



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



JULY/AUGUST 2024

Volume 3 No 6



August Sunset - Isle of Barra, Outer Hebrides

*“If I can put one touch of rosy sunset into the life of any man or woman,
I shall feel that I have worked with God.”*

G K Chesterton (1874-1936)



Dear friends

From The Manse

June 2024

My letter this month proves that I do occasionally listen. What's more, it proves that just occasionally I do what I am told as well! You see, my letter this month is written in response to a suggestion made to me.

All URC Ministers are expected to serve in some capacity (or capacities) in the wider church and over the years I have been doing this in a number of ways. Those have included being a member and a Convenor of various Pastoral Committees; serving on a couple of national committees; acting as an Interim Moderator and I used to lead a week-long Choral Course at the URC Windermere Centre. Last year I finished helping on the annual course the URC runs to train interviewers who are going to be assessing applicants for the ministry. There, I was a 'dummy candidate' on whom the course participants could practise their interviewing skills and my 'character' was supposed to be challenging and totally outrageous. As you may imagine, I enjoyed doing that a lot. It was suggested to me, however, that I should share with you what my current wider church commitments are so that you are aware of them.

Firstly, I am a member of the Area Pastoral Committee, with a particular concern for being a link with the churches at Marlow, Maidenhead and Fleet. The Pastoral Committee has an important communication role and you will be aware that that it also has the responsibility for how the stipendiary ministers allocated to this area are deployed. At a time when we have had to make great cuts to the number of ministers we have this has been a very challenging task but you have all seen the letter from the Pastoral Committee last December setting out its plan for the coming years. Thankfully the Pastoral Committee is currently on top of it all and its members are trying to do their best. Lucy Brierley, minister of Woking URC, is the Convenor and does an amazing job. It's a committee I quite enjoy being on because of the close link between its work and the local church but it can be quite challenging for fairly obvious reasons.

Secondly, I am Convenor of the Synod's Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC). I tried ducking this one but failed! Some of the Synod's churches are listed buildings (like Weybridge was) and we have something known as 'Ecclesiastical Exemption'. Basically, it means that when a church which is a listed building wants to make any changes or to do any work to the premises it applies to LBAC rather than the Local Authority. We then take things forward so that the building is still protected but the needs of a worshipping congregation are taken into consideration. There can be quite a fine line. My role on the committee is two-fold. I think that I am there to look at applications from a worship-leader's stance (it's the role of professional conservation architects and surveyors to deal with the technical considerations) and I am also there to chair the meetings and make sure that we meet our legal obligation. Although it's a small committee we are fortunate to have some very clever, knowledgeable people on it with whom it's a joy to work and of whom I am in awe.

Thirdly, I am one of those trained to be able to take part in the Assessment Panels for those 'candidating' for the ministry. I have never done a National Panel but over the years I have been on a number of Regional and Synod Panels. As you may imagine this is quite demanding, with a lot of paperwork to read and consider before ever meeting the candidate. I have been doing this for many years now, though, and have been on panels which have supported applicants to go forward and have been on panels which have stopped them as well. Saying "No" is never easy but sometimes it has to be said. Together with my work as a 'dummy candidate' in the Assessor's Training Course I do see this as being part of my contribution to the future life of the church. The candidate on the most recent panel I was on will not be ordained until at least 18 months after I have retired.

Fourthly (and finally), I am currently sharing the role of Interim Moderator of Bracknell, Marlow, Maidenhead and Windsor URCs, as they begin their search for a new minister, following the call of David Downing to become Moderator of South West Synod. Thankfully I am sharing this with Graham Hoslett and the hope is that the vacancy might not be too long. Oh, and I am also the minister on whom Elstead URC can call if necessary but Anna is providing them with support, too, since not only does she lead worship she is also their representative on the Pastoral Committee.

I suppose it should be said that the other thing which I have done over the years is supported newly-ordained ministers. When ministers are first ordained in the URC they meet regularly with someone appointed by the Synod to help them and this person is normally an experienced (and generally older) minister. This role has been really enjoyable and I am certain that I have learnt more from them than they have ever learnt from me! They have all become good friends and I am really touched that some of them still ring me when they want to talk something through or else they have a problem and don't know what to do. Since that support time officially lasts three years I shall not be taking on anyone new now but it's been a real privilege to be used by the wider church in this way – even if the realisation that it meant I had become an older, safe pair of hands took a bit of getting used to!

So, that's it. In addition to my local ministry I currently have four roles within the wider church. They are quite different and challenge me in various ways but Zoom has cut down on the driving a lot which suits me well. Yes, I admit it, I have reached the stage where I'm not very keen on driving far at night.

I have never held a high-profile position in the wider church, nor have I ever wanted to either. I have, however, tried to do my bit – and am still trying!

With all good wishes,



Thank you

Sincere thanks to those who stepped in at short notice and did various things whilst I was down with Covid. I am now fully recovered (except for being a bit short on the energy front) but I am so grateful to those who covered for me in any way. Thank you. *Michael Hodgson*

Songs of Praise – Sunday 11 August

As part of our Flower Festival this year it would be nice to have a Songs of Praise/Favourite Hymns service on the morning of 11th August. What's your favourite hymn? Why do you like it? Does it have a particular meaning for you? Why not tell us and share the story?

Please give me some suggestions for what you would like to sing in a Songs of Praise service.

If you are willing to tell us why a hymn is important to you then that would be lovely – I'm sure we should all be interested in the stories.

So remember – **11 August: SONGS OF PRAISE** – and let's have a really good 'sing'
Michael Hodgson

**SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES
JULY 2024**

On the first and third Sunday of the month services will also be on Zoom

*'I do love the beginning of the summer hols,' said Julian. 'They always seem to stretch out ahead for ages and ages.'
'They go nice and slowly at first,' said Anne, his little sister. 'They they start to gallop.'
Enid Blyton - Five Go Off in a Caravan*

Tuesday 2 July	7.30 pm	Elders' Meeting Hershams Room
Saturday 6 July		Treble Clef Choir - A Grand Night of Singing St James's Parish Church, Weybridge (see page 7)
Sunday 7 July (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Sunday 14 July	10.30 am	Morning Worship
Friday 12 July	12.30 - 2.30 pm	People Who Lunch - Church Hall (see page 7)
Saturday 13 July	7.00 pm	Walton Voices presents 'Finding Harmony'. Cobham Free School, Portsmouth Road, Cobham KT11 1TF (see page 7)
Sunday 20 July (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	3.00 pm	 Messy Church
Sunday 28 July	10.30 am	Morning Worship


AUGUST 2024

There is no Elders' meeting and no Messy Church in August

Sunday 4 August (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion
Sunday 11 August	10.30 am	Morning Worship

COPY DATE FOR JULY/AUGUST ISSUE : WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST

***ALL ITEMS (Provided they do not contravene copyright regulations) to the Editor or Associate Editor
(please see back page for contact details)***

Sunday 18 August (Zoom)	10.30 am	Morning Worship
	3.00 pm	 Messy Church
Sunday 25 August	10.30 am	Morning Worship

NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

In Memoriam

Last month's issue of The Grapevine carried the sad news that two of our members had died within a few days of each other – **Brian Ashfield** on 4 May and **David Cheeseman** on 12 May. Tributes to both of them appear in this issue – Brian on pages 12 and 13 and David on pages 14 and 15 – where you will see how they used their very similar talents in the service of others.

Prayers

Please remember these friends in your prayers – Kate Ashfield, John Langdon, Lilian Smith and Michael Stevens. Remember, too, all those who are unwell in hospital or at home and those for whom daily life is proving difficult.

If you know of anyone who would like to be included in this prayer list, or if you wish to be included yourself, please let the Editors know.

Anne Fitzgerald writes:

"I visited Eva Ramage last week at Worplesdon View. She is looking very well and sends best wishes to everyone at church."



Anne's grandson, Angus, invited her to be his guest at the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards at Buckingham Palace on 10 May.

It brought back memories for Johnston Simpson, who was one of the first to get the award in Aberdeenshire, presented by the Duke of Edinburgh at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh.

Four sprightly octogenarians celebrated their recent milestone birthdays at D'Oyly Carte café on D'Oyly Carte Island. D'Oyly Carte Island is a unique two-acre private island on the River Thames near Weybridge, Surrey and provides the perfect location to moor your boat for total tranquillity and enjoyment. Access to this beautiful island is by its own private footbridge which links secure parking for 40 cars on the mainland.



L-R. Beryl, Irene, Rosemary and Anne

A Ceremonial Occasion

Many of you will have had a publicity leaflet through your door giving details of the recently re-furbished Sainsbury store at Cobham but did you know of the personal connection with one of our members?

As a "long time loyal customer and friend of the store" Roy Bones was asked to cut the tape at the opening ceremony! As he says, "Fame at last!"

Fairtrade and Traidcraft



What is Fairtrade?

It is a global movement whose aim is to make trade fair. It sets standards for companies and farmers to ensure safer working conditions and fairer pay for workers and farmers.

What is Traidcraft?

Traidcraft was set up in the UK in 1979 as a Fairtrade organisation, with the fundamental aim of changing peoples' lives through trade at the same time as saving the traditional skills that people have around the globe from extinction. Traidcraft celebrates a world of creativity and culture.

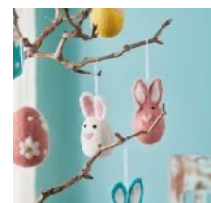
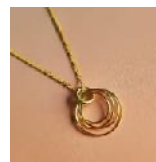
"[It] should come as no surprise to anyone who investigates the development of the Fair Trade movement that Traidcraft was established as a Christian organisation.... Not only are the principles and values that underpin Fair Trade entirely consonant with those of a Christian worldview, but it was principally within church-based organisations [that] Fair Trade first evolved." (Joe Osman)

Traidcraft trading took place through Traidcraft plc which had its own online shop and brochure which made supporting the cause very easy. Sadly Traidcraft plc went into administration last year. Transform Trade (who were the charitable arm of Traidcraft plc) have taken on the branding of Traidcraft and although there is no online shop or brochure specifically for products now they can be bought at various different places – just 'Google' 'Where can I find Traidcraft products?' and the internet will provide!

St Andrew's is supporting Fairtrade by buying ethically sourced tea, coffee and biscuits for Sunday mornings and, where possible, for People who Lunch.

Do you buy Fairtrade products? Do you know what products are available?

Here is a little selection:



Elizabeth Scharinger

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE

*In the sweetness of friendship let there be
laughter and sharing of pleasures.
For in the dew of little things the heart finds its
morning and is refreshed.*

Khalil Gibran

ELDERS' MEETING

(Note new schedule, now on **first** - not second -
Tuesday of the month)

Tuesday 2 July

7.30 pm - Hersham Room



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH Friday 12 July 12.30 - 2.30 pm Church Hall

If you are someone who enjoys having lunch with
a group of friends then People Who Lunch is
definitely the place for you. Everyone is welcome
at this monthly get-together held on the second
Friday of the month in the Church Hall. For just
£5 you can have soup, a roll, dessert,
cheese and biscuits and coffee/tea.



Puddings a speciality!

**Advance booking recommended
and necessary if you are coming
in a group!**

To book your place please contact Elizabeth
Scharinger by email:

administrator@standrewsurc.org

or Fiona Reardon on

07902 485933 / 01932 247119



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 21 July

3.00 pm in the Church Hall

All welcome!

Treble Clef Choir
St James' Parish Church,
Weybridge
(with our very own Hilary
Netherwood and Gwenda Cochrane)
Saturday 6 July - 7.30 pm

A Grand Night of Singing
featuring special guests
The Weybridge Male Voice Choir

Invites you to

A Grand Night of Singing
- our 35th Anniversary Concert
of light music

Featuring special guests
The Weybridge Male Voice Choir

Musical Director: Emily Leather
Accompanist: Hannah Stanley

Saturday 6th July 2024 7.30pm
St. James' Parish Church
Weybridge KT13 8DN

Tickets £15 available from
www.ticketsource.co.uk/trebleclef
and at the door
(children accompanied under 12 free)

Bar available

There will be a
retiring collection
for Friends of
St Peter's Hospital

WALTON VOICES
presents

FINDING HARMONY
songs of peace, love and freedom

with special guests
Cleves Senior Choir

13th JULY 2024 7pm
Cobham Free School
Performance Hall
Portsmouth Road, Cobham, KT11 1TF

TICKETS £17 (- booking fee) • £20 on the door • Under 16s free
WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/WALTONVOICES

www.waltonvoices.co.uk
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube icons

Raising money for
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF BARRISTERS

Charity number: 27735



News from the URC

Prayer Calendar for July

- 7 Hungerford
Mere
Bishop's Waltham United Free Church
- 14 Lymington
St Paul's, Bracknell
- 21 Park, Reading
Fovant
- 28 Twyford (Bucks)
Iford, Bournemouth

URC Prayer for July

Care for Creation

Loving God, we pray for our General Assembly taking place this month (*12 – 15 July at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire*) and for all who attend, vote and take part. We thank you for the moving of your Spirit through the meeting which has prompted resolutions in support of climate action. We pray for all our churches and members who are working to make these climate resolutions a reality and all who seek ways to sustain changes made and to deepen commitment. For in all these things, we seek to put your kingdom first and to walk your way with Jesus, in the Spirit's power.

Amen

Prayer Calendar for August

- 4 Banbury URC @ The Haven
Hope, Weymouth
- 11 Buckland, Portsmouth
Wheatley, Oxford
- 18 Fordingbridge
Marsh Gibbon
- 25 Pear Tree Green, Southampton
Aston Tirrold

URC Prayer for August

Care for Creation

Creator God, source of all life, you spoke and the universe burst into being, abundant, full of wonder and life, everything expressing praise to you, God of wonders! We add our voices to the praises of the created world. We pray this month that in our journey alongside you we may serve you by our prayers for our world and the challenges we face in the warming climate. Inspire us by your Holy Spirit to act faithfully to safeguard creation in every way we are able, not thinking of ourselves but loving our neighbours in all places so that in our Synod, as in our local churches and the whole company of your Church, your Righteousness, Justice and Peace may flow in love to all.

Amen



Our theme was the Valley of Dry Bones from Ezekiel. The children worked very hard and produced some lovely results. One of the most popular was creating a skeleton figure using cotton buds. Adding streamers to the cut away base of a paper cup was used to illustrate how we could breathe life into the streamers. We had colouring activities and cutting out bones to create figures.



*“Dem Bones,
Dem Bones...”*

The adults tried very hard to create pipe cleaner figures and put the into different poses, not as easy as it sounds. The boys, in particular, enjoyed finding bones (dog biscuits) in a bowl of jelly, a very messy task.



The children enjoyed the good weather and experimented with making bubbles. Some huge ones were created and we watched in awe as one very large bubble flew up and over the church roof.

The girls were eager to show us their prowess at gymnastics and enjoyed dancing to the songs during the celebration.



One of our Messy Church friends celebrated her First Communion at St Erconwald's Church with a party in the Bill Topping Room.

Anne Fitzgerald

FLOWER FESTIVAL



CAN YOU HELP?
YES YOU CAN!!!

This exciting joint venture with the Walton & Weybridge Flower Club is an opportunity to be able to relate to others.

There will be flowers in the church, managed by the Flower Club, in the hall on the Saturday, together with refreshments, retail therapy, including Art Peace, jewellery clothing and accessories

This is where you could help. Jean Rigden is co-ordinating helpers for the refreshments, baking, perhaps manning the book stall, and being there to make visitors welcome and at home on our premises. Please speak to Jean if you can make a cake or be there for a time on 10th August.

The festival will be open Saturday 10th with the hall events too. Sunday 11th will be a Flower Festival service, to which all are welcome and then the church will be open for all to visit until 4pm.

Please encourage family, friends and neighbours to come and see this cornucopia of flowers on either day.

If you would like to put in an arrangement on the theme 'A Post Card From...' see Anna Crawford - you will not be the only person from St Andrew's.

COME and enjoy time in our lovely building to marvel at the arrangements and sample the delights in the church hall.

Anna Crawford



CHRISTIAN AID RESULT

I have now gathered all the money that I expect to receive for this year's Christian Aid Week. The total that CA will receive from the church's efforts, in various forms including the Gift Aid, is £1,308.75. Thanks to everyone for being so generous.

Jem Ward



Restore Nature Now March London - 22 June

On Saturday 22 June, I took part in the march from Park Lane to Parliament Square joining up with a group of Extinction Rebellion Scientists, all wearing our lab coats. For the first time, members of over 300 wildlife and environmental charities walked shoulder to shoulder with climate and nature activists demanding urgent political action to address the biodiversity crisis. With the election on 4 July, we wanted our message to be heard by all politicians.

Involving well over 60,000 people, the march allowed everyone to celebrate and stand up for nature here in the UK. There were so many people that the march stretched up Whitehall, halfway to Trafalgar Square - I didn't even get close to Parliament Square where the speeches were delivered. The planners had anticipated a big gathering and so the speeches were broadcast on a huge screen on Whitehall.



Teresa

It was a colourful and inspiring event – protestors came with placards, colourful banners, amazing 3D models of birds, insects and other animals. I spoke with some of the people on the march including a mum with her 10-year old son, Arthur, who wanted to know how many animal species go extinct every year in the UK, a vegan GP, two professional gardeners, a retired nurse who wondered why I was wearing a lab coat, and a mum, who had come with her daughter because of their love for nature. The lady also talked about the intense heatwave in India – she has family members living there. The temperature has exceeded 49°C in one part of Delhi, and what makes it even harder to bear is that the heat persists at night. Several people I met were angry about the water companies, intensive farming, the construction industries and the landowners with shooting estates, all of whom continue to make money out of exploiting or damaging nature, and about the politicians who allow this to happen.

Members of the National Trust and the RSPB walking alongside Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil protestors - really? But the UK's nature conservation charities have always been so polite!

The charities have spent decades trying to influence government policy. They have conducted surveys, written reports about the dire state of nature in the UK, prepared policy briefs for government ministers, encouraged members to write letters and sign endless petitions, but the truth is that they have been ignored and things are getting worse. Just think back to the bug splats on your car windscreen (rarely a problem even on a long journey nowadays), the wide variety of birds that you used to see in your garden, and the abundance of wildflowers that were part of any countryside walk in the UK a few decades ago.



The frustrating part is that we have never had a better understanding of the state of nature whether it is on land, in freshwater, or in the marine environment, and what is needed to fix it. We simply need the politicians to follow the advice of their own experts and to invest in the restoration and recovery of nature.

Chris Packham, the naturalist and TV presenter, who was pivotal in bringing these different groups together under the umbrella of Restore Nature Now, recognises that this is just the beginning as there is a tough road ahead.

Teresa Bacon



FRIENDS REMEMBERED

Brian Ashfield



These thoughts about Brian have been compiled from tributes received from Michael, Alex, Jem, Gwenda, Liz and former member Richard Smith.

“If the marks of a Christian are that you should love God, love your neighbour as yourself and exercise your talents to help others, I have not yet found a better example than Brian.”

These words by Jem are a succinct and apt summary of Brian's life and character and are reflected in the memories of him held by his many friends.

Brian moved with his family to Weybridge in the early years of the Second World War when he was just a few weeks old and spent his entire life in or close to the area. On leaving school he gained an apprenticeship in the aircraft industry at Brooklands which, alongside study at Brooklands College, ensured he obtained the professional qualifications and practical skills that were to prove so valuable throughout his life.

As a young child Brian became part of the family at Weybridge Congregational Church (URC) when he joined Junior Church and he recalled how there were 100 or so children present in the church service every Sunday morning. This was the beginning of a life-long connection and in 1961 he was received into church membership and was elected an Elder in 1973 serving until 2022 (apart from the compulsory stand-down periods required by the Weybridge rules.) In 2015, following the resignation of Alex as Church Secretary, Brian became a valued and dedicated member of the 4-person team (the Secretariat) – together with Gwenda, Liz and Shirley – appointed to replace him. Brian was seen as a sincere man with a strong faith who was always friendly, kind and supportive towards others and always calm with good humour and a ready smile. In discussions he listened, never argued but, in the end, always did what he thought was right.

Brian was a ‘can do’ person whose no-nonsense approach saw practical issues as problems to be solved. He was a member of the Fabric Committee and took over as Convenor a few years ago. His maintenance work around the church premises was legendary. He had a vast store of bits and pieces (that he thought might come in useful) in one of the large drawers under the stage – also a construction project in which he had been involved. Since he never threw anything away some of them were out-of-date and they filled almost half a skip when the premises closed! Brian was not afraid of challenging jobs and when pigeons took up residence in the spire (having destroyed the wire mesh lining which was designed to keep them out) the result of their increasing numbers and lengthy occupation was that small feathers and less desirable detritus started to descend into the main porch – not good for the brides and their expensively attired guests or the many people attending services and concerts but constant clearing-up was not the answer. Undaunted Brian – assisted by David (Cheeseman) and both suitably clad – climbed up into the spire through its trap door, cleaned out the piles of mess and replaced the lining. Obviously not being bothered about heights he also cut the high hedges in the church garden and cleaned the church and hall gutters regularly but on one occasion, neglecting to have anyone holding the ladder, he fell to the ground from a high point, fortunately not sustaining serious injury but requiring time to recover. After that the safety rules were strictly enforced.

Along with David, Brian assisted John (Smith) with the sound system which John had designed and set up in the 1960s. He took over completely in 2016 when a new system was professionally installed and a rota of operators was established. In 2015 he also took on responsibility for setting the timers for the

somewhat complex heating systems in the church and hall. Fortunately he had the patience to deal each week not just with the church's own busy timetable but also numerous community bookings.



Brian fixes the roof beams while Steve is in charge of the ladder

In 1974 it was decided to build an extension to the manse consisting of a study/meeting room (with direct access to the main house) and with its own entrance lobby and separate front door. Unlike today, local churches were responsible at that time for the provision and maintenance of the manse and, in order to keep costs down, the members undertook to design and build the extension themselves with the proviso of getting additional external help if necessary. This was a huge commitment particularly for those physically involved in the work but they took up the challenge with great goodwill and, of course, Brian was part of that group. To help with the fund-raising it was suggested that members of the congregation might like to buy (and sign) a brick. Brian volunteered to organise the scheme. He borrowed the Scouts' trek-cart and, helped by Richard (one of the younger Scouts) loaded it with bricks from the manse site, trundled them round to the church to sell after the Sunday morning service and, following a successful sell-out, trundled them back to the manse. When this ambitious and friendship-creating building project was finished a celebratory party was held at the manse!

Similar practical skills were demonstrated in 2002 when a new kitchen was required for the church hall. Alex and Brian took this on as a 'Saturday job' designing and installing it over several weeks and turning themselves into plumbers, electricians, carpenters, ducting system makers etc, – becoming known in the church as 'ABC' – Alex & Brian Construction.

Alongside his practical ability Brian also had an 'arts' side. When the church drama group was re-started in the late 1950s he became a member and over many, many years he had numerous jobs – he was an enthusiastic and talented performer and worked hard backstage, too, as a set designer and erector, stage hand and so on. Another acting role he regarded as especially important was his annual appearance as one of the three Wise Men in the Christmas Eve Crib Service. Over the years he also took part in whole church productions (plays, musicals, pantomimes, concerts). His rendition of 'Jake the Peg' became a hit as did performances by our own 'Three Tenors' – Brian, Jem and John (Langdon). They were all members of the church choir where they developed their skills and in 2000 Brian and Jem felt confident enough to accept an invitation to join the 80-strong local choral society – the Gemini Chorale (now the Genesis Chorale) where Brian later became the music librarian. Social events were seen as an important part of the family life of the church and, as a member of the Social Events Group, Brian, was involved in organising events such as after-service BBQs in the church garden, skittles, line-dancing, square dancing and quiz evenings.

Brian had a habit of 'collecting' jobs'. For the nativity play at a Gift Service he climbed high into the roof area above the organ console to set-up a star for the Magi to follow. This star swung down and travelled through the air across the church into position over the manger, producing an audible gasp from the congregation! For many years he erected and decorated (with others) the large Christmas tree at the front of the church – a far more complex (securing and stabilising) job than it sounds. He produced the programmes for the monthly organ recitals and set-up the visual and sound systems which added so much to the enjoyment of those occasions. More surprisingly he dealt with the flower rota! One significant job he undertook (with Shirley) was organising the weekly Wednesday Open Church and Coffee Morning. This was a vital social contact time particularly for people who lived on their own and for several of them Brian and Shirley regularly provided transport.

Behind this busy, talented man was strong family support. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who was enormously proud of his family. While he will be missed by so many people, the loss to Kate and the family is immeasurable.



David Cheeseman



David was a faithful member and Elder of Hersham URC and later of Weybridge URC. The following tribute is taken from the words of his son, Paul, spoken at David's funeral.

This is the speech no one wants to make but it comes eventually to many of us to do. Clearly I had known Dad all my life so his loss is significant. It's a truism to say he taught me all I know but used it as a springboard to new things. He passed on his fascination with engineering and railways, which produced an interesting career for me. I never had that moment at school of wondering what I might do when I grew up. I just knew.

He had, I think, a good life – a life committed to the service of others whether through St John Ambulance, the church or just his willingness to help others out with practical skills or knowledge. He was the internet, before the internet, and if he didn't know he was sure to have a book to look it up. But, unlike Google, he didn't produce pages of results – but just one – the right one. So you did have to be careful to craft the question properly so that you got the right answer.

His first love was railways – both model and full sized. He leaves a legacy of detailed scale models initially built in the post-war years out of scraps using whatever materials he and his friends could get their hands on. His second love was Joan, dating from their teenage years to marry in 1961 and able to celebrate their Golden Wedding together in 2011.

He studied Mechanical Engineering (gaining a degree from the University of London) and spent time as an apprentice in Rugby and Hartlepool. His first real job was with the Bristol Aircraft Company working on the design of the jet turbines blades for Concorde and the Harrier. These things he was very modest about but to young Airfix kit-building sons made him something of a superstar. When we were clearing the house, we observed that probably only Dad would have a technical book about jet engine design in his bedside cabinet. He moved into teaching via posts in Brighton and Kingston University, which brought him to Walton where he spent 58 years at just two local addresses.

He grew up in Wimbledon and through Earlsfield Congregational Church met our mother, Joan. At school he played rugby to County level and through his parents enjoyed watching cricket. When he was old enough he rode a scooter on many exciting trips, with Joan on the back, and even on his last outing with me before his fall continued to shout at other 'scooterists' to "Pick your feet up" as they dangled them along the ground. Doing things properly was important to him.

He was the first person in our family to own a house and made sure it and the garden were kept well repaired and decorated. Growing up we assumed that everyone decorated every room every five years according to a published plan.

He and Mum were a good team and many, many people have experienced hospitality at their home. For many years they ran annual charity afternoon tea parties to raise money. They had very clearly defined roles but played them well. We are all products of our time but as a wartime child he grew up frugally and to make the best of circumstances and resources. The proverbial stiff upper lip could have been invented for him. He loved to repair things and undertake practical projects as diverse as fitting kitchens, boarding lofts (years before it became a common thing to do and using only hand-tools), felling trees and building a double canoe in the garage – all with a stubborn determination to get the job done. He had dreams of more projects, especially railway-related ones, but if he had a fault it was in bringing his mind's eye into reality. Or perhaps it was the imagining that he really enjoyed? The thought, experiment and planning being in some ways more interesting to him than the execution.

In later life he enjoyed the freedom to travel more and made many trips to Switzerland and the narrow gauge railways there and, of course, held a virtual season ticket to visit Wales. We managed to get him to Hong Kong once where he enjoyed the old-fashioned style trams. Any trip in any direction from the hotel seemed to offer him the chance to take the tram part way there, re-living his youth in South London.

He was an Elder at Hersham and later Weybridge United Reformed Church for many years. When COVID restrictions stopped the in-person Sunday services he continued, despite occasional IT challenges, to follow by computer from home.

He was a quiet and modest man. He was a family man who always put the happiness and satisfaction of his family and his wife before his own. He delighted in the achievements of his children and then five grandchildren. Very old-fashioned in some ways – he was honest, sincere and reliable. He enjoyed reading and researching and spent many hours finding out, for example, about railway Pullman cars and obscure railway details.

In his later years he suffered some health challenges yet persevered to look after himself for several years after Mum died – not his natural strong suit but performed with precision and stoicism. Most recently he was hospitalised for an extended time. He came home to spend his last days and died peacefully in his sleep which I think in the end was a relief for him and us. The death certificate announced “frailty of old age” which was a gentle way of putting it.”



Paul Cheeseman

As a member (from 2006) and Elder (2009–2015) at Weybridge David made a great contribution to the life of the church and his dedication, reliability and caring approach were much appreciated. He was Convenor of the Stewards' Rota for all services, a welcoming presence at the church door and 'on call' for anyone who needed help on these occasions; distributor for the URC 'Reform' magazine; Convenor of the Evening Bible Study Group; he and Joan raised large sums of money for Christian Aid each year hosting a September Afternoon Tea Party at their home; he provided flowers/greenery from his garden to decorate the church for Harvest Festival; assisted with the sound system; used his professional expertise for specific practical jobs but was also prepared to undertake less desirable tasks!

FLOWER POWER

"Just living is not enough. One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower."

Hans Christian Andersen

Here is a selection of the lovely floral tributes that we have enjoyed over the past two months.

***If you feel you can help with distribution, please speak to Claire, Irene or Moira.
Your offer would be most welcome!***



26 May



2 June



16 June - Jem and Claire Ward
For Jem's mother's birthday



23 June - Margaret Faultless
In memory of Gordon

Prayer Corner

Faith – a Meditation

Doubt sees the obstacles.
Faith sees the way.
Doubt sees the darkest night.
Faith sees the day.
Doubt dreads to take a step.
Faith soars on high.
Doubt whispers “Who believes?”
Faith answers “I”.

Anon

*Displayed on the wall of a very old
Quaker Meeting House in West Sussex.*

Reflections

I must look hard to see
which is the swan
and the grass on the bank,
and which the reflection.

Thank you, Lord,
for those who live
so close to you
in obedience, faith and love
that their lives are reflections of yours.

Grant that as I make my way
others may feel your touch,
hear your word
and experience your love
through me this day,
that I may reflect just something
of your glory.

Amen

*From “Norfolk Pictures and Prayers”
Compiled by Percy J Gandon and Ken Swann*

This meditation and the prayer were shared many years ago with the congregation at Weybridge by two of the members. The first came from someone visiting her friends in West Sussex. The second from someone who had happy memories of his young days in Norfolk. If you have a special prayer you would like to share with the rest of us please let the the Editors know.

Associate Editor

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA cast President Vladimir Putin as 'my dear brother' and said Russia was a consistent ally of Zimbabwe. Mnangagwa, who recently spoke at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, praised Putin for defending



the independence and territorial integrity of Russia. After long-time dictator Robert Mugabe was removed from power ending a three-decade rule that commenced in 1987, there was hope that the country would enjoy more freedom and economic development but this has not happened. Since coming to power, Mnangagwa has behaved more like a dictator than a democratic reformer. His open admiration for the Russian and Chinese premiers goes some way towards explaining why his people's freedoms are being steadily eroded. The Zimbabwe government's enthusiastic partnering with Beijing,

attracting Chinese investment where Chinese companies have been awarded USD 2.79 billion of investment flow into Zimbabwe, mostly in mining and energy should be good news for all Zimbabweans. The country's mineral and diamond reserves are amongst the highest in the world but any revenue benefit certainly does not appear to reach their nine million poor!

ARTIST CHRISTINE NDORO recently said: 'Life in Zimbabwe is somewhat complicated. We have a situation where things seem to be polarized. It is easier for those who had access to money, those who were able to begin and sustain income raising projects. And then we have the other situation where those who were disempowered are even more so now. Let me give you an example. This year has been a drought year where people believed that it would rain but when the rain came it was insufficient. Year by year, most families will have a field of maize that they can use to sustain themselves and also to sell any surplus. They will also have relied on the same field for vegetables that have become the staple diet along with sadza. The employment Market is quite brutal so for those without a steady income, life here is harsh. Many households around me are also afflicted by drug abuse one way or another - also on substance abuse. Youngsters are given drugs so they are eternally indebted to the dealers. Alcohol is often overlooked but alcoholism has almost become a pandemic'.



ARTPEACE, like so many others continue to struggle with no sign of light at the end of the tunnel. As one friend said: 'Zimbabwe remains a silenced nation stumbling through their latest economic crisis. The voices of outrage have gone silent, the opposition leaders who should be speaking out for us have disappeared and we stand alone'. At least our artist friends are not alone thanks to continued support from us without which life would be unbearable. It's their winter and temperatures drop to 3 degrees C at night. Artist Peter Kananji said: 'We are in winter now so it is very cold here - times are hard. I used to catch fish but it's too cold. We are growing some vegetables - look, my wife is preparing some relish for lunch. We are so happy with the donation which is helping us a lot as we bought some vegetable seeds - please thank our friends in the UK - without your support we would be nothing. My field was badly affected by the drought but I diversified through using dry maize stems to make manure .. after manuring I grow vegetables - thank you John and others for continued big support to Artpeace'.



OUR SUPPORT lifts many people in different ways. Michael Mukolosi (left), was uplifted by receipts from the sale of two of his Giraffe families. He has been suffering from a mental health disorder for a long time but his condition deteriorated when his wife and carer died last year.



With encouragement he now has a new lease of life and has started sculpting again.

COSTER & GODFREY were over the moon with their new mobiles kindly supplied by Paula. Photo right shows Coster with his 'courier' Fadzai from Alpha and Omega Ministries International, Maidenhead led by a good friend, Pastor John Vambe who facilitated the movement.



WITH HELP FROM 'outside' friends plus a few from St. Andrew's, enough money was raised to help Mike Masedza buy sheeting for the roof of his home he has been building for many years



(left) – Mike's prayers were answered and he sent a heartfelt emotional video of thanks to all who donated.

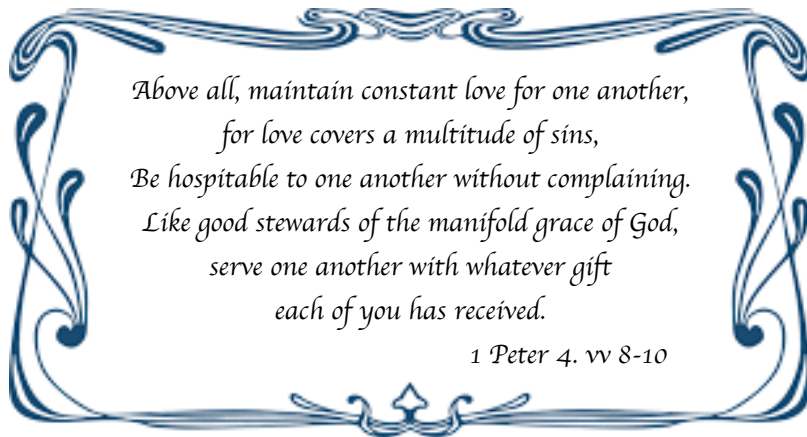
TWO HAPPY BOYS! The boys on the right, Talent (13) and his brother Munashe (11), left to fend for themselves also benefitted from a donation to ease their plight (story covered last article). They were so pleased and rushed off to buy school text books and some decent food.



WATER CRISIS: Photo below shows a lady who lives near artist Lovemore James, drawing water from a well 20 metres deep - extremely strenuous work. There is no running water in Harare owing to the drought and she has to rise early each morning to beat the queues. Lovemore sent a video with a commentary - see the link included in our Editor's Grapevine covering note.



ALL THESE STORIES some good, some bad, give a little glimpse into the troubled lives of our Zimbabwean friends. Encouragingly, it shows what a difference a little support can make in various ways in a country whose government appears not to care whether they live or die. Some tourists I meet rarely see this side of life enjoying the sights of a beautiful country in comparative comfort but perhaps these articles help set the record straight. **Johnston Simpson**



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Services start at 10.30 am.
Services are currently accessible on Zoom on the first and third Sunday of the month.

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!