missionary Apple. It was referred to from the pulpit, and the minister's wife took a retiring collection at the church doors on account of that one apple and it realised £2 2s. 7d. - since doubled"

"All the co-operator has to do is to order the tree locally or at the nearest fruit-farm; then send the Advice Form and Invoice to me and I will remit the amount either to the co-operator or the fruit grower. I set no limit on the price; the more matured the tree, the more satisfactory the produce is likely to be. The transaction is then at an end as far as I am concerned. J M MORGAN "Well bank" Preston Down Road, Paignton, Devon

February 1942

The second excerpt is from February 1942. Because of the war, services were being routinely held in the Free Church Hall for the black-out. We still commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the Free Church in 1910 and of course remember the same first minister, Mr Rushbrooke.

February 1942

From News Letter February 1942

There is an anniversary which is celebrated with more or less enthusiasm every year - the anniversary of the founding of our own Free Church. It was on February 18th, 1910, that 56 people signed the Church roll and bound themselves together in Christian faith, worship and service. Some of those pioneers are with us still - and what a story they could tell! Whenever I think of them, I marvel especially at two things. One is that so small a body of people should make such ambitious plans and set to work on such handsome and commodious buildings. The other is that in those days they should be so free from any sectarianism. There were many discussions before they agreed to a fellowship so catholic in spirit and comprehensive in scope, but we are all agreed that experience has justified their resolution. One wishes that so fine an example had been more widely followed. Such a lead ought not to be ignored, and usually we think about it on a Sunday as near as possible to February 18th. This year, however, we have fixed the Anniversary for March 1st, and the services will be conducted by Dr J H Rushbrooke, our first minister. We shall welcome Dr Rushbrooke, not only in gratitude for the great work he did in the Suburb, but as a very distinguished Free Churchman. He left the pastorate here to become secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, and when he laid down



The Rushbrookes and baby daughter lay the foundation stone of the Manse

the burden of that office he took up the lighter burden but the greater honour of the presidency. Few men have travelled more, and few who have travelled so much have used their eyes and ears to such good advantage. I hope there will be a crowded Hall to welcome him. The next Sunday we hope to hold the Annual Church Meeting, with a tea in the afternoon, followed by a devotional service at 6 o'clock and reports and discussion on work past, present and future. Please make a note of this. Further particulars will be given later. Frank Ballard *Anne Lowe*

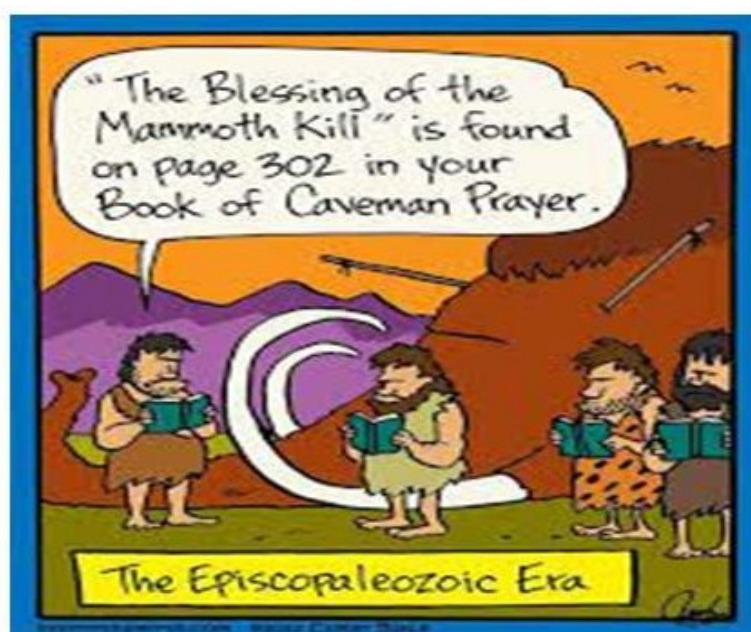
THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Following last month's 'Thoughts for the Month,' Helen Keller, American author and disability rights advocate, believed in being positive. Although being born deaf and blind, she had the ability to overcome any obstacle in her path. 'Life is a series of lessons which must be lived to be understood life teaches lessons and life teaches experience nothing can substitute for that power of experience' was one of her



beliefs. Another of her sayings was: "I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."

Sourced by Rosemary Birch



DÜRER'S JOURNEYS

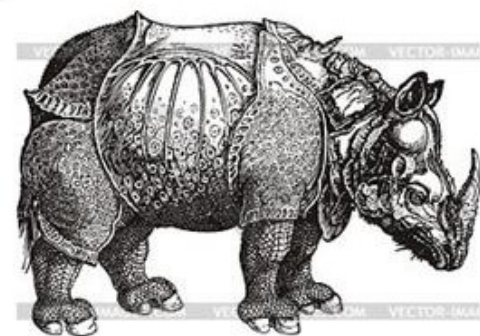
Travels of a Renaissance Artist

(National Gallery until February 27, 2022)



Once our remote ancestors left Africa and headed north there was no stopping them: fleeing from famine, plague or oppression; as mercenaries, pilgrims, scholars, crusaders, players, troubadours, journeymen and criminals we overcame the formidable difficulties faced by travellers before the age of the train and covered great distances to broaden our horizons or earn a better living. Thus it is not surprising that an artist like Dürer in his youth had his ‘wanderjahre,’ years he spent travelling from his native Nuremberg to Venice, where he met and learned from artists such as Bellini the Elder and later to Antwerp where he consorted with wealthy merchants who were already – around 1510 – importing goods from the “New World” and Africa. Dürer lived in exciting times, on the cusp of both intellectual change and trans-oceanic exploration. Among his contemporaries were Martin Luther, Erasmus, Melancton and Zwingli who contributed to the explosion of intellectual and spiritual questioning and reform that were to divide members of the Christian faith for good. These seismic changes applied also in the physical world as this was an unprecedented age of discovery for Europeans. Through his merchant friends in Antwerp, Dürer learned about and was given items of exotica. Take his famous armour-plated rhinoceros.

Yes, indeed, he'd not seen this animal and based his version on a written description and a sketch: here the fabulous meets the real and granted how steeped we are in Durer's version of the rhinoceros, who is to say which is more real: the artist's vision or the creature we may encounter in a zoo or safari park?



We should be grateful to the curator of this exhibition for deciding that the destinations of Dürer's travels should be contextualized by showing us the works of many of his contemporaries in the regions of Europe that he visited. Thus we learn who influenced him and, in time, as Dürer's fame as an engraver grew, how wide was his renown and his impact on the work

of fellow-artists. Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor from 1508 until his death in 1519, became Dürer's patron in 1512. However, there are also democratizing influences in that many of Dürer's portraits are not of grandees but of wealthy merchants trading in the Low Countries. These men, portrayed in the floppy hats fashionable at this time, with fur-trimmed collars to underline their financial heft, look out at us with determined or scowling faces and are of a type with Henry the VIII's fixer, Thomas Cromwell. They remind us that this was an age of opportunity in Europe when enterprising men from modest backgrounds could go far. There is another perhaps more important democratizing influence, which is as follows. Because Dürer excelled as an engraver and, therefore, print-maker, his highly portable prints circulated around Europe and could be bought by people who could not afford to purchase a painting. Thus high art as practiced by Dürer, with all the novelties and wonders it contained was displayed on the walls of those of modest means. So we have here ripple effects that are hard to assess in concrete terms, but which cannot be discounted all the same.

Rightly, Dürer's paintings are not as highly rated as his magnificent engravings and some of his altar-pieces can seem unimaginative and stiff. There is, however, a most striking Madonna, "The Virgin of the Iris," which, I think, speaks to our age. The Virgin Mary is associated with the colour blue: lapis lazuli, a pigment imported from Afghanistan, was used to colour her robes because it was precious and very expensive. Dürer's very northern Madonna wears a scarlet dress, her hair is blonde as is that of the infant Jesus. Behind her are some plain poles intended to support vines. In the background is an arch in a semi-ruinous state. The poles look like scaffolding and they, together with the ruinous architecture in the background, make me think that she is an appropriate Virgin of war zones like Syria, Ethiopia or the Yemen at the present time.

I cannot recommend this exhibition more highly as the art involved is stimulating, accessible and exquisite. If you are wary of public transport, my experience is that there are few travellers on the tube after, say, 9.30am and social distancing is not a problem.

Verity Smith



Film Review: Mr Jones

A recent book review had, as its subject, a Gentleman in Moscow which took a light-hearted look at an aristocrat under house arrest during Stalin's era in the Metropol hotel in Moscow. This film, Mr Jones, covers some of the same period and the early parts of the film also take place in the Metropol hotel, but the events are seen from an entirely different point of view. A much darker point of view.

It tells the story of Welsh journalist Gareth Jones who first brought the world's attention to the Ukrainian famine in the 1930s - despite real danger in journeying there covertly. (The screenwriter Andrea Chalupa was inspired by her grandfather who lived in the



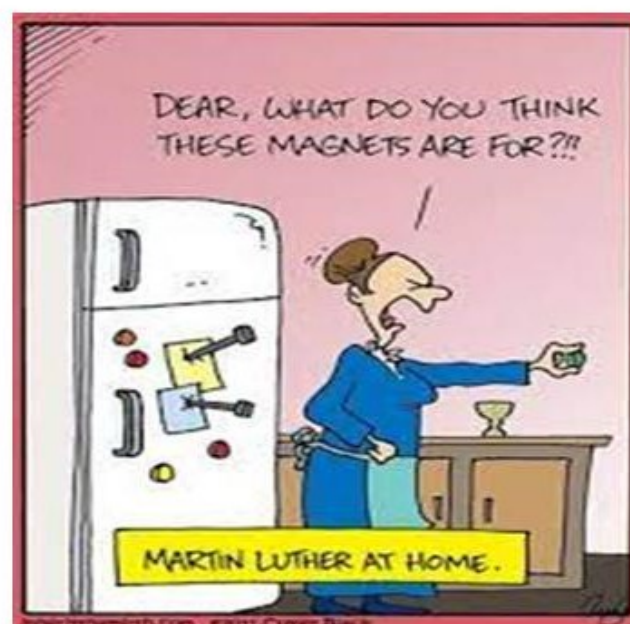
eastern Ukraine, to research the grim facts of the famine). Jones has already made a reputation for himself by interviewing Hitler and he tries to persuade Lloyd George to send him to Russia to interview Stalin. He doesn't succeed but nevertheless he goes to Moscow and pretends he has the great man's permission. While at the Metropol, Jones is condemned to hang around the louche and cynical journo-ex pat scene presided over by Walter Duranty, the New York Times correspondent in Moscow - a man whom posterity has revealed to be a singularly cynical placeman, intent on currying favour with Stalin in order to gain US recognition of the regime. Eventually, Jones gets permission to visit the Ukraine for a limited period of time, carefully supervised by his minders. But he evades his minders and begins his own journey and investigation of the real situation in the Ukraine - all during a very harsh winter. It is then that Jones finds out the truth about what Stalin is doing - and perhaps the fact that this is still not well known adds to the horror. And horror it is - perhaps a warning to the sensitive viewer would not be out of place. It becomes clear that the Ukrainian harvest has been almost entirely gathered and diverted to the world market in order to pay for Stalin's rearmament and five-year plan leaving the Ukrainians facing a virtual genocide. There is an excellent and disturbing scene in which Jones is confronted by five tiny children in snowy woodland who sing an eerie song to him about Stalin, and about

how cold and hungry and yet loyal they are. It has a sinister, hypnotic effect. Jones is to become tormented by hunger, even gnawing at tree bark. He sees a sledge being filled with dead bodies in the snow and a live baby being dumped among them. Finally, a thin-faced family share their supper with him, which turns out to be the worst horror of all as he realizes that he is eating human flesh served to him by a 'caring' teenager. These Ukrainian scenes are simply unforgettable.

He is shopped to the authorities, returned to Moscow, deported and threatened that if he tells his story then his compatriots who are already in prison (the Metro-Vickers employees accused of spying in 1933) will be executed. Back home the movie tells of his personal nightmare and his anguish when he is at first disbelieved. There is a moving episode back in Wales where Jones is so overcome with emotion on a walk that he stops, overcome by hysterical sobs, while a taunting group of children imitate and mock his anguish behind his back, reminding the viewer of his terrible experiences with the children back in the Ukraine. Only by chance is Jones vindicated when he visits William Randolph Hearst (on a visit to Wales) who sees an opportunity to shame the New York Times and the shameless Duranty by headlining the true story of the famine in his own newspapers as a world sensation.

There is a recurring cameo of George Orwell. Apparently, the two never met but there is a rumour that Orwell was influenced by Jones' reports and might even have named the proprietor of 'Animal Farm' Mr Jones in honour of him. It is a vivid and haunting film of a shameful episode in world history, still very little known. Highly recommended viewing!

Marion Ditchfield



CLIMATE CHANGE AND VALUE CHANGE VI: A PERSONAL VIEW

Previous issues of News and Views have been looking at Climate Change and how any action to tackle the problem requires 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. It is almost as though the Almighty has designed a situation which gives us the choice of either recreating the kind of people we are or giving up on His 'experiment' altogether.

And into this mix comes another example of the problems we face in making such changes - the role of our 'eight second attention span' culture when it comes to debating and getting to grips with the problem: how can a problem such as Climate Change be considered, evaluated and communicated by a media, both mainstream media (MSM) and social, which increasingly sees its job as entertainment and is dominated by the need to keep users and sponsors economically happy (generally measured by circulation, number of clicks etc); where keeping people 'happy' means a never ending quest to find ways to stop them changing channels or unsubscribing or, worst of all, simply turning off. Inevitably, this means a never ending search for 'novelty,' for excitement.

Visual culture replaces oral culture

In some ways it is unfair to blame the media industry for all of this because, like many others, it has had to respond to long-term cultural changes. The advent of telecommunication (in all the forms which IT has enabled) has had the effect of replacing an essentially oral culture by a visual culture which prizes appearances, celebrity and fluency and in which gaining and holding attention is everything. In this culture speed is essential, which means that anything complex or requiring consideration is anathema. The advantage of an oral culture was that people had to (occasionally) listen to what was being said, which meant devoting a finite amount of time and energy to the process (ie concentration). And there being no visual aid so to speak, it was necessary to bring a certain amount of visualisation to the process which also helped facilitate the development of imagination and abstract thought. But a visual culture is entirely different. The visualization is done for us - no imagination is required. The image is king, the content secondary. Unfortunately, the mind processing



the visual does so much more quickly and easily than it does the content. All too easily content, background and analysis, ie meaning, can get demoted to little more than a soundbite or two minute summary. Any more and there is the risk of people getting bored, losing their attention

and trying to find something else.

It is this environment that the Climate Change agenda has had to fight for coverage. And, once again, it is at a systemic disadvantage. The problem of Climate Change is huge, chronic, serious, difficult to encapsulate - and somewhat boring. It is a problem that may eventually threaten our survival - but that is a long term threat. It is not going to happen overnight and it is not going to affect everyone equally. It is not an entertaining or exciting sort of problem, there are not even any feel-good stories in it. It is therefore precisely the kind of problem which mainstream and social media find difficult to deal with.

'Don't Look Up!'

A recent film - 'Don't Look Up' - satirizes these problems.. It tells the story of a group of American scientists who discover a comet is heading towards Earth and is large enough to cause planet-wide extinction. Their findings are presented in confidence to the President - one Janie Orlean - but are met with apathy. They decide to leak the news to the media which they do on a morning talk show. However, when the show's hosts treat the topic frivolously, one of the team loses her cool and rants about the threat, prompting on-line mockery. The actual news about the comet's threat receives little public attention - all the programme makers are concerned about is their popularity/approval ratings which are carefully measured and analysed not only after the show but during the show itself. However, when President Orlean is involved in a sex scandal, she diverts attention and improves her approval ratings by confirming the threat of the comet and announcing a plan to divert the comet using nuclear weapons. The mission successfully launches, but is aborted when it is discovered that the comet contains trillions of dollars worth of rare elements and tech companies want to exploit them. The White House agrees. World opinion is then divided among those who demand destruction of the comet, those



who decry alarmism and believe that mining the comet will create jobs, and those who deny that the comet even exists.

The story is preposterous and the film has been panned by many critics as heavy-handed, blunt and unsubtle. It is not

even concerned with Climate Change per se. Which rather misses the point - the film is a parody of how the MSM deals with any serious but unexciting problem, including Climate Change. It is a deliberate exaggeration and satirization of the attitudes and values of those involved when they try to communicate these and similar problems.

In a recent article in the Guardian, the scientist and climate change campaigner George Monbiot recalled his experience of coming up against the hallowed formats of morning TV: *"I was reminded of my own mortifying loss of control on Good Morning Britain in November. It was soon after the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow, where we had seen the least serious of all governments (the UK was hosting the talks) failing to rise to the most serious of all issues. I tried, for the thousandth time, to explain what we are facing, and suddenly couldn't hold it in any longer. I burst into tears on live TV."*

I still feel deeply embarrassed about it. The response on social media, like the response to the scientist in the film, was vituperative and vicious. I was faking. I was hysterical. I was mentally ill. But, knowing where we are and what we face, seeing the indifference of those who wield power, seeing how our existential crisis has been marginalized in favour of trivia and frivolity, I now realise that there would be something wrong with me if I hadn't lost it."



Conclusion

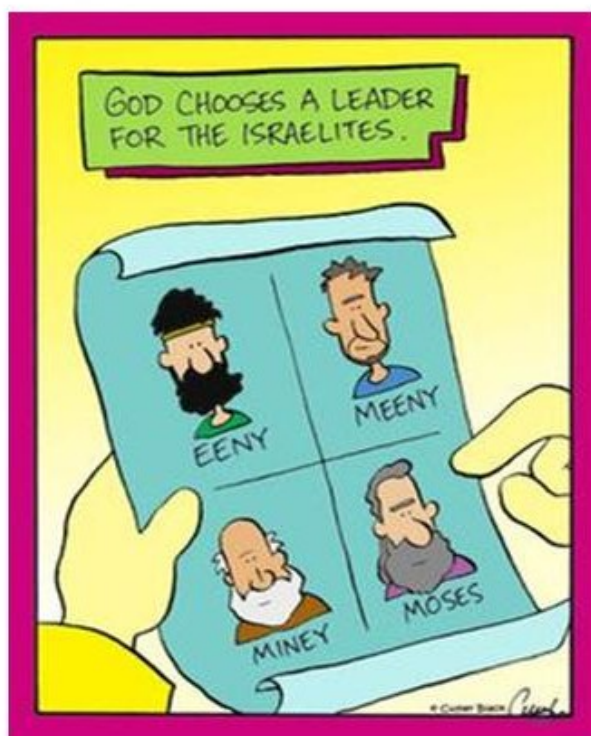
Inevitably, all the above poses the problem of how to get complex problems noticed by the MSM - more especially how to get them noticed and treated with any seriousness. The answer can only be 'with great difficulty'. This is perhaps why climate campaigners have increasingly favoured direct action - such as Extinction Rebellion's blocking of

motorways and disruptions on the tube system. Their actions echo the statue toppling action in Bristol and, going back somewhat, the violent actions of the suffragettes. All tired of their campaigns being run into the long grass by the formal systems of protest and/or being treated frivolously by the media. The problem is that direct action is not very popular with large sections of the public, particularly the British public which has a long tradition of eschewing any form of physical confrontation. Moreover, it plays directly into the hands of those who favour even more stringent curbs on the right to protest. Only the recent 'Not-Guilty' verdicts in the trials of those involved in the Colston statue toppling and the Extinction Rebellion protests give limited cause for optimism.

Spoiler alert

At the end of the film, all attempts by governments and tech bosses to divert/exploit the comet have come to nothing. The comet becomes plainly visible as it rushes towards earth. In a last gasp effort to deny the existence of the problem, people are told 'Don't Look Up' - an echo of the child-like belief that something doesn't really exist if you can't see it. (It sounds ludicrous - but is it any more ludicrous than millions of people believing that Donald Trump won the last election)? The President, the tech boss and their friends are cryogenically frozen and launch into space to find a new home. Meanwhile, our heroes gather together to await their fate by enjoying a final meal and a prayer. A most un-Hollywood-like ending!

John Ditchfield



JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No. 41: Places and their associations.

Can you put the place and association together?

PLACES

Nottingham Sheffield Somerset Devon Pembroke Cheddar
Lambeth Aberdeen Bath Canterbury Stockton-on-Tees

ASSOCIATIONS

Railways Cathedral Forest Buns Steel Cider Pastries
Potatoes Cheese Walk Oil



Answers to Competition No 40: Places and their Associations

Blackpool/Tower
Newquay/Surfing
Spalding/Bulbs
Lincoln/ Cathedral
Worcester/Sauce
Brecon/Beacons
Salisbury/Plain
Southend/Pier
Coventry/Lady Godiva
Crewe/Trains



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

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: WINTER OLYMPICS

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

SKI RACING
DOWNHILL
SLALOM
CROSS COUNTRY
FREESTYLE

SKI JUMPING
SNOWBOARDING
BOBSLEIGH
LUGE
SKELETON

SPEEDSKATING
FIGURE SKATING
ICE HOCKEY
CURLING
BIATHLON



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 Feb 3rd & 17th Choir Practice in Church

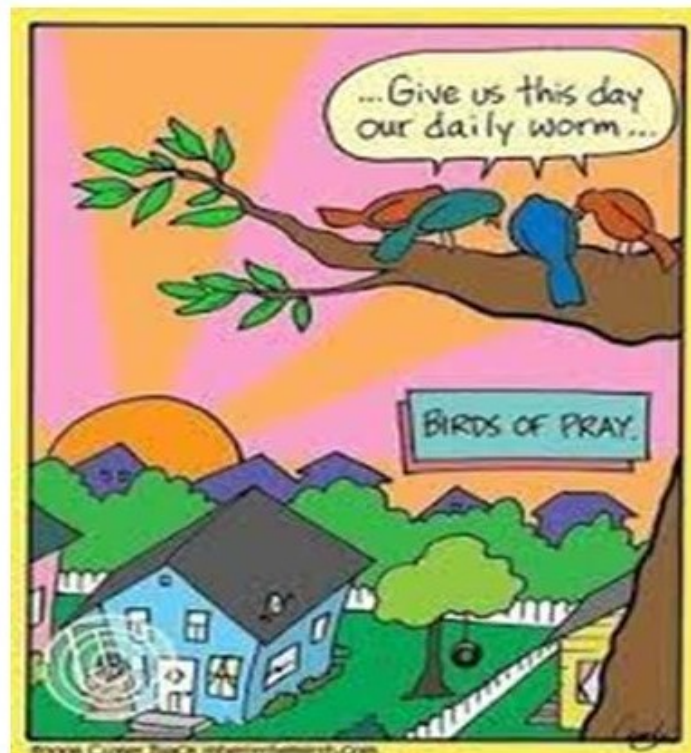
Christian Meditation - Meditators meet here. For further information, contact: Georgia at gmrtutton@aol.com

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 6 | 11.00am | Family Communion Service |
| 12 | 10-12.00 | Church Meeting |
| 13 | 11.00am | Family Service |
| 15 | 7.30pm | Elders Court |
| 20 | 11.00am | Family Service |
| 25 | 1.00pm | Piano Recital by Lysianne Chen, refreshments at 12.30pm in support of Christian Aid |
| 27 | 11.00am | Church 112th Anniversary Service in Free Church followed by lunch |

MARCH

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|---|
| 4 | 2.00pm | World Day of Prayer, at Trinity Church, Golders Green |
| 5 | 10.00-12.00pm | Church Cleaning, any help appreciated |
| 6 | 11.00 am | Family Communion Service |
| 8 | 7.30pm | Deacons Court |
| 13 | 11.00 am | Family Service followed by lunch for Ian Tutton's Retirement |
| 15 | 7.30pm | Trustee and Elders Court |



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 6th March 2022. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday February 20th

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.

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