NEWS & VIEWS

The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb

SEPTEMBER 2021

PLEASE TAKE ONE

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH

(United Reformed and Baptist)
Central Square, London, NW11 7AG
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
Correspondence Secretary	Penny Trafford 020 8959 3405 ptrafford07@gmail.com
Treasurer	Joe Fryer 07814 532049
Director of Music	Peter Hopkins
Children's Advocates	Lilian Coumbe coumbe_lilian@yahoo.com Stephan Praetorius 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

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FREE CHURCH
Central Square,
London NW11 7AG

NO 771 **SEPTEMBER 2021**

Dear Friends,

I am writing this while waiting for what for me will be the highlight of the day. This evening – Sunday, August 29th - at 8pm, ITV will be broadcasting the first episode in the eleventh series of the crime detection drama, 'Vera'. DCI Vera Stanhope, played by Brenda Blethyn, has been a part of my life ever since she first burst on the scene, probably at least 11 years ago. Set against the somewhat bleak backdrop of the North East of England, with occasional incursions into the murkier side of city life in Newcastle, nevertheless it always manages to engender a degree of positivity. A latter-day morality tale in which the bad 'guy' always gets caught, yet with a sense of redemption being always just around the corner. And before you reach for your keyboard to remind me; yes, I know it isn't 'real', that life isn't always like that. But it is because life isn't always like that, that I need to step back from reality just for a couple of hours and lose myself in the unreality that is the product of the imagination of the author and script writer. Indeed, what is genius about 'Vera' is that although it purports to be 'real life' drama, it always contains those elements that make you realise that it isn't so; that it was never meant to be so…

…And what is true for what we see on the screen is equally true for what we read on the page. Every page is an open invitation to enter into the world of the author. It might seem a strange thing to suggest from someone in my position, but that is how I understand the Bible. Different 'authors' using the vocabulary at their disposal, deploying what was known of the workings of the world at the time of writing, but above all utilising their own particular creative genius to frame the story they wish to tell. From the perspective of the twenty-first century, what they had to say, and in particular the way they said it, might appear to be at odds with our world-view. Indeed, we might find ourselves having great difficulty in discerning the contemporary

significance of the stories contained within its covers…
…But that is no excuse for not reading it. As with any 'good' book it draws us in, takes us out of ourselves, transporting us to a time and a place hitherto hidden from us. Of course, we find that strange, as if we don't belong. But give it time. Sooner or later, we will appreciate that there is something about what it has to say that will cause us to realise that it has the ability to impact directly on our own lived experience. We may use different words to describe it. But the meaning is the same. This for me is what is meant by 'Divine Inspiration.' For the Bible to be understood as Divinely inspired, it has to say something about both the author and the reader. Each inspired by God in the telling, (writing) and the retelling (reading) of the stories…
…And so, can I encourage you during these autumn months to read your Bible. Not just a few verses each day but whole stories, even if that means a number of chapters at a time. Read it as if you were reading a short story collection, a series of novellas, each written in their own inimitable style. You will be amazed what you will discover...
…Anyway, 'Vera' has finished now. It was an excellent start to the new series. Plenty of misdirection keeping the viewer guessing right up until the final reveal. It was that good, I'll probably watch it again. ***Ian Tutton***

Ministry at HGS Free Church

At the July church meeting, Ian announced his retirement with the proposed date of next March. In response, I voiced the feelings of sadness at the meeting; Ian has been a tireless pastor supporting many of us in life's crises, a teacher and leader - we shall miss him. Also we will be experiencing feelings of anxiety about the future.
The Elders have been discussing the implications since last November. We will need time to reflect in order to decide the future shape of the Church, its management, its preaching style, and our hopes and expectations. We will have to decide:

What is it we are going to be looking for as a church when seeking a new minister?
From which denomination will we seek our new minister; URC, Baptist, or other?
Do we want to co-operate with other churches?
What are the essential characteristics we want in our minister?
What are the resources (practical, physical, personnel) that we have within the church? Where are the gaps?

We are a self governing body; we make these decisions together, discerning the will of God. The importance of the church family having discussions and listening to each other is paramount. There will be the opportunity for such a discussion on:

Sunday Oct 17th when
Rev Eddie Boon, URC Discipleship Enabler,

will conduct the morning service, then we will have lunch together in church, and afterwards he will facilitate a discussion.
Please put this date in your diaries.
Penny Trafford
Church Secretary

Who makes a good leader? – a cautionary tale

Revd Mark Meatcher, URC Minister North Enfield Group of Churches, conducted our worship on 15.08.2021. He discussed the problems of selecting a new Minister and then provided some light relief by considering how some of the great Bible characters would be rated by a typical church committee. Below is a copy of their supposed report:

.We do not have a happy report to give. We have not been able to find a suitable candidate for this church, though we have one promising prospect.
ADAM: Good man but has problems with his wife. One reference told us how he and his wife enjoyed walking nude in the woods.
NOAH: Former pastorate of 120 years with no converts. Prone to unrealistic building projects.
JOSEPH: A big thinker, but a braggart; believes in dream-interpreting and has a prison record.
MOSES: A modest and meek man, but poor communicator; even stutters at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly in business meetings. Some say he left an earlier church over a murder charge.
DEBORAH: One word — Female.
DAVID: The most promising leader of all until we discovered the affair he had with his neighbour's wife.
SOLOMON: Great preacher, but serious woman problem.
ELIJAH: Prone to depression; collapses under pressure.
HOSEA: A tender and loving pastor, but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.
JONAH: Told us he was swallowed up by a great fish. He said the fish later spat him out on the shore near here. We hung up.
AMOS: Too much of a country hick. Backward and unpolished. With some seminary training, he might have promise; but he has a hang-up against wealthy people.
JOHN: Says he is a Baptist, but doesn't dress like one. May be too Pentecostal. Tends to lift both hands in the air to worship when he gets excited. You know we limit to one hand. Sleeps in the outdoors, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.
PETER: Too blue collar. Has a bad temper, even said to have cursed. He's a loose cannon.
PAUL: Powerful CEO type and fascinating preacher. However, he's short on tact, unforgiving with young ministers, harsh, and has been known to preach all night.
TIMOTHY: Too young.
JESUS: Has had popular times, but once when his church grew to 5000, He managed to offend them all; and his church dwindled down to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And, of course, he is single.
JUDAS: His references are solid. A steady plodder. Conservative. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday in view of a call. ***Report from the Pastor Search Committee***

The St Ives Roman Catholic Memorial to the 1549 Prayer Book Rebellion

Catholic Church Memorial

"I've got to rush, I have an 11 o'clock in Penzance", said Father Philip Dyson moments after leading morning service on 13th June in St Ives Roman Catholic Church attended by the US President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill during the G7 Summit in Cornwall. The narrow streets of St Ives were locked down as the Presidential motorcade took over and secret service agents swarmed the town. The few who had chosen to attend church that day had no advance warning of their special guests who sat in a pew towards the back of the Sacred Heart and St. Ia Catholic Church. At the end of the service, the President had a few words with some of the congregation. Mr Biden, who has Irish ancestry, is the first Catholic to be elected to the White House since John F Kennedy in 1960 and has been open about how his faith has influenced his politics.

In early July we spent a week based in St Ives for a 'Cornish Artists and Writers' Tour. The holiday was booked two years ago and postponed twice due to Covid. Third time lucky and we had our first day exploring St Ives, visiting Tate St Ives and the sculptor Barbara Hepworth's studio and garden. On our walk down through St Ives, our guide pointed out a bronze memorial on the outside of the Roman Catholic Church. This plaque, designed by Father Charles Norris of Buckfast Abbey, was erected in 1949 to commemorate the martyrdom of John Payne, the Mayor of St Ives, and the men of St Ives who died defending their Catholic faith during the Western Rising (or Prayer Book Rebellion) of 1549. A total of 5,500 people died during this uprising. In 1549 Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity, which enforced the use of services in English using the Book of Common Prayer instead of the old Latin Mass. In West Cornwall few people spoke English, and St Ives was one of many towns that refused to cooperate. In response, the Provost Marshall came to St Ives and invited John Payne, the Catholic Mayor, to lunch at the George and Dragon, but after lunch, Payne was hanged for being a Catholic.

The *Book of Common Prayer* was meant to unify Anglican services throughout the kingdom. The prayer book contained English language liturgical rites devised by Archbishop Cranmer, banned religious

processions, and ordered communion in both kinds. But the biggest change was that it mandated Mass be said in English, and authorized inspections by royal officials to ensure its provisions were carried out. Thus, though it was now fifteen years into the Anglican schism, the introduction of the *Book of Common Prayer* on Whitsunday 1549, marked the first time most English people had heard the Mass said in English. They were upset because they felt this was no longer the Mass. Most of England grudgingly accepted the changes with the exception of Devon and Cornwall. The West Cornish were outraged by the introduction of English in their 1549 services. Responding to this, Archbishop Cranmer asked why the Cornishmen should be offended by holding the service in English rather than Cornish, when they had before held it in Latin and not understood that.

The people of Cornwall and Devon remained particularly attached to the Catholic faith. For one thing, linguistic differences had always set their culture apart from the rest of the kingdom. At the time of the prayer book, most of the Cornish only spoke English as a second language, if at all. Also, because of their geographical remoteness from London, Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church had never really penetrated Devon and Cornwall, and the region had remained a Catholic island in the midst of the Anglican ocean.

A period of terror followed as the fearful people of those counties were pillaged and executed in retaliation for their rebellion. English was enforced not only in the liturgy but in common usage as well. While the Welsh were allowed to translate the Bible into Welsh a Cornish translation was denied as part of a systematic attempt to root out the Cornish language. Indeed, it is after the Prayer Book Rebellion that Cornish begins to go into decline. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Catholic practice in St Ives died away. However, in 1901 a Roman Catholic Mission was established in St Ives and the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in1902.

In June 2007, the then Anglican Bishop of Truro , the Right Revd Bill Ind, was reported as saying that the massacre during the vicious suppression of the Prayer Book Rebellion more than 450 years ago was an "enormous mistake," for which the Church of England should be ashamed. Speaking at a ceremony at Pelynt, he said: "I am often asked about my attitude to the Prayerbook Rebellion and in my opinion, there is no doubt that the English Government behaved brutally and stupidly and killed many Cornish people. I don't think apologising for something that happened over 450 years ago helps, but I am sorry about what happened and I think it was an enormous mistake".

Jenny Stonhold

My lack of green fingers!

Still on the theme of gardens, I listened to one of the BBC Daily Morning Services when the Canon Rachel Mann described how, on sitting with a group of friends in a favourite outside mutual space, just listening before the time of more formal liturgy, one of the friends said that the silence in the garden was like trying to share nature - with something much greater than the colours and different fragrances of the flowers, much greater than the songs and twittering of all the birdsong - it was the sense that the garden was alive with nature; bumble bees and honey bees going about their daily work of collecting pollen - the garden at the height of summer was like nature's cathedral of sounds and multi-sensory powers, reminding us of a line of Gerald Manley Hopkins, when he writes: 'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.'

Our small garden is rather like that. There's not much planned colour but it has something greater! Five sweet-pea seeds were planted, two were 'no growers', one collapsed at a few inches and two were eaten by slugs (we do keep two tortoises who love a tasty slug but they obviously missed these two!). And instead of all the 'planned' sunflowers, we have an equally high wild flower - Greater Mullein - which planted itself. The kitchen window-sill is still a mass of colour from the white pansy - I've no recollection of planting it; it just appeared in the pot! However, the garden table is a wonderful mixture of reds, whites and blues from a basket of flowers sent by our daughter. The plants were already planted when they arrived through the post! But in spite of all that, I too, at certain times of day, can get that wonderful feeling of the garden being alive with wonder and beauty. I wonder if you ever get the feeling of despondency, as I do, when you feel the world is passing by; it's too fast; a lot I cannot understand, there's so much need; so many are lonely; so many are hurting.Can I do anything to help? And then suddenly something happens and the answer is so obvious you must have been blind not to have realized it. In fact, I had one of those moments a little while ago. With walking becoming more restricted, I have to take my four-wheeled walker out when I go up to the post etc. It has a strong seat and gives a wonderful opportunity to sit down whenever I feel the need. I have had so many kind enquires as to my well-being when I'm just getting my breath back. On this particular walk, I noticed a little way ahead an elderly gentleman slowly pushing an identical walker. Not wishing to agitate him, I slowed my speed to observe him. He came to the road crossing-point and absolutely froze. For an age, (it seemed to me), and when no less than three separate cars had stopped to allow him to cross, he seemed

unable to go down the slope at the edge of the pavement. The obvious answer was to approach and say, "Would it help if we crossed together?" Our convoy of eight wheels and four legs crossed the road safely. James, I later discovered, had been isolating for the duration of the lockdown and the impact of being out and about again had been too much. My very small act of showing I understood; my physical presence alongside, my walking beside him, made him feel he was not alone. That was all he needed. Someone to share. I too knew how he felt - I too had felt overwhelmed on going into the supermarket again.

James thanked me for stopping and talking to him, which made me wonder why we are getting so preoccupied with our hectic life-styles that the necessities of life, such as greeting people are getting forgotten? Is it a London thing or are we taking people for granted? Are we forgetting that no man is an island. We all need someone but there are times in life when words are difficult - perhaps not needed - when perhaps a presence is more important. Philip Yancey's book 'Where is God when it hurts?', a thought-provoking book leant to me by Honor Orme, tells a story about the great composer Beethoven, a man not known for his social graces. His deafness made conversation difficult and humiliating for him. When he learnt of the death of a friend's son, Beethoven, overcome with grief, hurried to the griever's home. He had no words of comfort to offer. But he saw a piano in the room and went to it. For the next half hour he played the piano, pouring out his emotions in the most expressive way he knew. After he had finished playing, he left. The friend later remarked that 'no one else's visit had meant so much.'

Another story in the book, tells how Tony Campolo, the American preacher and evangelist, went to a funeral home to pay his respects to the family of an acquaintance. By mistake, he ended up in the wrong place. It held the body of an elderly man; sadly, his widow was the only mourner present. She seemed so lonely that Campolo decided to stay for the funeral. He even drove with her to the cemetery. At the end of the graveyard service, as he and the woman were driving way, he finally confessed he had not known her husband. "I thought as much," said the widow, "I didn't recognise you. But it doesn't really matter." She squeezed his hand so hard it hurt. "You'll never ever know what this means to me."

We shall never know what impact our simple actions can have on another. However much we think we can't help - even if we can't say the right words - just by being there, walking beside a suffering person means everything to that person. C.S Lewis in the poignant journal he kept after his wife's death

said that, at his moment of profound need, God, who had always been available to him, suddenly seemed absent. Lewis felt fear, and abandonment, and in the end it was the community of Christians who helped to restore him.
A poem by Rob Dilworth (2016) entitled 'In Jesus' Hands Two Fish and Loaves' contains the lines:

In Jesus' hands, the gifts I bring
Are blessed when given to my King.
I know my effort isn't much
But little blossoms with His touch.
In Jesus' hands the lost find hope
And find in Him the strength to cope.
His hands will reach what we can't touch
And in our hearts will do so much.

Rosemary Birch 'trying to find those elusive Green Fingers'

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Bible Study: Joshua

The final section of Joshua chapter 17, from verse 14 onwards, gives us an insight into how tribal 'self-interest' was a constant concern for Joshua as he sought to fulfil his vocation as a nation builder. Indeed, these few verses, albeit regarding what might be thought of as a trivial disagreement, may well be symptomatic of a deeper and wider malaise that was always present throughout the unfolding of Israel's history. The eminent Old Testament scholar, Martin Noth, described Israel as an 'amphictyony' – a term borrowed from ancient Greek – meaning a grouping together of otherwise independent tribes to secure a common purpose, usually in terms of defending themselves against other nation states. Not so much one nation, more a tribal confederation. Perhaps a C20 example would be Yugoslavia under President Tito…
…And so, we find in this passage an illustration of the underlying tension that existed between the tribes, *'...The people of Joseph said to Joshua, "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the LORD has blessed us abundantly."...'* (Joshua 17, 14). The people of Joseph refers to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh – the eponymous sons of Joseph, - themselves grandsons of Jacob (Israel). It is likely that this reference is included in order to both illustrate why it was that they felt able to 'claim' a status above that of the tribes, while at the same time

illustrating Joshua's determination to ensure that each tribe receives equal treatment concerning the allocation of land. The story cycle concerning Joseph is contained in chapters 37 – 50 of Genesis. It identifies him as a favourite of his father, yet as someone whose attitude earned him the violent displeasure of his brothers. He was prone to exaggeration, self-promotion, even self-aggrandisement, and this is reflected in the reference here to their being a 'numerous people'. The census of the people recorded in Numbers chapter 26 tells us that the combined total of the people of Manasseh and Ephraim was indeed greater than any of the other tribes, but not substantially so. And of course, the tribe of Manasseh had already been given a portion of the land settled east of the Jordan. Anyway, Joshua was unmoved… '*…"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites."…* ' (Joshua 17, 15). In effect, Joshua is saying to them that if they do believe themselves to be deserving of more than has been apportioned to them let them expand the boundary of the territory allotted by confronting, defeating and subjugating the indigenous Canaanite tribes. An incidental indication that whilst the Israelites as a whole had occupied the land in terms of the key population centres, mainly in the central area, relatively close to the western bank of the Jordan valley, they had not wholly conquered, and that the hill country, relatively inhospitable, remained beyond their control. This was not enough to satisfy them. '*…The people of Joseph replied, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel."…* ' (Joshua 17, 16). The implication being that not only were they to be given the most fruitful, the most fertile and productive part of the land, they expected Joshua to martial the other tribes to fight on their behalf in order to clear the land of those who stood in their way. And it does seem that whatever happened in the immediate aftermath of this exchange, the people of the Valley of Jezreel were never completely subdued. The story of Gideon, recorded in Judges chapters 6 – 9, is an elongated description of a succession of campaigns waged by the Israelites against the Midianites and the Amalekites in that area. And in 1 Samuel chapter 29 we have the description of Saul's army being defeated by the Philistines in that same valley. Its significance for the

NEWS OF PEOPLE

We were very sorry to hear of the death of ***Shirley Blackman***. This happened very suddenly and was a shock for us all. Shirley worked for the church for many years, being responsible for the upkeep of the Free Church Hall during a time when it was in almost constant use. She only 'retired' when she reached 80! Our sympathies are with her husband, Malcolm, and son Gary - who himself works for us as the church's caretaker - as they adjust to life without their wife and mother respectively. It was some consolation for them that a good number of family and friends were able to attend the funeral service, and I know that they have both been 'pleasantly surprised' to receive a large number of letters, cards and messages of sympathy. ***Ian Tutton***

ongoing well-being of the State of Israel, and of its people is underlined by this 'up to date' description: *'...The Jezreel Valley is a green fertile plain covered with fields of wheat, watermelon, melon, oranges, white beans, cowpeas, chickpeas, green beans, cotton, sunflowers and corn as well as grazing tracts for multitudes of sheep and cattle...'* No wonder the tribespeople of Manasseh and Ephraim viewed the prospect of being left to their own devices with great trepidation. But Joshua will not be persuaded…*'...Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment, but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out."...'* (Joshua 17, verses 17-18)…

…Joshua was determined to ensure that no one tribe would receive special treatment, for whatever reason. Any appeal to historical precedent was no longer relevant. Yes, they were the descendants of Jacob – 'the children of Israel' – but no longer was there to be any sense of the descendants of any one or other of Jacob's sons being regarded as superior to any other. If the tribal confederation that he was assembling was to be built into a nation then it had to be on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity. Internicene rivalry could not be tolerated. And of course, from a Christian perspective, the irony is not lost on us that, as described by the prophet Micah, *'...But from you Bethlehem, Ephrathah, the least among the tribes of Judah, shall come from me a King for Me over Israel...'* (Micah 5, 2). The tribe of Benjamin, the descendants of the youngest of Jacob's sons, the least of the tribes, it would be one of its descendants who would be the Messiah of God. Hence it was in Bethlehem that the future king was to be born, (Matthew 2, verses 4 – 6). ***Ian Tutton***

JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY FOR JULY AND AUGUST

Olympics: Four years to go until the next Olympics, in Paris. The coverage from Tokyo was comprehensive. I only caught the highlights - even so the excitement was almost palpable, particularly when GB team members won unexpected medals, including a good clutch of gold. The atmosphere for the contestants must have been almost electric: however, many team members gave at least the appearance of being relaxed, with Tom Daley putting his knitting hobby to good use by producing a pouch for his gold medal. There were various decisions which emphasized the thought behind the events - including two gold medals being awarded when there was a draw for first place. I almost felt a proprietorial pride in the concept of the Olympics: my home county is Shropshire and the earliest games, in the late 19th century, which developed into the modern Olympics, were held in Much Wenlock. One story particularly resonated with me: a Jamaican athlete had gone exploring and landed up with no money far from the stadium. A Japanese lady paid for a taxi back to base: he kept in touch and went back to show her his medal - and pay back the fare.

Lollipops for all: The German government has offered a free sausage with every Covid jab. In one small town 500 people turned up - for other places the maximum had been 140. In the future, perhaps our Government should consider a suitable British incentive - such as a pork pie or sausage roll!

Football: It doesn't seem very long since the last matches of the previous season were played, but the new season has already started with the first round of one of the minor cup competitions, the Carabao Cup. Out of 23 matches, nine went to a "sudden death" of a penalty shoot out - fate decided in just a few minutes. Two of the matches took some time to resolve, 19 penalties in one case and 15 in another. Nail biting but it's difficult to think of another solution - at least this is certain, whereas some judgment would no doubt lead to cries of "unfair" by one side or the other.

Exams: The papers have been full of the successes of those who have taken their exams; in many cases leading to a University place. I (many years ago!) had personal experience of this system when two of us took Latin 'O' level at the same time. The pass-mark was a relatively modest figure of 45%: I got 46% and the other person 44% and failed. Obviously there has to be a pass level: I did try hard not to be too triumphant, but perhaps I shouldn't have said, "you can always try again."

"Four go to Bristol": There have recently been adverts extolling travellers to go to Bristol by train along with the 'Famous Four and Timmy the dog'. A few weeks ago, Rosemary and I went to Bristol on a day trip, but by car. The object was to meet up with as many as possible from our extensive family. We managed 21 people - with one part unable to come because a grand-daughter had an important ballet exam and another couple had weekend commitments. A great day out at a venue we had previously visited (an inner-city farm) with our own meeting room, complete with wood oven for all the 24 pizzas cooked! A great time had by all. Luckily, daughter Sally knows Bristol well: if we hadn't been able to follow her van, we would probably still be driving around (and around)!

Things I have learnt walking: For the last several weeks, due to close-down of part of the tube for planned structural repairs, I've had a 20 minute walk from Charing Cross to my offices rather than the usual two minutes. The walk has meant going down Whitehall and across Horse Guards Parade. One morning I was approached by a man who started talking about the Gurkhas. Although they originate from Nepal - one of the few countries which, at one time or another, has not been part of the British Empire - there has always been a considerable number of Gurkhas working here and they have given service over 200 years to the British Crown.

The last of couple of minutes of my walk is alongside the lake in St. James' Park, past where the pelicans congregate. Years ago I took a grandson into London and told him that the pelicans had first come from Russia to the Park in the 17th Century. He said "they must be very old!!" They were in fact a gift from the Russian Ambassador to Charles II and over 40 birds have since made the Park their home. The latest three - Gargi, Tiffany and Isla have been joined by Sun, Moon and Star. They have become so famous that during Lockdown their feeding time was live-streamed! All this reminds of the doggerel (by Ogden Nash): "A wonderful bird is a pelican; what his beak doesn't hold, his belly can." At least there isn't the perception – which does exist concerning the seven ravens at the Tower - that if all the pelicans went, the kingdom would crumble; on the other hand there would be more fish!

The future is robotic: I have been aware for years of robot developments which have allowed a range of objects to be 'printed'. The latest is a

footbridge in Venice - made by a 3D printer - using a new type of "concrete ink". The no doubt simplified explanation, which I read, said it was created by specially formulated concrete being squeezed through a nozzle "like" (very helpful this!) "piping icing onto a cake." I hope the result has a stability which the description does not necessarily suggest - otherwise there will be a lot of wet people!

"Happiness is a warm shed": this is a conclusion from a dairy farm experiment to "make cows happy and maximize milk production." The idea is to combine efficient milk production with contented cows: emotional well-being leads to more milk, the theory goes. Apparently the experiment is moving towards success. I suppose it is the price that, increasingly, we will pay: at least I will still have the mental picture of rolling pasture with a herd of striking black and white cows contentedly chewing their cud.

It can be misty in the mountains! A couple who shouted for help after getting trapped on a 100 foot cliff edge in Snowdonia were at first mistaken for mountain goats. The pair were saved by Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue. Happy ending – unlike the man in Canada who was mistaken for a bear and shot by rescue people!

John Birch

St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.

From the Archives

September 1921

The appeal in 1921 for the congregation to enter the church silently for a service and chat to one another at another time, is an interesting one, perhaps one which would not find much support nowadays. The post-war appeal for clothing for Europe shows how deprived civil society on the continent still was, three years after the armistice in 1918.

From Work and Worship, September 1921

Reverence and Atmosphere

As Free Churchmen, it is not our custom to have our places of worship consecrated; we hold that God is to be worshipped everywhere, and therefore one place is not now holier than another, as was the case with the Tabernacle and Temple. Our Lord made it clear to the woman of Samaria that it is the heart and not the position of the worshipper that is the essential matter.

Yet if a place be not holy - an occasion may certainly be so. What more holy occasion can be conceived than meeting together to worship Almighty God - our Creator, our Judge, and our Heavenly Father? Heathen bow down in fear and trembling before their cruel gods of hideous form. We have been taught that our worship is acceptable - is indeed invited by our God of Love - but that should not abate our reverence, rather should we seek to exalt His name. 'Hallowed be Thy name.'

Our Free Church worship here is lacking in this reverence. There is a buzz of talk as the congregation gathers. Friends greet each other as though on the street or in the home. Children run for books and talk aloud. The worshipper who arrives five or six minutes early for silent recollection and preparation of heart is distracted as at a bazaar or concert.

It would be a great gain to the spirituality of our worship if this could be remedied. The greeting of Christian friends is a Christian act of love - but it is our Lord and Master that we come to meet and worship at our hours of service, and the greeting of each other had better be outside the place and hour of meeting. A card in the lobby might be a help.

"We meet to worship Almighty God
Let us enter reverently and in silence" MNA

An appeal that should be read by all members of church and congregation

Clothing Relief Work Party

As it is proposed to recommence this work in October, all friends are

reminded that now is the time to look out such used clothing as can be spared, and to send it to the Church.
The need in Europe is terrible, in some countries even greater than last year, so a very generous and sympathetic response to this appeal is hoped for.
Clothing of every description and for all ages is required; hospital linen and rags, soap, boots and shoes, and oddments of every sort for mending will be welcome. Kindly send things clean, and as early as possible, in order that the first meeting may have a good start.

September 1941

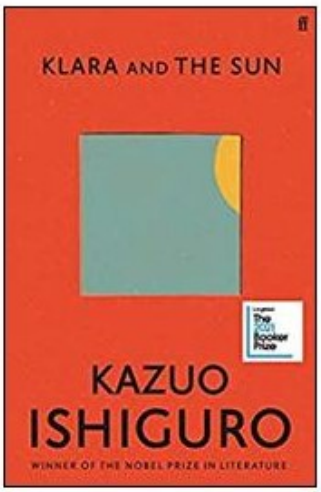
Harvest Festival took on great significance in 1941 with the slogan 'Dig for Victory' and a great reliance on home grown agricultural products. It is also interesting to see how all the young men in the Forces kept in touch from all over the world and how much the parcels from the Free Church were appreciated. It seems we have always been a caring church!

From Newsletter September 1941

One cannot cycle in a country like this without having many thoughts about the importance, this year especially, of a good harvest, and many other thoughts on the difficulties with which farmers have to contend. Agricultural methods have been largely revolutionised since I was a boy, but the weather still plays a large part in the farmers' calculations. I am glad to say that my family, like many other city families, have this year been represented in the labours of the fields. All of which gives a new significance to the Harvest Festival to be held on the last Sunday in September with Herbert Gray as the preacher.
Some interesting letters have come from overseas recently. Douglas McCallum gives his impressions of India. John Gibson, writing from the Middle East, tells how a parcel sent by the Church before Christmas arrived "a little the worse for wear but still intact." Donald Gabriel, in India has much to say about "life on the ocean wave." Rex Coleman, on a well-known warship in the Mediterranean, has seen more severe fighting and writes of his part in it with much modesty. Michael Martin, whose parcel followed him around the world, has again landed on British soil and may perhaps be in his own home as I write these words. I wish the magazine were now in existence so that we might give quotations from very welcome letters.
Ever yours sincerely, Frank H Ballard

Anne Lowe

Book Review



Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro

From the first page, one is hooked. As one reader put it, on reaching page 20: "I never thought I could care so much about what happens to a robot!" For Klara, the storyteller, is indeed a robot, but the novel is set in a future dystopian world where robot technology has advanced to the point where robots can be programmed to have - or to imitate - human feelings and thus to provide friendship to those lucky enough to afford them, in this case a young teenage girl - Josie.

Josie is a fragile young woman who we soon learn has an illness, an illness that has something to do with 'being lifted' (ie genetically engineered to join the dystopia's elite) and which has already proved fatal for her sister.

Josie and her mother take solar-powered Klara from the department store where she had spent her days being moved from one stand to another, watching the sun on its path across the shop floor, to a house in the countryside. Here we become aware of one of the quirks of the novel: AFs (Artificial Friends) see things differently to humans, perceiving the world as a series of squares or boxes (passers by always 'looking at their oblongs'), occasionally glitching out so that perspectives are skewed, everything given a migraine-ish slant. It's just one of a series of ways in which Ishiguro takes us into the existence of the sentient non-human, one of the subtle touches that hint towards the deeper themes that are being explored.

As the book progresses, we realise that the two protagonists of the novel - Josie and her boyfriend Rick and their parents represent two opposing views of the elitist world they inhabit: Josie has been 'lifted' whereas Rick has not. Rick's parents are regarded as old fashioned in not wanting Rick to be 'lifted'. He will not go to college or become part of the rich elite; he is happy to programme and develop his own 'drone birds' and get along as best he can in the countryside. Josie's estranged father is also following an alternative life style in a poor part of the city as a deliberate counter to the elite. Josie's mother, on the other hand, is determined that Josie will join the elite by being 'lifted,' even if this means putting her health at mortal risk.

And so it transpires - Josie begins to falter and fall ill. As her companion, Klara is determined to help her by calling on her mentor or god - ie the sun which powers her systems each day - to provide the 'special nourishment' which she assumes will cure Josie. And also to disable the road repair

machine, the fumes from which Klara feels are weakening the sun. The working out of these themes is complex and surprising and it is left to the reader to decide what the meaning of the book is all about.

The world portrayed in the book is somewhat sinister and foreboding - we don't know for certain what 'being lifted' means but we have to assume it is some kind of genetic engineering to fit people for the governing elite. It is obviously a world of great inequalities - but these are rarely touched upon. Klara is oblivious to all of this and simply accepts the world as she finds it - and just gets on with her task of helping Josie as she sees fit. It is this straightforwardness that makes Klara such an appealing character, perhaps the most appealing character in the book!

The book - short by modern standards - manages to raise a myriad of different issues: the difference between humans and robots, values and intelligence, perception and empathy. And above all, the nature of faith and, as Socrates wondered, 'what is the nature of a good life?'

The book has won many plaudits and has already been translated into many languages. In the opinion of this reviewer all thoroughly deserved.

Marion Ditchfield

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'I want to be like a sunflower so that even on the darkest day I will stand tall and find the sunlight.' ***(Author unknown, sourced by Rosemary Birch)***

PAULA REGO: A retrospective of her work
(Tate Britain until October 24 2021)

Paula Rego's name should be a household word as an artist, as applies to her contemporary at The Slade, David Hockney. Now at 86 she is certainly an Establishment figure, being both a Dame and the first person to have been appointed Artist in Residence at the National Gallery (1990). As her surname indicates, she is of foreign origin, having been born in Portugal. However, her anglophile father sent her to an English school near Lisbon and later to a finishing school in this country, followed by The Slade. There, she met her future husband, Victor Willing, with whom she had three children but unfortunately he died prematurely of multiple sclerosis. Although Paula Rego left Portugal at an early age, its government, rigidly patriarchal society and the brutality with which its army sought to quell nationalist movements in its African possessions, made a profound mark on her psyche and work. Francisco Franco, the Fascist dictator of Spain for many decades is well-known to us all; rather less so his Portuguese contemporary, Antonio de Salazar, who ruled Portugal for roughly the same period as Franco - in Salazar's case the "Estado Novo" lasted from 1933 to 1974. Bearing in mind that Paula Rego was born in 1935, it is not surprising that the impact of Fascism on her art is very marked in her formative years as an artist. In 1960, before leaving Portugal, she boldly produced a painting with the title "Salazar Vomiting his Country."

As with Hockney, Rego's work is accessible to all because in her mature production she does not use modern approaches such as conceptual art, video, photography or installations. Her paintings are figurative and often of a narrative nature, telling the story of women's subjugation to men, of their rebellion and in a contrary sense of her husband's increasing dependence on her when multiple sclerosis paralysed his body. A famous painting, "The Policeman's Daughter," shows a girl polishing her father's black boot. However, what is disconcerting is that one of her hands is right inside the boot she is polishing with a brush. This makes the image look intrusive to the point of aggressiveness. Another painting in the same sequence is "The Dead Goose," again domestic in character, in that it shows a young woman gripping a goose by its feet and holding it upside down as

she plucks it. Here too, because the size of the goose is exaggerated and its snowy down beautifully rendered, there are intimations of torture rather than an atmosphere of domestic tranquillity. The rebellion of the female underclass is studied in her paintings based on Jean Genet's play *The Maids (Les Bonnes)* in which two maids turn on their female employers and kill them. A rightly famous and – superficially, at least – gentler painting is "The Dance," which shows disparate couples and groups dancing by moonlight near the sea. In the background, at the top of a hill, is a menacing-looking fort. One couple is dancing cheek to cheek, another more sober couple would seem, from the woman's shape, to be expecting a baby and then there are three female figures – grandmother, daughter and granddaughter – dancing in a ring. To the left, is a very large isolated female figure in traditional Portuguese dress. The palette Rego uses is sombre and the moon bathes the scene in a cold light. The overall effect is ambiguous except for the fortress above and to the right of the figures. This said, according to the artist herself, the painting shows her as a child with her nanny and her mother; she, as an adult, dancing with her husband, and later in their marriage her husband dancing with a lover. The large isolated figure in traditional dress is the artist herself. However, nothing is explicit and there is plenty of latitude for any spectator to interpret the content as they see fit.

There is no room for ambiguity in Rego's paintings about the effects of illegal abortion, which date from 1998. These were provoked by a referendum on abortion in Portugal conducted at this time. Much to Rego's distress, abortion was not legalized in her country then and her response was this series showing the effects of back-street abortions on its

victims. Do not conclude, however, that Rego's work is all very seriously feminist or grim. She has taken delight in classic Walt Disney figures such as Pinocchio and Snow White and also in English nursery rhymes. This is something that shows particularly in her series of six etchings, "Nursery Rhymes," in which Rego gives her witty interpretation of famous children's rhymes such as "Ba Ba Black Sheep and 'Little Misss Muffet." Rego has also depicted a modern, Portuguese version of Hogarth's "Marriage a la Mode" series, painted when she was artist in residence at the National Gallery where these Hogarth paintings are displayed. The retrospective of Rego's work at Tate Britain has one hundred of her paintings and drawings and so provides viewers with ample evidence of the scope of her talent. We are grateful that she settled here and has drawn much inspiration from aspects of our culture. I would like to end this brief look at Paula Rego's art by quoting the introductory paragraph of the booklet that accompanies this exhibition: "Paula Rego … is one of the most distinctive and acclaimed artists of our time. Working across seven decades, she has reinvented figurative painting and the way in which women and their stories are represented." I agree wholeheartedly with this view of her art.

Verity Smith

CLIMATE CHANGE AND VALUE CHANGE II

In the last issue of N and V we saw how Climate Change was a problem whose only viable solution required governments and populations to do everything they were least disposed to do or be - be it pursuing genuine global cooperation (including Russia and China), putting an end to consumerism, minimising inequality (domestically and internationally), prizing community values over individualism, valuing the long term over the short term, and rebuilding powerful state mechanisms capable of undertaking such action. The list could go on and on - but the message is clear - to be everything we are not and have been taught not to be for the last forty years, to substitute one set of values for an entirely different one, to become different people. Without such changes it is doubtful if global warming can even be stabilised, let alone reversed.

So what are the prospects for bringing this about? Looking at our present leaders and elites, the answer has to be 'not very good'. Are there any pointers or lessons (warnings?) to be drawn from our experience of neoliberalism over the last forty years?

i. Having it both ways

Despite the awful events of the past few months - the heat waves in Canada, Siberia, the Mediterranean, the fires in Greece and Turkey, the flooding in Germany and Belgium, the rain storms in London and elsewhere in the UK, rain on the Greenland icecap for the first time in history - and the dire warnings from the latest IPCC report (climate change is here and now and is happening more rapidly than anyone anticipated and the 'world is now at code red'), there is still the idea that this can all be fixed in such a way that we can go on much as before, ie we are prepared to make changes but only if they can be more or less squared with our way of life now - in other words having our cake and eating it. We saw in past issues how this thinking applied to Neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s - that the gospel of greed could somehow be squared with community values and caring for others via the so-called 'trickledown effect', that the rising tide of prosperity that would be unleashed would float all boats and that we would become rich together. It was all nonsense of course, any

trickledown was strictly upwards and the rich became richer and richer while the rest of us stayed where we were or lost out. Inequality grew every year. We learnt we could not have our cake and eat it.

At the present time, the same kind of thinking applies to Climate Change. We propose carbon credits and offset agreements, planting of trees and reforestation schemes, electric cars, wind and solar power. All these will help of course (if applied on a sufficiently large scale - a colossally big 'if') but they are largely technological and financial 'fixes' that run the danger of letting people think they can still have their cake and eat it.

In the same way we like to think we can do our bit by judicious recycling, changing our light bulbs insulating lofts etc. Again, all of this is fine but only goes so far. The heavy lifting remains. Are we really prepared to change the way we actually live? As a minimum, are we really prepared to ban our SUVs in favour of smaller lighter vehicles (better still, give up our cars altogether or at least make them last a minimum of twenty years), prepared to make our wardrobe of clothes last a minimum of 15 to 20 years instead of relentlessly changing our garments two or three times a year, reduce our meat consumption to near zero, put a stop on most new, non-essential construction projects (because of the concrete involved whose manufacture is a major component of carbon emissions), do away with most of our bathroom lotions and potions (including make-up), forgo our holidays abroad, forbid non-essential air traffic, and so on - once again the list is endless. At first sight, all this would seem impossible, but bear in mind that this was similar to the kind of lives lived by people just after the war - ie before the age of plastics, mass consumerism, widespread car ownership, holidays abroad (!), etc. Unless memory betrays, it is still quite feasible to survive and have a fairly pleasant life without any of these things. And it would not necessarily involve sacrificing the advances we have made in medicine, healthcare, education, scientific knowledge etc, all of which are not, in themselves, particularly resource intensive. And - stretching a point - it might be possible to retain some of our beloved domestic technology ie iphones, TVs etc - provided we are prepared to really value them and make them last and not have to upgrade them every other year - iphones should have a life of at least 10 years, TVs 20 years or more.

Of course, none of this is very likely to happen - we would have to become different kinds of people. The only way to achieve these kinds of changes would be for governments to go onto a de facto wartime footing. But for decades Neoliberalism has taught the unimaginable evils of large government and any kind of role for the state - so, again, this would require

monumental changes in outlook that are simply not going to happen.

ii. 'Never waste a good crisis'

Another lesson from our Neoliberal friends is 'never waste a good crisis'. We saw how following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, people were hopeful that our financial and political systems could be reformed in such a way as to bring back the interests of ordinary citizens into the picture. Of course, it didn't happen. Instead, the opportunity was taken to usher in a decade or more of austerity economics that introduced previously unseen levels of poverty and inequality into UK society. The effects are still very much with us today.

And then came Covid. Again, people were hopeful that the pandemic and our response to it would be an opportunity to reintroduce community values, to truly value the work that so many ill-paid people did for the community. Remember how we clapped for NHS workers and how we promised them generous pay increases. Of course, nothing of the sort happened. Instead, the opportunity was taken to (surreptitiously) push forward the privatisation of the NHS and allow favoured firms to make fortunes from supplying PPI and testing equipment. The accompanying accusations of corruption and cronyism will hopefully be investigated further down the road - but one shouldn't hold one's breath.

Globally, Covid has also been a golden opportunity to make enormous fortunes. In August an analysis (by Oxfam, the Fight Inequality Alliance, the Institute for Policy Studies and the Patriotic Millionaires) was published that showed how every adult in the world could get a Covid 19 vaccine if the wealth collected during the pandemic (some $5.5 trillion) was subject to a one-time 99% tax. And there would still be enough over to give a payment of $20,000 in cash to all unemployed workers.

Conclusion

And what was true of the GFC and Covid 19 is even truer for Climate Change. Why should our elites bite the hand that feeds them and allows them to make personal fortunes? For like the GFC and Covid 19, Climate Change presents them with myriad opportunities to make even more money, from developing complex financial instruments and tax arrangements as part of carbon trading, to exploiting previously unusable land, to developing new trading routes, to property construction (and speculation) in favoured parts of the world least likely to be affected by Global Warming - 'bolt holes' for the wealthy. To quote George Monbiot: "No government, even the most progressive, is yet prepared to contemplate the transformation we need: a global programme that places the survival of humanity and the rest of life on Earth above all other issues. We need not just a new policy, but a new ethics…… But this conversation has scarcely begun."

John Ditchfield

JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

Competition No.37: Rivers and Places

This month's competition is about 'Rivers and Places' - can you can put the place and the river together

RIVERS

Tees Humber Ribble Great Ouse Mersey Dee
Stour/Orwell Rheidol Teifr Usk Severn Rother
Parrett Tamar

PLACES

Plymouth Bridgewater Rye Gloucester Newport Cardigan
Aberystwyth Harwich Pont of Ayr Liverpool Kings Lynn
Lytham St. Anne Kingston upon Hull Middlesborough

.

Answers to Competition No 36: Music about places

1. Fingals Cave
2. Lambeth Way
3. Men of Harlech
4. Glasgow
5. Londonderry
6. Skye
7. Lomond
8. Scotland (the Brave)
9. Liverpool
10. White cliffs of Dover

We look forward to your answers - send them either by email to jbirch1821@gmail.com or by post to J Birch, 26 Holden Road, London N12 8HT

WORDSEARCH: BUTTERFLIES

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

BRIMSTONE CABBAGE-WHITE CHALK-HILL-BLUE COMMA FRITILLARY GATEKEEPER GRAYLING HOLLY-BLUE LARGE-WHITE MARBLED-WHITE MEADOW-BROWN ORANGE-TIP PEACOCK RINGLET RED-ADMIRAL SKIPPER SMALL-COPPER SCOTCH-ARGUS SMALL-HEATH SPECKLED-WOOD SWALLOW-TAIL SMALL-TORTOISESHELL WOOD-WHITE

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

B	A	T	S	M	A	N	R	Q	C	V	R
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BAT
BALL
STUMPS
BAILS
CREASE

BATSMAN
BOWLER
WICKETKEEPER
FIELDER
BOUNDARY

OVER
HAT-TRICK
RUNS
CENTURY
INNINGS

DIARY

The church is open. The services will also continue to be live streamed 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 starting Sept 8th*
Saturday *10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open*
Thursday *Sept 16th & 30th 8.00pm Choir Practice*
Christian Meditation *- Meditators meet here. For further information, contact: Georgia at gmrtutton@aol.com*

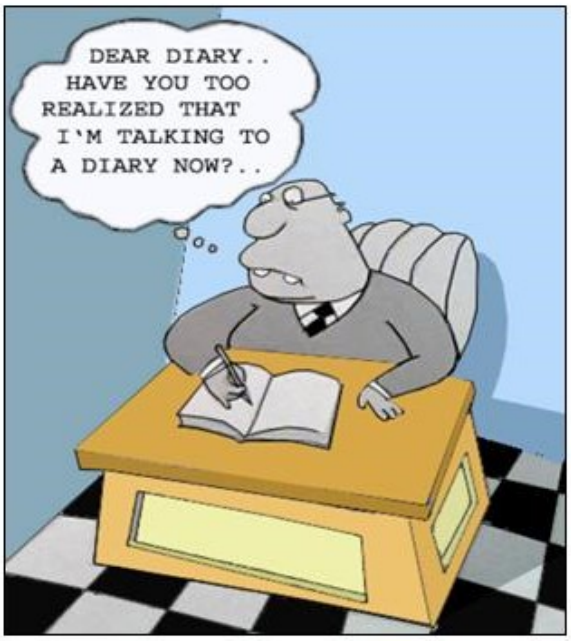
SEPTEMBER

2	7.00 am – 6.00pm	Church Open for Henrietta Barnett School Exam Days serving drinks and cakes
3	7.00 am – 6.00pm	As above
4	10.00 am - 6.00 pm	Open House weekend, church open
5	**11.00 am**	**Family Communion Service**
	12.00 am - 6.00 pm	Open House, church open and 3-4pm live entertainment
12	**11.00 am**	**Family Service**
14	7.30 pm	Deacons Court
18	10.00 am – 12.00	Autumn Clean of Church, all helpers welcome
19	**11.00 am**	**Family Service led by Rev Maggie Hindley**
21	7.30 pm	Elders Court
24	1.00 pm	Piano Recital in the Free Church.
26	**11.00 am**	**Family Service**

OCTOBER

3	**11.00 am**	**Harvest & Communion Family Service** followed by lunch
10	**11.00 am**	**Family Service**

17 11.00 am **Family Service led by Rev Eddie Boon followed by lunch then Future Vision Event – discussion on future ministry**



NEWS AND VIEWS

PRODUCTION	John Ditchfield
DISTRIBUTION	Jill Purdie and others
EDITORIAL PANEL	Joan Holton and Marion Ditchfield
TYPESETTER	John Ditchfield
EDITOR	Marion Ditchfield

The next edition of News and Views will be published on Sunday 3rd October. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield, (john_ditchfield@hotmail.com) by Sunday September 19th.

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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