

Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church



February 2021

A colorful poster for the "21 FOR '21 Spring Challenge". The background is a blue sky with white clouds and a green field with dandelions. The text is as follows:

TAKE PART IN OUR
21 FOR '21
SPRING CHALLENGE
21 CHALLENGES OVER 21 DAYS
DURING MARCH
GET YOURSELF SPONSORED & RAISE MONEY FOR
Baby Basics Sunbury & The Extra Mile!

What will be YOUR challenge?
SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED!

- MAKE 21 CAKES
- RUN, WALK OR CYCLE 21 MILES
- SING 21 SONGS
- RECITE 21 VERSES OF SHAKESPEARE
- RECITE 21 BIBLE VERSES

To register for the challenge, complete the registration form overleaf and email to: hmctheextramile@outlook.com

Baby Basics

Hampton Methodist Church, Percy Road, Hampton, TW12 2JT

Hampton Mission Partnership is a member of Churches Together around Hampton

Church website <http://www.hamptonmethodistchurch.org.uk>

*Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, **yet** I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights. (Habakkuk 3:17-19 NRSV)*

Dear HMP church families,

Greetings from the manse! My family and I finally moved into this neighbourhood! Thank you so much Lord for your providence and to people across the circuit who helped prepare the manse. We are truly grateful. While we were waiting for the move there were inconveniences and yet we were hopeful that the moving day would come soon.

Looking back to 2020, the waves of the Covid-19 pandemic had been pounding us and forced us to adapt to a very different way of living (including worship). And yet, we have got through it and people started this new year with hope that the vaccination programme being administered at present will restore things to some 'normality'.

Tragically the surge of new cases in early 2021 comes with the reality that we are not close to 'normality' yet and we were all deeply saddened by the news when the death toll surpassed 100,000 nationally. People who sadly passed away weren't just numbers; they were individuals just like you and me, and with family who are now in mourning for their loved ones.

Among us we know Ronald, a close relative of Vicky Hall who sadly died. We have also lost Pam, Brian Goodwin's wife: a loving, caring, gentle and kind soul who suddenly passed away at the end of January due to non-Covid illness. We are devastated and saddened.

We are also stung when our loved ones have fallen ill due to Covid, cancer and other illness as well as coping with lockdown, isolation, delayed treatments, working from home, and homeschooling. It feels like the devastating news never ceases and we have lost everything that we live for.

In the depths of our despair, perhaps we begin to understand the Prophet Habakkuk who experienced such great despair in his time. Everything that sustained lives - the permanent crops such as figs, grapes, olives, fruits from the fields as well as livestock such as sheep or cattle were gone or dead. The people were starving to death without any support from the government's social services or charities that we know in our present age.

We notice that the little word "yet" has transformed the course of all his despairs and struggles (see the verses above.) Not everything was lost. The power of 'Yet' contained words of great hope that enabled the prophet to turn his eyes to the Lord and rejoice. Living by faith, he foresaw the certainty in the One who created heaven and earth and all lives in it. Despite all tragedy, devastation, hurt and brokenness, he could not deny God's faithful covenant to his people that endured in this world and beyond. Jesus affirmed it and declared that "in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NIV) and he has offered us peace when we are in him.

Indeed, this power of 'yet' has been remarkably shown among our faithful church families in these turbulent times. Your prayer, leadership, initiative, love, care and support for each other and the wider community are tremendous. Your willingness to venture out into new ways of staying connected as God's family and worship via online platforms and social media is admirable. Your faith to take the responsibility and offer your talents for the church family as Jesus' disciples is commendable.

Amid the pandemic, 400 families in need were being helped through **The Extra Mile** last year. Over 590 bikes were donated through the **Bike Project** to support refugees since 2018. Many live-streaming services were successfully broadcast (though we keep learning along the way). More families were being connected, comforted and supported. The power of 'yet' through your kindness, care and creativity have brought them hope and joy.

While we are still going through the tough time of lockdown and Covid restrictions, yet these encouraging pieces of news help us to notice that the buds of the daffodil, the merest hint of green, are now shooting up from the ground. We know that spring is just round the corner.

So church families, let the power of 'Yet' in God rule our hearts. In Christ, we are the beloved child of God. Chosen, not forsaken. His rod and staff will surely comfort us and lead us on. As Jesus reminds us, '**take heart and stand firm in my love**'. We will, in faith, walk humbly together with God and with one another to see the Spring, the renewal of our relationship with Christ in which our strength will be restored to tend the needs of each other for his kingdom's sake.

I love you and I am praying for you every day.

Peace in Christ,
Kan

Lessons from Lockdown

Committing your thoughts to paper about an event which is not yet over is a risky endeavour. By the time you read this, the nature of the Pandemic may yet have changed again, making this article hopelessly out of date. Yet there is some value in writing letters from the Lockdown. They log our thinking and enable us to share our thoughts.

The question I would like to pose is a big one- what lessons have we learnt about the Pandemic? I will briefly comment on the global picture and then home in on our church family at Hampton Mission Partnership.

Perhaps the shockingly obvious fact about the Pandemic is that it is global. We are all in this together. This simple truth seems to run counter to much modern-day nationalist politics. Across the world nationalist leaders have pushed hard on the idea of sovereignty and "My Nation first" rhetoric. Sadly, this has led to a dangerous feeling of exceptionalism by some wealthy countries, encouraging a feeling of "the virus won't happen here, we are different to all those foreign places". This thinking has been called up short. Global problems effect everyone. Let's pray that this realisation will mean greater collaboration by all nations to tackle the danger of climate change.

The virus has exposed problems that have been in evidence for a long time. Deprivation, poverty, and overcrowding have hiked up infection rates, while the dismal state of the organisation and central funding of social care has meant that care homes took and are still taking a terrifying hit. The reorganisation of social care must be a priority for Central Government. We pray that the wise people at MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged) can play a key part in the much-needed reform.

A shining light has been the renewal of the view that our NHS staff, despite a decade of underfunding of the system, are a marvel. Perhaps we can also keep on remembering the huge value of (often low paid) key workers when new pay rounds are happening.

We can all rejoice at the answer to prayer that is the incredible speed at which several Coronavirus vaccines have been produced. I see the hand of God in this alongside the skill, talent, and hard graft of the research teams.

Let's turn to closer to home. Akin to all churches the Coronavirus restrictions have impacted hard on the traditional way we do worship. What has been a blessing has been the way that folk have stepped up to the plate. On the

evening of 17th March last year, we held our last (physical) Stewards' meeting. We planned our approach to the first Lockdown that had closed our church the following Sunday (Mothering Sunday). That meeting created a small leadership team of Pam, Barbara, Paul and myself (Vicci was still on Sabbatical). We set up the Partners What's App and instigated the Devotional Blogs. We linked up with Andy Dye who edited the first Worship -at -home sheet for that first Sunday (22nd March) which incorporated our very first Devotional Blog. Geoff realised that we were missing out on praising God with worship songs and has creatively provided us all with a weekly YouTube link to uplifting songs, to the pleasure of so many of us.

After the first Lockdown restrictions were lifted, we tried some "Taster "services in August. This was the inspirational moment when Jacques began experimenting with recording our services. It has been (and still is) a journey of discovery, as Jacques has mastered so many technical issues to enable us to live broadcast our services. We are simply not able to thank him, Sue, Lexie and Jac enough. What we have found is that in addition to all of us, the church family, wanting to worship together from home, there have been an increasing number of viewers seeking to share with us.

When Kan joined us in September, she and Jacques were able to pool their God given technical knowledge so that the broadcasts became more extensive. They also were able to learn off each other, yes, even when glitches appeared. Kan swiftly put David Priddy's marvellous Friday Fellowship (every Friday at 5.15 pm on www.bit.ly/ACBC-zoom) onto the Hampton Mission Partnership Facebook page. She then convinced the Devotional Blog team to read their Blogs on Facebook. The number of hits for both the Bible study and the Blogs have been a revelation.

Meanwhile, church services in the church building in the early Autumn went ahead but with us using space very differently. The two-metre social distancing rule meant that only an exceedingly small number of folk could use the inflexible church pews. Jacques created a relay system into the large hall where we had plenty of space to abide by the regulations. However, with rising infection rates our ability to record services at church was ended and it meant that we needed to record from people's homes. A safer but trickier option.

The Extra Mile has also moved up several gears. The sheer demand on the team has increased and we predict it will continue to increase with the ongoing economic recession. The team have worked wonders in the light of the new Coronavirus regulations. They have been hard grafting servants of the Lord. Alongside our really successful Bike Project we have made a difference, we have changed lives in this most challenging of times.

Kan has led the way for us to collaborate with Hanworth MC and Sunbury MC. The Preaching Plan has been revised so that until, at least, the end of March, we will in turn lead a live YouTube service, with a monthly individual church service via Zoom.

So, what have we learnt locally? Well for me, it has once again shown just what amazing people we have at Hampton Mission Partnership. Secondly, I expect that we will never be quite the same again. We can never go back just to the pre-COVID-19 way of worship. We need to continue to reach out to seekers via social media. We will need a twin approach. We must invest in our Audio/Visual system at Church so that we can better record services at church and broadcast them. This will mean that for any of us unable to get to a service we can still be a part of it. Alongside this we need to create a short punchy devotion that can reach out across social media. We actually have the elements of this. Just imagine a vibrant weekly 20-minute devotion consisting of: An Introduction; Some Worship Songs; The Devotional Blog; and a Prayer. This can sit both on the Facebook Page and on a new church website. When people use this, they may well not ever come to Percy Road, but they are still worshipping God and doing "church" with us.

Too many people have died in this Pandemic for me to use the word 'positive', but Brothers and Sisters, I believe that God has some especially important lessons for us all. May the Holy Spirit guide our prayers as we look forward in faith.

Mark Gilks

Exercise and me

As a child I was not sporty at all. At primary school I was chosen to be goalkeeper for the school netball team because I was tall - the rest of the team blamed me when we lost as I hadn't prevented the opposition from scoring. At secondary school I was always the last to be picked for team games and, when no-one volunteered to be the goalkeeper for the form hockey team, one of my classmates volunteered me. I have few happy memories of physical activities then.

In adult life I developed a love of walking especially in the countryside and enjoyed the achievement of reaching mountain summits including the highest peaks in Scotland (Ben Nevis), Wales (Snowdon) and England (Scafell Pike). But running was never an ambition back then - I struggled to run for a bus! When the rest of the family started parkrun in 2011 they would encourage me to join them but I always refused, thinking I would come last and that I would feel self-conscious, thinking that everyone would be looking at me.

Eventually in 2018 and in my early 50s I walked the 5km route of Bushy parkrun with Mike during the week so I could see how quickly I could do it. Comparing my time to the latest parkrun results for the previous Saturday I realised that I would not be last, not by a long way, so I registered to take part. After walking for two events, the welcoming inclusive atmosphere helped me to run/walk the next one and then, to my and Mike's amazement, I ran the whole of the next one. My times got quicker and that encouraged me to continue. Everyone at parkrun is so friendly and no-one cares how quick you are, what you look like or whether you finish with a bright red face (as I usually do!).

So in July 2019 I took part in my first proper race (anyone who knows parkrun will know that it is a run, not a race) at the Wedding Day 7k in Bushy Park. Then in February 2020 I took part in the Valentine 10k in Chessington in the wake of Storm Dennis. It was an amazing feeling finishing that race.

Then the pandemic struck and parkrun was paused and my weekly visit to my new home of parkrun at Hanworth Park stopped, as did all my other activities. That spelt the start of a new journey in my running life, dedicating time to run a couple of times a week (once with Mike and once by myself), setting myself goals to try to achieve. During the summer I took part in a challenge to run a 'fast' mile each week and was delighted to sneak under 9 minutes. Then in October I completed the Vitality London 10k which was done virtually after the original event in London in May had been cancelled and I gained my first ever running medal!

I think that the ability to be able to go out for a run during the pandemic has been a great thing for me, both physically and mentally. I may not look forward to it before I set off but I am usually pleased to have done it afterwards. Whether running or walking, we live in an area of beautiful green spaces where we can be refreshed by God's creation. The return of parkrun in the UK is a little way off yet but I'm sure it will be an amazing experience when we can enjoy its community atmosphere again. Until then you may spot me running around the Bushy Park/Hampton/Sunbury area.

Sue Dennison



Rediscovered hobbies

When a request was made for contributions for the magazine, particularly about rediscovered hobbies, I thought I would write about two which have taken up more time since last March. The first has kept me busy, but is not one Brian could join in, namely knitting.

I was taught by my mother at an early age and I made my first recognisable piece, a dressing gown, for one of my dolls, when I was five years old. I know that I knitted a vest to gain my Brownies knitting badge at about 9 or 10, and continued making garments from then on. But in the last few years I have not been so productive, until an old school friend began to email me photos of things she had made. It made me realise that I was wasting a talent as well as time, and that an added bonus would be keeping my hands arthritis free, or at least more flexible.

So, with shops closed, I delved into my store of wool, material, buttons etc. Fortunately, having been an infant teacher, I have always kept things which might come in useful. (Brian has similar containers of nails, screws etc that always seem to provide what is required.) The same was true of my hoard, so I got started. I began with two blankets made of squares, one large and one as a cot blanket for a friend's first grandchild. Then a number of scarves to use up odd balls of wool, angels for the church and then Christmas decorations to add to presents. As the photo of the first star made shows, it was a trial run and ended up with one point too many and resembles a starfish so not good enough as a gift!

Spending more time with needles and wool in my hands, made me think of how many things I have made over the years. I was delighted to see Brian appear one morning in a sweater which he hasn't worn for a very long time. It was made with wool and a pattern bought on a trip to Ireland and was one of my best achievements, so I am including a picture of that. I must say that I don't think I would be able to repeat it now, so no orders, please!

The second hobby is birdwatching. Many years ago Brian and I joined a birdwatching evening class, thinking that this was an interest we could both share. We enjoyed the classes for a number of years, and went on many outings and an annual long weekend trip with the group, until the class fell victim to the cut in funding for adult education. Among other places, we had weekends in Norfolk, Suffolk, Pembrokeshire, Portland Bill and Hampshire. The class leader had the knack of sometimes choosing rather run-down guesthouses, so it was always a surprise if they turned out better than expected. I remember the two in Norfolk at Holt, and in Suffolk at Southwold were excellent. On Portland Bill, we came back one afternoon to find a new carpet had been fitted in our bedroom. I think the owners had been waiting for a group booking in order to afford it. In Pembrokeshire, two of the men in the group came into supper and reported on their rooms. One said his bed was like a hammock, and the other's like a cot.

Anyway, the point of this is to say that a legacy from then is that we have continued a daily record of birds we see in the garden from Autumn through to Spring. So lockdown has given us more opportunities to carry on with this. We don't choose any particular time of day to watch. Binoculars are kept in the kitchen so that we can look when we see more activity. This often happens at inopportune moments, such as when I'm cooking, but so far there have been no disasters, maybe just a few delays in serving meals. Over the years it has been interesting to see trends. For example, there were a good number of years when we had no sparrows visiting our garden, then the starlings disappeared. Of course ring necked parakeets have increased considerably, as have jackdaws which have spread from Bushy Park. Both of these species can be rather a nuisance. The parakeets eat the emerging flower buds on the pear trees, and the jackdaws can monopolise the bird table at times. But there are plenty of other birds to enjoy.

We have the regular daily visitors - house sparrows, blue tits, great tits, coal tits, dunnocks, robins, parakeets, jackdaws, wood pigeons, collar doves, magpies. Some regulars seem to have deserted us recently, such as chaffinches, blackbirds, greenfinches and goldfinches, but, of course, we may just not be looking at the right time. Occasionally, we see jays, wrens and song thrushes. It's always great to see something new arrive, or a bird which rarely visits. In the last weeks we have seen long tailed tits, a nuthatch and several goldcrests.

This winter we feel that there have been fewer birds visiting our garden, and think this may be due to the mild autumn weather and more natural food available, or more people putting out bird food since lockdown. Both of these would be a bonus for our bird population. If you don't already feed the birds in your garden, why not start now.

Janice Thompson



John Trotter (and Jeannie)

I have known Jeannie and John all my life. When I was a child Jeannie was my Sunday School teacher in what was known as the Primary Department which met in the small hall. The children sat on little wooden chairs and Pam Goodwin used to play the piano for our songs...songs such as 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam' and 'Hear the pennies dropping, listen as they fall, everyone for Jesus, He shall have them all' sung while we dropped our pennies into the glass money box. I remember the wonderful Sunday School parties that we had. Jeannie kept a special book where she wrote details of the number of fairy cakes, sandwiches, jellies, biscuits etc. that were required for the parties and members of the congregation were asked to supply these.

I became Jeannie's pastoral visitor in 2015 when she was mostly housebound. I used to make regular visits to Jeannie and John to their home in Cambridge Road and there was always a warm welcome in their home. John could be found pottering around in the garden or fixing something in the house. He was a great handyman and could tackle anything that needed mending or remodelling. He had an electric scooter and would regularly take trips up to Sainsbury's and also into Kingston on the bus.

Jeannie and John loved to attend the Friday Focus lunches where they could enjoy a lovely home cooked 2 course meal and meet other members and friends of the church. These were valuable times of friendship and fellowship. When they were not able to get to the church, somebody would deliver a plated meal (and dessert) to them at home. A few of us would sometimes take sandwiches round to their home and share lunch and fellowship together. John would love to tell us stories about his childhood, the several marathons that he had run and their early days of married life when they lived in Malvern Road.

When it was becoming increasingly difficult for Jeannie and John to manage at home they decided they needed to be cared for and moved into Linwood Care Home in Thames Ditton on 10 November 2017. They had adjacent rooms and were very well cared for by the staff. I continued to visit both Jeannie and John regularly taking Liz W with me and sometimes Liz L. also. They both enjoyed the visits that we made to the care home and would love to reminisce about 'the old days' and were always interested to hear news about what was going on at church and to receive church flowers and the church magazine.

John was able to use his electric scooter to get around inside the home -although he was frustrated that he couldn't take off on his own and go out and about on it! Jeannie sadly died on 31 July 2018 and I continued to visit John. He missed his dear Jeannie very much, but was always pleased to see visitors from the church and to share his memories of Jeannie.

Once the Covid pandemic started in March 2020, the home did not allow visitors, so we were not able to see John and had to be kept updated on how he was via his son Ian. On 23 November 2020 we heard the news that John had died in his sleep. So Jeannie and John were once again reunited. What a wonderful couple, we have so many happy memories of them and they are greatly missed.

Wendy Salmon



John's life

The second child in a family of seven children, John grew up in a small house in Hampton Hill, and then Hillfield Road, Hampton. Bushy Park was his playground. We are not sure how much John learnt at school, but he remembered some of the pranks he got up to far more vividly than any of his lessons.

At the age of fourteen John left school and started his apprenticeship as a carpenter boatbuilder at Thornycroft's Boatyard on Taggs Island. His skills in crafting wood can be seen in many family and friends' homes in the shape of furniture, desks and toys made for his children and grandchildren, as well as beautifully hand turned bowls, and lamps.

In his early teens John met Jean at a dance in the Scout Hut Hampton and a romance started that was to last over eighty years. Sadly, Jean died in 2018 just after their 71st Wedding Anniversary.

John joined RAF Bomber Command in 1942, he never forgot the many friends he lost in air-raids and in recent years he spoke more of his experiences. In 1947 John married Jean at St Mary's Church overlooking the river at Hampton. It was a large family wedding and a reception at the Co Op hall, everybody helping out with the catering by offering their rations.

Home together was in Malvern Road, Hampton where they shared a house with Jean's mum and dad. Over the next few years their family expanded with the arrival of three children. With a young family John spent every day either working as diver on the Thames, using his skills to repair lock gates and maintain the river bed or in the evenings modernising the house, cultivating his allotment and helping friends. In 1959 he left the river to join Borax Research Laboratories developing his skills in engineering.

John had a moped to get around but after he'd had several accidents the family got their first car, a Vauxhall called EPHy. In 1965, they moved to 22 Cambridge Road, the house that so many friends and family remember as their second home. There wasn't much time for hobbies but John was always keen to be involved in his children's sporting activities, including son Ian playing for Hampton Juniors and daughters Sue and Gill competing for Surrey Athletic Club.

And then John took up running himself. Ian thought it was a good idea, offered encouragement and John was a natural. His achievements include being the 3rd over 60 year old in the 1986 London Marathon. His enthusiasm led to him raising funds for Help the Aged by running in a relay from Paris to London and being part of an Over 70's relay from Land's End to John o Groats in aid of children with autism.

John has never been one to spend time sitting down and he enjoyed a good few years holidaying, enjoying exploring France with Jean in their caravan. John never slowed down, always busy fixing and solving problems and he looked after Jeannie with incredible care and love.

Ian Trotter

Companion Cycling

Elsewhere in this magazine Ian Trotter mentions how much he and his father John enjoyed their cycle rides through Bushy Park with Companion Cycling - a charity I have been a volunteer with for the past 16 years.

Companion Cycling enables people with special needs, regardless of their age or ability, to cycle on specially adapted cycles in the peaceful surroundings of Bushy Park. Cycles are carefully selected to enable people to ride, whatever their ability. These range from side-by-side pedal cycles suited to those with good mobility but limited co-ordination, through to wheelchair cycles suited to riders with severe mobility problems. We also have a range of tricycles with added safety features and a number of conventional bicycles for accompanying riders. Our volunteers help choose the cycle most suited to the rider's needs and will familiarise new riders and pilots with the cycles and accompany them around the park as necessary.

In 2019 Companion Cycling won The Queens Golden Jubilee Award – for voluntary service by groups in the community. Along with five other volunteers I was fortunate enough to attend the awards ceremony on behalf of the charity. It was an interesting evening at which we got to hear about the work of other charities that also received the award. Unfortunately like many organizations our activities are suspended at the moment due to restrictions imposed to fight the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

If, when things return to normal, you require further information either as a user or a volunteer please take a look at our website <https://www.companioncycling.org.uk> or contact me.

Colin Greasby





On 11th November 2020, I made a special visit to the Hampton War Memorial so that I could commemorate, personally, the 100th Anniversary of the laying of the Memorial Stone to the 'Unknown Soldier' in Westminster Abbey

The insert on my wreath is a picture of the original Hampton War Memorial, built on behalf of our RBL. It was designed and built by me and members of Hampton School Maintenance staff around 1996, to be replaced in 2018 by the current Memorial, leaving only at the foot of the flag pole just one part of our original Memorial staving;

'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'

The nativity

There is perhaps significantly more hidden information in the Gospel stories than we ever usually think about.

When Joseph first heard of Mary's pregnancy, he must have gone spare, particularly as she was clearly a God-fearing young woman. Obviously, he spoke enough about it that Matthew recorded it. We don't hear of any family support; they would undoubtedly been furious with Mary. Who else heard of it?

The village gossips knew what Deuteronomy states. A betrothed maiden, found to be pregnant, must be stoned to death along with the man, unless she says she was raped, but screamed, and no help came. They could have decided that, since she refused to say that she had screamed for help, she had to be stoned to death. Is this why she fled to Elisabeth? After 3 months, Joseph would have made it known that he would have Mary as wife. So, the gossips would have calmed down, perhaps, when she returned home.

You can't imagine Joseph willingly taking a heavily pregnant wife from Nazareth to Bethlehem unless he was forced to do so. Surely, unless he was under extreme pressure, he would have delayed, for her to deliver the baby, if he was required to take her. Surely Mary couldn't have walked to Bethlehem.

You can imagine a squad of Roman soldiers arriving in Nazareth, proclaiming Quirinius' decree, and ordering everyone to pack up and go, allowing the population of Nazareth a minimal time for preparation. with threats of anything from flogging to crucifixion if people delayed too long. They would have other towns and villages to visit. Perhaps they stayed just the one day, by which time everyone had to be gone. So, Joseph would have to seek a donkey for Mary, get together what cash, fodder and food supplies they could for the journey, as well as emergency supplies in case Mary was delivered on the journey.

At the time of Jesus' Bar Mitzvah 12 years later, there were many relatives living in Nazareth. None of them are recorded as accompanying Joseph to Bethlehem, suggesting that they had all had to split up because of the Roman pressures when Quirinius' decree was made known.

Why did Mary have to travel with Joseph? Surely the women-folk, with midwife experience would normally care for a woman late in pregnancy if her husband had to travel on business. Does this mean that all the women had to go as well under the decree?

The journey was about 100 miles, with a choice of two routes, the shorter one down the spine of Israeli hills, and the longer one by the River Jordan. This was undoubtedly the easier one, and I get the impression it would have taken about a week unless they had to make stops on the way. We don't know what time of year this was. Bethlehem and the Jordan Valley would be equitable at most times of year.

When they got to Bethlehem it was already bursting at the seams as a result of Quirinius. No room at the inn, and presumably at the houses, including any close relatives of Joseph. Based on modern experience, prices would be considerably up, both for the stable and the house they went to after the birth, and where they stayed until they went to Jerusalem for the 40-day cleansing ceremony.

Would primitive banks have transferred funds from Nazareth to Jerusalem? If not, they could have been nearly skint by now. Even if they had money to buy a lamb, would one be available? The witness of Josephus is suspect, but his record, if wrong in detail, leaves the impression that, even if 1/4 million lambs were not slaughtered at Passover, there could easily be a real shortage, other than those dedicated to Temple rituals, and therefore they offered turtledoves or pigeons.

The wise men must have put significant thought into their gifts before they set out, and they came up with three which were recognised for their value. It was likely that Herod might be key to their quest. How would he have responded to a gift of a handful of gold coins? With his history, perhaps instant execution. They had to take sufficient to give Herod some pleasure (he was always seeking money to complete projects such as re-building the Temple).

They must also have thought about who they would be asking about a King of the Jews, and Herod's officials would have been high on their list. We are told nothing about smoothing the path of officialdom, but it is certain that any official they met would demand a bribe, otherwise their way would be blocked. They first asked inhabitants of Jerusalem where the new king was, but they didn't know anything.

When they were ushered into Herod's presence, they should have smelt a rat, especially when they were instructed to be his spies. Herod had a dreadful reputation for liquidating members of his own family who might be rivals, and they should have known that the new king, if he was not Herod's son, would be ruthlessly sought and exterminated. They ought to have had nightmares about the baby's fate after they had found the baby. They then left by a way that didn't go through Jerusalem.

Why did Matthew's record suggest that the wise men were very naïve in a world where the naïve did not survive? Perhaps he was recording just the bare bones of narrative, and he expected the reader to fill in details that would be obvious to anyone familiar with the times.

It seems that the visit by the wise men was quickly followed by the flight to Egypt (with Herod hot on their tracks), which suggests that there may not have been time for the cleansing ceremony between the departure of the wise men and the flight to Egypt.

Was Joseph allowed to work in Egypt? Would Roman rule have eliminated local prejudices? The wise men's gifts may have been essential for their survival.

Brian Goodwin

The First Covid Christmas

It was after Kan had put the video up of some of the young folk singing and doing actions to the song "Our God is a great big God" that I, unfortunately, had the great big idea to do a Nativity. I say unfortunately as there wasn't a lot of time to get it done before Christmas! Nothing like putting yourself and everyone else under pressure!

Having seen how much joy that first video had brought to people, I thought why can't we do a pre-recorded Nativity, spread some warmth and let this Christmas feel at least a little normal?

With cries of "Please do it!" from Eunice, Mark and Kan ringing in my ears I reluctantly agreed.

There was a week to mull it over. A week to write it, plan video clips, find willing participants and a week to gather those clips in and have poor Jacques put it all together. Thank you Jacques!

It was decided it would work well for the 20 December which was the week of Advent celebrating Mary and the Annunciation. I wanted to make Mary's story an important part of the script and bring in the Magnificat - Mary's praise song to God after she visits Elizabeth and is told the news of her pregnancy too. My initial thoughts were to have this danced by a group of girls but time was not on our side and as we couldn't get the music I wanted due to licensing and time issues we decided to read the verses from Scripture as Lexie danced. Thank you to Lex for being so willing to do that as a solo! All the music we used was from "Singing the Faith" and the discovery of "The Camel Shuffle" was a true gift! It was perfect for the Wisemen to complete their packing and set off on their journey.

We couldn't have done any of this if it weren't for our troupe of marvellous actors and their fabulous video clips which they sent back to us. You were all truly amazing and thank you for taking the time and putting the effort in! We hope you had fun doing them. Adding your own creativity and ideas added an extra bit of magic. Thank you too for those who did more than one role and had double the video clips to do - Struan and Jac we are looking at YOU!

There are many aspects of the script and editing I would have liked to improve on but perhaps our amateur attempt brought home the unpolished, unpredictability of nativity plays watched in the past where the star gets stuck on its string and the innkeeper decides to invite the couple IN instead of showing them the stable! This is the feeling I had hoped to capture - the joyous innocence of young children in costume re-telling the story of old.

We had hoped to bring a smile, a tear perhaps, certainly a giggle but most of all to try and make this Covid Christmas a little warmer, a little brighter and a little more normal for all of us. So if you, like me, find yourself clicking on that link just one more time to watch it again.....we hope you continue to feel the warmth and presence of the Christ child as we go forward in the new year. May we go forward in the knowledge that what God began in Bethlehem and indeed long before that starry night...the giving of His son for us, His very self for us - still rings true. Immanuel! God with us! May we find strength and comfort in knowing God is with us as we navigate these coming months.

Every Blessing
Sue Kotze



Angel, star and shepherds



Manger, Herod and Magi

Angels

For a few years several of our congregation have knitted Christmas angels. Last year we brought our angels to the Carol service and people were invited to take one at the end of the service and give it to a friend or relative-or to just leave it somewhere for somebody to find. The angels have a little label on them with a message indicating that they are a gift from the church.

This year was different; there was no carol service in church, so we decided that we would hang the angels on the church front wall. Liz came up with the brilliant idea of wrapping the angels in cellophane bags so they would be protected from the rain. So I tied a washing line to the church front wall and the angels were pegged on for passers-by to help themselves.

They proved to be extremely popular and they all disappeared in a few hours. We also had some lovely messages about them on Facebook and 'Nextdoor Hampton'.

So why don't you get knitting early while we are in lockdown ready for our Angel giveaway next Christmas?

Wendy Salmon



Getting to know Trevor and Janet Wright

We would like to introduce ourselves! We knew of Hampton Mission Partnership from Mark Gilks, who is a member of our Gideons Fellowship Group, and who has always been an encouraging and very practical Christian. Janet and I have been involved with the Gideons for many years (now called Good News for Everyone). Janet is currently the 'chairman' of our group.

We have both been Christians for many years and have belonged to many fellowships. We have had much to do with Baptist churches. We were married at Walton Baptist Church in 1975 and we know Graham and Margaret Coster from Teddington Baptist Church.

We have three children - David (42), Peter (38) and Katharine (36), who are all in Christian work. David and Katharine both work for 'Compassion' and Peter works for a Christian Safeguarding Organisation called 31.8 (from Proverbs). Peter used to go to Hampton Baptist with his wife Elizabeth. They have two children - Caroline (10) and Marianne (5). They now live in Gravesend and go to Emmanuel Baptist Church. David and his wife Becky live in Southwell (near Nottingham) and have three children -Aimee (15), Emily (12) and Joshua (9). Katharine remains single and is changing jobs in January 2021 to work in Essex doing NHS training with children with anxiety and mental health problems. We would value your prayers that she settles in regarding accommodation and finding a church nearby.

We are looking forward to getting involved at Hampton Mission Partnership. Janet has been working with The Extra Mile for four years and is very happy with the group. I used to be a Community Nurse and so have had a bit of experience working in the community. I also used to lead meetings and services at our previous church. Janet and I both enjoy singing, so it was good to be invited to sing with your music group. We also enjoy the Sunday Zoom fellowship group and the Friday Zoom Bible Study group led by Rev David Priddy at 5.15 pm. Why not join us?

We look forward to getting to know more people and are very supportive of the Christian fellowship under the leadership of Rev Kan Yu. We are looking to the Lord to guide us along the way. Psalm 107 verse 7 says 'He led them forth by the right way'. It was our reading this morning. So he leads us today and this year. O blessed thought! The Lord always guides us by the right way that is the very best way! We believe he has led us to Hampton Mission Partnership and look forward to being used to build up the fellowship in the place he has put us.

Love in Christ Jesus

Trevor and Janet Wright



Christ my Saviour

Since moving to Harlow settling in a church has had its challenges. Finally we found a welcoming home in Potter Street Baptist Church. What a blessing it has been and is, in not only mine but also in Craig's life. We will always miss Hampton Methodist Church as it was known, as our first home church. Through the ups and downs of life I have always found comfort in Christ and as the crises seemed to mount in an endless flow so did my strength. My weakness was my gift to know the peace that can only come from faith. Who am I without God? Nothing and no one.

The wonder of this relationship came with a sudden clarity when I recently became ill and collapsed without answers, and has grown since. Once again I was in agony and spent hours in A&E. Finally a CT scan showed a blockage caused by scar tissue from previous surgery. Diagnosis - surgery. Yet I had peace knowing it had nothing to do with anything except to be where God my Father wanted me to be. Sharing my love and faith and trust and bringing Christ's peace and comfort to those around me. No fear, just gratitude and a sense of closeness to God through Christ. Who would have thought that was possible? What a privilege to be so loved.

Lying on a hospital trolley in incredible pain coming in waves, labour pains for 24 hours would have been easier. And then the thought that my pain was only a tiny inkling of the pain from the lashes and crown of thorns Christ took for me. How close I felt through that experience is a blessing I will carry forever.

Throughout my life I have known of Christ but the journey of relationship has grown with each new challenge I face especially in my health over the past 15 years. How to describe it is difficult but to say 'Nearer and dearer each day' is a love that is priceless. We can suffer in pain or we can live with Christ who knows and sharing him with others is a privilege. Grace in abundance.

I don't know if this makes sense but the harder the going gets, the easier it becomes. Focus on God and the peace is beyond understanding. The obstacles just become clearer and how we are taken out of situations is amazing.

I am currently at home awaiting Covid test results and yet at peace with the time off and the time to write this. It is a message of hope.

Thank you, Father, for choosing me. I stand in your glory and give you praise.

Love
Kathy Duncan



I once had to say, "Goodbye Teddington, goodbye England", when I moved back to Germany in October 2001 having been in England for 3.5 years. I was in tears, I was so sad, I missed my friends from Teddington Methodist Church very much. Once back in Germany we bought a dog and such was our attachment to England that we chose an English Springer Spaniel, and my youngest daughter's second name is Eloise - named after one of Deborah's friends she had while we lived in Teddington.

During the next few years we were able to keep in touch by visiting Teddington Methodist Church whenever we were in Great Britain and we were also able to meet some of our friends back in Germany - Brian Kent came to stay with us, and Kate Taylor paid us a visit with her husband Jon and their son James.

In January 2013 Dietrich's employer offered him a permanent position in London. I certainly did not want to move again, and Dietrich was all on board with that, he would just come home every weekend – but at 4 am the next morning I woke him up and told him that we needed to talk! We talked and to cut a long story short – we ended up moving to England again. Deborah was just going through her final exams and the other three girls were at a point in their educational journey where they could be moved to a different school.

We rented a nice house in Kingston and thought about joining Kingston Methodist Church, due to its more convenient location, but of course on the first Sunday back in England we paid “our church” a visit and it was like coming home. And we stayed.

While living in Germany I had become a local preacher and I was lucky that my service was needed and welcomed in Teddington circuit. I was extremely nervous when I had to lead my first service in one of the other churches, but wherever I went I was greeted with open arms and soon felt at home.

This summer Sarah will finish school and she is going to leave home. I have spent the last 25 years at home looking after my family, but with Sarah starting university I must go back to work at the German Railways in Germany.

It is once more time for me to say goodbye, and again it is with a sorrowful heart, it is not easy to leave eight years in our church family behind me. You have all given me so much; you have opened your hearts and have enriched me. And I am grateful for all your love and I will always have an open door in Germany for everyone who wants to visit me and my family.

**“To everything there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to uproot that which is planted.”
(Ecclesiastes 3, 1-2)**



As always, our time is in God's hands. I appreciate the many blessings he has given me. I will move back to Germany in June 2021 knowing that I have had an amazing time in England, that I have had a chance to serve him.

I will remember fondly Teatime Concerts, German Carol Singings, Plant Sales, Fellowship Meetings, Baby Basics and The Extra Mile.

I will remember Granny P and the “Girl's Trip plus one” to Germany in August 2019 with Rubina, Rodrigo and Eunice and so many many wonderful people.

But oh dear, I will miss you all so very much!

Yours Monika

The Extra Mile

As Trevor has said, I have been volunteering with TEM for the past four years. I first heard about it through Mark, when he joined our Gideon group. As I was recently retired and had been praying that God would show me what I should do with my time, TEM seemed to fit the bill and I offered to help. After all, the bible tells us that we are to show God's love to the poor and needy.

With this high-minded purpose I joined the group and yes, we have been able to bring relief and joy to many people who had nowhere else to turn, but I began to find out that I was working with a group of people who enjoyed having fun together! I have made some good friends. As we work we also chat and share things like family news including the birth of grandchildren, and we enjoy each other's company. So I thank God for the day I met Mark and he introduced me to The Extra Mile. I love it! I think there may be some photographic evidence to go with this article!

Janet Wright



21 for '21 Spring Challenge

The annual soup lunch at Sunbury has become the main fundraising event for Baby Basics and The Extra Mile but obviously cannot be held this year due to the pandemic. BB and TEM volunteers have continued through most of 2020 to support families referred via social workers and health professionals, and the community has generously donated the items we needed plus support from groups like The Hygiene Bank, Stripey Stork and Nicki's Crafting Crew. In 2020 TEM supported 400 children and gave Christmas presents to over 130 children. BB is close to their 1000th Moses basket since Baby Basics Sunbury started.

So, how to replace the soup lunch in 2021?

The Spring Challenge is something we can all participate in and do something positive to show God's love in helping others in these uncertain times. Initially I was uninspired at what my '21' could be and decided to take the option of making a donation. But then an idea emerged from my post-Christmas resolve to reply to letters received with cards...

My '21' will be good old fashioned snail mail in the form of a card/letter to hopefully brighten 21 people's days. We rarely receive an actual personal letter in the post in these days of email and texting. As a teenager I loved writing and had penfriends in America, France and Sweden. I remember writing on that flimsy blue airmail paper and the eager anticipation of receiving a reply often weeks hence. (The American penfriend became one of my best friends and we have had many wonderful holidays along with our husbands, who also became firm friends. I reconnected with the Swedish one last year when she found me on Facebook. We now play a daily Facebook game called Quiz Planet, each month alternating between the questions in English and Swedish, which gives my brain an even greater workout as you can imagine!)

So, what will your '21' be? It may be something unique to you or one of the ideas in the publicity. Then tell all your friends and family and give them the opportunity to support you and Baby Basics and The Extra Mile.

In the June magazine, as well as reporting on how much money we raised, I'm looking forward to hearing your stories of what you did and how it went.

Liz Windaybank



Farewell from the Halls!

After growing up in Teddington and Hampton and spending our married life in Hampton, David and I have decided to make the big move from London to Rustington in West Sussex (just down the road from Pam Harrison!)

It was 30 years ago that the Elders of Teddington Baptist Church challenged people to consider if a Baptist Church should be planted in Hampton. We joined with a few others to pray about the way forward; and from there Hampton Baptist Church was started. I believe the church fulfilled its role of serving the community of Hampton and sharing the good news of Jesus. This role continues through the joining with Hampton Methodist Church to become Hampton Mission Partnership in 2019.

We have enjoyed living in Hampton, somehow still a village despite being part of Greater London. Many friendships have been made with neighbours, through schools, clubs and of course the Church. We are grateful to the church for supporting us always, through ups and downs. Being part of God's fortress has been a great journey.

It is sad that we can't meet up at the moment to say goodbye, but we wish you a farewell and God's blessing. Hopefully we can pop by when we are allowed to travel again as we will be up here to visit our parents. And we look forward to hearing how God is continuing to working through Hampton Mission Partnership.

I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121 v1.

Vicky and David Hall.



World Day of Prayer 5 March 2021

The World Day of Prayer is a women led, global, ecumenical movement. This year the service was due to be held at St Theodore's Church in Hampton, but will now be an online service due to covid. Anita Tozzi from St Theodore's will provide a zoom link nearer the time so that we can all share in the worship.

The Christian women of Vanuatu have prepared the service on the theme 'Build on a Strong Foundation.' Vanuatu is on the other side of the world in the South Pacific, 1,100 miles east of Australia and is an archipelago of 80 islands. It is one of the first countries to start to pray on this day, setting off a wave of prayer that travels round the world.

There are three official languages, Bislama, French and English.
Their motto is: 'Long God yumi stanap' in Bislama
'Nous nous tenons devant Dieu' in French
'With God we stand' in English.

They are in the South Pacific cyclone zone and suffered severe damage from Cyclone Pam in 2015 and again in April 2020 with Cyclone Harold. The rising sea levels due to Climate Change are also a major threat to the islands. The capital is Port Villa on the island of Efate.

European contact was first made by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Fernandez de Quiros in 1660, followed by the French, then Captain James Cook in 1774. He mapped the islands and named them the New Hebrides. In the 1800s came the traders, followed by 'blackbirders' who kidnapped, tricked or coerced South Pacific islanders into working on the cotton and sugar plantations in Queensland, Fiji and Hawaii. The way of life on the islands began to change, from each island having its own tribal groups and organisation to a government administered in the European style. British missionaries and French planters were the two main groups and by 1887 there was a shared administration between England and France which became more formal in 1906. Vanuatu became independent in 1980 with a new flag and constitution and elected its first Prime Minister, Father Walter Lini.

The role of women was greatly undermined during colonial times and even though the constitution provides for gender equality, women still represent only 3 percent of senior government or executive positions. Primary education is not free or compulsory and boys are often prioritised over girls in families with limited funds. Please support the work of this International Christian organisation. For more information and activity sheets for children and resources for leaders of children's groups see www.wwdp.org.uk

Margaret Thorn



Congratulations

To Rev Naomi and Luke Oates on the birth of Rachel Seren on 21 December. Naomi explained the meaning of Rachel's unusual middle name, 'The name is Welsh for 'star'. Luke's Welsh and she was born on the day of the Great Conjunction. We also liked that there was a Christmassy connection – when we originally hadn't been expecting to meet her until almost a month after Christmas.'



Naomi, Luke and Rachel



Rhiannon and Max, 8 August



Miria and Dayo with Israel and friend Jackie

26 October 2020

Circuit Lent Course

Following the successful Circuit Advent course enjoyed by more than 60 people, there will soon be a Circuit Lent course. The evening sessions will be on 23 February, 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 March. The morning sessions will be on 24 February, 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March. The course will be led by Kan and David Innes.

The course is written by Revd Michaela Youngson, Joint London District Chair and is called 'Woven.' You can download the course booklet from the London District website www.methodistlondon.org.uk/lentcourse2021 but hard copies will be available to pick up from church.

The website explains the meaning of the theme:

As people of faith we know that our story and God's story are woven together, not because we wish it to be so but because God is interested in the smallest detail of our lives. The God who knit us together in our mothers' wombs is the same God who knows the number of hairs on our heads and who loved us and the whole world enough to send Jesus to show us the way of love.

Lent is a season during which we reflect on our personal relationship with God and on every Christian's responsibility to engage with the world as it is. We notice again God's prompting to move on from personal reflection, through shared study, towards lives of love in action. We remember that Jesus travelled a journey from his baptism, through the wilderness and beyond, to a ministry of teaching and healing, of challenging injustice and of holding the powerful to account. We will remember the cost that Jesus paid for standing up for those who were most vulnerable and we will look towards the eternal hope that lies beyond the sacrifice.

Books

Those Who Wait: Finding God in Disappointment, Doubt and Delay by Tanya Marlow

Tanya Marlow is a writer, speaker and broadcaster on faith and spirituality. She writes about the Bible, the messy edges of life and finding God in unexpected places.

This book was recommended by the Woman Alive book club and it didn't disappoint. Tanya has recreated the stories of four bible characters and told their stories from their perspective. Sarah, Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary (mother of Jesus) all feature in this book and the author tries to convey something of what it might have been like for them waiting and trying to listen for God's instructions and promises. Also what others around them were feeling and some of the cultural traditions of the time.

This book can be read on its own or used by a bible study or house group. After each character's story there are reflections, creative exercises and questions to ask yourself. After telling the stories of the four characters there is a Q&A notes section on why she has chosen to interpret the stories in a certain way and linking in the theology to the stories. Then there is a section for a 6-week bible study with bible references and questions the group could consider.

I found this a fascinating look into the lives of these characters and exploring some of the issues that would have been around at the time, as Tanya has done extensive research, so you are getting a real experience of what was most likely to have occurred rather than the softer version we are sometimes given.

Pam Harrison

Stories from the streets: an insight into the work of Street Pastors by Luke Randall and Sue Shaw

I have known Sue and Luke for over twenty years. They are both involved in the work of Street Pastors in Kingston, and Sue also went to work for Street Pastors in the Caribbean. The book is a fascinating insight into the work of Street Pastors and the way God can work through the most unusual of circumstances. Both Luke and Sue are committed Christians and work for the Lord through a number of charities.

Stories from the Streets is written from the perspective of Street Pastors from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Antigua in the Caribbean. As well as compelling true stories there is also plenty of background information about the organisation itself, homelessness, street drugs, safeguarding and why Street Pastors do what they do. The stories describe real life situations where people are helped in a diverse range of places, on the streets at night, on railway platforms, after terrorist incidents or in schools.

You might be a Street Pastor yourself wanting to know more about the work or thinking about becoming one or just curious about what Street Pastors actually do. Either way do order a copy and find out what God is doing on our streets.

Roger Brown

Remarkable people: extraordinary stories of everyday lives by Dan Walker.

You might know Dan Walker as a presenter of BBC Breakfast, Football Focus or Match of the Day. He is also a Christian. In the introduction to the book he says, 'I have been privileged over the years to sit down with some incredible individuals. I have interviewed some really 'important' people. I've shoved a microphone under the nose of the last six UK prime ministers, various members of the royal family and all sorts of sporting superstars in countries across the world. None of them appear in this book.' Instead, this book tells the stories of ten ordinary people that Dan has met, some recently and others from the past who have made a lasting impression on him.

It struck me how seemingly chance encounters in our daily lives can change the course of life for ourselves and those we meet. You must have heard about Tony Foulds, who still diligently tends the Sheffield park memorial to the American crew of a plane that crashed nearby during the war. The reason we all now know about it is because Dan (in a hurry walking the dog before work) took a different path that day that led him to an elderly chap looking cold with shaking hands sweeping leaves from the path and Dan stopped to say, 'Are you OK?' I wonder how often we miss opportunities to reach out to people who cross our path?

Several of the stories are very thought provoking and make you wonder what you would have done in similar situations. The final chapter is called, 'How will you remember 2020?' It has the stories of people who have faced massive challenges due to the pandemic. Dan says, 'If there is one thing I will keep in my mind from the people in this chapter and in this book it's that it is possible to have a positive effect on those around me...we can all have an impact on the people we spend time with, even if it's just a few seconds.'

Liz Windaybank

The Garden of Vegan by Cleve West

Cleve West is a garden designer who has won gold and silver medals at Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows. We know him because he is a fellow allotment holder. I bought the book for Colin's birthday but was interested to read it myself as we have been semi-vegetarian for many years and was interested to learn more about veganism. Cleve has been vegetarian for some thirty years and only about five years ago became vegan – about which he is now very passionate.

The book starts with a chapter entitled 'Seeds' which covers Cleve's childhood, early memories of encounters with animals, family history and hereditary illnesses followed by a chapter he calls 'Veganic' – vegan organic gardening. This covers sections on bees, soil fertility, compost, use of woodchip, liquid fertiliser and no-dig methods. Chapter 3 is entitled 'Healing Gardens' and is of more general interest, particularly in these pandemic times when so much is made of the power of nature in healing and the feelings of well-being that gardens and open spaces can give. Cleve writes about the flower shows he has designed gardens for, as well as his allotment.

Chapter 4 is entitled 'The Environment' and this is what we all think of when we read or hear about vegans. It starts with a quote from Friends of the Earth:

'1kg of intensively reared beef requires up to 10kg of animal feed and 15,500 litres of water. It produces as much pollution as driving for three hours while leaving the lights switched on at home.'

Cleve covers the rise to fame of Greta Thunberg and that our Garden of Eden, our planet Earth, is threatened. Rainforest destruction, species extinction, ocean depletion, ocean dead zones, loss of biodiversity, global warming, pollution of air, land and waterways and water shortages are some of our more pressing problems. Yet we are reluctant to acknowledge that cutting meat and dairy from our diets could massively reduce each individual's carbon footprint and help mitigate many other impacts on the environment. He goes on to discuss Climate Change, land and grass-fed cattle and the meat and dairy industries being a leading cause of global warming.

Chapter 5 is 'Health and Humanity' – and covers where we get our protein from, consumption of pills, diabetes, antibiotics and nutrition facts (Cleve maintains that during his transition to being a vegan he learned more about nutrition than when he studied nutrition as part of a sport science degree).

Chapter 6 is 'Food' and covers myths, tips and recipes. I can confirm that the onion bhajis Cleve makes are excellent!

Chapter 7 is 'Transition' – how farmers can, and do, transition from meat and dairy production to all plant-based production.

Chapter 8 is 'Advocacy' - becoming an animal rights advocate and contains startling facts about animal and chicken rearing and slaughter.

Chapter 9 is 'A call to Gardeners' covers consumer power and what we as consumers are prepared to do.

So, to sum up, am I now vegan? I confess not. However I totally agreed with much of what Cleve says in the book and that if we all try to reduce considerably the amount of meat and dairy we consume this will have a massive impact on our planet. Do read the book!

Hazel Greasby

All are available from Waterstones or Amazon. Dan Walker's book is available from Richmond Libraries.

The next circuit book club will be Friday 30 April. The book will be Remarkable people.

KNITTED AQUARIUMS

For local
care homes



If you can knit or crochet we'd love your help to bring some joy to local care homes, and let them know their local community is thinking of them.

Email: wendy@embracingage.org.uk

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