

Keeping in Touch..... Number 20

Thank you as always to those who have sent in contributions this week. They are much appreciated! - do keep them coming please. Deadline each week is noon on a

Wednesday—please send to c.a.curtis@ntlworld.com Cant't believe this is the 20th!

If you are not nifty with a keyboard simply ring 01480 350787 and let Alan or Chris know what you want to say!

Jean Pepper picked up the phone to tell me about her wedding.....

It all started in early January 1958 when her sister came home from work to say a work colleague was moving to Leeds and selling their caravan in Hartford. She and Jo went to see it and decided to buy it there and then. But of course in those days you wouldn't move in until you were married so the next day they went to see the Vicar in Broughton where Jean lived. They originally wanted a special Licence but the Vicar suggested he read the banns the next three Sundays and then he would marry them on the following Wednesday, giving them a little time to make some preparations!

They married in very snowy weather on 5th February 1958. No time to send out invitations – everything word of mouth. She and her mother went to Peterborough to buy a dress with the butcher giving them a lift up to main road to get the bus. Her grandmother offered to host the reception and family made sandwiches and sausage rolls. A £5 cake was bought from the Co-op plus some sherry and port!

A road sweeper in the village that morning stopped her sister to ask why she wasn't in school. When she explained her sister was getting married that afternoon he promptly swept the roads up to the church. When they came out of the church, which was well attended the sun was shining! No bouquets but a few buttonholes and a lovely delphinium blue dress with added buttonholes. She still has the dress! Later they ate fish and chips with their guests then went to their new home complete with an "apple pie" bed!



Jean took two tiers of her cake to share with her work mates at Smiths in St Peter's Road where she worked as a coil winder. In return they clubbed together to buy Jean and Jo an electric fire! Sadly Jo died in 1999 but she has very happy memories of the wedding day but she never did get a honeymoon!

Celebrating the long ministry of Revd. Derek Alan Newton—Part 3

Hazel continues.....

For some considerable time we continued to make use of the Manse at Earl Shilton, until the Church Secretary was given the difficult job of asking us to leave. The church had called a minister and the house to be prepared for his arrival.

We lodged with my brother for a month and with friends at Adeyfield, who encouraged Derek to buy – and drive – a car.

At the close of one Sunday evening service, an invitation was given to any who wanted prayer to step forward. Derek walked slowly and carefully towards two Elders who prayed with him. I shuffled forward too.

We sat quietly until the service ended, then Derek stood – and walked – the length of the church. Our grandson, a determined atheist, would say in response to this “Yes, but”. He demands logic, proof, ‘the science’.

My response was “Thank God”.

My shuffling gait transformed that evening into a longer, more confident step, and the fractured sternum, broken ribs, damaged knees and ankles mended slowly – but surely.

Once again a Moderator organised housing – this time a Manse in Whitstable, Kent.

In 1990 Derek was 60 and General Assembly had decided ministers must retire at 65.

When he felt the time was right he offered to fill the vacancy at Canterbury, promising to stay for a further 3 years if the Moderator, David Hellyer could make this possible.

This was a first ‘city centre’ church for him and, as none of the members could afford to live within the city walls, we had a ‘gathered congregation’.

The church stood on the main road into the city, had no grounds, and parking for just one car outside the church door. This made weddings and funerals – in fact any event held at the church very difficult. Car-parking charges were steep which meant a keen eye was necessary with regard to length of services etc. Behind the church loomed a hideous concrete multi-storey car - park.

Derek became chaplain to a local hospital caring for mentally ill patients. Much of his pastoral work involved ministering to the many rough sleepers in the city. All the churches were involved in the ‘soup and sandwich’ run in the evenings and the sponsorship of various hostels used by those who preferred not to sleep in shop doorways.

The church had been notified that city development plans would include the demolition of both church and car park and a new church built on the site. Work would begin, they were told, in the very near future.

Derek ministered to this congregation for almost 9 years, and not until a few weeks after he left, did the first workman arrive on the scene – with a spade!

In the meantime, the minister and two Elders, were invited to attend meetings of the City Councillors and Developers. Derek chose Joe, an architect and Peter, a solicitor.

Derek is a peace-loving man but it almost came to blows on more than one occasion.

4 luxury dwellings were to be built on half the plot. The church would be tucked away, access via the service road at the rear of the ‘luxury dwellings’ i.e past the wheelie bins, and just two parking spaces provided. “No way!” said Derek and his henchmen.

Eventually the church was built, attractive and practical and very well placed, very visible when entering the city. The golden dome was a late addition, sneaked onto the plans when Derek had retired and Joe and Peter resigned their posts.

When I gave Derek my promise to go whither he went, I had not envisaged quite so many changes of address. St. Ives, I thought, the perfect place to put up one’s feet. Retirement, thought Derek. New horizons, new opportunities. Slippers will have to wait.

Irene calling.....

BRAIN DRAIN

I've started doing puzzles
Though they drive me up the wall,
There's crosswords that are struggles
'Till I'm cross-eyed with them all!

They say when you get older
You should use your greying brain
And I'm trying, really trying,
It's becoming quite a strain.

Some answers can be easy
And I fill them in no probs,
But others get me thinking
'Till my brain hurts so it throbs.

It's supposed to be relaxing
Plus a learning curve for fun,
But I tell you folks, it ain't no joke,
I'll try another one.

I don't enjoy the Word Search
They make me boggle eyed,
But I don't like to be beaten,
Or give up before I've tried.

Half way through I'm thinking,
Should I give up, should I dare?
But I carry on regardless
While i'm pulling out my hair!

I hope it will be worth it
And my slowing brain will grow,
That thought will keep me going,
If it does I'll let you know!

cc IRENE CARTER

Church Weekend 11th - 13th June 2021

We have a provisional booking at Launde Abbey for our biennial weekend away. This was made following our very successful weekend in 2019. It is now time for us to decide if we wish to keep this booking or not.

Obviously we have no way of knowing if any covid restrictions will still be in place by then. Launde Abbey has recently reopened in a covid secure way and have published their "Keeping you Safe" documents on their website www.laundeabbey.org.uk so do have a look at them.

The cost would be around £210 -£240 pp, (VAT goes back up on 12 January) to include accommodation, all meals, tea and coffee and facilities.

We aim to run a mixture of sessions led by a speaker, worship and leisure time as before.

If you would be interested in attending please let Helen Ackroyd or myself know by Friday 25th September 2020.

Barbara and Helen

Mary Anthony found this lovely photo of my dad (Ross Calvert) greeting Margaret McQuitty at her 80th birthday party!



Behind the Iron Curtain in the 1960s.....

Last week's mention of Check Point Charlie by Hazel reminded me of an unforgettable trip to Berlin in 1965. As the Mill Hill Churches' delegate on the Hendon Youth Council (then part of Barnet) I had the opportunity to go on an exchange to our twin suburb of Tempelhof in Berlin. Whilst I was studying German at school I would know no one else on the two week trip – quite brave for a 16 year old and no direct flights to Berlin in those days so an arduous 24 hour journey by train and ferry. No sleepers either – we had to sleep sitting up! I vividly remember passing through the Ruhr Valley in the dark – watching the fires in the furnaces near the tracks. Eventually the train jolted to a halt at the East German border and armed soldiers came on board and took what seemed like forever to process us all – then same again when we reached West Berlin – effectively an island in the middle of Eastern Europe. As someone who was used to travelling freely in the UK and idea of being “imprisoned” was difficult to get my head round. We were exhausted when we arrived and were picked up by our host families. Mine was a lovely family who lived in quite a impressive apartment in Tempelhof. I slept for hours and when I eventually



woke I was fed “raw meat” according to the card I sent my parents (i.e. salami!) and cherries. I had to get used to no garden either and families would parade around the streets and parks in the evenings and Sunday afternoons. We had a fabulous trip, seeing all the sites. The “Wall” was a relatively recent construct and was marked just by wire in places – but armed guards were everywhere. The iconic Brandenburg Gate could only be viewed at a distance. Daily they changed the guard at the Russian War Memorial which bizarrely was on the western side. The Russian soldiers marched over and those they were taking over from marched back! This was the time when many made daring escapes often losing their lives in order to reach freedom.

No one in West Berlin could visit anyone in the east but we could go on a coach tour. That was the one trip we made without our hosts and I felt very guilty that I could go and yet they couldn't go to visit their relatives. The whole visit was carefully choreographed but the differences between east and west were clear.

Coming back through Check Point Charlie was quite scary – our cameras well secreted so precious photos wouldn't be confiscated.! Later in our trip we stayed by one of the lakes that served as Berlin's “seaside”. Going out on a boat we sailed as near as we dared to the barbed wire that went through the water marking the border.—complete with armed guards in small boats.

I have been back since with Alan (2002) – what a change! I could hardly recognise anything. But when I walked through the Brandenburg gate my eyes were filled with tears – of delight, almost disbelief that I could now do this and the wall was gone and all that heartache with it!



Chris Curtis

Some of you will recall John and Margaret Oubridge who worshipped with us before they retired and moved away. Very sadly their son, Chris, died this week after a long time living with cancer. Chris was a contemporary of Richard Ballard and many others in our FURY group. Our condolences go to John and Margaret and to Chris's wife, Linda and son, Tom.

Algorithmic hiccups From Sally Runham

The 'A' level algorithm received a bad press when students' results were revealed, with many getting lower grades than predicted by their teachers, some seemingly unfair. Algorithms, though, generally make us think of supercomputers, artificial intelligence, and cutting-edge science. We wonder where this will lead us. They invade our personal space as in, 'You recently bought that book, would you also like to read this one?', and stretch imaginations whereby science fiction is rapidly becoming reality, potentially taking our great-grandchildren to Mars. We know, though, that skilful computing, used ethically and compassionately, is an essential component of higher quality, longer lives, able to enjoy a safer world where carbon emissions will be controlled. Algorithms, with their clever chunks of coding, are already essential for medical and drugs research and, within a few years, they will be used routinely in diagnosis of illness with better-than-human accuracy. Algorithms will only grow in importance with the power of computers, but they are not a new concept.

Early evidence of algorithms used for division calculations was found in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) in around 2500 BC. Algorithms were also used in Babylonian astronomy. Ancient Greeks used a set of instructions or equations to work out prime numbers. **Algorithmi** was the Latinized name of the ninth century Persian mathematician. Now, the definition is a finite sequence of well-defined, computer-implementable instructions, typically to solve a class of problems, to perform a computation, to provide an answer.

The Ten Commandments were a sort of early algorithm for how to live life. Reciting the Lord's Prayer, we seek God's help to adhere to a good and sustainable way of living. Centuries old, both sets of 'instructions' apply to everything we do today. All of us find some way of not adhering completely to the best way of living our lives. Computer processing stops if the rules are not obeyed completely. Then skilled logisticians alter the way it copes with glitches, enabling it to get back on track. Ability to cope with vagaries in weather forms an essential part of the supermarkets' supply chains – not always providing the most farmer-friendly solution. Demand-led algorithms failed to factor in human panic emotions, though, at the start of lockdown causing a huge hiccup to the supply of flour, pasta and other 'essentials'.

Getting our church back into action is like programming an algorithm but this time every member and user of the church has an input into the program to achieve the required outcome. The simplest algorithm is to leave the building closed until Covid-19 is under control, but a more compassionate way is actively sought. Letting some vulnerable user groups have access, seeing if the café can provide a basic community service, and trying to find ways to provide worship and prayer. All this takes more than any



First service back.....

Some Elders, plus a small group who had indicated via the survey that they were willing to return to worship sooner rather than later, attended a service in the church building on Sunday to test out the safety measures that have been put in place. No singing of course and all measures carefully observed!

Details of future services will be published shortly. There will be no service in St Ives this Sunday. Resources on the web as usual!

From Char.....

Right—Cromwell's Barn very sadly demolished in 1964– what an asset it would have been now! How could that have happened?



Left—the dismantling in 1961 of the much missed railway to Huntingdon. The building behind is Enderbys Mill. It used to print labels for the jam factory in Histon then Sir Clive Sinclair used it for his many technological innovations including the C5! It is now a residential accommodation.

A postscript from Hazel

Mansfield, Derek's first church, has been demolished and now forms part of a large traffic island (town development)

Shirebrook ceased being a place of worship many years ago. During the miner's strike it became HQ for Arthur Skargill.

Hertford continues - the Church Hall now the store place and distribution centre of the local food bank.

Adeyfield. The premises were in need of major repair and maintenance. The site was sold to a developer who built a block of luxury flats. The money gained paid for the purchase of a site on the edge of town which gave scope for the development of a worship centre, flats and two shop units to rent, and a cafe.

Invitations to the grand opening were being prepared when lock-down intervened.

Canterbury church was demolished and a new worship centre built.

Buildings come and buildings go - but the Body of Christ - the Church goes marching on.

