



**ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
WALTON-ON-THAMES**



**NEWSLETTER**



**APRIL 2021**

**Volume 78 No 3**



*See the land, her Easter keeping,  
Rises as her Maker rose.  
Seeds, so long in darkness sleeping,  
Burst at last from winter snows.  
Earth with heaven above rejoices...*

*Charles Kingsley*



Dear friends

*From The Manse*

*April 2021*

I'm a great believer in having a number of different pots and tubs in the garden, planted with all sorts of different things so that you can move one into place when its plants are coming out and are in flower and then you can move it away again when they're dying back, replacing it with another. Last year, when getting hold of bedding plants was difficult and I was initially expecting to be going on sabbatical, I didn't bother planting them all up and some were moved to the working area of the garden and rested. In the autumn I planted a few tubs up but, if I'm honest, rather forgot about those apparently empty ones in the corner.

A few weeks ago I was getting something from that area and realised that there was a little miracle happening; a little gift from God there waiting for me to discover. The empty pots weren't. The bulbs in them had come up and lots of buds were beginning to show. All I had to do was pull them out and place them on the patio. Now, it's just a riot of colour. It's that miracle of life which is unstoppable.

Last year we celebrated Easter as bravely as we could, disorientated and dismayed at being unable to gather together in church. It felt so weird. This year we'll be on line again although at least it's familiar to us now. We also have a tentative re-opening date if the timings in the Government's roadmap are realised. So, just as it's hard to know that once again we'll not be in church on Easter morning, lustily singing "Jesus Christ is risen today", but then I look out of my study window, across the patio with a number of pots of bulbs on it and am forced to think again.

One of the names for daffodils is "Osterglocken"- "Easter Bells". Currently they are peeling out the message that "Christ is Risen" for all they're worth. Tall ones, dwarf ones, scented ones, bi-toned ones. They are all ringing out the message of resurrection.

The women who went to Jesus' tomb to anoint his body and instead discovered the empty tomb had taken with them herbs and spices. I've some beautiful, scented hyacinths on the patio too. They were bulbs I'd had in pots in the house last year. When they'd finished I'd put them in the corner of the garden to die back and forgotten them. Now, they are up again and out in full flower, scenting the air around them and reminding me of the women whose sad task suddenly became the most joyous of all tasks. What's more, as if pressing the message home, up the path is my herb garden with, amongst other things, rosemary, mint, thyme and basil. They are all coming back after the winter. I've even been able to use fresh mint this year already.

Now, I'm aware that what I'm about to say may sound a little odd, but as I think about my Easter message this year and feel so frustrated that we're again not having "in building" Easter services it's as if nature is telling me, "He is not here, he is risen!" My patio appears to be telling me something - and perhaps it's right to do so too.

With all good wishes,




*Phil Lad*





## EASTER SERVICES AND CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2021



Wednesday 31 March	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
Thursday 1 April (Maundy Thursday)	7.00 pm	Maundy Thursday Communion (Zoom)
 Friday 2 April (Good Friday)	11.30 am	Good Friday Service of Meditation (Zoom)
 <b>Sunday 4 April (Easter Day)</b>	<b>11.30 am</b>	<b>Easter Day Worship with Communion (Zoom)</b>
Tuesday 6 April	7.30 pm	St Andrew's Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 7 April	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer
 Friday 9 April	12.30 - 1.30 pm	People Who Lunch (Zoom)
<b>Sunday 11 April</b>	<b>11.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship (Zoom)</b>
Tuesday 13 April	7.30 pm	Weybridge Elders' Meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 14 April	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge URC open for private prayer

### ***COPY DATE FOR MAY ISSUE : WEDNESDAY 14 April***

*All items to the Editor, Norma Reid, 3 Gwalior Road, London SW15 1NP  
Tel: 020 8785 4392 Email: [aristocats.2000@gmail.com](mailto:aristocats.2000@gmail.com)*

<b>Sunday 18 April</b>	<b>11.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship (Zoom)</b>
Wednesday 21 April	10.00-10.30 am 10.00-11.00 am	Prayer and Share (Zoom) Weybridge URC open for private prayer
<b>Sunday 25 April</b>	<b>11.30 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship (Zoom)</b>
Wednesday 28 April	10.00-11.00 am	Weybridge open for private prayer

### **ST ANDREW'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

As you know, at this time of year we normally arrange our Annual General Meeting. We are holding back in the hope that we will be able to hold it in person, possibly in June. We will keep you updated on the situation.

## ELDERS' DEVOTIONS - MARCH 2021

I have been thinking about our personal outreach as an example of being Christians. We can sow seeds of hospitality and kindness and neighbourliness. Whilst we cannot force people to become Christians, we can shape conditions to encourage them. We do not know how our examples develop in the hearts of others.

We need to find ways to talk naturally about God and all that we believe. We need to let our lives be a sign of God's grace. Perhaps we can be a gentle light in our relationships with others. We do not have to force our ideas on them but we can be a soft glow that puts them in the best light. We need the Light of Christ to shine through us.

If we can be supportive and loving to those who share our lives they could feel the presence of God who lives not only in us but also in them. We need to create friendships that respects others and lifts them.

### A PRAYER

Dear Loving Father, show us how to work with you. Let your Spirit fill us and help us speak when we can be heard. We want to share your love but struggle when it is revealed through unexpected people.

Lord we pray for refugees who come to live in our country. Grant them a place of safety and friends who can offer them support and practical help.

Father, we pray for all who mourn the passing of loved ones especially those taken by Covid. Comfort them and let them know that there is life hereafter. We ask that our prayers will not just be empty words when we come across those who suffer and ask that you will be their God also in their grieving.

We offer our lives in service establishing your Kingdom and church here in Walton.

In Jesus name. Amen

*Moir de Kok*

### MINISTER'S SABBATICAL

As you know, last year I was due to take a sabbatical which I postponed for a year due to the COVID restrictions. My hope was to begin this year on 1<sup>st</sup> May: however, with some restrictions still in place that's not so easy. Furthermore, with the churches' target date for reopening being Pentecost, I don't want to be away for that either. Being realistic, when the buildings are open again it's likely to be a busy and crucial time to be around and I'd not feel comfortable being away from the pastorate for three months. With the agreement of my Training Officer, I have therefore postponed my sabbatical for a further year and now intend to take it in the summer of 2022. I really shall be taking it then or else I'll be too close to retirement! What I am intending to do, though, is take some annual leave, hopefully immediately after the church buildings reopen, and I shall still be going on the retreat I'd booked in July.

So, I will be taking a bit of a break, but using annual leave and "in service training" time and I'll not be going off on sabbatical until 2022.

*Michael Hodgson*

## LOOKING AHEAD...

If the Government's current timetable is kept we are hoping that both church buildings will reopen again on 23rd May - Pentecost, the church's birthday. Anna, Gwenda and I have been looking ahead to our target reopening which is clearly going to be a very special day for both congregations. As you know, as a Minister with a pastoral heart I would very much like to be with both congregations that day to share in that joyous occasion but, if both services are at 10.30 am, then I can't be in two places at once and I object to a sharp knife being used to enable it. It may also be that on this occasion members of the two congregations would like to support each other as well. Again, that's not possible if both services are held at the same time.

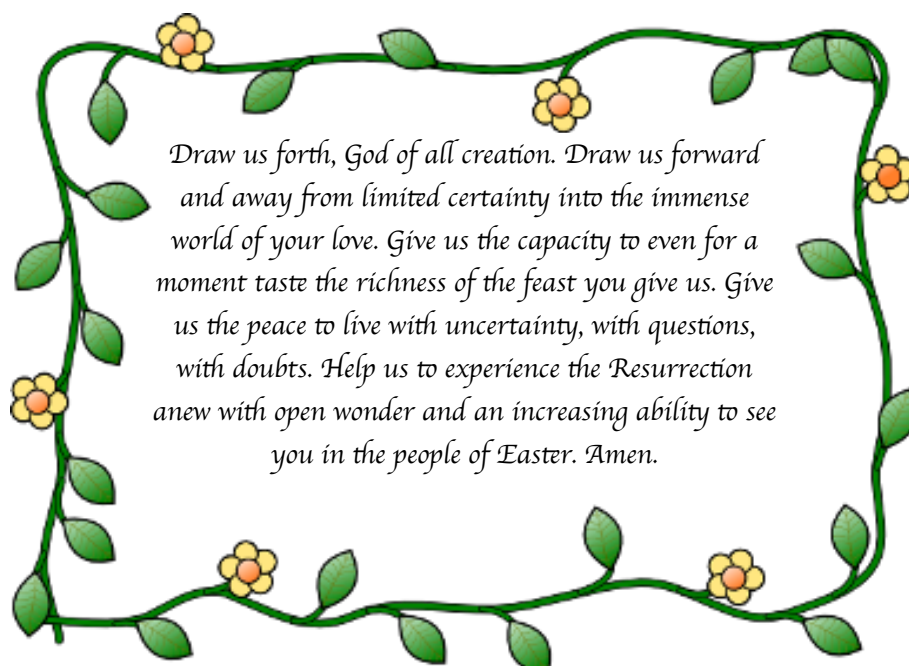
Having talked through a number of ideas, it could be nice to do things a little differently that day. The suggestion is that St Andrew's opens at 10.30am on 23rd May and that that service is also the "zoom service" for those unable to get to either church. Weybridge URC would then hold its service in the afternoon, possibly at 2.30 pm that day. This way, both churches open on the same day. Both churches can celebrate and as many people as possible are able to be included.

The drawback is that many people are likely to be quite busy on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, perhaps going out for lunch with family for the first time in a long time – it's the first Sunday after pubs and restaurants are able to so reopen indoors. It's also quite a busy and crucial time in the sporting calendar. On the other hand, if people can't make "their" church's service they may be pleased to go to the other one if that time fits them better - I don't know. I suspect that there's no perfect answer and that what ever we do won't suit everyone. Any comments would be welcome but this is where thinking is at the moment.

At the risk of saying the obvious, a priority will be to celebrate Communion and so my idea is that both services would be Communion services. That way, the first thing we do in each building will be to gather at the Lord's Table and keep that sacrament which Jesus gave us.

Obviously, lots more to follow but I thought you'd like the heads up - the light at the end of the tunnel - and to know that we are now planning for the future.

*Michael Hodgson*



## The Birks of Invermay

### Scottish song by David Mallet and the Revd Alex Bryce

As we patiently wait for spring to arrive, we thought that this lovely song would remind us of the joys of the season to come. In the 18th century, Invermay was a small woody glen, full of birch trees, watered by the rivulet May. It is situated about five miles above the bridge of Earn, and nearly nine from Perth. The Birks Of Invermay (also known as Berks Of Endermay) is a Scottish song written sometime before 1733, The first two stanzas of this song are thought to have been written by David Mallet (1714-1765), the other stanzas are generally ascribed to the Revd Alex Bryce, minister of Kirknewton (1713-1786). To hear a performance of The Birks of Invermay song click [here](#).

It is not entirely clear who devised the Scottish country dance but it is credited to Thomas Skillern. The dance first appears in Skillern's Compleat Collection Of Two Hundred And Four Reels And Country Dances For 1776 and in his 'Book Of 24 Dances' published in 1795. The dance (32 bar Strathspey) is featured in RSCDS Book 16 (2). If you would like to watch a video of the dance then click [here](#). You can click on this link <https://www.scottish-country-dancing-dictionary.com/video/z-birks-of-invermay.html> to hear the song (words below).

*contributed by Anna Crawford*

#### *The Birks Of Invermay by David Mallet*

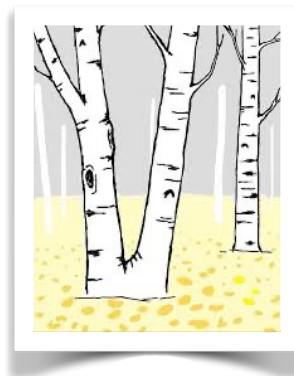
The smiling morn, the breathing spring,  
Invites the tunefu' birds to sing;  
And, while they warble from the spray,  
Love melts the universal lay.  
Let us, Amanda, timely wise,  
Like them, improve the hour that flies;  
And in soft raptures waste the day,  
Among the birks of Invermay.

For soon the winter of the year,  
And age, life's winter, will appear,  
At this thy living bloom will fade,  
As that will strip the verdant shade.  
Our taste of pleasure then is o'er,  
The feather'd songsters are no more;  
And when they drop, and we decay,  
Adieu the birks of Invermay!

The laverocks, now, and lintwhites sing,  
The rocks around with echoes ring;  
The mavis and the blackbird vie,  
In tuneful strains, to glad the day  
The woods now wear their summer suits;  
To mirth all nature now invites:  
Let us be blythsome, then, and gay,  
Among the birks of Invermay

Behold the hills and vales around,  
With lowing herds and flocks abound;  
The wanton kids and frisking lambs  
Gambol and dance around their dams.  
The busy bees with humming noise  
And all the reptile kind rejoice:  
Let us, like them, then sing and play  
Among the birks of Invermay.

Hark, how the waters, as they fall  
Loudly my love to gladness call;  
The wanton waves sport in the beams,  
And fishes play throughout the streams:  
The circling sun does now advance,  
And all the planets round him dance:  
Let us as jovial be as they,  
Among the birks of Invermay.



## ZOOM CHAT LINE – WHY NOT HAVE A GO?

During recent Zoom services, a few of the congregation will have seen messages from ArtPeace before or during the service. Some may wonder how to access these. Answer: If you tap or click



on the foot of your Zoom screen whether displayed on a tablet or PC you will see a little speech bubble icon headed 'Chat'. If you tap or click onto 'Chat', a column will open to the right of your Zoom screen. At the foot of this column, you will see a small section which allows you to type and send little messages within a meeting. You can either send a private message to an individual user, or to the entire group. If you type a message to me for ArtPeace, I will copy same onto my mobile and forward it on to their mobiles. It's very simple really – it must be as even I can use it! The artists love feeling part of the St. Andrew's scene and listed below are

some examples of messages sent to me via WhatsApp from their mobiles. I, in turn, cut and paste these onto the Zoom Chat section and press enter for everyone or individuals to read.

### Examples of Chat messages sent by Artpeace:

**From Shingi:** Good morning, Thanks John for letting us join your service. St Andrews, we love you for the great job you are doing. Today it's our day to be with you - Yes, we are miles away but through mobiles it's near, so we hear the service with our families in our homes. Thank you, Lord, for giving us this opportunity to be with St Andrews. All our families are happy. We Love You All 🙏🙏🙏

**From Mike:** Good day St Andrews church. We now feel a part of your congregation and feel blessed. We are ready once again to listen to today's service. Stay safe and God bless you all!

**From Godwin:** St Andrews - your service is making a difference as it makes us feel the presence of God. Thank you all. Keep it coming.

**From Lizeni:** Thank you for your message Carol (Lee) – you are a nice person and lift our Spirits. Amen.

**From Fortune:** Morning St Andrews - we feel privileged again to share this service. It takes us closer to our heavenly Father. God bless - we are waiting anxiously.

**From Christine:** Good day St Andrews parish. Thank you for sharing the Word and your time with us and our families. We are richly blessed. May this be the beginning of a fruitful week for yourselves and us. God bless you all.



**Why not give it a try next service?** When most of us eventually return to St Andrew's for our usual service, it will be difficult if nigh impossible for me to make this happen. I know ArtPeace and their friends would love to hear from you, and it would make our link so much more personal. We enjoy a unique tightly controlled very much 'live' set up unlike large professionally run charities where feedback can be minimal at best so let's make the most of it! **JS**

*Photos: top – Artist Godwin and his family and immediately above: artist Lizeni and her family.*



## “EARTH LAUGHS IN FLOWERS”

(From Hamatreya by Ralph Waldo Emerson)



*A selection of Alison's creations*

Knowing my interest in floral decoration, Anna Crawford very kindly invited me to a Zoom demonstration which was attended by 50 ladies from four flower clubs in Surrey. It was a great success no one left disappointed as the well known Alison Gillot gave a most entertaining and skilful demonstration. She used the theme of nursery rhymes and not only interpreted these but also sang them to us whilst arranging flowers!

Her first arrangement was based on ‘See Saw Margery Daw.’ In the 1700s a daw was a lazy person. The two children on the see saw represent child labour in Victorian times and one, Johnny, would earn a measly penny a day. He would get a new master because he couldn’t work any faster. (The workhouse). In her arrangement Alison used Choisya to cover the oasis in the container

and then arranged single yellow chrysanthemums cut from the main flower stem, together with purple Dutch Irises. The irises were arranged at an angle to represent the see saw. We were taught a good tip about the Dutch irises: by gently flicking the calyx, the flower opens.

We were treated to “Mary Mary Quite Contrary” based on the story of Queen Mary of Scots who was a staunch Catholic. She was responsible for the death of many Protestants in Scotland. In the rhyme, the silver bells and cockle shells were colloquialisms for instruments of torture. The Maids in a Row actually refers to the Maidens which were used to behead people. Alison interpreted this rhyme by using a pale pink watering can in which she arranged pink Gerberas, purple Liatrus, pink helichrysum (straw flowers) and pin cushion like flowers dyed deep magenta. The arrangement was loose and very attractive, with foliage of Pittosporum and Sedge - there you had Mary’s garden of flowers.

Baa Baa Black Sheep was next and we heard about the wool tax imposed by King Edward. The proceeds of 1/3 of a bag of wool went to the King, 1/3 to the church and the last 1/3 to the farmer. Hence nothing was left for the “little boy down the lane” who was the shepherd. The Black sheep’s fleece could not be dyed well and so was baa baa. To this day, in the House of Lords the Speaker sits on a bag of wool.

Before using white tulips Alison explained that they should be left wrapped up as they were phototropic and would bend if left uncovered. Also, when buying tulips always make sure the leaves squeak when touched as that is sign of freshness. The flowers were arranged into a flat circle made from cardboard (with a wine glass-sized opening in the centre), bound with black twine. White tulips were threaded through the centre of the ring in a circle with one placed in the centre. They were held together at their base by tape and, finally, gypsophila was threaded among them. With the posy tied under the circular form you had a delightful depiction of the nursery rhyme in black and white.

The next rhyme was Humpty Dumpty, made famous but Lewis Carroll’s book “Alice Through the Looking Glass”, first printed in 1810. There are many theories about who Humpty Dumpty was, the most popular being that it was the name of a large cannon used in the Civil War of 1642-1649. It is believed that when the town of Colchester was threatened, the cannon was hauled up onto the church roof and one-eyed Roger was left to fire it. During the siege of the town by Lord Fairfax’s attacking troops, the Roundheads fired on the church and the damage caused the cannon to come tumbling down (Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall).

Alison created an oblong form which she covered in red as a container. She then placed tall black balsa wood sticks upright and sprayed Teasels black to represent the soldiers’ busbies and stood them among the Teasels in the container. She cut magnificent Grand Prix red roses in various heights and placed them among the teasels (in glass vials). Red tulips represented the soldiers in red coats. Next, red anthuriums



were added with their glossy leaves. Lastly, hypericum red berries were placed at the base of the arrangement, representing the cannon balls. Moss covered the oasis. She then placed dried and hollowed out broccoli stems to represent the cannons. What an impressive arrangement!

The well known Ring a Ring of Roses was a rhyme about the Great Plague of London in 1665. The roses represent the skin rash the sufferers had and the pocket full of posies alluded to the attempt to disguise the stench of the plague on people. We understand that 15% of the population was decimated by the plague hence the "we all fall down". Alison interpreted the rhyme by using an old oasis ring wrapped in red paper and covered in copper wire. A sphere was created with oasis and covered in bay leaves. Red hat pins were stuck into this to represent the rash of the plague and it was placed in the centre of the circle. Around the edge of the circle she placed little silhouettes of figures. The border of the ring was filled with pink roses cut quite short and interspersed with pieces of sea lavender. A charming centre piece.

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush was thought to be about the women prisoners of Wakefield prison exercising with their children around the mulberry bush in the prison courtyard. Alison covered a large tin in mulberry paper and used coffee grounds to create a design on it. Before using the daffodils, the base of their stems were pushed into a short piece of plastic straw to make it possible to insert them into the oasis. We were taught that daffodils give off ethylene and so shouldn't be mixed with other flowers. Alison tied three bunches of daffodils and placed them in three small glass vases and these were put onto a ring of candle wax which was created by pouring melted wax into a cake form. Around the three vases of daffodils she placed pine cones on the round wax form to represent the mothers.

All this work was done with amazing skill and confidence whilst Alison carried on her commentary. At the end of the demonstration, the ladies broke up into chat rooms. It was very successful as there were up to four in a "room" spies. It was lovely to meet new people and we all agreed that we had enormously enjoyed the demonstration. *Moir de Kok*

## THE LIGHTER SIDE

My wife and I were watching the gorillas at the zoo when several of them charged at the enclosure fence, yelling terribly, rolling their eyes around and clenching their fists. They looked quite terrifying. The crowd scattered except for one frail, elderly man, who did not bat an eye. Later, my wife asked him how he had kept his composure. "Oh, easy," he said cheerfully. "You see, I used to run the youth group at my church."

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2.30 this morning, can you believe that? 2.30 am! Luckily for him, I was still up playing my bagpipes.

*Signs that say it all...*

*On a field gate:* the farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free but the bull charges.

*In a Laundromat:* automatic washing machines - please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

*Seen on a bin lorry:* Satisfaction guaranteed or double your rubbish back!

*In an office:* After tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

*Some Glasgow Humour...*

The Minister was sharing a rail compartment with a Scot the worse of drink who insisted on talking.

"Please don't speak to me" said the Minister, "you're drunk." "Drunk?" replied the Scot. "You're worse than me - you've got your collar on back to front!"

Strolling through Bearsden, a woman pointed out one of the town's churches and observed to her companion: "They're so posh in there, I hear they even have a Communion wine list."

*(Note from Ed: I was christened at New Kilpatrick Kirk in Bearsden but, sadly, moved away before I was able to appreciate the Communion wine!)*

## TREASURER'S UPDATE

During a normal, non-Covid year we would be having our Annual General Meeting around this time. Since this is not yet allowed, the AGM will be held sometime later this year. However, I can give you a first look at our finances as they stand at 31 December 2020, ie for the full 2020 year.

INCOME:	BUDGET	ACTUAL	VARIANCE
	£	£	£
Voluntary	34,000.00	35,155.00	+ 1,155.00
Hall lettings	27,634. 00	9,349.00	- 18,285.00
Total	61,634.00	44,504.00	- 17,130.00
EXPENSES:	60,324.00	55,710.00	- 4,614.00

Income shortfall of £17,130 vs expenses under spend of £4,614 means a net shortfall for the year of £12,516. This shortfall will be financed out of our reserves.

Looking at the above, may I first thank all of you for your continued generous giving, with your cheques, debit/standing orders etc and even some cash.

To be able to report a positive income vs budget picture in our voluntary giving area can only be described as remarkable in a difficult year for many.

In so far as Hall Lettings income is concerned, it is no surprise that this is down by 66%. As you know, most of our hirers had to close for most of the year. It does, of course, highlight the extent to which we rely on lettings income.

Note 1 The numbers above have been rounded to the nearest thousand and obtained from the trial balance. Small variances in the final financial statement may occur.

Note 2 Unfortunately, we will continue to experience financial shortfalls in 2021. The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter will reflect close to zero income for Hall Lettings and this income will only recover partially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Your continued financial goodwill towards your Church therefore remains very, very important in 2021 .

Thank you and God bless.

*Jan de Kok*



## JOB OPPORTUNITY - HALL BOOKINGS

### CAN YOU HELP?

Hall bookings are a major source of income as well as being part of our outreach to the community.

Jan has been doing a sterling job on Hall bookings, but he only took on the task as a stop gap and we now need someone - or two together - to take over the role. The Elders are looking into having the system computerised, with a suitable package to allow bookings and invoicing to be done on line, thus saving a lot of work. There is a dedicated Hall Hire e-mail address and mobile phone number.

Please consider this carefully. if you would like further information or to discuss the possibility, please contact the Minister or myself.

*Anna Crawford*

## PETS CORNER

*Sophia Swanson writes from Houston*

We have 2 Labradors from the same litter. Scout is our yellow lab a big boy at 75 lbs. Kona is a chocolate lab at 60 lbs. Scout was the biggest pup and Kona the runt of the litter. Scout is a scaredy-cat and I often have to reassure him everything will be alright. Kona, on the other hand, is like a mother hen and takes on the job of keeping us all safe. Scout is very obedient and does exactly as told. Kona is in her own little world and comes around when she's ready. They've just turned two years old in March and enjoyed a birthday treat of homemade pumpkin and peanut butter biscuits. Daily routine is watching for squirrels to chase out of the garden and the occasional bunny. Sunbathing is another afternoon favorite they've mastered.



*Squirrel Watch*

## MOVING ON



John Hutson is moving away from Walton at the end of March to be nearer to his daughter, Lorna, in Chipping Norton. As one of the longest-standing members of St Andrew's, joining in 1975, for many years a serving Elder and also Treasurer, we are all very sorry to lose him from the congregation. We will miss his cheery, interesting and dapper presence a great deal. We wish you all the best in your new home, John, and look forward to being able to keep in touch with you once we know your new address. *Ed*



## A LITTLE TELLY WATCHING

I don't know if any of you are watching the TV programme, "Rich House, Poor House" but it's one that I find both interesting and thought-provoking. To be honest it's not a programme I think that I'd have chosen to watch but I stumbled across one evening as I was too lazy to turn the TV off and was instantly hooked. In what I'm about to write, however, I should make it clear that I am using the TV programme's terminology, not mine.

The format is that a couple and their family from the richest 10% in the country swap homes and weekly expendable income with a couple from the poorest 10%. Before I saw the programme I totally misjudged what would happen and the lines that would be taken. The programme's stated aim is to ask does money really buy you happiness? The answers it comes up with are what make it such an interesting one to watch. Stepping out of their lives and into someone else's often has a profound effect on both couples.

Some of the poorer couples really benefit from a week away from their normal environments, struggles and worries. They've often seen it as an incredible opportunity, with the help of the other couple's family and friends, to reflect on their own lives and, at the end of the week, have frequently returned home with their mindset refreshed and refocussed. For them it's been a week with a massive burden lifted from them which has then allowed them to address their issues from a different perspective.

Some of the richer couples have also benefitted from a week away, often re-evaluating their own priorities and values, again with the help of the other couple's family and friends. Some have been left appreciating the personal "cost" of their financial success and, in that cold light, have frequently been pretty uncomfortable with it too. They often return home with their minds in a different place and with an altered set of values and priorities.

Clearly, there are strict programme rules about what the couples may and may not do but, at the end, it's fairly common for the "rich couple" to try to give the "poor couple" a helping hand (not by giving money) to help them move forward. It's not uncommon for the "poor couple" to ask the "rich couple" for a bit of advice as well, a fresh pair of eyes looking at the problems they face. (Please remember that I'm using the TV programme's terminology.) It's also common for the "rich couple" to have had their eyes opened and to have been brought up short by what the "poor couple" face.

In the Bible, Cain famously asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?". Over the couple of years that I've been watching "Rich House, Poor House", I've seen a number of couples facing that moral question. What's been so interesting is that the giving, the receiving and the helping has not been one way. Some incredibly moving stories have been told and the programme is usually positive at the end.

I often find it to be inspirational, giving me, the viewer, a different perspective too. I'm certainly glad for that initial evening when I couldn't be bothered to turn the telly off.

*Michael Hodgson*

*It's not how much we have but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness.*

*Charles Spurgeon - British Clergyman - 1834-1892*



On 23 March, at 8 pm, we lit candles to remember those who sadly lost their lives with the Coronavirus. The Moderators of the General Assembly of the URC, the Revd Nigel Uden and Derek Estill, have offered this prayer.

*"Living, loving God, we praise you, and through times of peril we lean into you, for in Jesus Christ you have trodden paths as difficult as ours, revealing there a love that nothing defeats, a love that bears us through. Even as we strive to behave responsibly, and to care reliably, so we feel after you that these uncertain times we might trust you are with us, our refuge and strength, and our faith, hope and love might be renewed, through Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## THE WAY WE WERE

### WALTON-ON-THAMES

The other day I was looking at a Gazetteer of places in England and Wales which was published in the 1870s. I was intrigued to read the entry for Walton, part of which I'd like to share with you.

*Walton-upon-Thames- a village and parish in Surrey. The village stands on the River Thames with a station on the L&SWR, 17 miles from London, with a post, money order and telegraph office. It is a resort of anglers, tourists and boating parties and has several good hotels. The population has increased considerably owing to the erection of houses on the Oatlands Park estate and to the erection of villas and ornate cottages in other parts. Ashley Park House is said to have been built by Cardinal Wolsey and is now the seat of the Sassoon family. Cowey Stakes, generally regarded as where Caesar crossed the Thames in pursuit of Cassivelannus is adjacent to Mount Felix.*

I'm assuming that Cowey Stakes is what, today, we call Cowey Sale and next time I'm walking round the town I'll keep my eye open for all those anglers and boating parties, staying at the good hotels. By the way, whereas there is information about St Mary's church, the only other place of worship then was the "Wesleyan" chapel. Also, I was interested to note that St George's Hill was also included under Walton, not Weybridge.

Michael Hodgson

### ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH c. 1935



"From 16th June 1928, a small band of Presbyterians held a weekly service in the Playhouse, and in July 1930 they purchased this site on the corner of The Chestnuts. The architect, P G Overall, prepared plans for a church to seat 350 and a hall to seat 250. Initially, the hall alone would be built and serve as a church. The Rev. Hugh Macluskie was appointed as acting minister in March 1931. W. H. Gaze & Sons of Bridge Street commenced building work in September and the foundation stone was laid by Lord Beaverbrook in November. The hall, costing £5,000, was provided with a vestry, parlour, kitchen, cloakroom, lavatories, chair store, and transformer chamber. The walls were

wainscotted in Douglas fir with red bricks above. The ceilings were covered with "Insulwood" - a patent acoustic board made in Sunbury. "Unity" electric tubular heating (still something of a novelty) was installed by Messrs. Sedgley & Edgley of High Street. Messrs. Gaze's Works Band played at the opening ceremony on Saturday, 20th February, 1932. The intended church building was never constructed, but the "hall" is still in use by the United Reformed Church."

*From 'A window on Walton on Thames by L.L. & D.M. Barker' published by Borough Books (first published 1994, second edition 1998)*

## ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

**COMING TOGETHER:** March 7<sup>th</sup> proved another joyful day for ArtPeace as they shared St Andrew's and Weybridge URCs' Zoom service. The reading came from John 15 verses 1-12 'I am the true vine, and my father is the vine grower'. Michael our minister commented: 'I don't think



that I have ever read the start of John 15 in this way before. The Surrey and Zimbabwe branches of the vine may be quite different, but we all draw from the one, true vine and that is Jesus – and currently we are trying to help each other to produce the fruit in difficult times.' Artpeace and their friends gathered round old mobiles - example left: some members of Ignatious's church listening attentively to audio clips and hymns. The Zoom chat line was peppered with text comments from the artists during the service. Said artist Christine: 'I think our sharing the word like this is wonderful.'

It is also amazing how long we Zimbabweans have been in the hearts of some URC churches and their friends. It is extremely heart-warming and fills my heart with immense gratitude.' During the service Fortune sent our audio clips to relations in Mutare and Bulawayo - 270 miles away!

**OUR 20 YEARS LINK:** ArtPeace problems have been well documented here: Cholera epidemics, HIV, fear and torture during the Mugabe era, hunger, drought, despair, unemployment on a massive scale, imprisonment, abject poverty and frustration with a corrupt heartless government who violate human rights. Sadly, the old regime still cracks the whip. However, communications have improved thanks to mobiles. UK art sales pre Covid plus donations covering the basic essentials of life have proved a huge morale booster and group numbers are expanding!

**APPRECIATION FROM FORTUNE:** 'Guys you have completely changed my life. If not for your kindness, I would be lying in a grave now. Thank you for donations - my tears run when I think



about what you do for me and my family. I have major health issues due to terrible torture during Mugabe era. Your support for me and our families has kept us alive. I pray all of you have good health and many more years. Thanks to your generosity, I am no longer stressed where my family's main meal will come from.' Photo far left shows Fortune at home near the end of his tether. We all feared his time with us was limited. The other recent photo (left) shows him looking relaxed and happy. Digressing,



Fortune told me that his neighbour got a shock recently when his family discovered an eight-foot-long black mamba (above right) in their home! One of the world's deadliest snakes, black mambas are shy, evasive creatures but if cornered they will strike and their venom is lethal!



**EVICTIO**



LOOMS for artist Coster, his wife Emma and their family. The last donation helped a little to pay for his mother's modest funeral, but he is now completely broke and unable to pay rent arrears of 300\$ so faces the trauma of eviction. Coster lives in a displacement camp and built his modest home with his bare hands. He said: 'The council said that I can stay until the deadline of next month unless I pay. I am worried as we have nowhere to go.' He and his family are furiously gathering in their harvest of maize (photo below). When/if they move, they will lose their field they have all worked so hard to maintain and which is essential for the family's survival.



**THE HARVEST SCENE:** Some artists have already started harvesting from early sowings – others will start later in April. Despite some fields being under water for a long period due to torrential rain, most feel they are in line for a good even bumper harvest this year so Marlow URC's support with seed, fertilisers and chemicals will again sustain numerous people with maize, their staple food for much of the year. Photos below left, show Shingi's children Luke and Emmanuel and right, Mike and Muk with children holding big fat cobs, the fruits of their labour.



**DONATIONS:** I have been heartened by several kind donations recently – a godsend as it is becoming increasingly difficult keeping 'the ship afloat' so a big thank you to all concerned. As a result, I have bought two more used but good condition mobiles and chargers through eBay as some artists are without. This will enable them to share in our Zoom services once I can find a courier. However, the bulk of the money will go towards relieving their hardship. **Johnston Simpson**



#### MINISTER

The Reverend Michael Hodgson  
The Manse  
3 Elgin Road  
Weybridge  
KT13 8SN

Tel: 01932 841382  
Email: [michael.mah@btinternet.com](mailto:michael.mah@btinternet.com)

#### CHURCH SECRETARY

Mrs Anna Crawford  
23 Shaldon Way  
Walton-on-Thames  
KT12 3DJ

Tel: 01932 244466  
Email: [secretary@standrewsurc.org](mailto:secretary@standrewsurc.org)

Website: [www.standrewsurc.org](http://www.standrewsurc.org)

We are at present holding services every Sunday with Zoom at 11.30 am.  
A weekly "Thought for the Day" and a prayer are also available by post or email.  
Please contact the Minister for inclusion.

Anyone who wishes to take part in the Zoom service should contact the minister, who will be able to send them a link to enable easy participation.  
You are all most welcome to join us!

***Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.  
Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold  
grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.  
1 Peter 4 vv 8-10***