

Baptists and Methodists together at Hampton Methodist Church



Winter 2022



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

Hampton Mission Partnership is a member of Churches Together around Hampton

Church website <https://hamptonmissionpartnership.org.uk>

Dear HMP family

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

Clocks are changed. Days are shorter. Nights are longer. What do you ponder?

Shining stars, Christmas trees, sparkling lights... Are these preparing us to journey through the cold dark winter, I wonder.

Colourful ornaments, handpicked presents, sumptuous feasts and party ideas on social media and TV adverts... are these comforting our fear of darkness, I mutter.

Jesus, light of the world, was born in Bethlehem. His incarnate presence of God is our constant reminder. *"Don't be afraid." "Do not fear."*

It's comforting to know we constantly have little lights around us even when it's dark. Lamps, smart phones, candles, night lights surround us to give light so that we can still see.

In life, God has given us friends, families, brothers and sisters in Christ, a phone call, a visit, a kind act, a gentle touch, a genuine smile. They all radiate lights to shine on our gloomy thoughts and burdened hearts, for us to see from our hearts: ***there is God, there is love.***

During the summer season, HMP shone brightly in and for the community through ministry of The Extra Mile (*helping and walking in solidarity with more than 3000 children*), Bike Project (*empowering people to commute and travel*), Computer Club (*equipping people to live in the present world*), Messy Church, Breakfast Church, that were always filled with love and joy.

What's more, the change of seating and setting in church, the faithful Sunday worship both in church and online, the dedication of all church members in different offices, being Christ in various sports activities such as the local football club and parkrun have enabled others to see the Light of Christ in their circumstances.

All these wonderful ministries and experiences have prepared us to enter the season of Autumn. Standing firm in God, we continue to be the shining light of Christ for others to see God's love in their midst.

No matter who you are and where you are at, the chorus from Darkness like a Shroud (SoF 78) exhorts us,

*Arise, shine, your light has come.
The glory of the Lord has risen on you!
Arise, shine, your Light has come,
Jesus the Light of the world has come.*

With love in Christ,
Kan

The Extra Mile

As we enter our busiest time of year, we have been reflecting on how we work and how far we have come since we started. You may have heard already that we have now reached the milestone of supporting **3000** children through The Extra Mile and have had some very encouraging feedback from health care professionals that families have not only appreciated the items we have been able to supply for them, but have been really touched 'that somebody cares' is what one mother said.

Obviously, we wish that what we are doing was not necessary, but sadly it is very much needed and never more so than now; where we find ourselves living through a cost-of-living crisis which is having a huge impact on those more vulnerable members of society. Over recent weeks we have seen an increase in referrals coming through from the professional bodies we work with. There seems to be more poverty for basic needs than ever with over half needing support either on low income or no recourse to funds, sometimes due to fleeing domestic violence.

Our Christmas present campaign has started and we have been very clear that this year we are only giving presents to those who will not have anything. Of course, some of the families we have supported are of a different faith so some professionals have been discerning with who they are referring to us. We have given deadlines for collecting as usual so hopefully there will not be too much clutter in the church but if you do see items around you can see what work has been going on.

Of course, all this would not be possible if it were not for people willing to volunteer helping out on a Monday or Wednesday morning. We thank all those involved in anything they do for this cause whether it is helping on the allotted days or social media, finance and record keeping, taking things to charity shops or recycling centres, making the occasional delivery or collection or meeting professionals outside our usual times and helping to mend things when they are broken. Lots of different ways to help out either on a regular basis or occasionally when needed. You will be sure of a welcome as many hands really do make light work – even if it is just helping to wrap Christmas presents on the weeks before Christmas. So, if you feel that you could help out more, please get in touch with one of the team, I am sure you know who they are by now, or check in with a steward.

On the subject of Christmas, we have been asked to provide 200 presents to St. Giles Hotel which houses asylum seekers and refugees. This is on top of our usual list from other referrers. Fortunately, we have been able to access some Santa Stork gifts (Stripey Stork) for the older children and it is hoped that between the gift service and other local churches we should be able to meet all our requests. The Hygiene Bank has also promised toiletry bags for Christmas presents. There has been a Facebook appeal and some people have asked for us on WhatsApp local groups. The elves will be busy wrapping right up to Christmas at this rate.

Pam Harrison



Some of the presents from the Toy Service

Rest

One of the many blessings for me of our church being a Mission Partnership is that I get to share the leadership of Worship with the gifted Chris Broomfield.

Back in September Chris and I were planned to take a Hampton service together. The traditional way to start service preparation for me is to look up the Bible passages that are set for that Sunday. This means checking a list known as a Lectionary which gives, over a three-year cycle, the Bible passages from the Gospel, the Old Testament, and one of the Psalms.

Now, a Preacher or Worship Leader does not have to use the Lectionary readings and can select a theme that the Holy Spirit guides them to choose. This is what happened on this occasion. Chris felt that a service with “Rest” as its central theme would be relevant and enhance our worship.

It did not take long for me to realise that behind the Spirit’s guidance to Chris was a genuine need. So “Rest” became our theme.

Chris chose some very fitting hymns and gave one of her seemingly simple, yet actually profound, talks about road signs with a spiritual message, and how we can use different versions of the Lord’s Prayer to help us think about the actual meaning of the words. My contribution was to follow on from Chris’s ideas and thoughts to talk about rest; physical rest, spiritual rest, and eternal rest. Our esteemed Joint Editor Liz has asked me to briefly capture some of these thoughts in our wonderful church magazine. So here goes!

I suspect that I am not the only person who has encountered a work environment where the management think that “rest is for wimps.” Yet we all know that we must have physical rest. It’s the same with spiritual rest--- we all need it. But what is it?

Spiritual rest is a relationship. It’s our relationship with God. It’s when we are up close and personal with God. When we are at one with God.

Many of us have been brought up describing Sunday/Sabbath as the day of rest, but the traditional debate about restricting Sunday shopping and leisure activities can be unhelpful. I have sat in a Hospital A and E on a Sunday glad that the doctors, nurses, and all the backup staff are working.

We need to see Sabbath as an attitude. It’s the place where and when we can find God’s rest. This can happen on any day, not just on a Sunday.

We need time when we can be attentive to God, who tells us “Be still and know that I am God.” We need to rest in him, with him, despite being in the midst of life’s burdens.

The thing is, the church doesn’t always help! I for one use the term “the Lord’s work.” But what does that phrase conjure up for you? I suspect it means things like pastoral work/mission/outreach. And quite right too. But it’s not the whole picture.

A few years back we often talked about a ‘purpose-driven’ church, and that is fine. A church needs to have a vision, a mission, a plan for the future. However, it is also vital that we pay attention to God’s purpose for each one of us. Yet this is not always straightforward. God’s purpose in our lives can be disguised as detours, messes, or even defeats.

A good illustration of how what appears to be a detour turning out to be the main event is the old story of Mr. Holland’s Opus.

Mr. Holland had a magnificent ambition. He wanted to be a great composer. But he still had to pay the bills, so he and his young wife move to a small town where he teaches music at the local secondary school. This is only for money as all his effort goes into his masterpiece, his Opus, which is his real calling. The idea is that he teaches for a few years then steps up in the world as a famous composer. He works on the Opus, tweaking it, adjusting it, trying to get it exactly right. But life keeps on intruding. One year leads to another, then a decade or two, and the day comes when Mr. Holland, now an old man, is to retire from the school.

It's his last day. He packs the contents of his desk into a cardboard box and walks down the empty corridors for the last time to meet his wife who has come to pick him up. As he slowly moves down the main corridor, he hears a noise coming from the large hall. He goes to see what it is. It's a surprise. Hundreds, yes hundreds, of his students from his years of teaching are there. The room is packed with well-wishers, friends, and fans. All have gathered to say thank you. An orchestra is there, made up of Mr. Holland's students through the years. They play Mr. Holland's Opus.

And for the first time in his life Mr. Holland realises that the real opus, his true life's masterpiece is the men and women his life has touched. All these people that he has helped and shaped. This is his true purpose.

A Gospel story that also helps us is the favourite one about the two sisters who lived in Bethany and loved Jesus. Martha gets cross that her sister Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him teach (alongside the men). She demands that Jesus tells Mary to help her prepare the food. Jesus points out that Mary has chosen the "better part."

Great, but what is the best part? It's a combination of Martha's hands and Mary's heart!

The message is simple; we all need to find time to stop what we ought to be doing! What?

There will always be your "to do" list, the essential chores, emails and texts that need replies, shopping that's not been done. But we need to find time to put all these pressing requirements on our time to one side, to find our Sabbath moments, when you stop and focus your sole attention on God.

Remember, Jesus told us "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

Each of us has an "inner self," it's a collection of all our memories, our values, our true self. When, through the Holy Spirit, we make connection with God to our "inner self," we call that spirituality. There's a short book with a slightly unhelpful title called "The Practice of the Presence of God." It's about a guy called Brother Lawrence, who after being wounded in the Thirty Years war ends up in a monastery. The Abbot thinks that he's too thick to learn Latin, so he's put to work in the kitchen. He washes dirty dishes morning, noon, and night. Yet this unlikely fellow, lives his humble life with God so close to him. It's as if God is there with him, personally close as he cleans the dirt off the plates and cooking utensils. Despite the wordy title of the book, this rest in God that Brother Lawrence knew so well is not intellectual but spiritual.

It may seem odd to say it, that although prayer can be a useful gateway to spiritual rest, we must be aware that it can also be a distraction. Prayer is essential to our faith, but we know that it is set in the burdens and problems of our world. In spiritual rest we need to enjoy the calm of just being with God.

One helpful secret passage is thankfulness to God. Why not try quietly reciting something like these lines to God who is with you in your Sabbath moment:

- You are my Creator
- You are my God
- I am your child
- I know that you love me
- I know that you are with me

The promise that will come to you in your spiritual rest is that God is saying to you “never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5).

Finding your Sabbath moments, your spiritual rest will provide you with time spent in a different world. It won't change the burdens you face, but it will enable you to deal with them better, because you deal with them with your God.

These times are also a preparation for God's eternal rest that through Christ is prepared for you.

Your current Sabbath times are only a shadow, but the time will come when you, through Christ, will rest in Peace and rise in Glory.

Mark Gilks

Presbyteral ministry, pregnancies and a pandemic

Well, it's probably safe to say that my first three years in ministry haven't been exactly what I expected. But first, I should take a step back. Some of you will remember me from when part of my ministerial training involved shadowing Vicci, particularly in her work at Hanworth, but with opportunities to get involved across the Teddington Circuit. Shadowing Vicci, as I'm sure you can imagine, was like trying to shadow a particularly colourful, well-shod whirlwind, and my three years in training left me with the impression that ministry could be joyful, creative, and rewarding (an impression I am yet to shake).

For the past three years, I have been serving as part of the staff team in the North Kent Methodist Circuit (www.nkmethodists.org.uk) which means that, for a year, I had the joy of working alongside Kan. I work with four churches – two with memberships hovering around 60, and two much smaller village chapels.

When I first arrived in September 2019, I spent a while 'listening' to where the churches were at and where they felt God was calling them to go next. In December, the Messy Church team at one of the churches was trying to decide what to do next – numbers had fallen, and the timing of sessions didn't seem to suit local families any more. I told them about Hampton's Breakfast Church (definitely one of the highlights of my time in the Teddington Circuit!) and, in January 2020, we launched our own version, with all the important ingredients (including bacon butties). Our Breakfast Church continues to thrive, and we have Hampton to thank for such a brilliant idea! (editor: we pinched the idea from Crediton Methodist, Hilary's church.)

Just over a year ago, after two years 'On Probation,' I was ordained at Methodist Central Hall in Walsall. Because of Covid, the congregation was limited in size, and the rows of faces that shouted 'They are worthy!' were wearing masks – but that seemed oddly fitting, considering that I and my friends had spent the majority of our first two years in ministry trying to help our churches through a series of lockdowns and ever-changing regulations. Although the pandemic had many terrible effects, I found ministry during Covid to be full of unexpected blessings – from suddenly having the

time to help out with our local foodbank, to meeting vulnerable members of the community who needed shopping or a friend, and from seeing how the churches responded with fresh expressions of worship online and by phone, to celebrating the ministry of our incredible Pastoral Visitors, who ensured that no-one was alone.

Another unexpected blessing that emerged during the pandemic was my daughter Rachel Seren, who was born in December 2020 (the year that 'Christmas was abruptly cancelled'). Rachel decided to make her appearance exactly a month early, at the moment I was supposed to be leading a Zoom Christingle. That was my first experience of balancing ministry and motherhood! There were a couple of years when Luke and I were unsure whether we would be able to have children, so Rachel's arrival brought with it joy upon joy, and she continues to make us laugh and smile countless times a day. At the moment, her favourite things are helicopters, owls, and getting yoghurt all over her Mum's clerical clothing.

Luke and I are delighted to be expecting our second baby in January – although, given our track record, the churches are being sure to put backup plans in place for my Christmas services! We send you all lots of love and blessings – those of you who played an important role in my training as a minister, and those of you I've never met. May you continue to flourish as you seek to do God's will and to be a blessing in and around Hampton.

Naomi, Luke, Rachel & Bump Oates



Fundraising Run

Back in March 2022, Kojo (Hangout's co leader) and I took a couple of members of the circuit youth group to an event in London. We had an incredible set of conversations about anti racism, challenging injustice and privilege, and around these powerful revelations two things happened – the first was we made a connection with Walton Methodist Church and their young people, and the second was that one of our young people saw a flyer for 3Generate, the national children's and youth assembly of the Methodist Church. If I had waved these flyers myself, I doubt there would have been much interest. But one of the cool, older teens from Walton asked our young people if they were going, and talked about how good it was. That was the planting of the seed.

Before anything else, I had to see what interest there was. Slowly but surely, the members of HangOut responded and we had six of our young people keen to go. One of the members has a friend in Putney, who was keen to go to 3Gen but didn't have a group to go with, and so our total went up to seven.

By this time, I already knew that I wanted to make sure the places were funded. Although the cost of 3Generate is not unreasonable, it wasn't sofa cash and for families sending two of their young people the cost mounted up. I wanted everyone to get to the event, and didn't want anyone to feel that they couldn't go because of the cost.

The London District generously contributed towards all the young people travelling from the District, which meant we didn't need to raise as much as it first appeared. At first, it looked like we'd need to raise just under £600 to cover the ticket costs. It was too much to pull out of thin air. I'd seen a friend of mine raise money for a project by doing a sponsored event, and I wondered whether I could do the same. JustGiving had the option of crowdfunding, and seemed like a convenient and safe way to raise the money.

I had returned to running earlier in the year and a running challenge felt like a good way to stretch myself. I'd often thought about doing a walk or run around the circuit and that seemed like the perfect route.

By this time I'd also come up against another challenge – finding someone prepared to give up a weekend to take a group of teenagers away is a tough ask. Thankfully, our friends at Walton Methodist Church had three leaders to their six young people, and were happy for us to be part of the group.

We decided the best way to get to 3Generate was to travel together by coach. This added an extra £400 to our running costs, and by then three more young people had asked to come, so the total to raise was now into four figures.

When I first set up the JustGiving page to raise the funds, I worried that the total would stall at £270 and we'd have to do a lot of work to try and make up the total. I shouldn't have worried, everyone in the circuit – plus friends and family – showed just how much they care for our young people. We absolutely exploded our target, ensuring that not only could we get our 10 young people to 3Generate but that we could also make our preparations ones that were memorable and made the whole experience an exciting one from start to finish.



Training for the run didn't go as smoothly as I had hoped – trying to find the time to get out for longer runs was difficult, but I did manage to get out for a six-mile run and an eight-mile run before the main event. It was nice to be able to save the full 10 miles for the day.



On the big day, everything felt calm. The anxiety of the days leading up seemed to park itself elsewhere as Tim and the kids drove me to Hanworth. I regretted not arranging a seeing off party, everything felt quiet and lonely as I prepared to go. Then suddenly, out of the blue, came the lovely Liz L. She was exactly the kind and supportive face I needed to see me through the first leg to Teddington Methodist Church (thank you Liz!)

It was smooth

sailing to Teddington, where I met John T from East Molesey Methodist Church. We ran from Teddington, through Bushy Park and then to East Molesey Methodist Church. It was nice to have the company and the support, especially as this was the longest section. After a quick pit stop we ran to Hampton Ferry, where John and I parted ways.



On the other side of the river I met up with Sue D, and we ran on to Hampton Mission Partnership, the shortest leg of the journey. The final part of the journey I wanted to do on my own, and so I said goodbye to Sue, put on some of my favourite Rend Collective album, and began the last stretch.



The road to Sunbury Methodist Church was long. It brightened up when Tim and the kids drove past and cheered out of the windows!! Much to my annoyance though, I realised that I was going to be a little bit short on the distance. I took a detour around the back streets behind the church (which threw off Tim who was tracking me from his phone!)

As I came round the corner I was amazed to see people coming out to see me. The kids had instruments and

everyone lined up to cheer me in. Most of the young people had come out to support too and had made banners and a finish line for me to crash through. It was an incredibly heartening moment!

The young people were selling cakes to raise some extra money themselves, and it was certainly a delicious place to finish! Tim also brought some non-alcoholic champagne to toast the success too. I hadn't told the young people how much had been raised beforehand, instead I tallied up how much had been raised altogether and asked one of the young people to read it out. The looks on their faces were amazing!

Thank you so much again to everyone who sponsored and supported our young people to get them to 3Generate. I'm sure that our young people will be able to fill you in on the amazing time they've had and all the excitement that a weekend away can bring. It was an incredible experience to take

them away, and I'm so grateful for the support we had to make that happen.



Bron Coveney

3Generate 2022

On Friday 30th September, young adults from the Teddington Circuit and Walton Methodist came together to travel to Birmingham to attend 3Generate 2022. As a group, we found a deeper connection with God; we got to learn and share with fellow Christians our age - it was a memorable experience that we all enjoyed very much, one we won't forget!

This is what a few people in our group had to share about their own experience at 3Generate:

"I felt a sense of the strong community amongst Christians our age, the weekend itself was uplifting in which I felt I got closer to God. Going with Teddington Circuit made the experience even better as I've truly made great friendships and memories." - Sydney, Walton Methodist

"One thing we learnt about ourselves is that meditation helped us connect more with God, using meditation really helped with self reflection and feeling God's presence." - Vianna & Vuyiswa, Hampton Mission Partnership

"At 3Generate, I learnt that there's lots of different ways to understand God. One of the methods was that we went to see a play that made us young people think in different ways, and challenged us to use various perspectives in relation to God. Overall this trip was very fun and insightful!" - Isaac, Sunbury Methodist

We'd like to say a massive thanks to Bron who provided us with this amazing opportunity; all the young adults are immensely grateful that we got to have a wonderful experience together! See the photo opposite!



Paying our respects to the Queen

I've never been someone who's wanted to join the crowds in Central London for big royal events. I would much rather watch from the comfort of my sofa, with a cup of tea and a dignified commentary telling me which foreign dignitary is which. And able to nip to the loo or put the kettle on when it all got a bit.....long. And, of course, with big dogs to walk and a teenager to feed, being out all day can be tricky. But I think the sheer number of events linked to the Queen's death and funeral made the possibility of attending one much more inviting.

So it was that Louise and I decided to try to attend the procession of the Queen's coffin from Buckingham Palace to Westminster the Wednesday before the funeral. We didn't really have great expectations of getting a good view, but at least we could say we'd been there. In fact, as we came out on to Whitehall directly opposite Horseguards Parade, it was clear that we'd found the perfect spot, with front row views right where the procession would turn out of Horseguards on to Whitehall. We were cheered to see there was a portaloo quite close to us, though in fact it might as well have been on Mars as the crowds were so deep we could never have reached it! We've probably all watched the procession and it was as solemn and moving as you would imagine, and I have some great photos of the procession itself.

What I will always remember, however, is the camaraderie of the crowd. By the end of our six hours in a tight huddle we knew our neighbours by name, had shared sweets, airdropped our best photos to each other and heard our back stories of previous brushes with royalty. It was an amazing experience, everyone so different yet coming together with a shared wish to pay our respects to the Queen. It was a day I will never forget.

Emma Gale

“THE QUEUE”

LOUISE & CAMERON BOOLS

At 7.20pm on Saturday, 17th September, two days before the state funeral of the Queen, Cameron had unexpectedly announced he was going to join The Queue. Immediately: “Well if you can hold on half an hour, I’ll get my stuff together and join you” came tumbling out. What? What was I thinking?! A moment of madness? We weren’t quite sure whether it was, or whether it was something we would always regret not doing. Our chance to pay our respects to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at her Lying in State at Westminster Hall. We had heard horror stories of 24/36 hour queuing times but without any actual solid verification from people that had indeed waited that long we couldn’t be sure and decided to go for it. By the time we had reached just Teddington station, I was already regretting it; having suffered with poor health recently, I started to worry I would not cope with cold weather which exacerbates my condition.

Cameron, was enthusiastic; “Come on, Mum, you can do this!”

We arrived at the “Queue For The Queue” in Southwark Park” at exactly 9pm along with hundreds and hundreds of other jolly people. The nervousness and regret (certainly for the older one of the two of us!) set in again. Could I do it, could I literally queue for hours (and it was looking like hours, if rumour had it)?

The ‘cattle pens’ at Southwark Park, we later found out, distanced 3.5 miles alone and that was before you had even officially started queuing! We were glad of our sensible shoes, refreshments and gadgets.



We were given our official green wristbands, without which we would not have been admitted. Our battered wristbands have been kept for posterity.

After The Queue closed, there had been attempts later on to sell wristbands (not us!) with stories of one from 17 September attracting a top bid of £2,000! All wristbands were later removed from sale.

FRIENDSHIPS

We had heard stories of great friendships being formed in The Queue and indeed within minutes a Dad and son had introduced themselves and we started chatting. The Dad in question turned out to be a councillor from LB Harrow! We later lost contact as we ducked and dived out of The Queue for loo and refreshment breaks.

Time moved SLOWLY... interminably slowly. The Queue, which ran predominantly to the south of the river, once we had left Southwark Park, snaked inland away from The Thames, down narrow lanes, before moving back towards the river creating an unexpected chill for most of the night. We were glad of our layers and coats and glad of the little camping seat that Cameron had thought to bring with him for the odd sit down even though it only appeared to seat half an adult! The sit downs were in short supply though as we had been warned it would be constantly moving! At around 3am news began to filter down that The Queue would pause for cleaning of Westminster Hall where the coffin was residing and also for ‘ceremonial rehearsals’. The pause did little to warm or cheer us but the conversations and what was waiting for us at the finish, kept us going.



After a one and a half hour delay, we set off again. The London Eye, The Covid Wall of Remembrance, photo opportunities galore, there was much to see, though you were likely to be told off by stewards if you stopped and held The Queue up to take photos!

LANDMARKS

Time passed slowly but the many famous, historic London landmarks, in the late evening, early hours and gloomy mist of the early morning helped to dampen the boredom.



NEARLY THERE

The best sight of the night was the arrival of dawn. We had been given estimated times at the start of the night - a horrifying 17 hours initially, which was pretty quickly played down by a police officer who admitted that these numbers were put out to deter more people arriving. We were reassured it would be no more than 12-14 hours.

As we neared Lambeth Bridge we were met with the welcome sight of free hot coffees and teas and chocolate bars. Not long, not long... As we finally arrived in the cattle pens of Victoria Tower Gardens, the end seemed in sight, however, a further hour and a half awaited us followed by the inevitable security checks.



THE FINALE

It was exactly 11 hours and 45 minutes from arrival at the start of The Queue at Southwark Park to entering into Westminster Hall.

The moment when we filed past HM's coffin was surreal. The calm, indeed regal, atmosphere, the moment that you realised that you were about to experience something incredible.

It was a blessing to have this opportunity to pay respects to this tireless and dedicated servant of the people and of God.



At its maximum, when the start of the queue was in Southwark Park, the total length was approximately 10 miles. More than 250,000 people are thought to have seen HM Queen Elizabeth II lying in state.

The Queen in Hampton

In 1981 the Queen visited the new housing that had been built on the site of the old nursery lands. Great excitement! On the day my daughters Elizabeth and Caroline had a friend to play and so I got three little posies ready for them, hopefully to hand to the Queen! My son Jonny was a baby in arms still. As the Queen arrived I encouraged the girls to worm their way to the front of the crowd. As the Queen came into view she walked straight across to the three girls and took the posies from them. The Richmond and Twickenham Times photographer took the picture below, which was printed in the next edition.



Elizabeth, Caroline and their friend Lucy Watts handing posies to the Queen.

About three years later I was fortunate enough to be invited to a Buckingham Palace garden party. I don't recall much about it except there were lots of people there and that I didn't meet the Queen or any other member of the royal family but it was exciting to have attended!

In order to enable our car to park in The Mall on the day I was sent a large printed 'X' to put inside the windscreen. After the party we proudly left it stuck on the windscreen! Later that summer, after a holiday in the French Alps we decided to drive into the Aosta valley in northern Italy to spend some time there. We were stopped at the border and questioned as to what the 'X' was! I always recall my husband Colin trying to explain in our non-existent Italian that his wife had been for tea with the Queen of England and this was our parking permit!!! The border guards gave up and let us go on our way. We did laugh afterwards but needless to say Colin ripped the 'X' off the windscreen!

Hazel Greasby

parkchat

Bushy Park is famous for many things – its deer, Bradley Wiggins winning the time trial in the London 2012 Olympics, Chestnut Sunday – but speak to a runner and most likely they will know it best as the home of parkrun.

You've probably heard of parkrun. It's a free, weekly 5K run, jog or walk and has become so successful that there are now 772 parkruns all over the world, from New Zealand to Japan, Canada to Finland, and a favourite from the days of parkrun lockdown quizzes, Eswatini (source: www.parkrun.org). But the first ever parkrun took place in Bushy Park. On 2nd October 2004, Paul Sinton-Hewitt, a very keen amateur runner who was unemployed and struggling with an injury, gathered together 13 friends for what he originally called the Bushy Park Time Trial. Paul has spoken movingly about how founding parkrun helped him through a difficult period, helping him cope with depression. The event grew and grew, eventually becoming parkrun, with Bushy Park recently celebrating its 900th event.

Despite attracting some high calibre runners (Mo Farah has been seen at Bushy on more than one occasion), parkrun is non-competitive. It's a positive, welcoming event that is for everyone, whether you walk, jog or run. There is no time limit and no one finishes last – that's the job of the volunteer tail walkers.

Many of the HMP church family take part; some have been there since the early days and others started relatively recently. We all share a love of the parkrun community and found ourselves meeting up at the finish to swap stories of our runs. Some of us often travel to other parkruns, but on the first Saturday of every month, we meet at the kiosk by the Bushy parkrun finish for a post-run drink (by the Diana Fountain car park). Whether you're an established parkrunner or just keen to give it a go (sign-up at www.parkrun.org), we would love to see you and your family and friends at our monthly meet-up: look out for the gaggle of people in the photo.

Bronwen Fisher





For the love of English Paper Piecing And Liberty!

It is often assumed that patchwork is a product of necessity and thrift, responding to the need to create a new piece of fabric and a practical object from any leftover scraps.

Whilst this may have been the case for some patchwork made by those lower down the social scale, patchwork was, at times, also created by ladies who had the leisure time to produce highly decorative pieces from fashionable fabrics. This started to happen in the 1700s. By the late 19th century manufacturers produced novelty prints, known as “conversation prints” which were all the rage and often featured animals, sporting motifs or everyday household objects.

Moving on to the 20th century and by the end of WW2, patchwork was a dying craft. A new society wanted to move away from the old-fashioned style associated with “making do” that characterised the wartime era. By the 1970s crafts were becoming accepted as a leisure pursuit rather than being viewed as a practical necessity. As a result, patchwork became more visible as part of a popular culture.

Now in the 21st century patchwork crafters may use traditional techniques but also experiment with new ideas, materials and inspirations allowing the craft to develop and progress.

During the Covid lockdowns I decided to take on a heritage project to create a patchwork quilt from Liberty fabric.

Liberty has always been a byword for quality, style and even luxury. Progressive yet traditional, Liberty Art Fabrics are unique in marrying the contemporary with the timeless. For many people part of the Liberty appeal is its heritage when you can reminisce about your childhood memories of the fabric – your first Liberty dress or visit to the Liberty shop in London. What a shop!

I signed up for a subscription and each month I received a beautiful package containing sufficient Liberty fabric to make 1 or 2 patchwork blocks. At the end of 15 months, I then sewed all the blocks together, and created a “sandwich” of wool wadding, and backing fabric to support the patchwork front.

My quilt is entirely hand stitched and quilted with the sole exception of the initial row of binding which is machined.

I run sewing workshops as LavenderLinen, from my studio in Chertsey, primarily to teach people how to use a sewing machine, but also other topics such as English Paper Piecing patchwork, and Free Motion Embroidery.

The one word that comes out of feedback from learners is “confidence”. It gives me great joy as a learning and development professional to see positive change in behaviours as a result of my teaching.

Workshops are suitable for men, women and older children, and more details can be found on the LavenderLinen website: www.lavenderlinen.co.uk

Valerie Clark

Valerie recently gave a fascinating talk at Ladies Guild. These are some of the comments from Ladies Guild members afterwards: -

Margaret – My friend Noreen took one of Valerie’s packages for her granddaughter and she is delighted with it. Patchworking is something she has wanted to do but had no idea how to start so hopefully that little kit will start her on a long, happy hobby.

Jacque – I thought Valerie’s talk was really interesting and so well presented. For someone who has only ‘darned’ when necessary in the past, it was fascinating and inspiring to see such creative results. I have a cousin who is deeply into embroidery so it was good to see how committed these creative people are. I won’t ever have the patience or inclination to attempt this craft but I hold these ladies in high esteem and admire their passion.

Liz L – The talk was both interesting and informative and her patchwork was beautiful. I’d like to say that I would give it a go, and will try the sampler, but you will not be seeing a quilt from me any time soon! I feel that my starter would have to be a cushion cover, maybe in the Spring – year to be announced! It was lovely that Valerie gave her time to come to show us what is possible if we were to put our minds to it!

Liz W – I sent one of Valerie’s starter kits to Pam Harrison, who we know is very ‘crafty’.



Valerie showing the Liberty quilt to Jacque and Liz



Pam’s first attempt at patchwork

Janice's patchwork journey

Several days before Valerie Clark's talk at Ladies Guild, I was tidying out a wardrobe and found my first and only completed piece of patchwork - a long skirt which I made in 1970 or 1971. I think, back then, patchwork was quite popular for clothes, so I decided to have a go. As I was living in Gibraltar at the time, I chose quite bright colours which suited the summer sunlight in the Mediterranean, and set about cutting out lots of hexagonal shapes from Weetabix packets. The next thing was to tack the fabric on to the cardboard and hand sew the shapes together. I can't remember how long it took to complete the skirt, but it was a labour of love and quite unique.

I wasn't sure about taking it to Valerie's talk and seeing it against her beautiful work. However, I did show it as you can see in the photograph, but I haven't dared to try it on yet to see how much my waist has expanded! Afterwards, I began to make smaller items but nothing was ever finished. These pieces have remained in cupboards, complete with fabric and cardboard shapes. So now, fired with renewed enthusiasm, I hope to complete something - watch this space.

Janice



Devon delights

I feel I should introduce myself to some readers of this magazine as, although it was only seven years ago when I left Hampton, things have since moved on apace in the church that was HMC and is now HMP. So for those who have joined recently, I'll briefly explain that I was born and brought up in Whitton, attended Twickenham County School (same year as Wendy Salmon), went to Southampton University, got married then moved to Hampton and joined the Methodist Church in 1977. Fast forward to 2015 - retirement and the move to Crediton in mid Devon to be nearer to our two sons and grandchildren and enjoy a 'new life in the country'.

When Liz invited me to contribute an article about "back to nature" I was pleased to accept and extol the delights of living in Devon. Many studies have shown that exposure to nature is linked to a host of benefits and I can wholeheartedly endorse those findings.

Living here you cannot help but become immersed in the natural world and the rhythms of life. If I were to walk or cycle along the lanes blindfolded (not to be recommended!), I think I could deduce the season from the sounds and smells emanating from the fields. The stillness of the winter months is palpable while cattle are housed indoors and the sheep that remain outside just quietly eat and sleep. The arrival of spring is heralded by the cacophony of loud bleating as new born lambs and their mums call to each other. In the summer months there's a bit of a lull, with the contented munching and occasional mooing of cows, enjoying being turned out onto grass, the sun on their backs. The wonderful mixed hedgerows, providing vital resources for mammals, birds and insects, are alive with buzzing and birdsong. Tractors are the giveaway sound as late summer blends into autumn and farmers are busy making hay and silage or harvesting crops. The resulting stubble fields create a habitat ideal for a bird display that I hadn't seen before moving here. I was introduced to it when out with my weekly walking group. On a footpath through recently harvested fields there were skylarks all around, ascending. Vertically. Then hovering and singing. Such a stunning, spectacular sight and sound! No wonder it inspires poets and musicians.

We also have Dartmoor on our doorstep and it's one of our favourite places to visit. It is described as 'the Last Great Wilderness of England', providing "the perfect environment from which to escape the rigours and stresses of modern living." It covers 365 square miles and is wild, remote, rugged and breathtakingly beautiful. On our walks we've come across hidden gems of ancient woodlands, where twisted trees are covered in lichen, moss and ferns, reminiscent of how I imagined the Enchanted Wood in my childhood reading of the Magic Faraway Tree. Also Bronze Age stone circles and abandoned medieval farmhouses. We have climbed up craggy Tors and narrowly avoided sinking into bogs! Certainly nature in the raw.

I am sometimes reminded of the differences between rural living here and life in suburban Hampton. I belong to the Crediton Singers choir and a fellow alto is a dairy farmer whose arrival time at rehearsals depends on how cooperative her herd has been at milking that evening. (No one had that excuse for arriving late in Twickenham Choral Society!) When rotas are drawn up at Crediton Methodist Church we know we can't include Reg, Mavis or Ken in the early spring as they will be on duty in their lambing sheds. Gordon and Colin similarly can't be rostered for Sundays in late summer as they may need to be out on their tractors harvesting crops before forecast rain.

So, here ends my condensed glimpse of life in rural Devon. Praise God for the beauty and benefits of His natural world.

Hilary Everitt



Hilary and John at Dartington Hall Gardens

Delayed Celebrations!

In July 1970 Colin and I were married at Hampton Methodist Church. The minister at the time was Rev. Peter Mundy and we remained friends with him until he died. He always said that we were the only family that he had married the couple and then baptised all of their children!

In 2019 Colin and I started to think about celebrating 50 years of marriage the following year and booked a venue for Sunday 19 July 2020. It was hoped that our son and his wife would come over from Australia and on the same day their two children would be baptised at our church. It was not to be! COVID struck in March 2020 and come July we were in lockdown and so we contacted the venue and re-scheduled for Sunday 18 July 2021 thinking everything would be back to normal. It was not to be again – although not in lockdown, venues were restricted in how they could serve meals and this was unsuitable for a large gathering. Again we re-scheduled – for July 2022.

Our celebration did finally take place on Sunday 17 July this year. The date was around the time of the very warm weather and so Colin and I decided to hold the event outside, requesting that all the seating be moved outside. It was a glorious day and we celebrated with family and friends - being outside it was a bit like a French family celebration alongside the river! For various reasons Jonny and Gabbi were unable to come from Australia but they supplied us with a lovely video of themselves and their children which, with the technical support of our family here we were able to play at the hotel, along with some photos of our wedding. It was a celebration indeed.



The wedding on 18 July 1970



Books

Miss Benson's Beetle by Rachel Joyce

Set in the 1950's this story follows the lives of two women thrown together who usually would never even meet let alone be friends. When Margery Benson decides to go on an adventure of a lifetime, after feeling unsatisfied with life for some time, she decides to advertise for an assistant. Then, having no choice ends up with someone who, on the surface, appears completely unsuitable for the task. However, as the story unfolds there are many surprising characteristics that suddenly reveal who the two women really are when they face disaster and adversity throughout the highs and lows of the trip. Both are running away to escape different situations.

This is a lovely novel exposing the naivety of some people in those times; but also forcing people to face prejudices and examine the nature of a true friend. A real page turner and can thoroughly recommend.

Pam Harrison

The Attic Child by Lola Jaye

This is a historical novel following the lives of two children in different time zones who are connected by a shared experience of the attic of a large house. It is an epic story of when a troubled young woman first sets eyes on a photograph taken at the beginning of the 20th century, little does she know what it might lead to or what she will discover that changes her life for ever; in a good way.

The book explores some of the worst traits of humanity as well as the strength to survive and make a successful life even when suffering some terrible setbacks and situations. There are a lot of joyous times in the book, not all doom, but also some thought-provoking situations for us all to consider our own past and how we treat the people we come into contact with. It also brings to life some historical events that I was not aware of and would recommend it as a really good story taking you to parts of Africa as well as London and home counties.

Pam Harrison

Braver by Deborah Jenkins

Our own Deborah Jenkins has published her first full novel! Braver, is an inspiring and gripping story about how a church community can encourage and support those in its area. Whilst not overtly a Christian book, the themes of love and acceptance shine through.

The book covers some serious contemporary issues such as safeguarding, mental health and bullying and through them we see that community can give hope and support in difficult situations, with some suspense and unexpected twists and turns thrown in. The characters are engaging, relatable and honest; showing how sometimes stepping out of a comfort zone can have benefits for the individual and those around them.

For Hamptonians, there is the added bonus of recognising many of the roads and places in the imaginary setting of 'Oldbridge', with Deborah's lovely descriptions of the area we know so well.

A delightful, heart-warming read; getting to know life in the suburban village, not too unlike our own!

Vicky Hall

What's on around Christmas

2 December – Tea and Memories in the small hall from 10.30 to 12. For people living with dementia and their carers. Join us for festive crafts, quiz, carols and refreshments.

4 December – Breakfast Church in the small hall. 9.15 to 10.30 for all ages.

4 December – Hampton Village Traders Association Christmas Celebration from 4 pm to 7 pm.

10 December – Carol singing outside Hampton and Richmond Borough Football Club at 2.30 pm.

10 December – Teddington Choral Society Christmas Concert at 7.30 pm at St Mary's Church, Church Street, Twickenham. Tickets £15 (under 16 free). www.eventbrite.co.uk

11 December -Carols by Candlelight at 4 pm at Hampton Mission Partnership with festive refreshments after in the hall.

11 December – Discovery Club Christmas Fair at the Anglers pub in Teddington from 11 am to 4 pm. Thameside Harmony Chorus are singing at 2 pm. (The ladies barbershop group that Chris sings with and who rehearse at HMP.)

17 December – Messy Church and nativity from 2.30 to 4.30 at Hampton Mission Partnership.

18 December – Service at 10.30 am led by Rev Kan Yu with an impromptu nativity at Hampton Mission Partnership.

25 December – Christmas Day Service at 11 am (30 minutes) at Hampton Mission Partnership.

The Bethlehem Road

JOIN THE TEDDINGTON METHODIST CIRCUIT

WEEKLY ADVENT COURSE

MONDAYS: HAMPTON 2PM FROM 28TH NOV
TUESDAYS: ON ZOOM, 8PM FROM 29TH NOV
FRIDAYS: TEDDINGTON, 11AM FROM 2ND DEC

CONTACT REV DAVID INNES FOR INFORMATION
DAVID1A1INNES@GMAIL.COM



Embracing Age concert and volunteering opportunities

Embracing Age is a Christian charity befriending and supporting care home residents across the Borough of Richmond and beyond. On Friday 2nd December we are hosting A Collection of Classics concert and would love you to join us for an uplifting evening of solo and ensemble classical music at St Stephen's Church, Twickenham, accompanied by cheese and wine, and a bar. Doors open 7.30 pm for 8 pm start.

We're excited that donations made on the night will be match funded through The Big Give, meaning that for every pound given, a further pound will be donated. We have some very talented musicians performing for us, so it will be a wonderful evening, with the match funding meaning double the impact for care home residents. Booking is essential - please see the Embracing Age website for more details www.embracingage.org.uk/concert

We're also looking for new volunteers to help us in a number of roles:

- Befriend care home residents across the Borough
- Help with admin
- Co-ordinate handmade Kindness cards for care home residents
- Help with our website
- Help with fundraising applications

Further details on all these roles are available on our website www.embracingage.org.uk/get-involved or email us at tina@embracingage.org.uk

Tina English