



ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE



THE GRAPEVINE



NOVEMBER 2024

Volume 2 No 9



© The Royal British Legion

*“But the freedom that they fought for,
and the country grand they wrought for,
Is their monument today, and for aye.”*

Thomas Dunn



Dear friends

From The Manse

November 2024

During our service on Remembrance Sunday I shall again read out the list of names from the memorials from Hersham, Walton and Weybridge. As far as I am aware there were no losses from Hersham Congregational Church during the 1st World War and there were obviously none from St Andrew's since it wasn't founded until the 1920s, but there was a number from Weybridge. There are names from all three churches for the 2nd World War. I don't think that there are still any family connections to them within the congregation today and we know very little about them, but I wondered if it might be appropriate to reproduce the list here and so say what little we do know, in an attempt to make things a little more personal.

From Weybridge in the 1st World War

Archibald Press born in 1890 in Herne Hill, to Walter Manning and Kate Alice Press. He was a Sergeant in F Company of the London Scottish Regiment and served in France and in Flanders. He died of wounds received in battle on 22nd October, 1915. He was 25.

Leslie Charles Archer Bromhall was a native of Weybridge. He was a Private in the 7th Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment. He served in France and in Flanders and was killed in action on 3rd July, 1916.

James Passmore Russell was born in 1889 to Christopher Passmore Russell and Emma Anna Russell of Halfway Granaries, Walton-on-Thames. He was a Private in the 1st and then the 14th Battalion of the London Scottish Regiment, serving in France and Flanders. Killed in action on 5th October he left behind a widow, Edith Alice Russell who lived at 11 Hight Street, Walton. He was 27.

Arthur Freer was also born in Weybridge in 1896. He was the son of David and Elizabeth Freer who lived in Gascoigne Road. A Private in the 11th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, he too served in France and in Flanders. Arthur was killed in action on 9th April, 1917 at the age of 21.

Maurice Kemp-Welch was born in 1881 to James and Olive Kemp-Welch who lived in Olantye, Weybridge. His father was a Director of the Aerated Water Company and Maurice went to university in Cambridge (I don't know which College or what he studied) gaining a BA degree. He served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment). He died on 11th April 1917, aged 36.

Sgt Sidney Thomas Collins (Sadly I know nothing and have been unable to trace his war record.)

FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR

From Weybridge

Pilot Officer Bertram William Miles was Pilot Officer in the RAF Volunteer Reserve. He was killed on February 10th 1944 when his plane, a Stirling Bomber, crashed on take-off at Lakenheath on 2nd October, 1944. He was 22 and is buried in Weybridge cemetery. His parents, William and Maud were subsequently buried in their son's grave in 1967 and 1969 respectively. A memorial stone marks the grave.

From St Andrew's

Ralph Plaistow was born in 1911, the son of Cuthbert and Lilian Plaistow who lived in Weybridge. Ralph was a graduate of Queen's College, Cambridge, graduating with a BA and he joined the 83rd RAF Volunteer Reserve where he was a Flight Sergeant. He died on 1st September 1941 and is buried in Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery

Kenneth Blair Thomson was born in 1925, son of John and Mary Thomson of Esher. He was a Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, serving on HMS Orion, one of the ships that took part in the Normandy Landings in June 1944, (where she fired the first shell). The ship subsequently took part in many operations on the Mediterranean Sea. He died on 28th November, 1944.

From Hersham

Eric Arthur Howard was born in 1922, the son of Arthur Victor and Daisy Esther Howard, of Walton on Thames. He had a younger brother (Raymond Jack - see below). He was in the RAF as a Flight Sergeant and was a wireless operator and air gunner in 148 Squadron. On 3rd November 1942, he was to take part in a raid leaving an airbase in North Africa for a raid on the El Alamein battlefield. The plane crashed on take-off. The pilot was the only survivor of the crew. Eric was 20. He is buried in the Heliopolis Cemetery in Egypt.

Raymond Jack Howard was born in 1925 and was called up to serve in the Army, joining the 7th Battalion of the Green Howards, Yorkshire Regiment. From above you will see that his brother was killed in 1942. He himself died on 8th September 1944 when the Green Howards were involved in the Western Europe Campaign. He was 19. He is buried in the Geel Cemetery in Belgium, where his headstone bears the poignant inscription:

LEAVE WE NOW OUR LOVED ONE SLEEPING IN JESU'S KEEPING "TILL WE MEET AGAIN"

Each year I stand at the memorials and read the list of names because I think that they should be read and remembered. I think that we owe them that. They were so young - at least one still a teenager. And I don't mind admitting that the I find the words of the Kohima Epitaph and Exhortation the most difficult words I have to say in the year.

When you go home, tell them of us and say,
"For your tomorrow we gave our today."

With all good wishes,



News of the Church Family

In Memoriam

Malcolm Bryant

We were sad to learn of the death of Malcolm Bryant on 4th October. Malcolm and Jane started worshipping with us after they moved to Walton to be nearer family. They transferred their membership to us from Guildford a couple of years ago. Malcolm has not been well for a little time but suffered a major heart attack on 1st October. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jane, their son Alan and with the family. Revd Nigel Appleton, a long-standing friend of the family writes of Malcolm saying, "*Dedication to family and friends, with strong and generous beliefs his quiet, understated style was seasoned with a powerful sense of humour and, on occasions, withering shafts of wit!*" Malcolm will certainly be missed by those of us who knew him.

His funeral will be at 2.00pm on Monday 11th November at Randalls Park Crematorium.

A Double Celebration for the Woods Family

Marriage

Congratulations and good wishes for the future to Rachel Woods and Tim Barton who were married on 7th September. Despite the heavy rain they had a wonderful day with several family members having a role in the ceremony.

Birth

There were further celebrations for the Woods family on 27th September when Matthew and Gemma became the proud parents of Willow Ann – a sister for Florence, granddaughter for Angela and Mike (Grandma and Grandad), great-granddaughter for Roy Bones (Pops) and niece for Rachel and Tim. Love and good wishes to all the family.



Congratulations to Christine Carlile!

We are delighted to have this lovely photograph of Christine celebrating her 90th birthday, surrounded by her family.

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers all those friends who are unwell or going through troubled times.

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

SERVICES AND OTHER KEY DATES NOVEMBER 2024

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

Sunday 3 November (Zoom) 10.30 am Morning Worship with Holy Communion

NOTE: 3 November is the last day for receiving shoeboxes!

Tuesday 5 November 7.30 pm Elders' Meeting Hersham Room

Friday 8 November 12.30 - 2.30 pm



People Who Lunch, Church Hall -
Advance booking advisable (*see page 7*)



**Sunday 10 November (Zoom) 10.30 am
(Remembrance Sunday)**

Morning Worship

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All items to the Editor (provided they do not contravene copyright regulations)

Norma Reid: Email: aristocats.2000@gmail.com

Or Associate Editor, Mollie Henham Email: 18amh65@gmail.com

Sunday 17 November (Zoom) 10.30 am

Morning Worship

11.00 am - 2.00 pm

Mencap Christmas Fair (*see page 11*)

3.00 pm



Messy Church

Sunday 24 November 10.30 am

Morning Worship

*It's impossible," said Pride
"It's risky," said Experience
"It's pointless," said Reason
"Give it a try," whispered the Heart
Unknown*

SHOEBOX APPEAL - IT'S NOT TOO LATE!



As in previous years we are supporting the Christmas Shoebox Appeal as run by the charity, "Link to Hope". Leaflets are available in The Gateway which are really helpful because they tell you all you need to know about how to prepare a shoebox - what to put in and what not to include. You can choose to prepare a box for a family or for an older person and as the charity says, "We want everyone to receive a fun and useful box of new, unused gifts."

They do also ask you for a £3 donation to cover the transport costs and details of how to do this are on the the leaflet too. It can be as simple as sticking 3 pound coins on the leaflet and putting it with your box. (Do you remember what cash was?!)

Boxes **MUST** be returned to church by **Sunday 3rd November**. After service that morning they will be taken to the collection point in the afternoon.

This is such a simple and inexpensive thing to do and yet brings such joy to the recipients.

Michael Hodgson

CHRISTMAS IS COMING ...

The Post Box

If you would like to send Christmas Greetings to other members of the congregation there are two ways of doing so. You can send Christmas Greetings to everyone by putting a message in The Grapevine and if you want to send cards to your personal friends in the congregation you can put them in the church's Christmas Post Box. So you can use either or both of these options.



- Look out for the he Christmas Post Box in The Gateway on **1 and 6 December** for any cards you wish to send to other members of the congregation!
- Please ensure the name of the recipient is written clearly on the envelope.
- The cards will be sorted into 'packs' for the individual recipients and ready for collection from The Gateway on **15 December**. If you are unable to be in church on that day please arrange for someone to collect your cards.

The Grapevine

To have your Christmas Greetings included in The Grapevine please send your message to the Editor, Norma Reid, by the deadline for the December 2024/January 2025 issue, **Wednesday 11 December**.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT A GLANCE



PEOPLE WHO LUNCH
Friday 8 November
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



**SERVICE OF
REMEMBRANCE**



Sunday 10 November at 10.30 am

"What good are wings
without the courage to fly?"
Atticus



MESSY CHURCH

Sunday 17 November

3.00 pm - Church Hall



CHRISTMAS FAIR

Sunday 17 November
Burview Hall 11.00 am - 2.00 pm

! ADVANCE NOTICE !

SAVE THE DATE!



6-8 December

Pop-up Exhibition in The Heart, Walton



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Friday 20 December at 7.30 pm

St James Parish church in Weybridge
(more information next issue)

What you leave behind is not what is
engraved in stone monuments, but what is
woven into the lives of others.

Thucydides

The Climate and Nature Bill



A new Bill is on its way through Parliament. The Climate and Nature Bill has been written by scientists, experts and campaigners. It considers the full extent of the climate emergency and the breakdown in the natural world, how these are linked, and what the UK can best do to tackle the combined crisis. If the Bill passes into law, the Government would be making a legal commitment to ensure that policy and action is driven by what the science tells us is necessary.

The Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill was first introduced into the UK Parliament by Caroline Lucas MP in 2020 as a Private Members Bill. It is now backed by over 185 MPs representing all major political parties. In September, Dr Roz Savage MP topped the Private Members' Bill ballot and selected the CAN Bill as her 'ballot bill' of choice, which she will now champion in the House of Commons. This is a huge step forward. The Second Reading is scheduled for Friday 24 January, and with enough support from MPs, the Bill will then head to the Committee stage.

This strong, science-led and joined-up plan has the potential to transform the energy and food systems in the UK, to create space for people to live in harmony with the natural world and bring the green jobs that are essential for everyone to thrive in a zero carbon, nature-rich UK.

Weaning ourselves off fossil fuels means big changes, so it's important that everyone is on board with them. This is why the Bill also calls for a climate and nature assembly to help the Government and Parliament develop an emergency strategy on the way forward.

Many organisations including A Rocha UK (the charity behind Eco Church), Christian Climate Action, Oxfam, Greenpeace, Extinction Rebellion and the Wildlife Trusts along with a wide range of businesses are also supporting the Bill.

Encourage our MPs to care for creation!

The Bill is progressing through Parliament, but it still needs our help. At least 102 MPs must attend the Second Reading and support the Bill on Friday 24 January to take it through to the Committee stage.

A campaigning group called Zero Hour has been backing the CAN Bill since 2020. See down for a link to their website where you will find information about the Bill and some helpful resources.

<https://www.zerohour.uk/>

History shows that MPs will only act when the public demands it of them.

If you'd like to help, please write to your MP asking them to attend the Second Reading of the CAN Bill 24 January, before their diaries fill up. The Zero Hour website has a link to a template email that you can use, although it is always preferable to personalise the email. It doesn't need to be long! See down for a link to get started. The website is an excellent starting point because it will help you to generate an email tailored for your local MP: the template that you access will be adjusted according to whether or not your MP already supports the CAN Bill.

<http://action.zerohour.uk/>

On the Zero Hour website, you can read about Roz Savage, one of the new MPs at Westminster. You will understand why her photo on the website shows her holding on oar!
<https://www.zerohour.uk/yeswecan>

Eco Church

Elizabeth Scharinger, our Eco Champion, is working hard on our application for the Bronze Eco Church award. Let's not leave it all to Elizabeth!

Writing an email or a letter is something we can do from home to show our care for the Earth and for the generations that will follow us. This fits very neatly under the 'Community and global engagement' heading, one of the key areas that needs to be considered in the Eco Church survey.

None of this is easy. But as a former US President* once said, we choose to do this "because that challenge is one we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win."

Teresa Bacon

* President JF Kennedy, 1962, from the 'We choose to go to the moon' speech.

Eco Living

If you were at Church for our harvest festival on Sunday 13th October, you may have visited the Eco Living Stall in the hall.

It was amazing to see so many people buying products that will help them to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

If you enjoy the product that you bought and would like more or if you didn't visit but would like to know more, please do let me know because I can bring items to church on a Thursday for you to collect on a Sunday.

You can even look at their website and if there is anything specific that you'd like, I can order it for you at a much cheaper rate than the one advertised.

www.ecoliving.co.uk

I look forward to helping you all on your Eco journey!

Elizabeth Scharinger



IN FLANDERS FIELDS

THE POEM BY JOHN MACRAE

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Remembrance Sunday Offertory

Once again we are glad to support Combat Stress as part of our commemoration on Remembrance Sunday. Combat Stress is the leading UK charity for veterans' mental health and was founded in 1919 (opening its first care facility in Putney in 1920) as the Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Society. It seeks to achieve a return to positive health for ex-service men and women suffering from mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

On average Combat Stress helps 14,000 veterans a year with 11,000 using its telephone helpline. It employs its own clinical staff to provide highly specialised treatment to UK veterans at its centres in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. 81p of every £1 raised is spent on veterans' treatment and support, 16p on fundraising and 3p on raising awareness and improving access. The Treasurer, Jem Ward, will be pleased to receive your donations for Combat Stress and these may be made via Bank Transfer to the church's bank account indicating that it is for Combat Stress, or by cheque made out to St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge, or by cash.

Please put cheques/cash in an envelope marked 'Combat Stress' and place it in the offertory plate by the door. (This may be done in advance if you are not going to be present on the day.) The Treasurer will add Gift Aid to your personal donation (making it worth 25% more to the charity) and your gift will then be included in the total payment made by the church.

Reg Charity No 1094666

Burview Hall
Queens Road
Walton-on-Thames
KT12 5AB



CHRISTMAS FAIR

SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER

11 am to 2 pm



Lots of Bargains!

Refreshments - Gifts - Toys
Tombola - Raffles - Books
Good as New
Crafts and Cushions -
Toiletries - Jewellery

Come and meet Santa in his Grotto!



Jean Rigden (who has been busy making cushions)11 would be delighted with any contributions - all new, of course! - including for the Tombola. Do try to pop in after church!

Jean writes:

"Our beautiful Tree of Life. Our Day Service and Club members all made a leaf."



HARVEST FESTIVAL



We celebrated a joyful Harvest on 13 October with Parade by the uniformed organisations and favourite seasonal hymns. The Colours were presented during the first hymn 'Come ye thankful people come' and then we brought our gifts to the front of the church and placed them on what were to be colourful and laden tables. The Cubs led the opening Prayer and there followed a lively rendering of 'Cauliflowers fluffy and cabbages green' sung by children and projected on the screen. We were able to enjoy the Beavers' contribution on the screen, recorded from their woodland camp environment.



Michael gave an Eco-themed talk about rubbish. On what day was it collected? Were there more 'normal' rubbish bags or more full of re-cycling? Definitely more for re-cycling. Had anyone got solar panels at home? Did anyone walk or cycle to school instead of using a bus or car? Yes, some of us, at least. Did we use single-use plastic plates or china ones? China were the better option. Did anyone need new jeans? Yes! Did we know that it takes 10,000 litres of water to grow and make one pair of jeans? Silence.



Apparently the average person takes 10 years to drink that amount of water! This was news to most if not all of us! Was there a green way to dry the washing? Yes - a washing line! Welsh farmer Wyn had started changing the diet of his cows so that they could now get all their nutrients from grass so there was no need for planet-polluting chemical supplements. The answers came thick and fast and it was clear that saving the planet was uppermost in the minds of everyone.



Michael drew attention to an Eco stand in the Church Hall where we could buy eco-friendly utensils. This would all help towards our achieving an Eco Bronze Award.

The Rainbows and Guides combined to read, in no particular order, rhyming couplets from the lovely hymn by Shirley Erena Murray, 'Touch the earth lightly'. The Colours were returned and we all repaired to the Church Hall for refreshments and to browse the Eco stand.

Norma Reid



Harvest Festival Donations

The very large volume of food items from the Harvest Festival at St Andrew's on 13th October were given to the Walton and Hersham Foodbank. Several members of the congregation wished to donate money as well, as we understand that demand continues to rise rapidly.

Thank you for these donations, which including Gift Aid and one very large donation, amounting £1,181.25 – your gifts will help to make a difference to the lives of many local families in need.

Donations of £203.75, including Gift Aid, were also received for A Rocha, as part of the church's move towards becoming an Eco Church and helping to protect future harvests and the environment.

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Jem Ward

I have received this reply from the Foodbank:

"Hi Jem,

That's amazing, thank you so much. I have just seen the notification from our online giving platform, it is a very generous donation. Demand does continue to rise for foodbank support, we are helping over 100 people every week with no sign of that reducing. We are so grateful to St Andrew's for hosting our foodbank every Monday, it has proved to be a very useful distribution centre for us.

Please pass on our thanks to your congregation, your support is very much appreciated.

With kind regards,
Nina Malyon
Walton & Hersham Foodbank Manager"

Tribulations of a Treasurer – Chapter 5 (Part 2)

You will recall my previous tale of my struggles with disposing of the BT landline. We take up the story with a brief resumé of where we left the tale.

On the contract that I was sent, the church's name had disappeared from the heading: "Organisation Name" – to be replaced with MINE..... And the anti-virus contract was in the name of a church that has never existed: "St. Andrew's Reform Church" (*What St. Andrew's proposed reform was, and whether it has ever been implemented, I have no idea.*)

But then.....

An e-mail back to my contact produced an almost instantaneous response..... with the correct name in the correct places! Having checked it, I signed the contract and returned it to her, before anything else could happen.....

So, now we had succeeded!

Er, no.....

Life is not like that. We should now be saving about £10 per month, but I received a bill the next day at the old rate, plus another £10. I rang and queried it. Apparently, because we were "out of contract", we had to pay a higher rate until the new contract kicked in – despite the fact that it had taken six weeks, whilst we were "in contract" up to the expiry of the contract, to try and sort all this out. (*Please bear in mind that I had started this exercise three or four weeks before we would be out of contract, to avoid such a situation arising.....*)

Cue another ten days of waiting. I then received a call from the young lady's colleague, querying whether we were up-grading our broadband package. The answer was, of course, in the negative, so a "new contract" document had to be issued, rather than using the one which I had previously signed, which was an "up-grading contract". (*Even though the details were for just the same broadband package as we have been using in church for some time now.....*) This "need to sign a different contract" would have gone down better if the new contract had had my e-mail address written correctly.....

..... and had not wanted to charge us £2,000 for equipment, plus a £9.95 delivery fee.

I wrote back politely to point this out.

I then had a further telephone conversation, during which it transpired that the person drawing up the contract had missed out a decimal point – we treasurers know how easy it is to do this! The sum to be paid was not £2,000 but £20.00.....A revised contract was sent and, after checking it AGAIN, I signed and returned it.

So, surely, now we had succeeded!

Er, no.....

Two days later, I received a request for the details of the company's director, so that a credit check could be carried out. The eagle-eyed amongst you will have realised, ladies and gentlemen, that the church is **not** a company and does not have any directors – the lack of the ending "Ltd" or "PLC" in the church's name should have given this away to the not-nearly-as-perspicacious-as-they-should-have-been credit-checking team at BT.....

Cue several telephone conversations and e-mails about the fact that the church has trustees (the Elders) and that I am an agent for them and for you as the Church Meeting, so credit-checking me would be worthless. My valiant BT ally was then advised that I should provide the company number and the check would be done via the details associated with it.

The church is **not** a company and so no details are held under a company number at Companies House..... (At this point, I had a temporary change from feeling trapped in a Kafka-esque nightmare to being the subject of Edvard Munch's painting "The Scream".....)

To add insult to injury, on the same day, I received a cheery BT computer-generated e-mail headed: "You missed the boat!" It explained that "Your BT Broadband contract ended a few weeks ago on XXth XXXX, 2024. This means you are on our higher out-of-contract rates and are paying more than you need to.

Give us a call today to renew your contract and save money at the same time. Call 0800 XXX XXXX or click to speak with an advisor." (If only it were that easy.....)

Another call to my ally at BT. We agreed that I could send the details of three of the elders, who would then undergo the credit checks. (This was not something new. It had been done to satisfy various banks' requirements when we were changing to the new bank account a couple of years ago.) I wrote to three elders to secure their agreement and then sent their details in – by now, more in hope than expectation that we would finally get somewhere.....

Ten days later, the elders concerned having been found to be fine and up-standing citizens who were no threat to the financial stability of BT, I got a call, not from my ally in Birmingham, but from a chap with a warm Wearside accent.....Somewhat to my surprise, he had the definitive contract to forward to me to sign. I received it, checked it thoroughly, signed and returned it, especially as it held no demand for a £20 payment and a £9.95 delivery fee for equipment that we would not need.....

So, now we had succeeded!

Er, no.....

In our subsequent 'phone call, he said that all that was now needed was a new Direct Debit Mandate. I politely pointed out that BT had received our payments since February, 2023 using a DDM from the new church's bank account. There was an expression of surprise from the other end of the line. I quoted the contract number and a rapid scan of the computer screen in the North-East proved that I was indeed correct and that this DDM could be used for the new contract.

So, now we had succeeded!

Er, no.....

The subsequent bill, which was to be paid in early August, came in at £81, instead of the £51 I was expecting. Cue a query from me.....Apparently, it included elements of the old contract, which was running until BT changed to the new contract in early July, halfway through the payment period..... (You are keeping up here, aren't you? No?..... Then perhaps you will not be surprised that the address was still showing as:
ST ANDREW'S URC CHURCH
ST ANDREWS REFORM CHURCH.....)

I decided to await the August bill, payable in early September, which would, surely, show the correct amount.....

Er, no.....

Another £81.50 owed, because the landline was still being charged for, and with the address unchanged. This was followed by the rapid issue of a polite but firm e-mail to my contact in the Wearside.

The August Bank holiday week having passed, I received an automated e-mail from BT.

Excitement! They had a special offer on, which would allow me to purchase MORE landlines at a very much reduced rate. (Sigh!)

I wrote back to my contact, asking if any progress had been made, and reminding them that I was looking to REMOVE the landline.....

No immediate response, so I called the office and my contact's colleague, to whom I had spoken originally, listened carefully to the situation. I explained that I was looking to get the right amount charged and, having signed a new contract, I wanted to get the over-payments refunded. He gave me the number of the Billings

section and advised that I should speak to them. He urged me to persist past the automated questions until I got to speak to an *actual* human being, who would have the *actual* power to change the *actual* amounts charged.

I rang, and persisted as advised.

To my delight, I was connected to a gentleman in Billings *with lots of power*. He changed the contract to the requested broadband plus anti-virus package! He changed the amount being charged and organised a refund credit for the overpayment! He wasn't able to correct the name on the contract, (*sigh!*) but said that he had been able to put my name at the top and add "Walton and Weybridge" onto the church's name! I thanked him profusely and sat back to await the next month's bill, fearing that it had all been a dream.....

Thankfully, that was not the case! (*Cue a swift lap of honour round the computer and the arrival of the Band of HM Royal Marines to play the National Anthem in front of a cheering crowd of on-lookers throwing flowers.....*)

So, now we had succeeded! (At least on the financial side.) This issue had been resolved, such that there would be nothing to pay in early October, and most of the payment due at in early November would be covered by the refund of our overpayment during the summer.

Now..... about the church's name.....

The invoice showed:

CHURCH WALTON & WEYBRIDGE
ST ANDREW'S URC CHURCH
ST ANDREW'S REFORM CHURCH

You have to admit to thinking of Eric Morecambe at this point: "*They've got all the right words, but not necessarily in the right order*"..... plus a few repetitions for good measure.

So, loins suitably girded and shield of faith on arm, I called my contact again. He put me through to "the absolute experts in the Billing Team" and I explained the difficulties to a young lady there. After a short discussion, she claimed to have changed the name on the first line of the bill to read:

"St Andrew's URC Walton & Weybridge"

On the invoice, there is also now a "Friendly Name" section, which allows them to have some idea of who should be speaking to them and how they wish to be addressed. This had reputedly been changed to show my name.

The BT internal system alerted my Wearside contact that I had finished the call and rang me back automatically. (*Isn't technology wonderful – when it works.....*) I thanked him for his help and said that I hoped the issue had now been resolved. He noted that notes of what had actually been changed had not come up on his system, to allow him to check..... but I advised that I was quite content to wait until the next bill to see if things had been sorted out.

(*Frankly, if the name were correct on the top line, I would put up with random words on the next two lines underneath, as I was 64 when this saga started and I would be nearly 65 ½ by the time the next bill came to be paid.....*)

Overall, on the back of several issues like this one with different companies, I despair of anyone being able to set up a bureaucratic system, or write a computer programme, that will actually function as it should..... at least for those organisations, like the church, which are not limited companies.

However, if you have helpful people working with you, even the seemingly most strangely laid out system can, eventually, be made to function to the benefit of both parties. I am very grateful to all the folk to whom I spoke or e-mailed, for their time, effort and courtesy. If only the system had been set up more efficiently.....

Jem Ward



STOP PRESS: Further to the main ArtPeace article, Willowdale Rotary Club of Toronto have made a donation of 500 Canadian dollars (£277) towards the cost of raw stone which was greatly appreciated. However, this leaves the group with a big dilemma as they are still considerably short of funds despite a recent superb

donation from a lady member of St Andrew's plus money left over from Marlow URC's seed and fertiliser donation. Hard choices have to be made - whether to sacrifice any donations over the next two or three months or more to put towards the cost of raw stone - at the expense of food, rent and January school fees. Sales of their art at Southwark and St Andrew's have fallen but still remains their main source of income as there are few jobs around - many Zimbabweans try to eke a living from selling vegetables by the roadside. The current feeling is that colourful verdite raw stone would enhance their work and possibly boost sales but they are deeply worried particularly as Christmas is not far away and life is already tough. The group meet on the 2nd November to decide. Working with stone benefits Michael Mukolosi and is therapeutic as it keeps his mind off his problems. He suffers from depression having lost his wife and carer. He cares for his blind mother. The photo above shows Michael on the right with his friend Godfrey William. **'Healing Child'** by Michael is for sale in the Gateway.



STONE MINES

Mining for stone in Zimbabwe is a risky laborious process where hand tools are used to dig pits and extract large rocks to be dragged down a mountain side and heaved onto a lorry. The whole operation requires intensive use of manpower. This photo was taken many years ago during our friends' expedition to the mines.

JS

GIFT SERVICE AND CHURCH PARADE

10.30 am 8 December

This popular service in support of children in need who are under the care of the team at NE Surrey Children's and Families' Services, will take place this year on Sunday 8 December. Your generous response has always helped to make Christmas special for several children and their families. The service (including the traditional nativity presentation by the children) proved to be an important part of the Christmas celebrations for all ages in our church family. Your support will again be very welcome this year and since the service takes place on 8 December it was thought that early information would be helpful and give you time to pass the details on to anyone else who might be interested. Below are some ideas for possible gifts for children up to 18 years old.

Please note that only new gifts can be accepted.

The Children's and Families' Services Team will ensure that all your gifts are distributed in time for Christmas.

- 0 – 5: *bright-coloured toys, cloth picture books, trucks and cars;*
- 5 – 10 *Lego, colouring-in activity books, craft activities, play figure sets, puzzles, games, books;*
- 10 – 18 *model kits, activity sets for girls and boys, puzzles, games, books, gift packs of toiletries.*

***Please do not wrap your gifts as this delays the sorting process
for the Children's and Families' Services Team***

Some of you may prefer to make a monetary donation through the church. These donations will be used by the church to buy vouchers which are issued to those in crisis for necessities from a local supermarket. The Treasurer, Jem Ward, will be pleased to receive your donations and these may be made via Bank Transfer to the church's bank account indicating that it is for NE Surrey Children's and Families' Services, or by cheque made out to St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Walton and Weybridge or by cash. Please put your cheque/cash in an envelope marked 'NE Surrey Children's and Families' Services' and place it in the offertory plate by the door. (This may be done in advance if you are not going to be present on the day.) The Treasurer will add Gift Aid to your personal donation (making it worth 25% more to the charity) and your gift will then be included in the total payment made by the church.

'Believing is the only magic that makes the utterly impossible completely possible, and the undoubtedly undoable undeniably doable! And, of all the different kinds of beliefs there are, the belief of a child is by far the most unbelievably unstoppable.'

from 'The Christmasaurus' by Tom Fletcher



News from the URC Wessex Synod

Prayer Calendar for November

3	Tadley St Francis, Banbury
10	Blandford Forum Trinity, Abingdon
17	Grange, Reading Somersford, High Cross Church
24	Bell Street United Church Shaftesbury Caversham Park, Reading



FLOWER POWER

“As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colours
enough to paint the beautiful things I see.” *Vincent Van Gogh*

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

We are still in need of help to distribute the flowers after the service.
If you feel you can help with distribution, please speak to Claire, Irene or Moira.
Your offer would be most welcome.



29 September



13 October - *Norma Reid*
for her parents, with love



20 October - *Margaret Faultless*
in memory of her parents



This month we continued the Eco church theme and discussed Caring for God's world. At the Celebration, one of our members read the words of the hymn 'Touch the earth gently'. He also clearly outlined the creation story from Genesis and we looked at Psalm 8. The rest of the group were very attentive and provided lots of ways in which we could care for God's wonderful world.

Russet-coloured Autumn leaves



Good enough to eat!

Following Paula's instructions earlier, we even managed, in the absence of Hilary and Michael, to provide music to sing using the equipment!



Leaf happiness

We had activities based on the theme. There were seeds to plant and bulbs which we hope will flower in time for Christmas. Everyone enjoyed sewing round a picture of the world, and cutting out hand shapes to attach to a heart-shaped world. We had a go at printing leaf prints admiring the different colours and shapes of the leaves. We also made bird feeders covering used toilet rolls in peanut butter and rolling them in birdseed. Even icing the cakes this month continued the theme with green and blue icing creating a picture of the world.



I might be a second Beth Chatto...



Our Wonderful World



Toilet rolls and peanut butter are genius bird feeders!



The icing on the cake

The event ended with soup and tasty shepherd's pie.

Anne Fitzgerald

PRAYER CORNER

A Prayer of Commemoration for the Fallen

(from the Church of England website)

Father of all, remember your holy promise,
and look with love on all your people, living and departed.
On this day we especially ask that you would hold forever
all who have suffered during war, those who returned scarred by warfare,
those who waited anxiously at home,
and those who returned wounded, and disillusioned;
those who mourned, and those communities that were diminished and suffered loss.
Remember too those who acted with kindly compassion,
those who bravely risked their own lives for their comrades,
and those who in the aftermath of war, worked tirelessly for a more peaceful world.
And as you remember them, remember us, O Lord;
grant us peace in our time and a longing for the day when people of every language, race, and
nation will be brought into the unity of Christ's kingdom.
This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BE STRONG

Be strong be strong. Be strong
We are not here to dream,
To drift,
There are battles to fight, And loads to lift;
Shun not the battle,
'Tis God's gift,
Be strong, be strong
It matters not how
Deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the fight, the day how long,
Faint not, fight on,
Tomorrow comes the song.
Be strong, be strong.

(found in the Bible of the grandfather of Lady Taylor in 1935)

Have a heart that never hardens
and a temper that never tries
and a touch that never hurts.

Charles Dickens

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

HELLO TORONTO! Earlier this year, Heather Graeme and her husband David (photo with Beryl Brown), visited St Andrew's URC from Canada to visit Rosemary Topping, Heather's sister-in-law. They were married in St Andrew's by the Rev. Bill McCrorie literally the first week he moved down South and before his first official service! Enthused by the ArtPeace display in the Gateway



and by the story behind the group, they left with a lovely giraffe and some birds. A flurry of emails later, Heather, as a past President of the Rotary Club of Willowdale, Toronto, asked if I would give a talk on the story based on our ArtPeace involvement via Zoom to her fellow Rotarians. This took place after a few technical hiccups on October 3rd. During the question and answer session, some members expressed an interest in purchasing sculptures but how would we get these over to Toronto? Fortuitously



Caroline Gardner and husband Rick are due to visit their family in Toronto in November and kindly agreed to carry a few pieces. ArtPeace were delighted with this development and sent an enthusiastic 'Greetings Toronto' video (left).



Willowdale Rotary Club, was chartered in 1950 and has only 29 members at the moment but punch well above their weight. Heather will raise the subject of the chronic shortage of raw stone at her next board meeting so fingers crossed, there may be a little help forthcoming towards financing an arduous expedition to the mines found at Mashonaland North in Guruve. The majority of Zimbabweans make a living selling goods or vegetables at dusty roadsides, but our friends' main source of income is through our sales. They want to work with a stunning stone called verdite, nicknamed 'Africa's green gold' displaying multiple stunning shades of green, blue and brown.

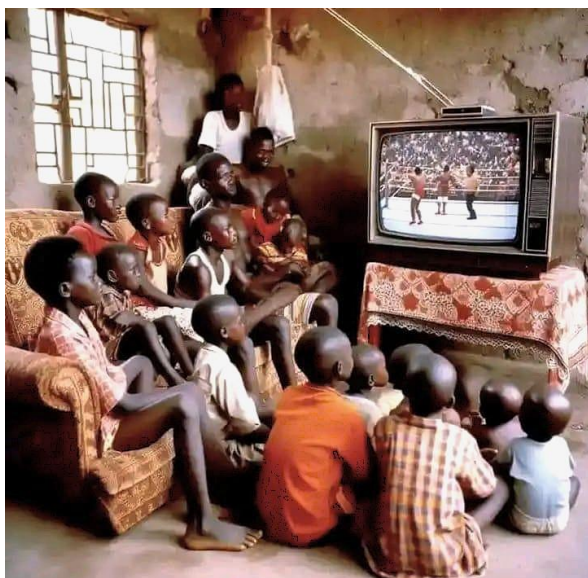


IMAGINE going to bed with \$100 in your pocket and waking up the following morning to find that it is only worth \$56! This happened on Sept.27th to Zimbabwe's national currency called the ZiG which lost 44% of its value. So overnight, if one did not have any US\$ one could only buy half the food you intended buying, half the medicine or half the rent etc. The country appears to be returning to the nightmares of 2007/2008 and at the hands of the same ruling party. Civil servants, from teachers, nurses and doctors to police, army and prison workers to engineers and pensioners are the worst hit and reduced to poverty overnight.



Civil servants, from teachers, nurses and doctors to police, army and prison workers to engineers and pensioners are the worst hit and reduced to poverty overnight.

SNAPSHOTS FROM ZIMBABWE: Years ago, Lovemore James took this photo of family and



friends watching a programme on his TV. Little has changed said Lovemore. Neighbouring children still flock to watch the same TV. **Right** - Mike Masedza thought to share this photo of a friend's toilet - the mind boggles! The gap between rich and poor in Zimbabwe is staggering and the latest currency crisis



further worsens their situation as food prices and all other commodities continue to escalate.

ZIMBABWEAN ART moves people in various ways. In my case, 'Inner Feelings' (left) by Lloyd



Chikede, 'spoke' to me leading to the ArtPeace project. Liz Grimsey, a big fan of their work, could not resist this eagle on the extreme right, carved by Herbert Mhlange. Liz is a loyal supporter of Crystal Palace FC whose emblem is an



Eagle. A surprising number of St Andrew's ladies are avid Premier league football fans!

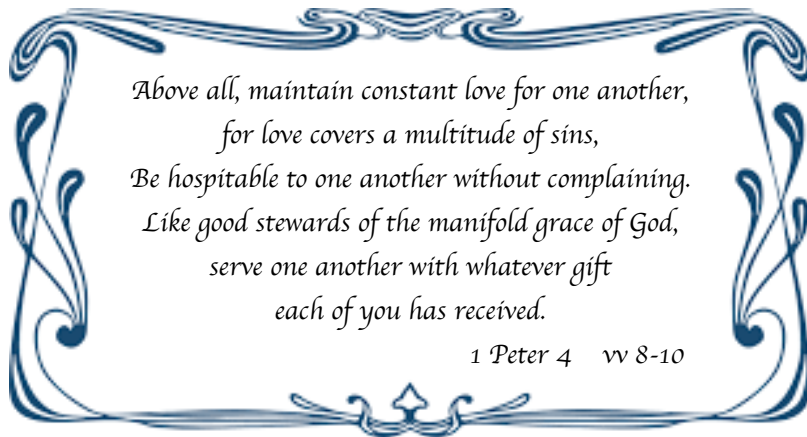
CONGRATULATIONS ISABELA who, as a child, was initially looked after by her ailing Gogo (grandmother) who could barely support herself. Lizeni Nasho offered to raise her adding to her



extended family of eleven. Isabela proved to be a bright child but the family could not afford University fees. Step forward Paula who kindly assisted. Little has been heard since of Isabela whose studies were often interrupted not least by Covid. However, I recently received graduation photos taken in October with a heartfelt thank you message to Auntie Paula and for our support in helping the Nasho family in so many ways over the years. Her degree is in International Marketing. A delighted Paula said: *'The little girl I first saw in her new school uniform has grown into a beautiful young lady. I'm very proud of her and, hopefully, she's very proud of herself. Her hard work has paid*



off. A good education is Zimbabwean parents' No.1 priority for their children for without it, they have little hope of a job. Artist Lizeni, who died last year would have been so proud of Isabela. Finally, a BIG thank you to those kind people who have donated recently. **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!