



DOWNING PLACE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
CAMBRIDGE
PLACE MATTERS



MONTHLY MAGAZINE – ISSUE 19
APRIL 2020

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LORD JESUS,
IN THE MIDST OF A STORM,
YOU SAID, 'PEACE BE STILL.'
BID OUR ANXIOUS FEARS SUBSIDE,
SUSTAIN YOUR CHURCH IN FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE,
BRING OUR NATION THROUGH THIS TUMULT,
GRANT WISDOM TO THOSE WITH HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES,
AND HEALING AND HOPE TO THOSE WHO ARE INFECTED.
AMEN.

MINISTER'S LETTER

In the late 1970s, I was entertaining whether I had a vocation to ministry. One Good Friday, I heard a sermon that began with a throwback to *Listen with Mother* – the BBC's radio programme for mothers and children at home. Every weekday lunchtime, before reading a story, the presenter would ask, 'Are you sitting comfortably ...?' So began that preacher, the Revd R. W. Hugh-Jones. 'Are you sitting comfortably?' And after a pregnant pause, he continued, 'Well, you shouldn't be.' It was the day I finally gave in to the 'call'.

A few days ago, the First Minister of Scotland was speaking in a very different context. She seemed to borrow Hugh-Jones' idea. Nicola Sturgeon suggested that if life still seemed to be normal then it shouldn't be. The way that Coronavirus Covid-19 has re-shaped so much means that little remains as it was a week ago. And we should not be behaving as if it did.

I believe it is best for us all to accept that, early on in this Covid-19 pandemic. If we rail irascibly against the virus's unwelcome re-ordering of our daily lives, we will suffer rather more in the long run than if we recognise that something utterly irresistible has wrested normality from us. Moreover, if the experience of other parts of the world is to be learned from, embracing the restrictions upon our movement and upon our associating with each other is essential for achieving the coronavirus's earliest defeat.

With many of you, I imagine, I have been impressed by how countless organisations have responded to the crisis. There has been ceaseless activity, not only by the Government and by our wondrous health professionals, but by places of learning, by businesses and charities, by churches, synagogues and mosques, temples and gurdwaras. Neighbourhoods have flourished as mutual caring bubbled to the surface. Strategies for dealing with the economic consequences are evolving. Faith communities have offered their worship online. It has been deeply moving.

As we hunker down for the long haul, my sense is that now we need to temper our frenetic activity, not by stopping our good works but by partnering them with prayer. The Archbishop-designate of York, Stephen Cottrell, writes of **Christian leadership**, saying that it should be about 'hitting the ground kneeling'. Echoing that, as the initial flurry of busy activity settles into whatever our new normality must be, we have a vocation as the church to pray. And to pray without ceasing. I very much valued the Churches Together in England initiative for a candle to be lit and placed in street-facing windows on Mothering Sunday at 7.00pm in the evening. It was prayerful, even for those who struggle to put their faith into words. Might this be something we could do every week, to challenge

Covid-19's grip?

Ms Sturgeon suggests that if life remains normal, it shouldn't. The Prime Minister, too, says that in the strongest possible terms. As a person of faith, I am left asking whether there is *anything* that remains as it was. There is. I cling to the conviction that the grace of God, as it is in Jesus Christ, remains as it was. That grace consoles me as I contemplate the shadows that have suddenly surrounded us. This Easter Day, the resurrection of Jesus may mean many different things to us, but is there not at its heart a powerful suggestion that even when tackled by the worst, the light of God's grace could not be snuffed out? It is by the light of that resurrected grace that I believe we are to go through this darkness. It doesn't dispel the shadows, but, in their midst, it guides us, it calms us, it calls us on, migrating us into hope.

When we are loosed from this virus's grip, there will be much to be re-established: our nation's economy and that of many a household, businesses and charities; our mental health; our confidence. In pursuit of all that, people's ingenuity, determination and sacrificial commitment will achieve much. But they won't be everything.

R. W. Hugh-Jones, whose preaching so arrested me on Good Friday 1979, was a Congregational minister, called to Coventry's Warwick Road church in 1949. It was less a than a decade after the blitz had laid waste vast areas of the city, which had a thousand years of history. As he accepted the call, Hugh-Jones' predecessor, Leslie Cooke, urged him to see his task as integrating the life of the church into the life of the city. Years later, looking back on twelve years of such integrating ministry, he reflected that the essence of the church's unrelenting task was to ensure the message of that grace was preached, and the values of God's reign lived out. And so it will be here as well. 'Are you sitting comfortably ...?'

As a colleague recently wrote to me, so John and I 'leave you in the love and care of our gracious Lord.'

Nigel Uden



PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

1 If you need any kind of pastoral or practical help in the next few weeks, the first point of contact should be your Elder or Pastoral Visitor. The ministers will, of course, respond too as they always do, but bear in mind the extra load that they are carrying.

2 Aim to communicate by email, text message, closed DPURC members' Facebook or via the telephone.

3 Where a member or friend is known not to use email, a 'phone call from time to time will be appreciated, especially where the advice has been to avoid normal social contact.

4 The congregation may be in a position to worship on-line soon (with the sermon at least being made available to those who do not have the technology).

Full services will also be available from the URC's Daily Devotions website each Sunday. The Daily Devotions offers a daily Bible reading, reflection and prayer. Visit the website <https://devotions.urc.org.uk/> to read or listen to the day's devotion, and to subscribe to them if you would like them sent by email.

Future preachers include John and Nigel, and it will allow Downing Place URC to share the joy of Easter as it had been anticipated in our own preaching schedule, since John has agreed to lead worship on 12 April.

5 Hope is one of the gifts of the Spirit - go well in these confusing times.

Finally, and regretfully, it is not wise to continue with plans for the special service and supper on 1 May to mark John's departure. Our expectation is that a new date can and will be secured!

Margaret Thompson

NOTICE FROM THE CLERK

You'll have heard from the ministers already that Sunday services and many other activities have had to be discontinued for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is to let you know that since the Church Meeting cannot now meet physically, most of its functions are being carried out by the Elders' meeting, acting under the powers delegated to it by the Church Meeting on 15th March. The Elders themselves are unlikely to meet physically, and will try to carry out their business by email circulation, delegating some of it in turn to the Officers, who are working on ways of supplementing email with virtual meetings(!).

Two matters still call for direct input from members. Two elections were to be made by the 24th May Church Meeting: a Synod Representative for the next two years (Augur Pearce is the current representative, and is eligible for reelection), and an Elder to serve until the next regular election of Elders probably in March 2021 (Beth & Mike Humphreys share a post currently, from which they have resigned with effect from 12th April). Nominations should be given to Nigel Uden in each case; by 12th May for Synod Representative, and by 30th April for Elder. Those receiving at least three will be asked whether they are willing to stand, and election will take place (by some means yet to be settled) around 24th May.

Owen Saxton



Emmanuel Church, with chairs spaced out for our service and Church Meeting on Sunday 15th March” (photograph by Robert Porrer)



CHRISTIAN AID NEWS

Christian Aid held a Roadshow in the Emmanuel building of Downing Place Church on Saturday 14th March – you will have seen the posters on the walls, and in Place Matters. It was a great blessing that we were able to go ahead with this just before everything closed down, because it was a very instructive and worthwhile morning.

Nigel opened the proceedings with some words of welcome and a prayer, then **Malcolm Guite**, Cambridge's very well known poet/priest, and a noted supporter of Christian Aid, spoke to us about Christianity's relationship with the environmental movement. In the last half century there had been some misconceptions about this, but it was important to stress that the Church did care about creation and the material world, and supported all efforts to repair and preserve it. Malcolm read us two of his sonnets, including this unpublished one. Malcolm had written it to answer a request for words to be set to music by young composer, Rhiannon Randle.

Our Burning World

Our burning world is turning in despair,

I hear her seething, sighing through the air:

‘Oh rouse yourself, this is your wake up call

For your pollution forms my funeral pall

My last ice lapses, slips into the sea,

Will you unfreeze your tears and weep from me?

Or are you sleeping still, taking your rest?

The hour has come, that puts you to the test,

Wake up to change at last, and change for good,
Repent, return, re-plant the sacred wood.
You are my children, I too am God's child,
And we have both together been defiled,
But God hangs with us, on the hallowed tree
That we might both be rescued, both be free.'

Copyright Malcolm Guite, used with the poet's permission



Malcolm Guite, speaking at the Roadshow

Our Cambridgeshire Christian Aid representative, Pam Richardson, told us about her recent visit to Ethiopia to see a Christian Aid project to install a pipeline bringing a water supply to a remote community. Women no longer need to make a six hour return trek to fetch water, and Pam showed us a plastic jerrycan full of 20 litres of water, so heavy we could barely lift it – women in Ethiopia carry two of these at once on their trek to get water. Pam's photographs brought home the stresses climate change and water shortage are imposing on local communities, and she told us something of the other projects Christian Aid partners are putting in place – sand dams, wells, irrigation – to make it possible for crops – and people - to flourish.

Water is the theme of this year's Christian Aid appeal, *Every Last Drop*. It's a vitally important appeal, but it will be extra difficult this year to raise money for Christian Aid. House to house collections and fundraising meals have been cancelled, there will be no Church services to distribute envelopes, and even if street collections and some other events might go ahead older volunteers will not be able to take part. Moreover the problems of climate change and water shortage will be made much worse by the coronavirus pandemic in countries without a sophisticated health service.

So please don't forget Christian Aid this year, and do make as generous a donation as you can. Details of how to donate are on the Christian Aid website, and keep an eye on the weekly diary to see whether anything can be arranged via our Church. I know you will be generous – thank you in advance.

Christian Aid Week – Sunday 10th May until Saturday 16th May, 2020.

Sheila Porrer

ON CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN A TIME OF PLAGUE

The Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) wrote to a friend on how he will behave as a pastor during a time of plague:

I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he has expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbour needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.

(from a letter to Johann Hess, Pastor at Breslau, 1527) You can read the whole of Luther's letter, with its mixture of spiritual and practical advice, some quite sobering, at : <https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogL-W.pdf>.”

BUILDING WORK UPDATE

Steelwork is now in place for the new narthex room being constructed at the rear of the Sanctuary.



Photograph by Robert Porrer

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SIGNS OF HOPE -



Our Thomas was baptised last March. Now he can walk and hold a hymn book either way up. On the day of his baptism we took home some crocus bulbs. They are now blooming in gardens all over Cambridge – and Liverpool. We have some in a pot ready for our new garden at Downing Place.

The soil should now be warm enough to sow seeds outside. Nasturtiums are easy. They do not need posh soil and like a sunny spot. Planted now they should start to grow in about ten days. We can watch the leaves and later have bright flowers.

We can be cheered and remember God's love for the world.

PASTORAL NEWS

The people of Fulbourn URC wish to pass on their greetings and best wishes to the Downing Place congregation

SPECIAL CAUSE FOR FEBRUARY

The Special Cause collection for Romsey Mill raised £147.00

DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
BIBLE READINGS AND PRAYER TOPICS
APRIL 2020

Below are the Bible readings from the Lectionary for April which we would have used in our services. The reading in bold would have been the focus for *Sharing Together*. You are invited to read them for yourselves and reflect on them.

Overleaf are prayer topics for each day, suggesting church and related matters.

April 5th: Palm Sunday. Isaiah 50. 4-9a. **Philippians 2. 5-11**; Matthew 21. 1-11.

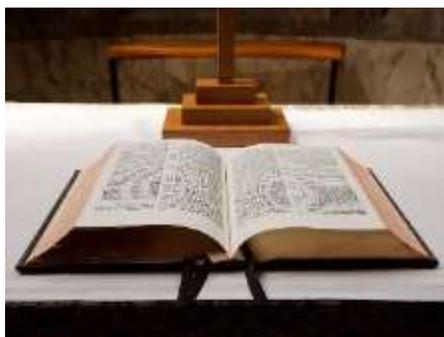
April 9th: Maundy Thursday. Matthew 26. 17-75.

April 10th: Good Friday. Matthew 27. 1-61.

April 12th: Easter Day. Jeremiah 31. 1-6; Acts 10. 34-43;
Matthew 28. 1-10

April 19th: Acts 2. 14a, 22-32; 1 Peter 1. 3-9; John 20. 19-31

April 26th: Acts 2. 14a. 36-41; 1 Peter 1. 17-23; Luke 24. 13-35



PRAYERS FOR EASTER WEEKEND

Maundy Thursday: When the night falls silent, remember what he said. ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.’ Hold those words, until they move from your head to your heart to your life.

Good Friday: O Jesus who suffered and died,
give me eyes to see evil transformed to good,
ears to hear the true message of the cross,
and a heart to know your death-defying love. Amen.

Easter Day: O God of life, renew the world with love!

Let hate be banished, and death be gone.

Let sadness be healed with joy and all wrong be put right.

Let everything be made new and all of creation come alive. Amen.

(Prayers from the URC website)

ARROW PRAYERS FOR APRIL 2020

1. As concern for the effect of the Coronavirus spreads, we pray for our friends and neighbours – and ask for wisdom in our continuing contacts.
2. We pray for the doctors and nurses who are caring for the infected, and all health workers affected by the spread of the virus.
3. We pray for families and friends who have been affected by the virus, that they may know your presence with them in their fear and concern.
4. We thank God for the signs of Spring, with fresh green leaves on the trees, the blossom, and the riot of spring flowers.
5. Palm Sunday. **Take a moment to remember Jesus’ ride into Jerusalem and the start of the final week of Jesus’ life on earth.**
6. We pray for the Officers as they consult one another. Thank God for their time and concern in developing the life and witness of Downing Place URC.
7. We pray for Ann and Elaine keeping track of activities, and the constantly changing situation. We pray for their families.
8. We pray for those who would normally attend the Group Therapy Centre, remembering those who will support them while it is closed and thanking God for the dedication and care of staff and friends.
9. Maundy Thursday. We remember that as Jesus shared his last meal with his friends, he promised to be with them always . . .
10. Good Friday. Thank God for the dedication of Jesus, and remember all who suffer for their faith today under cruel and restrictive regimes.
11. We pray for Cambridge Street Pastors and Nightlite, whose activities are currently suspended; and for the police and public who need their support.
12. Easter Day. Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Pray for John Bradbury, as he prepares to leave Downing Place URC to be General Secretary of the URC.

13. We pray for local hospitals, and thank God for the care and concern of all departments. **May the staff keep safe and share God's love.**
14. **We pray for those in Arthur Rank House, for those nearing life's end;** for chaplains and visitors, that they may know Your love surrounds them.
15. We pray for our Elders and Pastoral Visitors, that they may be guided to support those who need their friendship and their care.
16. We pray for the people in your village, street or college that they may know the peace of Christ in their lives and in their hearts.
17. We pray for young people unable to go out and meet their friends as they would usually do.
18. We pray that this may be a day of rest –particularly for those who are having to reduce their daily contact with friends and neighbours.
19. We pray for those who would like to go to church today, but who have to stay at home. May they know Christ with them wherever they are.
20. This week we pray for our city and district – we pray for those who are **homeless and thank God for Jimmy's and all who support them.**
21. We pray for families – especially those who depend on the Food Bank, and thank God for the support it gives to those in need.
22. We pray for the City and District Councils, keeping services for the vulnerable going, in spite of the difficulties caused by isolation.
23. We pray for the local shops and services which are having to work in different ways, to avoid social contact and to keep vulnerable people safe.
24. We thank God for our neighbours and friends with whom we normally live and work, but whom we have to contact in remote ways.
25. We pray for our families and friends who are far away, that they may stay safe in your love and care. Help us to be strong in time of trouble.
26. This week we pray for people around the world – naming any we know or know of – first in the countries in Europe ...God be with them!
27. We pray for the people in Africa - for those suffering from drought and diminishing fertile land . . . Pray for the harvest . . .
28. We pray for North and South America – for peace between nations.
29. We pray for Asia and Australia – as they tackle climate change.
30. We pray for the Arctic and Antarctic – and for the scientists from Cambridge who live and study in that hostile environment.

May God bless us all, as we pray for one another. Amen

God our refuge,
we seek your protection.
Protect the vulnerable from illness:
those who are old and frail,
weakened by years and struggle;
those who care for others,
expending energy and love;
those for whom inability to work
means hardship and poverty.

Protect us
from the greed and suspicion
which snatches at our own security
stock-piling and panic-buying
that deprives others of the necessities of life.

Protect us from the shortsightedness
which sees the germ in our own eyes
and ignores the plagues
of hunger, war and violence
that take so many lives each day.

Protect us from the isolation
that leads to loneliness and despair
denying the interconnectedness
that links us with one another.

God our refuge
in our panic and fear
may we not lose sight of our common humanity
that makes us one people in you. Amen.

Jan Berry

LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



In July 2017, members of St Columba's were privileged to hear a talk by David Hookham on Living with Dementia. He later came back to St Columba's to walk round the building with us and point out aspects of the signage and the building fabric that people with dementia might find difficult. We were very appreciative of the time he spent with us on those two occasions.

Sadly David died in February - we send our sympathies to his wife, Susan, and remember them both in our prayers.

His talk is reproduced here as a tribute to David and for the benefit of current members of Downing Place.

St Columba's United Reformed Church

Talk by David Hookham on Sunday July 16th on 'Living with Dementia'

Living with Dementia is a gradual process that creeps up on one, with effects sometimes only seen in retrospect.

3 years ago I went, with some scepticism, to see my GP because my wife felt I was, at times, 'forgetting' day to day matters. I thought I sailed through the 'tests' he gave me – and was surprised when he said I had better see a Consultant!

Some weeks later - after further tests and brain scans I found myself, with my wife, sitting opposite a Consultant, at the Memory Clinic, who told me that I had 'mild dementia' – possibly dementia with Lewy Bodies.

However well the diagnosis is presented it brings apprehension for the future, for

one's self and one's family. I have found Living with Dementia sometimes difficult but one can be helped by sharing experiences not only with family but also with new found friends that I have met at local meetings organised by the Alzheimer's Society.

Also by sharing my personal story with you provides a way of making sense of changes.

Day to day my life has taken on a routine, which helps me to formulate my 'present time', because more and more I find it is the present that is important.

I can recall quite a bit of the 'far-past' past; the 'recent past' is more of a task. As for the future – a couple of days forward, yes that's o.k. - but next month? I really can't visualise.

I still need mental stimulation – there are a few subject areas that work for me – an early favourite was politics – but this often became a rather tenuous subject leading to verbal conflict with friends and family!

I therefore reverted to a previous favourite pastime of mine which was the American Civil War. Now though rather than further reading, which is difficult, I confine myself to the battle maps alone. I can concentrate on a map rather than lots of words. I can remember, for the most part, what I know about these battles and can thus re-create them in my mind, make comments – and bore everyone I speak to!

Another interesting subject area for me is Impressionist Art. I find that observation and discussion of paintings stimulate my mind to 'work'. I can look at a painting, make my own interpretation of the subject and in a way become part of it. Whether this coincides or not with the artist's or critics' views really is immaterial to me.

General conversation with family and friends is important and this is where understanding and help from others is also needed.

Living with Dementia is living with a different slant on all aspects of life. I have tried to give some idea of what it is like for me.

Now, I would like to end this talk by reading you a poem written by Alyson Hughes who herself has dementia, and donated by her to the Alzheimer's Society.

Recalling the Memories

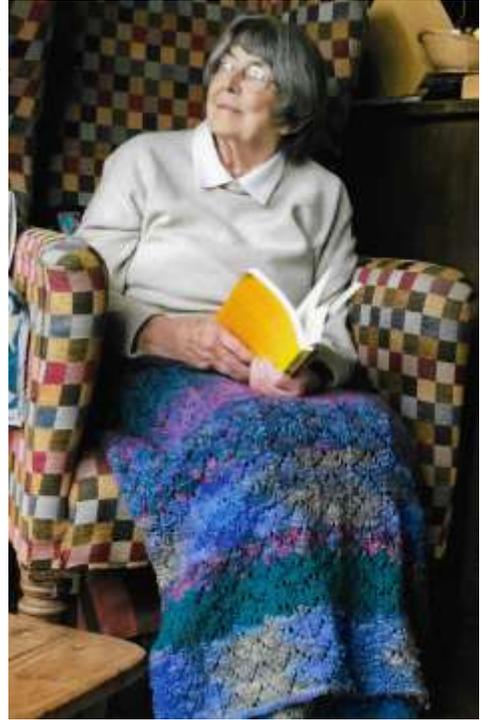
These are my memories of times gone by,
They will stay with me forever till the day I die.
Sometimes they need unlocking by a sound or a smell,
Or a flicker of a face I once knew well.
These are events of long ago that playback in sepia or monochrome.
But I don't seem able to recall at will,
And it's harder to remember since I became ill.
Yesterday is a memory that fades so fast,
Yet vivid are the days of my childhood past.
Scrumping for apples just out of reach,
Children laughing along the beach.
Skinny dipping in the sea,
Easter parades and Whitsun tea.
Christmas carols and twinkling lights.
Alcohol fuelled lusty nights
Some of these memories always under key and lock,
Not to be revealed for fear they'll shock!
But these are my memories of times gone by,
You can't take them away, they're mine till I die.

(This is a poem written in 2016 by Alyson Hughes who has Alzheimers)

PROFILE—ANN PHILLIPS

I come from determinedly Nonconformist stock. My parents were both brought up as **Baptists**. My father's family tramped five miles to a Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel in Milton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire – his father being a “yeoman farmer” in **Kingham**, and the farm being the place of glorious summer holidays for me and my sister and brother.

I was born and brought up on the Kent coast and I learned to love the sea and I still do. My sister Jean was two when I was born and my brother Alan came along four years later. My father taught French and **German in a boys' grammar school** after service in the trenches in the First World War. We were a peaceful and happy family, especially on a Saturday evening when, work done, we all settled down to play games together – word games, card games and others of our own invention.



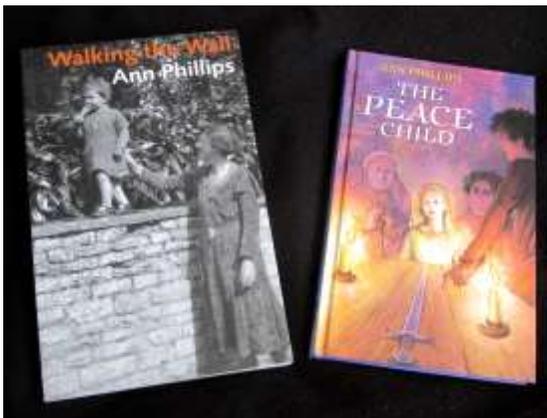
Bouncing baby

My first primary school in Broadstairs was utterly benign – I remember only rewards and encouragement. When the war started we had to leave Kent, first staying in Kingham with my grandparents, and later moving to Stafford. The school where my father taught was evacuated there, along with its sister grammar school for girls, which I joined, a year early, after an unhappy spell at the local primary school. At the end of the war we, and the schools, moved back to Kent. I suffered from chronic asthma and there were no remedies then, so I lost about a third of my schooling, but filled in a good many gaps by reading, propped up in bed.

At school in Kent I made new friends and became ambitious – I decided I was going to Oxford, like my father and four of my uncles. I said to my father “I’ll need to have a degree because I’ll be a teacher, won’t I?” He replied “I strongly advise you not to”. He was obviously considering the days when I was short of breath, and the difficulty of making myself heard by a class of thirty teenagers who weren’t actually listening.

All the same, I went to Oxford, to read English at St. Hilda’s, because “it had a pretty garden and was by the river” (my aunt’s advice). This worked out well for me, as I walked in the garden hatching out poems, and took to the river, in a canoe, as I found poling a punt jolly hard work. I made lasting friendships and profited from the teaching of two distinguished women, who both became Professors: Helen Gardner who dealt in English literature and Dorothy Whitelock who became Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon in Cambridge. I didn’t achieve the First Class degree I aimed at, in part because in my last term Oxford was hot and dry and full of the pollen of willow trees to which I was allergic. I was ill but insisted on taking the exam, along with everybody else. The College would have supported me if I had wanted to do research, but I was clear that I didn’t. Taking my father’s advice (for once) not to teach, I decided I would look for a job in publishing. Until such a job turned up I took a shorthand and typing course, thinking it would come in useful, as it did.

My first job in publishing was with Edward Arnold in London, then with Penguin out at Harmondsworth. I shared a flat with my sister and went to her Church (Park Chapel in Crouch End). The chapel had a distinguished organist, Eric Thiman; he was also a composer and generally in need of words to set. My sister and I produced some of these, and I was pleased at this small literary success. At this time too I wrote some short stories for children’s magazines, including the *Young Elizabethan*, which had a short existence – much regretted by me.



When I moved to Penguin Books I needed to move nearer to Harmondsworth, and I found a bedsit in Richmond, though I was sorry to leave my sister and our congenial landlady who gave us a pudding for our lunch every Sunday. I transferred my Church membership to the Vineyard Congregational Church in Richmond.

Life at Penguin was fast. I made friends and enjoyed much of my work, which was to a large extent by telephone, impeded by the noise of planes roaring in or out of nearby Heathrow. With so many books in production at once a careful check had to be kept on progress, and this was achieved by a huge pegboard on the office wall, with a row of pegs for each book. For various reasons I could see that I should not want to stay in that job until I retired, so when I saw an advertisement in The Times for a personal private secretary for the Principal of Newnham College I thought this might imply a quieter life, and I applied and was accepted.

Life was certainly different. The Principal, Ruth Cohen, wanted her secretary to live in College and be a member of High Table, so I rapidly found myself in a large room with a balcony looking over lovely gardens. No shopping or cooking to do, no housework, and lively, enjoyable company. There was a sizable resident community of academics at that time, when not as many academic women were married as is the case today.

I liked my boss, but she was tough and demanding to work for, and after four years I was tempted to go back to publishing, now in Cambridge with the University Press. I rented a little house in Shelly Row, still only a short walk from Emmanuel Church. I was living there in the hard winter of 1962-3, when the river froze over and people skated up to Ely. I used to walk to work along the river, sliding down the bank at Magdalene Bridge, and walking on water as far as **Queens', where I climbed up the bank and was almost at the door of the Press.** The downside of this pleasure was that I had no water coming into the house for five weeks. Fortunately neighbours close by were on a different line of pipes and I filled two buckets in their kitchen every morning and recycled it through the day.

I enjoyed my work as a sub-editor, and then chief sub-editor, but there was a snag – no chance of promotion. So when Newnham College invited me to return, I agreed. My new job there included being tutor to about ninety students (this being, in Cambridge speak, a pastoral cum administrative job). I was also Director of Studies in Theology, in tandem with a theologian from another college – who would do the strictly academic side of things while I did the college end.

By now I had a house of my own – a couple of little thatched cottages in Harlton which I had renovated and made into one. However tutors were expected to be in college at night, so I became a weekly commuter, only fully at home at (some) weekends. I now had the company of my second cat, Archie – imported via the Blue Cross when Harlton had a plague of rats. He took (without enthusiasm) to my college rooms and to a catflap in a window. He obligingly wakened me one night by growling when a rather over-refreshed group of lads (who had clearly been at a celebration) attempted to climb into my sitting room.

I liked Newnham, Cambridge and the students who came my way. I never wanted to make comparisons with Oxford, the two were just different. For a time I was tutor to graduate students, then I became Fellow Librarian and Archivist, but I still had my undergraduate student group.

At Newnham I started to write more at length – I decided I would make this my Saturday job. The result was five books for young readers, all published by Oxford University Press, the last one written after I retired. I don't so much want to write fiction now, only poetry, which has always been my main interest and pleasure.

As soon as I settled in Cambridge, I also settled at Emmanuel Church. The Church had been very influential in my childhood, though at one time I was discouraged by what seemed to me very “male” language in the Bible and services. I didn't seem to fit in anywhere. But I've always believed that God



With my father and my sister Jean, on his left

loves beauty and can be found in beautiful things. That's one reason I love the Emmanuel building, which always seemed such a light welcoming space with its stained glass windows. So I'm deeply sad about leaving the building, although I'm happy about the union, and I hope I'll find the Downing Place building less bleak when we move there.

After the deaths of our parents my sister came to live in Cambridge, but as she had a Methodist Church next door she chose an even shorter walk than I did – one minute approximately. We are both happy in our choices.

Field Flowers

The flowers that lie

Between the wheelruts, under the white sky –

shepherd's purse, speedwell, groundsell and pimpernel,

the scrambling persicary and sharp camomile,

spidering from the dust or the chunky mud

where the lark sings off overhead

and the gate swings by –

we who love these and know them all by name,

however far we travel, we shall come home.

Ann Phillips





Soft Answer

Not red, but blue: the clarity of sky

The density of summer-quenched rains

The slow release of the down-washing eye

Not red, but blue, runs truer from torn veins

Not hot, not cold, descent of winds and wings

Pouring of unlocked torrents in relief

The rise of struggling buds by muddied springs

See it as blue, Not anger: grief.

Ann Phillips

THE CHERRY HINTON ROAD TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP



We were so sorry to hear about the death of David Swainston who had been a regular attender of the CHR Tuesday Fellowship in the past.

We have continued to meet during February. Julia Stone has written about the visit of John Bradbury and Quentin. She says that John talked about the streams of churchmanship that flowed from Germany (e.g. Luther) and Switzerland (Zwingli and Calvin) and that since the sixteenth century have evolved and joined to form the United Reformed Church in 1972. John brought Quentin, a French theological student who was visiting Downing Place for a week. He carried with him his hymnbook showing that some of the hymns we had just sung were also in his book. Beneath the tunes and the words in French there appeared the actual words that we sing in English- the literal meanings of the two versions being slightly different in order to fit the same tune!

We were treated to a most interesting talk by Maureen Kendall on a visit to Cuba which she made with John. She told us about how many of the people were still living in poverty, who, despite the Cuban revolution in 1960 have been affected by US sanctions. On March 3rd, Ted Dennison talked about the many years he spent in Zambia working for the United Society for Christian Literature. The talk was called “When you come, bring the books”, taken from 2 Timothy chapter 4. His task was to sell Bibles to the population and he had sometimes had to take quite perilous journeys in order to deliver the Bibles.

Julia Stone has also written about the talk given by Wendy Roe on Holiday Forum. Holiday Forum takes place annually at the Conference Centre at Swanwick. Wendy and other members of her family have spent time there over

the course of many years. During that time the facilities have changed from a “holiday camp” style to those of a well appointed hotel. The catering is excellent and there is a programme of events and gatherings which is varied with worship times, family activities and space to enjoy the place and the beautiful Derbyshire countryside. When the family has returned there after being away, it has felt like ‘coming home’.

We have had to suspend our meetings owing to the current crisis, but we hope to keep in touch with each other by phone and e-mail until we can meet again.

Penny Milsom



French theology student Quentin with the Tuesday Fellowship



MAGAZINE EDITOR: Sheila Porrer

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

Please send items to both Sheila Porrer and Ann Auger
(ann@downingplaceurc.org)

ITEMS FOR MONTHLY

PRAYER DIARY: Maureen Kendall

WEB EDITOR: Alison Binney

Please send all items to be included in the May edition to both Sheila and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 22 April 2020.

Any items received after the deadline will not be included.

The May edition will be available during week ending Friday 1 May