

Keeping in Touch..... Number 22

Thank you as always to those who have sent in contributions this week. They are much appreciated! - do keep them coming please. Deadline each week is noon on a Wednesday—please send to c.a.curtis@ntlworld. If you are lucky enough to get away do send us a “postcard” like Sally and Nev did last week—three or four photos and where they are from.

Irene calling.....

GREEN FINGERS

Our greenhouse has come into play,
Since Lockdown it's a treasure,
While tied to house and garden small
This pastime's been a pleasure.

Retirement and this Covid time
Has made me watch my money,
Besides it's nice to grow your own
The taste is sweet as honey.

I've had a stab at growing plants,
I've dabbled in the past,
With time a plenty on my hands
This hobby's set to last.

Deciding on a salad crop,
With tender care and water,
I'd manage with a little skill
To grow them as they oughter.

Well, - they grew, but thinning out's a shock!
Decision made me weep,
Who should I choose to live or die,
Toss on the compost heap?

The guilt it weighed so heavily,
So I potted them all you see,
I may not be a gardener yet,
But, I'll sleep more easily!

cc IRENE CARTER

Thanks for our clean and fresh building

We would like to say a huge 'Thank You' to all those who have been responsible over the years for making sure that our building is clean and fresh everyday - starting with the two ladies who were first to take on the task immediately after the re-opening in 1980. We cannot remember their names but do remember some amusing chats with them. We believe that next to step into this essential role were Maragret Cakebebread and Pat Humphrey followed by Gill Innes - a task she did early in the morning before then stepping into her other role as our secretary in the church office. Working alongside Gill for a long time has been Sarah Desborough, until sadly Gill had to retire from both her roles. We are fortunate to still have Sarah Desborough with us, who has been joined by Sarah Clarke since Gill's departure. And so to our two present Sarah's and all those before them, we say a grateful thanks for all that you do and did to make our building so clean and fresh every day. Grateful thanks to you all.

Stewart and Liz D

PS from your editor—the two early cleaners were I believe Rene and June. CAC.

At your (virtual) service!

Although we are now starting to have a physical service each month, we are planning to also carry on with our virtual ones as well.

It would be really useful to get your feedback on what you do and don't like about these – what you'd like more of and what you'd like less of.

For this week's service, we tried doing things a bit differently by having separate items for our readings (Val), reflection (Pete), intercessions (Chris and Alan) and blessing (Rob). We also had more hymns than usual.

What we don't know is whether you preferred that or not?

Do you have any hymns that you would particularly like us to include one week? Do you have any suggestions for items we could include some weeks?

If you've not taken a look yet, then follow the link below to see what last Sunday's service looks like.

<https://www.stivesfreechurch.org/worship/testing/>

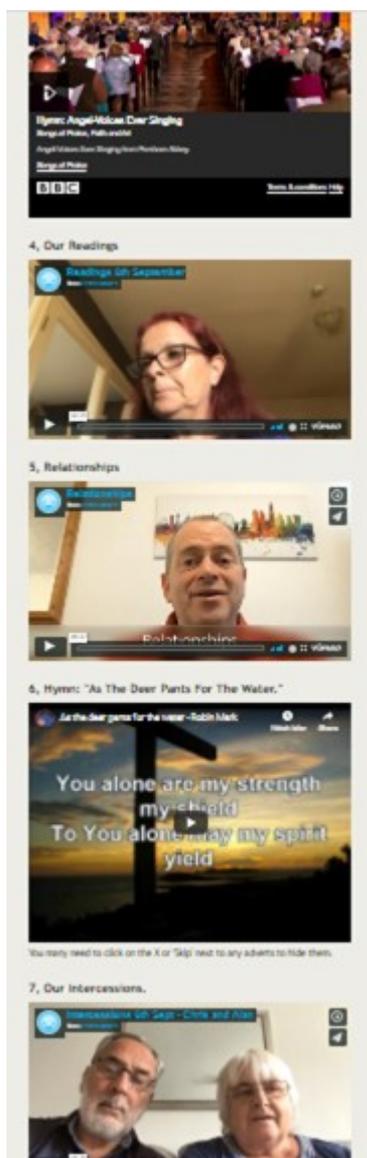
[latestdevotionreflection/](#)

Over the next few weeks, Nicola Grieves from the URC, Christine, Gerry, and Roy will each be providing the reflections for our virtual services.

If you could email any thoughts or suggestions to

media.sifc@gmail.com then that would be very much appreciated.

Thank you. ***Pete Davies***



Famous Last words..... Or isn't it a small world.!!

Last week I wrote about my memories of Rex Walford and Mill Hill Religious drama days in the 1960s.

I was chatting with my Mill Hill friends via Zoom on Saturday and I was testing their memories as to when he produced West Side Story.. Two or three of the group had been in it and generally we thought it might have been a year or two later than I suggested. Jokingly I said, well it doesn't matter too much as no one who reads the SIFC Keeping in Touch will have any reason to contradict me! Famous last words.!! Lo and behold our very own Pat Clarke helped behind stage and her good friend Rona was in a leading role!!

Pat and I have some catching up to do!!

One friend found the actual programme and it was actually 1967!

On my daily walks during lockdown I have noticed nature more. I often sit under an ash tree on the "Wheatfields" grassed area near home in St Ives. On one day in June I was privileged to be visited by a male Blackbird, who came quite close to me in his scratching about for food. So I wrote this little poem:

BIRD

A "tame" blackbird has just hopped by,
Showed me his yellow beak and eye.
I don't think he was social distancing,
Just searching about and listening
For the minute sounds of his minute prey
As he looked for food on this sunny day,
Upon the grass, around the tree,
Where I sat in tranquillity.

(Sitting under an Ash tree) 2 / 6 / 2020 John Williams

Musings from an occasional fill-in

Musician!

Back in the day I used to play regularly once a month at Fenstanton where the old "organ" was near the front on the right when facing the cross. The decision had been made to renovate the chapel and create the lovely space we have today.

The timing of the final service was very appropriate because as I was playing the last hymn I began to feel the floor boards giving way beneath me! What to do??

Well, I stood slightly to take the weight of the organ bench and we managed to get to the end without anyone realising anything was amiss! It was a good job those floor boards were about to be replaced otherwise we might have lost a musician down a hole!

CAC

Church Weekend 11th- 13th June 2021

We have a provisional booking at Launde Abbey for our biennial weekend away. This was made following our very successful weekend in 2019. It is now time for us to decide if we wish to keep this booking or not.

Obviously we have no way of knowing if any covid restrictions will still be in place by then. Launde Abbey has recently reopened in a covid secure way and have published their "Keeping you Safe" documents on their website www.laundeabbey.org.uk so do have a look at them.

The cost would be around £210 -£240 pp, (VAT goes back up on 12 January) to include accommodation, all meals, tea and coffee and facilities.

We aim to run a mixture of sessions led by a speaker, worship and leisure time as before.

If you would be interested in attending please let Helen Ackroyd or myself know by Friday 25th September 2020.

Barbara and Helen

Helen 01480 494005 helenackroyd1@btinternet.com

Barbara 01480 395308 barbara.duffett@ntlworld.com

Revd Derek Newton—the retirement years....

Following Hazel's writings and postscript in recent editions I felt led to write a little about the 22 "retirement" years. We have both been so greatly blessed in this our final place of residence in St.Ives. We were received into membership at the Free Church along with dear Brian Lodde, with Bill Mahood as Minister. This was a special joy having studied for the ministry at the same time in Paton Congregational college, Nottingham.

One of the first things Bill asked of me was to help out by taking a few services at Fenstanton.

22 Years later I will be about to retire on a regular basis conducting Worship the first Sunday each month.

What else did the Lord lead me into. I was Interim Moderator twice at Chatteris and once at Linton..I have also preached several times until last year in at least 12 of the Methodist churches of the Fen Circuit. Plus regularly at U.R.C. churches at Melbourn, Buntingford and Linton. In all of these fellowships we have made a wealth of lasting Christian Friendships.

Meanwhile we continued to work at the "English" church in Benidorm, now able to go for longer stints. We were also greatly blessed to work for "Mastersun", which was a Christian holiday company specialising in visits to Bible land of the New Testament. Both Benidorm and Mastersun participation came to an end when turning 80, and travel insurance costs became prohibitive. We had been privileged to serve for 20 years and 15 years respectively.

One of our favourite Mastersun trips was leading a group to visit the Seven Churches of the book of Revelation (chs.2/3) As a group of Christians we had a Turkish guide and Hazel and I were there to present the Biblical aspects and attend any spiritual needs. The one outstanding thing we came to realize was that there were no church buildings, not even any ruins. It was a strong reminder that what is so important about the Church of Jesus Christ are the people and the witness to the Gospel, proclaimed then and handed down through the ages to us today.

One day, standing in a field at Colossae we were informed by our guide that this was the coldest spot in this part of Asia Minor. He then directed our gaze to distant hills in which were the hot springs of Pamukalea. In between stood the site of Laodicea who in Rev.ch.3 vs 16 were reprimanded for being neither hot nor cold. In-betweeners who God would "spit out of His mouth". Always a timely warning!!

Other Mastersun Highlights were Oberammergau in 2000 when after the tour I was asked to stay on for a month as the Free Church chaplain. Another very memorable visit we led was to Jordan and Petra followed by a journey into Syria, to Damascus. Able to stand on the spot in Straight Street Where God instructed Ananias to go to bring sight back to Saul (Paul).

So you will see that 22 retirement years have been well blessed in the Lord's service.

A second retirement now at 90 years of age. Unless the Lord has other ideas !.

I think the Lord might indeed have other ideas!

At the morning service at Fenstanton on the last Sunday in August Catherine made a presentation to Derek to mark his second, or is it his 3rd or 4th? "retirement".

However he is continuing to preach at Fenstanton for some time to come.!

Hazel will need to keep those slippers warm!!

Have you missed arts and crafts fairs during lockdown?

Nev, Sarah, and I visited the St Ives Rotary outdoor Arts and Crafts fair held at Slepe Hall Hotel on Sunday 6th September and realised how much we have missed such displays during the drab six months' lockdown. It seems many artists have been occupying time gainfully to accrue stocks of pretty items. Some had made facemasks, of course, and I bought one. Sarah bought several unique birthday presents, I ordered a tea cosy in patchwork blues and greens, and Nev bought two early Holly Stocker Christmas cactus cards! The rest we will buy from Just Sharing when the shop reopens, hopefully later this month.

It was great to see Val Bush there, too, and she reported that three regular exhibitors of the Saints Crafters group were present at this Rotary event. "It was a good fair, and all the stallholders I spoke to were very positive about the event." This group of mini businesses hopes to be able to hold an event in The Free Church in due course. I have photographed several lovely items but please note that some are subject to copyright. For details of the artists and crafters below please contact: Fiona Stocker at St Ives Rotary. fstocker@stivesrotarycambs.org.uk



I am sure, like me, you are taking each day at a time, assessing the risk of attending each event, and following your own high standards. That way lies a viable future for the micro businesses of our economy, as well as the macro issue of our health.

.Sally Runham

A "postcard" from Suffolk! From Chris and Alan.....



The view from our van near Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Orford Quay and Southwold lighthouse and beach huts.

Please forgive us if there are more typos than usual this week as it has been edited in a field in Suffolk with very limited Internet. Alan will have to pay the sacrifice of going to the local Adnams Pub to down half a pint in order to get sufficient signal to send the finished doc to Gail!