



**New Malden
Methodist Church**
At the heart of the High Street

Lockdown Life

Issue 2: May 2020

Welcome to the second edition of Lockdown Life, which is here to help us keep in touch with one another during this time when we can't get together in person.

In this edition, we have collected together some memories of people's experiences of wartime, to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May, as well as news of what people have been up to during the last few weeks. This will also be the last edition with Julia in post as our Families Worker before her well-earned retirement. I have enjoyed working together, and will miss sharing the silliness of the Sheep Trail and Panto time, as well the laughter and support she has given me since I arrived in New Malden - thank you!

So, I hope you enjoy reading, and if you would like to contribute to the next edition, please let Sarah know.

With every blessing, Karl

VE Day Remembered

The recent VE day celebrations stirred memories from some older members of our congregation who were around in 1945. We are very grateful to all these people for sharing their experiences of a time when life was very different from now.

Reg Finch was a young teenager, on holiday from Lancashire and staying with his aunt in Putney. He remembers going up to London and seeing the King and Queen on the balcony at Buckingham Palace, albeit from quite a distance away. When it was time to go home, his aunt managed to carve a path through the enormous crowds by saying her nephew was ill and needed to get home quickly!

Ruth McLeod reports that she was deemed not fit enough for service in the Women's forces (which seems a bit ironic now!) so she worked as a nanny in Edinburgh. She was keen and able to turn her hand to anything that needed doing, which will not surprise those who know her!

Win Fry was working in an office at the time and says she wasn't given any time off for the celebrations. Likewise, **Jean Bedford** says it was Guides as usual that evening.

Greta Curry grew up in Sunderland, which was the largest shipbuilding centre in the world at that time and suffered a lot of bombing. She was evacuated twice, first to Selby and then to Wakefield, but came home when she got into the Grammar school in Sunderland as her parents could not manage to buy two different school uniforms.

Greta remembers seeing the planes overhead being picked out by searchlights, and being worried that they would see her very long shadow from up above. She also recalls being sent home from the Youth Club if the sirens went off, but she and her friends tended to pass by the chip shop on their way home and pool their pennies and halfpennies to get some fortifications for the coming raid. Her

father worked at the shipbuilding yard, and before the launch of a new ship the men would be required to work all day, on through the night and then the following day. Greta would run from home with his sandwiches to sustain him through these gruelling shifts.

She was a teenager when the war ended but there was not much celebration going on in Sunderland that day; and she knows this, because she went out looking for some! She had to go right to the east end of town, where the docks were, to get any sense of partying. She only found out much later about the huge crowds that had gathered in London that day, because of course almost no one had a TV in those days.

Stella Chattle writes: We did have a lovely Burford Road Celebration on May 8th and cemented friendship with two more families from the extended section of our road. I think I now know most of them. The circle is a lovely place for all the little ones to ride bikes and scooters and interestingly the little girls are also suddenly enjoying playing with their dolls prams. We have a chat every day while there is no school and they are also watching my Alliums grow with great interest. There is a great community spirit in this road as we 'meet' together outside each Thursday for tea.

My memory of VE Day is still quite vivid. I would be seven at the end of May. My Stepmother and friend took me up to London with the plan to get to Buckingham Palace to see the King and Queen come out on the balcony. As soon as we got off the train (we were travelling from Surbiton to Waterloo - an adventure in itself!) we became part of a great crowd. As we approached Westminster Bridge the crowd got larger and I remember at one point somebody shouted out "Don't push, we have a child here" and suddenly I was up on a man's shoulders.

We did eventually arrive at the circle surrounding the Victoria monument. There we stood shouting "We want the King! We want the King!" I learn now that they came out eight times and Churchill joined them. It was so exciting!

I am sure that day is the reason why I just love being at an event where I can shout and applaud, and be part of a mass of people enjoying what they have come to see. I went with my Father to watch the Coronation; we slept overnight in the Mall opposite St James's Palace. Such fun! We cheered everybody who came in sight from dawn until the end of the day. I did the same for Charles and Diana's wedding with Val Allcott. Barrie was then our Minister. For Princess Anne's wedding I took Jo and Nicky and we caught the first train out of Worcester Park Station. Then we stood in Whitehall.

I have enjoyed remembering!

And from **Donald Finnan**: I was watching the Antiques Road Show WW II special anniversary programme on May 8th when I saw a bomb with which I had had a previous close encounter!

It was an incendiary bomb, with a special metal ring at the nose so that it would penetrate the roof, and a small explosive charge which would ignite the napalm or phosphorous contained in the cylinder. One came through our roof during the war and ignited in the loft. My father rushed upstairs and I followed. We crawled into the loft, he on his stomach with the hose and me a distance behind him with the stirrup pump and a bucket of water. Eventually, after getting through a number of buckets, father managed to soak everything around the bomb so nothing else would catch fire.

This was an event in the third blitz on Liverpool in May 1941. I remember many nights in the Anderson shelter dug into the earth behind our flat. I remember the anti-aircraft fire from a mobile

gun parked outside the front, the windows being blown out, and the roof of my school being blown off one night by a landmine, moved in one piece and put down a couple of hundred yards away! After that remarkable event I remember having a year or so of just one hour a week education as the teachers did the rounds and taught small groups in peoples' homes. Later on we were crammed into another school with about 60 pupils to each class. I used to get the bus to Penny Lane (Beatles) and walk from there.

My main memory is of a gigantic explosion in the docks. There was a ship, the S.S. Malakand, loaded with 1000 tons of bombs and ready to sail. Fire spread from local dock buildings and the ship exploded, destroying the whole dock in which she had been berthed. Parts of the ship's plating were found in a park over a mile away. Next morning I looked out of my bedroom window and there was a huge orange semi-circular glow over the city centre, like a terrible sunrise, as if the whole city were on fire. Many years later, I saw on TV a painting someone had done at the time, and it was exactly what I saw that morning. I can still see it now. Only London was bombed more than Liverpool.

And finally a very sobering account from **Monika Shaffer-Fehre**:

On my own account, of course, I felt happy with the celebrating crowds in London, but the enormous losses of Germany also give me pause and make me very sad.

I was born in Berlin in April 1937. When the blitz came, I often fell ill and consequently was sent to my Godparents in the 'Provinces'. There was no "Kinder transport" in Germany then and parents made their own arrangements. My Godparents became, therefore, my foster parents. Döbeln in Saxony is a small town and Allied bombers hit a small car factory only once. I played happily with local children and acquired a Saxon accent that could be cut with a knife ('Brum' is music in comparison). Additional food for children was milk and a big roll which we collected daily. I have a deeply ingrained memory of walking home from school past a fenced exercise yard teeming with people and a woman coming to the fence begging me to post a letter into a letter box out of her reach and being very grateful for my compliance. I feel that must have been one of those transports to a concentration camp and a last desperate letter...

My mother's family were at home in Dresden; therefore, on the night of the 13th of February 1945 my foster parents made me get out of bed to witness Dresden burning. We stood in the wintery garden and watched the bright red sky - unforgettable. The next day my grandmother came to us in Döbeln, having walked all through the night. Her bakery / confectionery business had been destroyed and she had lost everything. (My grandfather had been Guild master of the Dresden bakers and confectioners and I always feel glad that he had died in 1933 and that he was spared seeing his magnificent "Konditorei" being destroyed.

My aunt, who lived through that night in Dresden, told me later that she fled through the burning streets with a pram containing a baby, my cousin. On the front board sat her amputee husband, and my other cousin (7) held on to her coat. The fires raged so fiercely that people were sucked into the flames. Napthaline was also thrown and people became human torches. Alight, they jumped in to the river Elbe, but as soon as they emerged, the flames burned again and could not be extinguished. Why did Dresden burn so fiercely?? A rumour had been spread that a heavy attack by the Allies was planned that night on Berlin. So all the fire engines of the Provinces were sent to Berlin to help. None were available in Dresden.

The next horror for Döbeln came with the arrival of the Russians. Total Capitulation. My foster parents, neighbours and I stood at a roof window and saw Russian tanks come over the brow of the hill straight into our little town. The adults were of course shocked, rightfully fearing the worst, but with the curiosity of youth, all the children of the neighbouring streets rushed to the entry point of our little town and the Russians, having just raided a sweet factory, threw little bags of sweets into the crowd of youngsters. Wonderful! That, alas, was the only friendly act to be remembered of the troops.

With the Russian presence of course, my real usefulness became apparent, as my foster mother always required me to come with her when she had to go out. With a small girl of eight in tow she would not be attacked or raped. Still, I do not hate the Russians. They were men taken from deepest Russia without any knowledge of Western ways. In a neighbour's house, for example, some soldiers made a brilliant discovery: they found a gadget for washing potatoes, but on pulling the handle, all the potatoes disappeared (as they would in a toilet!) On their return to Russia many were killed, because they had seen the West and had new ideas – inconvenient for the regime.

Culinary joys for us now consisted of one potato shared between three and in summer and autumn we had 'safaris' to gather ears of wheat or hack potatoes off harvested fields. I returned to my mother in Berlin in 1948 and in autumn that year I began studying English at school.

With thanks to all our contributors for these lively and varied accounts, which remind us that Victory always comes at a great price.

Circuit Services of Farewell and Welcome

Farewell for Rev Andy and Liz Clark

Andy and Liz will be moving a bit earlier than we had expected and we will need to bring forward the date of their farewell service - we will give you details as soon as possible. It is very unlikely that we will be able to gather a large number together for the farewell and we are exploring ways to have a small number present but a live internet link.

Welcome to Rev Mark Wakelin

On **13 September at 11am** there will be a special Circuit Service at Chessington to welcome the new Minister, Rev Mark Wakelin. District Chair Michaela Youngson will be attending and we hope you will be able to come along.

Current Church Worship Arrangements

Although no services are currently taking place each of the local churches is making its own local arrangements for worship and communications to continue:

Surbiton Hill [Live](#)

10.30am Sundays: to see a broadcast of our online Sunday service go to this site: shmc.online.church

3.15pm Thursdays: For live messy church with Sharon Lloyd at our family Facebook group please see: [surbiton hill messy church](#) (NB this is a closed group for safety reasons - click on the "join" button)

Available on Demand

YouTube channel: "[surbiton hill methodist church](#)" - all of our worship and music videos available at any time

Family YouTube channel: "[shmc family fun ministry](#)" video and activity for families and children

Chessington, Kingston and New Malden

For further information please check the church websites. For NMMC see the end of this newsletter.

Make Lunch from Judith Jewell

Many friends will know that for a couple of years our church has been a "Make Lunch Kitchen". Once a week in the school holidays we cook lunch for children who are entitled to a free school meal. We're a small team, led by Julia, and supported by the Make Lunch charity *Transforming Lives for Good*. We've been gradually increasing our numbers, starting small like a mustard seed – up to February half-term we were cooking for an average of 10 children from four families.

Then the pandemic arrived. Children who would normally be going to school and getting a free lunch there, were suddenly stuck at home. We had plenty of food in our Make Lunch cupboard, and a good balance of grant money so we decided to carry on. But physical distancing rules mean we can't have families coming to the church to collect a meal, and we decided we're not geared up for delivering hot meals to homes.

Instead, every Wednesday, we fill a bag for each family on our list. We've had generous donations of food from Waitrose, and The Dons Trust via Greg Martis-Jones, and we've used grant money to buy other things we need. So we can give each family a lovely mixed bag of tins, dried goods, bread, fresh fruit and veg and sweet treats. We put in activities for the children, to replace the fun they'd have had in the Lower Hall, while we were cooking.

As well as the families we already knew about, Sue Knowles has referred a few of the families she meets through her work in the community. This week we filled ten bags – some collected by a parent, and the rest we delivered. Every family we support in this way is so grateful and we have had some lovely messages of thanks. We are going to carry on until the lockdown lifts, the children can go back to school and we can get back to cooking and serving in person. Please continue to support this valuable work in your prayers.

Thank you Julia, with lots of love ...

From Pam Wardley

It is so difficult to know what to say about someone who has been the very core of our church.

Always looking to serve those in our community and outside it has been her mission and she has gone about it with enthusiasm and expertise.

She has shaped our outreach to bring people to know the Lord and involve them in our work. She has also made that fun. I think Fun might be a very good description to use of her methods.

I wanted to express my admiration for what Julia has done.

From Peter Catford (who appointed Julia on 1st April 2005)

I have very vivid memories of Julia's first Christingle and Julia managing to get resources from Waitrose and alike so that the service would run well. Still not sure how she did it.

The Christmas Tree Festival was a mammoth task as was the Wedding, Baptism and other displays that drew people in to talk and re-engage with the church.

The help with liaising with Junior Church was a great help as she knew everyone so well it meant that a lot of the mess I would have made on my own was averted or minimised.

Oh yes and the sheep song features prominently.

Looking back Julia was a joy to work with, her can-do attitude and her faith that continued to be stretched and shaped by the stuff going on around her was an encouragement to a minister.

Thank you Julia, and enjoy your retirement. God bless, Peter

From Gillian Gilman

Julia - a description:	enthusiastic
	imaginative
	dramatic
	forthright
	friendly
	encouraging
	persistent
	loyal
	brave
	welcoming
	faithful
	loving
	good company
	and much more...

From Sarah Moore

Even when I return to the office after Lockdown, whenever that may be, office life will never quite be the same again without Julia. As a colleague and friend she has been a joy to work with for the last 9½ years that I have been doing the job.

I know from the times when she has been on holiday that office life without her will be quieter. There will be less looking for things accompanied by the cry, "well I know I had it". I will be interrupted less. I will also laugh less and it will definitely be a lot more dull!! Her enthusiasm, a word that comes up a lot in relation to Julia, is boundless and a thing to admire, even if I have not always been entirely receptive. During rehearsals for panto in 2012 I was in the office quietly working on the Notices and minding my own business when she exploded into the room shouting, "I've had a brilliant idea!!!" It was brilliant – the appearance of an athlete with the Olympic torch during a scene in the panto – just unexpected!



Julia is hugely supportive and will help with anything. She knows when we need to shut the door and scream. Her advice is always helpful and her diplomacy has helped me draft many a tricky email and deal with troublesome hirers. We have cried and laughed and shared amazement and incredulity at church life. And there is always tea. Lots and lots of tea.

I know that Julia will continue to support and enrich the life and work of the church. She will come in to the office often and I will be very happy to be interrupted to set the world to rights, discuss the latest edition of Strictly, Bake-off, Pottery Throwdown and Sewing Bee and of course, drink tea.

From Ali Walsh

Julia is a treasure or a jewel in the crown as she has achieved such a lot of different things while being a lay youth worker, from her regular articles in the church newsletter to entertain the children to the pantomimes to entertain both children and adults alike.

From running a Brownie pack to organising the Nativity to starting the Christmas celebrations with the Christingle. The Christingle attracts so many families who may not attend the church for the rest of the year but return for the Christingle year on year.

These are just a few of the wonderful events which wouldn't have been possible without Julia's hard work and determination.

From Alison Bullett

I first came across Julia when working with her in the Junior Choir. About 20 years ago we had 15 or more youngsters who came to a midweek rehearsal, sang occasional items in services and produced quite a few concerts. It was great fun struggling to keep up with the lively beats, the lively youngsters and their extremely lively Director. I know several of our – still young – people have very happy memories of their time in the Choir, and love to come back for singalongs at Christmas when the old songs make a re appearance.

Soon afterwards came my first experience of The Pantomime! Many more were to follow before I really felt too old to tread the boards and look ridiculous. Julia never gives up with this. Some people, having put up a sign-up sheet and seeing just three names on it three weeks later, would quietly go away and re-think. Not Julia! 'You know you want to!' is her battle cry, and before you even realise she's got hold of your arm, you're cast as something unlikely, ('No one else will fit into that costume quite as well as you') and it is all jolly good fun, no matter what time of the year it happens.

Her enthusiasm is unrivalled, and across all age groups she has made such a difference to so many aspects of Church Life. I hesitate to list all the activities and groups she has been involved with, as I'm bound to leave some out. But, no matter what is going on in her personal life, and there have been plenty of challenges there for her to cope with, she turns up and does her stuff. Her Christingle services are now legendary. There she is up at the front in heels and red velvet, immaculately coiffed, smiling, calm and collected in spite of whatever technical difficulties have been plaguing the system for the past two hours, ready to lead the enthusiastic crowd in the sheep roll call, the lighting of 200 candles and the assembling of the Nativity figures; often as challenging as assembling the



Christingles themselves, as the youngsters scramble under chairs to produce the right number of shepherds. They all turn up in the end.... they wouldn't dare not to!

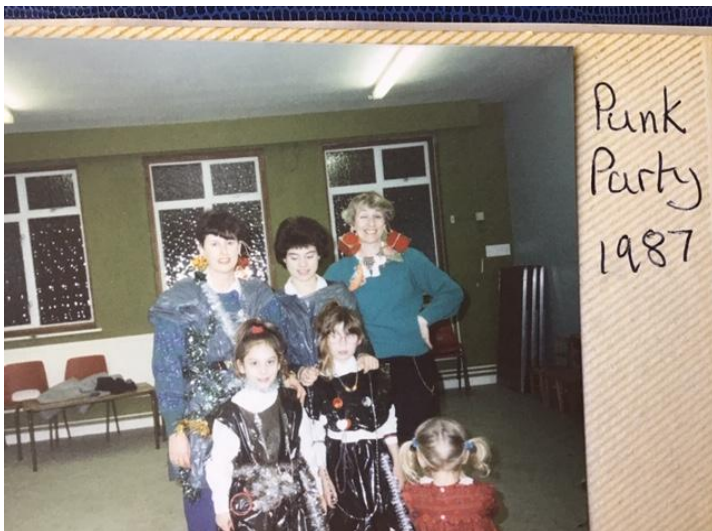
There is much more that she does too behind the scenes, as Family Worker and in The Office. All those things that just magically appear at certain times of the year? Julia will have had a hand in it somewhere. The parties, the Malden Fortnight parade, the Starters and Puddings and so much more. We will miss you hugely Julia, but you have certainly earned your retirement. All the very best in whatever you do. We know you will not be idle, or very far away.

Julia is Jolly; a Juggler of time,
Unflappable, Unstoppable, from prayer to pantomime,
Lovable and lovely, she's "Glammy"* and she's neat,
In Office stuff and Church life, always ready with a treat.
At Brownies, Guides and Toddlers, she's busy night and day
May God give you His blessing; Good Luck! Don't stay away!

*(Julia is 'Glammy' to her grandson Ethan. An apt nickname!)

And Brownies

Julia has been involved in the uniformed organisations within the church long before she was the Family Worker as Sue Knowles' photos show. The ice skating picture is from 1994. You can always rely on old friends to dish up the dirt when required. There are more to be shown at a later date!!



Julia has even been known to camp on occasions, a pastime she does not enjoy!!

From Emma Haines

Evidence that Julia camps!!!



From Hannah Moore

As a family worker, a large portion of Julia's time at church was, fortunately or unfortunately for her, spent with the youth.

As those who went to the Greenbelt festival can confirm, it was quickly discovered that Julia's natural habitat was not a cold tent in a muddy field. Nor was it in a fetching safety jumpsuit 52 metres in the air walking over the top of the O2 arena, but she did these things with a smile on her face and she did them for us. Julia also organised some amazing things with her feet firmly on the ground, she hosted several 'Stop-ups' where, to celebrate Easter, we tried to do something even Jesus' disciples didn't manage – staying up all night. Some of us (who will remain nameless) didn't actually manage it either, but when Julia leads hot cross bun making at 2am it's impossible to resist.

From Fort Rocky weekends to Malden Fortnight Parades, Julia was constantly thinking of ways that we could have fun together, learn about God and solidify friendships which are still going strong many years later. Her passion and joy are always infectious and a new idea is never far away, you can also guarantee that just when you thought you had escaped, she'll find you a role in the pantomime.

Although a lot of us church 'youth' may be using that term much more loosely now, it is undeniable that without Julia there wouldn't have been nearly as much laughter or adventure or slightly burnt hot cross buns and we can't thank her enough.

This is the only photo that we can find of Julia at Greenbelt, here with Emma Haines and Becky Edwards. She was clearly good at avoiding the cameras this time!



From Judith Jewell

To be read (or sung!) to Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah"

New Malden has a Superstar!
Her fame spreads through the coffee bar -
Nearly every day that's where you'll view her.
With stunning smile and amazing shoes,
To young and old, she spreads good news.
We are all so pleased to say we knew her.
Hallelujah, yes it's Julia
Hallelujah, yes it's Julia

Christingle and the Christmas Fayre,
Sparkling trees are everywhere,
The church looks wonderful because of Julia.
It's panto time, on with the show,
On stage and off, she makes it go,
You don't want to miss the show, now, do you?

Hallelujah, yes it's Julia
Hallelujah, yes it's Julia

Malden Fortnight every year,
And now a Make Lunch kitchen's here -
So many good things happened, thanks to Julia.
A listening ear, a loyal friend,
The list goes on, without an end . . .
The one we cannot do without is Julia.
Hallelujah, yes it's Julia
Hallelujah, thank you Julia

Thank you, Julia



From Robert Elves

Spring is a time of year when nature starts awakening from its winter slumber. I am lucky that in normal times I cycle to work so have time to observe the day by day changes taking place. During this time of lockdown I am managing a daily hour long walk or cycle ride and so

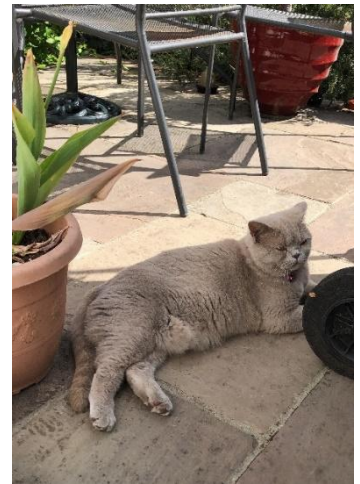


more than ever I am enjoying seeing the nature unfold around me. As others have observed animals seem to be becoming more audacious and coming closer to areas of human habitation. So what are my highlights?

The last photo I took pre-lockdown was of a heron sitting on a neighbour's shed roof. This beautiful bird returned a week later and perched on our fence very close to our kitchen



enabling me to take this photo (right). Unfortunately this visit seemed to coincide with a reduction in the number of fish in our pond (despite all our defences including netting) and we now only have the three largest left. I have also observed a little egret around the Hogsmill basin. The first time it was on the Hogsmill River itself towards the A3 but was too far away to capture it on camera. I was therefore pleased to see it again a couple of weeks later on Tolworth Brook (above left).



It is not only wild animals that have come close. Our neighbours' cat often makes its presence felt in our garden, especially around meal times. It was therefore a bit of a surprise when the cat from two doors down boldly strode down our garden and came straight in our house. She spent a good hour exploring every nook and cranny. This was somewhat distracting as I was in an online meeting with several work colleagues at the time.

Robert Elves

From Pam Bugeya

Reproduced with permission.

“There are strange goings on at Upminster Methodist Church.

Last week, when carrying out the weekly premises check, I discovered a dead wasp lying upturned on the floor of the Wesley Hall. Next to it was a lone ant. I removed the wasp to the bin, left the ant to its own devices and dutifully noted my discoveries on the 41 item check list prepared for these vital observations – as usual I was able to respond in the affirmative to the question ‘boiler looks acceptable’, although maybe I should have noted that he’s no oil painting.

Yesterday I returned to the church for another weekly check. Initially all seemed well. The boiler was still reasonably attractive and the lightning conductor in good order – although once again I’d forgotten to take any lightning with me in order to undertake a thorough test. It was however in the Wesley Hall that matters were concerning. On the floor was a dead wasp. Another dead wasp, in exactly the same position as the one I had so carefully removed last week. Next to the wasp were not one, but two ants. I removed the dead wasp, placing him in the bin next to his deceased friend and once again left the ants to their own devices. Of course I noted their presence on the 41 item check list, wondering if perhaps a line on insect infestation could perhaps replace the somewhat subjective question regarding the aesthetic qualities of the kitchen boiler.

It was only later that I considered the potential seriousness of the situation. Ants breed. They are quite good at it. They had already doubled their numbers in a week. If this trend of population doubling every seven days continues, in ten weeks there will be 2,048 ants on the Wesley Hall floor (and 12 dead wasps in the bin). In twenty weeks these will be 2,097,152 ants (and 22 dead wasps). Two million is a lot of ants – and they haven’t even booked the hall.

Now ants are intelligent. And organised. They might elect a Property Steward and a Treasurer. They might find a Presbyter in their midst. Then who is to tell what may occur? The chairs could be stacked more than five high. They might not remove their rubbish, expecting some poor long-suffering church member to take it to the tip on their behalf. They could even remove the pews.

We must act. We must do what all good Methodists do in times of crisis – have a cup of tea and a biscuit (but not a chocolate one) and form a committee. We already have the Covid-19 Management Committee. This worrying situation requires an Insect Management Committee.

Now the first job of the Committee must be to take advice. To seek advice from the Minister, the Superintendent, the Circuit, the District, Connexion, our Insurer and the Government and then to find a lawyer in our midst who is able to provide clarity and to interpret the conflicting information. Undoubtedly the way forward will remain unclear. Another solution will be required.

As good Christians we should of course turn to prayer, but even this is not as straightforward as it may appear. Obviously the wasps need our prayers but what about the ants? Should we really be encouraging them? We could pray for God's will but what if God is so impressed with the ants' ability to find a Property Steward that he decides they can do a better job at running the church than us? No, it would be safer just to pray for God to give us strength to handle this difficult situation.

And so we must hold meetings. We must talk, and talk and talk. And then we must make a decision. It will eventually become clear that everything boils down to one choice, to squish or not to squish.

The ants may be clever, they may be organised, but we have one huge advantage. Our feet are very much bigger than theirs. A few well-placed boots could stop the troublesome insects in their tracks. But the ants are God's creatures and we are stewards of his Earth. Surely there is no one amongst our congregation who would carry out such a task. Another solution will be required.

We could take the ants outside; one by one if we're quick, or by the bucket load if we'd allowed them to multiply. But ants are small and the gap under the Wesley Hall door is large. They would return. Another solution will be required.

Persuasion? Could we convince the ants that pastures are greener elsewhere? Wouldn't they like to smell the incense at St Laurence, swim in the pool at the Baptists, or perhaps find a church where they can take advantage of the opportunities for unrestricted reproduction? But no, Methodism is known for its hospitality and they'd want to stay. Another solution will be required.

I have given the matter a great deal of thought (not prayer – God is probably quite busy at the moment) and have come up with an ideal solution. Colchester Zoo have aardvarks. Aardvarks eat ants. The zoo is short of funds and one would imagine would be delighted if someone offered to feed one of its animals for a while. We will borrow an aardvark. Now all we need is an Aardvark Management Committee.

Does anyone want a dozen dead wasps?"

From Caroline Auty

I read in Saturday's Guardian that it took Gustav Mahler eight weeks to write his epic 8th symphony. We've been in lockdown for eight weeks now and haven't produced an eighth or even a first symphony, but we have settled into a new routine that mixes work, school, and fun (sometimes the first two can be fun) pretty well.

We managed to buy a bag of flour direct from a mill so we've continued to produce lots of bread and bakes. We've had a go at making cheese – from a kit, not a cow – and we've got a kit for curing pork. We'll let you know how this goes. We've also got some ginger beer on the go and have had a good time playing "hunt the cork" around the kitchen. Is it always this lively? The good thing about baking together is that it ticks off food technology (obvs), maths (measuring), English (reading the recipe), physics and chemistry (mixing and cooking) and sometimes geography (where is pizza from?). And you get to enjoy the proceeds!

We've found some new cycle routes, mainly thanks to the mini-Holland investment which has made lots of Kingston and Surbiton more accessible, and have enjoyed walking round the private roads of Coombeside, marvelling at some of the properties and wondering who lives there.

We've all found more time for music practice so won't have the excuse of "being a bit rusty" or "been a while since I played" when this is all over. As we assume we'll be in holidaying in the garden this summer we've been a bit more ambitious and planted more vegetables than usual.

Overall we'd love to see our friends and family in the flesh but in the meantime we're keeping busy, staying alert etc.

These are the Hands

This poem was written for the 60th anniversary of the NHS by the author and poet Michael Rosen, who has had the Covid-19 virus himself and has recently come out of Intensive Care.

These are the hands
That touch us first
Feel your head
Find the pulse
And make your bed.

These are the hands
That tap your back
Test the skin
Hold your arm
Wheel the bin
Change the bulb
Fix the drip
Pour the jug
Replace your hip.

These are the hands
That fill the bath
Mop the floor
Flick the switch
Soothe the sore
Burn the swabs
Give us a jab
Throw out sharps
Design the lab.

And these are the hands
That stop the leaks
Empty the pan
Wipe the pipes
Carry the can
Clamp the veins
Make the cast
Log the dose
And touch us last.

Published in "**These are the Hands: Poems from the Heart of the NHS**". All proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the NHS Charities Covid Appeal.

From Pam and Alan Vincent

Ever since Tony Chalk introduced me to it I have had much pleasure from my membership of the Pen and Camera Club of Methodism. The club is a camera club for people associated with the Methodist Church and dates back over 100 years. It only holds two face-to-face meetings per year; most of its activity works by groups of between 8 and 20 members circulating photographs by post or email. Members of the group then comment on each picture or hold a friendly competition by awarding marks.



I operate a group of 11 members stretching from Plymouth to Scotland; we circulate our images by email, assign marks anonymously and use the marks as our monthly competition. We also include a 'news' section in our monthly mailing to keep us all in touch.

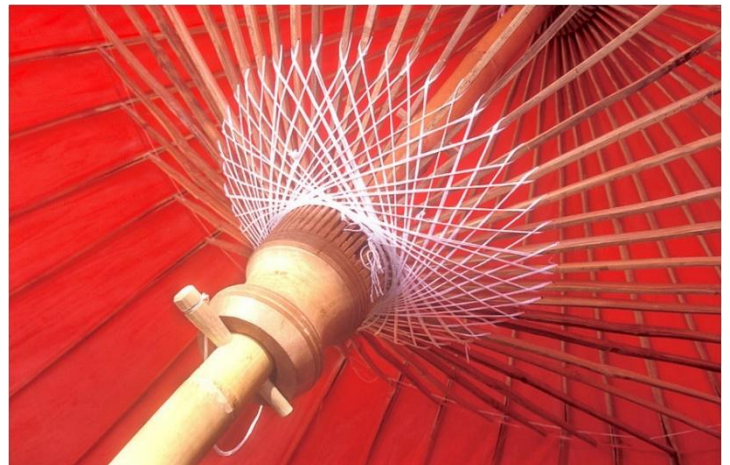
The photographer of each image is revealed when the marks are circulated the following month. I have included a few of the higher- marked images in this note.



I am now looking for ways to continue my photographic hobby indoors and in the garden as well as caring for Pam who had a spell in hospital after becoming badly dehydrated following a tummy bug. She came out very weak – I



suspect having eaten too little in the hospital – and I am doing my best to build up her strength and keep up her fluid intake. She has good days and less good days, I'm afraid but her increasing confidence on the stairs makes a good indicator of progress.



I am trying to spend some time each day in the garden clearing the blackberry jungle that was at the bottom of our plot. A garden firm did do a good job of cutting and removing most of it but there are still a lot of roots to remove before we can claim to have a viable vegetable patch again.

Best wishes to all. Stay indoors and keep safe.

Alan Vincent



Here is another collection of wildlife photos **from Eleanor Roberts** to enjoy:



From Judy Caddy

Kathleen O'Meara's poem, 'And People Stayed Home,' written in 1869, after the Great Famine in Ireland:

And people stayed home
and read books and listened
and rested and exercised
and made art and played
and learned new ways of being
and stopped
and listened deeper
someone meditated
someone prayed
someone danced
someone met their shadow
and people began to think differently
and people healed

and in the absence of people who lived in
ignorant ways,
dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
even the earth began to heal
and when the danger ended
and people found each other
grieved for the dead people
and they made new choices
and dreamed of new visions
and created new ways of life
and healed the earth completely
just as they were healed themselves

Janet Mills service details

Janet Mills and her husband Peter were members several years ago and moved up to Scotland to be near family when Peter's dementia became too hard for her to manage alone. He died a few years ago. Many members of the church will remember them.

Janet's cremation service took place at 3.30pm on Wednesday 20th May. Interested people can watch the service for 14 days afterwards by going to the website www.obitus.com. The username and password need to be put in the boxes on the right side of the first page.

The username is **dundee7056** and the password is **494784**

Audrey Bedford service details

The funeral of Anne and Paul Bedford's mother, Audrey, will take place Thursday 28th May at 3.15pm. For any who might wish to join them at the service via the internet, the website is www.obitus.com. Viewing time starts 5 minutes before the service at 3.10pm and will end at 4.05pm. Attendance at the crematorium is limited to immediate family only.

The username is **putney9252** and the password is **835596**

Anne and Paul hope to arrange a thanksgiving service in the future.

Miscellaneous

Thank you: A big thank you to all those who are generally keeping things ticking over, such as Mick Taviner, all the gardening ladies and gentlemen, and the many others who are helping each week.

Birthday greetings - wishing Donald Finnan a happy 89th birthday for Wednesday 20th May.

On-line events:

Bible Studies are held weekly on Wednesdays at 7.30pm and **Online Coffee Mornings** are on Thursdays at 10.30am for an hour each week. You can join these using Zoom if you have a PC or smartphone or join by phone using a landline or non-Internet enabled mobile phone. Details of how to access these are in Karl's weekly Pastoral Letter. (Note that, for security reasons, the meeting ID and password will change each week.)

Morning Services "Windows on Worship" are available to watch on YouTube each week from 10am on Sundays, visit <http://tiny.cc/73iulz> and click on the video for that date. To download the accompanying Worship Sheet (the equivalent of an order of service in this context), please follow the link <http://tiny.cc/awiulz>, and select the file for that Sunday.

Next Issue

The theme will be a focus on children and childhood. Would any of our young people like to share their views on lockdown, or indeed anything else?

We will also be running a baby photo competition! Please email your baby photo to Sarah.

John Cronin is taking a short break from editing the newsletter to concentrate on his work commitments and moving house. So please send **ALL** submissions for the next issue to Sarah on the church email nmmc@hotmail.co.uk. Please submit your contributions by no later than 10th June.