

Keeping in Touch..... Number 25

Thank you as always to those who have sent in contributions this week. KIT deadline is noon on Wednesdays. Please send to c.a.curtis@ntlworld.com

If you are lucky enough to get away do send us a "postcard" —three or four photos and where they are from.

TEARS ARE OKAY

The world is going crazy

All around us as we know,

We're cleaning Covid conscious

Hoping, praying it will go.

We're masked and gloved and ready

We're distancing with care,

While trying to get on with life

With normalizing dare!

We slap a smile upon our face

Keep conversations bright,

But sometimes in the wee small hours

Tears spill into the night.

It gets too much sometimes to cope

When daily news is sad,

Tears act just like a safety valve

Releasing them's not bad.

So, wipe your eyes and soldier on

And say a little prayer,

God knows when you are feeling low,

Just call, and he'll be there.

cc IRENE CARTER

GREEN

(The recreation ground, "Wheatfields" area, St Ives)

*I'm sitting once more beneath the
spreading ash tree*

*A note-book is resting on my knee,
Blackbirds chatter, people pass by,
I look on them with a wary eye.*

*A little boy on a bike chases a crow –
Why does he do that, doesn't he know
That even a crow is a natural thing
And can out-fly most things, including
him?*

*People with dogs are having some fun,
The grey clouds obscure a reluctant sun.
But here it peeps for just a gleam,
Is this all part of a gentle dream?*

*The pandemic mess seems far away
While I sit here during this pleasant day.
Worries are gone for a little while -
As the ash tree sways, it makes me
smile.*

18 / 7 /2020 John Williams

Dear weekenders

Thank you all for letting Helen and I know if you wished to attend the church weekend at Launde Abbey next June.

For a variety of reasons we do not have enough people to make it a viable weekend. Also owing to the current Covid restrictions which will be in place for some months to come we would not be able to enjoy the weekend in the way we normally do. We have therefore decided to cancel our current booking for June 2021. Launde Abbey staff hope to see us again sometime in the future, and we may look into arranging something else there at a later date.

Best wishes

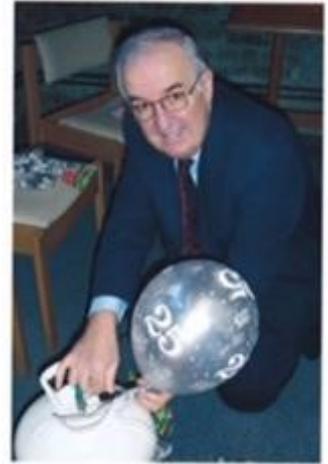
Barbara, Helen and Catherine

GEOFF BAILEY

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Geoff Bailey on Thursday of last week. With loving support from Evelyn, Geoff had been managing his Parkinson's so brilliantly in the last few years.

It was around 2001 that Geoff and Evelyn joined our church family when they came to live in nearby Haddenham, having spent a number of years living and working in Japan.

As new members, both Geoff and Evelyn quickly became involved in church life - Geoff served as an Elder and Associate Secretary with such commitment and imagination, whilst Evelyn was involved with finance. It was Geoff who in 2005 came up with the slogan '25 Alive' and organised many musical events as part of celebrating '25 Years of Service and Ministry to the Community'. The lovely photo here shows Geoff in the Porch Chapel blowing up balloons ready for the launch of '25 Alive' in Market Square.



By 2012, Geoff and Evelyn finally settled in Cambridge with their membership being transferred to St Columba's URC where they were taking a keen interest in the merging of two local congregations to create the new 'Downing Place URC' in a remodelled building. We give thanks for Geoff's life of faith and service and especially for his time with us in St Ives - and we hold Evelyn and family in our thoughts and prayers. **SMD**

Downing Place, Cambridge memories by Shirley

Shirley Kirkwood read with interest Sally's article in the last Keeping in Touch, and emailed her with the following comment, giving permission for Sally to include here.

"Dear Sally
I read with interest the proposed changes to this church.

When we moved from Scotland down to a small village outside Cambridge I tried several small churches before I found Downing Street. It was dark and cold but I was given a warm welcome by the minister. In those days there was no coffee bar after the service. Difficult to make or meet friends. The minister recognised this and started organising each of his elders in charge of their district to take over the manse for tea and biscuits. It was a great idea and I always looked forward to an hour of chat once a month!

Your item brought back some happy memories. Thank you

"Incidentally I worked in Cambridge veterinary dept. situated on the Downing site so passed the church every day!" **SK**

A mini postcard from Sally and Nev stayi ing near their daughter in West Sussex.....

*Petworth URC where they have a 30
minute service each Sunday*



*Below—The
Candle House Petworth*



A Postcard from Deepest Norfolk from Martin and Jackie...



Left—planning for the day with PPLB—Personal Protection for Low Beams



Left -Waiting for sunshine....

Right—Sheringham Golf Course



A postcard from South Devon from Char.....and Brian.....

Char was visiting a friend at Otterton and they met up with Brian one day at the lovely Bicton Park.



Sir Walter Raleigh was born nearby



Budliegh Slaterton

Favourite hymns

On the 150th anniversary of our Victorian building we held a vote for our favourite 10 hymns. An article about each was written each month then in Inspire. The other day Jackie was “sorting”, as you do these days, and found this article about her favourite hymn, The Love of God is broad like beach and meadow. She asked if it could be published again.

In 2015 I wrote: “The third of the four hymns that tied for seventh place in our top ten, this came as something of a surprise in our vote! A great personal favourite of mine, but not one I would have expected to have so much support from others. Indeed, it is included in very few of the mainstream hymn collections. It was written originally in Swedish in the 1960s and was translated into English by URC Minister Fred Kaan.

The following commentary is included in the Companion to Rejoice and Sing:-

“The theme of this hymn, with its image of an all-embracing love, unconfined and unconfining, might not be acceptable to all shades of theological opinion; and indeed is not present in every verse of the Scriptures; it does not resolve the conflicting demands of justice and freedom which have haunted prophets and poets for centuries. Nevertheless, it carries a necessary reminder of how much of our human condition is the result of self-inflicted hurt, and points to a God whose nature is the opposite of this. The hymn does not say so; but if we can see such a God revealed in Christ, then its message will go home”.

The tune composed by Lars Lundberg evokes the beauty of the Scandanavian countryside and coast and, in my opinion, goes wonderfully with this lovely hymn.”

Hymn 108 in Rejoice and Sing

The love of God is broad like beach and meadow:

wide as the wind, and an eternal home

Take us as far as your compassion wanders

Among the children of the human race.

2. We long for freedom where our truest being

Is given hope and courage to enfold.

We seek in freedom space and scope

for dreaming

And look for ground where trees and plants can grow

3. But there are walls that keep us all divided;

We fence each other in with hate and war.

Fear is the bricks and mortar of our prison,

our pride of self the prison coat wear.

4.O judge us Lord, and in your judgement free us,

and set our feet in freedom's open spaces;

Take us as far as your compassion wanders

Among the children of the human race.

CCL117444



Erstwhile Elder, Philip Simpson, now living in retirement in France, recalls the days, immediately after 27th September 1980, when we realised that our Church and Community Centre was a very different kettle of fish.

FEEDING THE BEAST

The church has just celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the re-furbished church that all enjoy today. But how many remember the aftermath of learning to control the beast that was created? A very hungry beast!

In the good old days when the Sunday services were over, the building was locked up until the next Sunday. But the new Church and Community Centre was truly a new kettle of fish. No longer could it be just locked up until the next Sunday. It was a veritable Community Centre as well. Used by one and all seven days a week. Security became a major responsibility.

So a rota of Security Officers had to be established to ensure that all was safe and well when users had vacated the building. I was one of them. It was a chilling experience checking out the building, late at night, with nothing but a torch and one's faith to protect oneself! Indeed it was!

Well do I remember, one dark night, finding a poor soul, a punch-drunk, ex-boxer, asleep in the porch chapel. I quivered as I challenged him. He was a mountain of a man – not unlike a grizzly bear. He had nowhere else to go, he pleaded. And no money. Fortunately, that late at night, there was a solution. The Church Hall opposite was still undergoing refurbishment. I tucked him up in there, where he could make himself a cup of coffee, help himself to biscuits, and gave him a £1 coin. The next day, he was gone.

I am sure that all erstwhile church Security Officers could relate similar experiences. But none like Bill Pywell. He turned up with torch and faith in hand to search the darkened building. He threw a fit when he entered the Centrum where he found the floor strewn with bodies – many of them! He let out a scream when all of the bodies resurrected themselves – protesting vociferously. They were a yoga class who were required to meditate in the prone position in the dark.

And what about maintenance? A 24/7 enterprise requires much maintenance to combat wear and tear. So a Maintenance Team was established under Alan Scarrow. In the office was the Sacred Work Book. Any problems with light-bulb changing, plumbing, faulty locks and the like were listed in this book. And were solved, with hope, every Tuesday night, by Alan Scarrow and his team of volunteers. I was one of them.

Well do I recall one evening when we were required to change light bulbs in the ceiling. To achieve this, we had to climb a ladder to the bell chamber and crawl through the roof space to change the bulbs. As I did so, I looked down to see three lady volunteers flitting about with dusters.

“ More elbow grease, ladies, “ I boomed out, in a god-like voice. “ You are being watched from on high!”

All three threw a fit. But I was to pay for my god-like impersonation. As I returned through the bell chamber, it decided to chime – eight earsplitting times. I was stone deaf for hours.

Meanwhile, search for that old Sacred Work Book. It might offer you more than a chuckle or two.

Then there were projects well beyond the ken of mere, amateur Working Parties. One of them was the

re-tiling of the apse roof. And I was “volunteered” by the project managers, Alan Scarrow, Arthur Burling and Frank Enfield. Now I don’t have a head for heights. But working for these dear souls, with other’s also stricken with vertigo, there was no way out. We had to scale the scaffolding, with slates in hand, with the instruction from Arthur : “ Go to it, my son. You can only fall once! The Lord is with thee!”

Yes indeed, people, it required much work by a small army of volunteers to ensure that our successful enterprise was secure and well maintained all these years. Long may it be so.

Editors’ postscript: we can vouch for the veracity of these stories. The security rota carried on for many years, with many “bodies “ being found asleep in odd places over the years. Such people were always treated with as much charity and compassion as security would allow. Tony Bullough was the last person to organise this rota.

Rotas of all sorts abounded! The URC generously scoped us with an extra half a minister to allow Donald to act as Warden and Kate to be ordained and serve as Community Minister. A firm and decisive hand was necessary in those early days but nevertheless much else needed done by volunteers. Many of us spent many hours down there as well as working full time. We didn't realise though what an impact it was having on our children until one day, on holiday and visiting St Marks in Venice, one of our girls declaimed—” Well if we went to church here mum and dad would be on the Gold Cleaning Rota too!” AC & CC.

And simply because I had a spare space—some photos of our garden—Oct 20



From Babs Moore—Freewill offerings .Thank you those who have made donations to help church finances in the difficult times and those who have changed to paying directly into the bank. I also aware of those faithfully putting money in their envelopes ready for when we are able to meet again. Much appreciated.

if anyone wants to know more about making donations or regular giving directly into bank or by cheque then I am happy to help. 01480 352627.