

Keeping in Touch..... Number 46

Welcome to this week's KIT. Thank you so much if you sent something in. You all have interesting tales to tell—please keep the articles coming if you want KIT to continue! The deadline for next week is noon on Wednesday. Please send anything to c.a.curtis@ntlworld.com if you would rather just tell us something, rather than type, then please lift up the phone to Chris or Alan—01480 350787 or pop a note through the door.

What a Coincidence—from Mary Anthony

A very strange thing happened to me many years ago when I was working in the church office. It was the late 1980s. The Day Centre met 4 days a week in the Worship Area and I used to go in to speak to some of the elderly people. On this occasion there were two ladies sitting together who were obviously close friends and they were talking about where they had lived prior to coming to the St Ives area. Both were from London and Martha said that she had lived in Willesden for most of her life. I said “well that’s interesting as I was born and brought up in Willesden and lived there until the age of 10.” I could hardly believe what I was hearing when Martha said “my sister Elsie lived at 7 Talbot Road, Willesden and



married a man called Albert with 3 daughters Beryl, Mary & Gladys.” I think my mouth fell open and I said “I am Mary and you must be my Aunty Sis and I remember visiting you as a small child”. “And Elsie was my step-mother.”

What an amazing coincidence that we should meet up after so many years, having lost touch when my two sisters and I went into the National Children’s Home in Alverstoke, Gosport. We lived there for 5 years from 1960 – 1965. That’s another story though for later.

Meeting Martha after so many years was lovely and I had the pleasure of letting my two sisters know that I had found our Aunty Sis. We have many happy memories of spending time with Martha and celebrating her 90th birthday at Somersham Baptist Church where she was a member. Sadly, Martha passed away a number of years ago but it’s good to look back and remember her with great affection.

Irene calling...

ARTHUR FLIPPING ITIS!

My neck's a pain
It creaks with strain,
My kneecaps rattle too,
My hands are weak
My voice a squeak,
Just what am I to do?

One shoulder's up,
One shoulder's down
I'm locked who knows how long,
My spine I fight
To sit upright,
A set of scales gone wrong.

My metal feet
Are hard to beat,
From magnets I steer clear,
I often slip
and slide lose grip,
A model I am not dear!

I've been rebuilt
I'm on the tilt,
The ops I've had are many,
The N H S
I must confess
Have overspent the penny.

They've done their best,
So here I rest,
And soon I will be fine,
It can be slow,
But it will go,
Pass me a glass of wine!

cc. IRENE CARTER

ZOOM Coffee Morning

The next coffee morning is on Thursday 11th March at 10:30am. Please contact Barbara Duffett if you haven't joined in before but would like to barbara.duffett@ntlworld.com



A note from Babs Moore—our Freewill Offering Secretary

GIFT AID

The tax year finishes early next month and after that I will be submitting our Gift Aid claim for the 20/21 tax year.

I would like to thank those who have moved over to regular bank payments once more and I will assume, unless advised otherwise, that those who are now giving directly into the bank do not require envelopes for the next tax year.

For those who prefer to give me envelope then I will distribute envelopes either by post or when we are able to meet again depending in individual wishes. If anyone has been faithfully putting money into envelopes and would like to pay that money either into the bank or via cheque so that can be included in the Gift Aid claim then please let me know. If cheques are posted to me, I can pay in via my mobile so do not need to visit a bank in person. Also, if anyone wishing to complete a Gift Aid form or modify an existing one e.g. if no longer pay sufficient tax to be able to Gift Aid, please get in touch. David Duffett and I had a plan to renew all Gift Aid paperwork in the 2020/2021 Tax Year but, due to Covid restrictions, decided it was better to wait until we can all meet again, hence my request to be advised of any changes I should make.

Many thanks again to all for your contributions Babs Moore 01480 352627 Babs.Moore@yahoo.co.uk

My Musical Memories

As I have recently retired from Choir, I have been looking back at the part music has played in my life, and realising how much it has meant to me!

I had the great good fortune to be born into a musical family. My mother was a soprano soloist in Church circles and my father played the double bass in the Boston chamber orchestra (Lincs!) Our Methodist Church was full of music! My uncle was the organist, so from a very early age I was cajoled into singing solos at the Sunday school anniversary. My sister and I sang the duet from Judas Maccabaeus one year, quite a feat for youngsters! We soon graduated into the church choir, my first go at the Messiah at about 14 years.

My second good fortune was to have a best friend who was a very accomplished pianist from an early age. We toured the local churches, Mabs playing recitals, and accompanying my solos! Those were the days, seems so long ago! Mabs went on to the Royal Academy and is a brilliant pianist to this day!

My school had a brilliant Music mistress, so we sang all the time, junior, middle and senior choirs, not to mention Music O level.

On to Uni where I joined the choir and had singing lessons (at my parents insistence) We sang all the Bach passions, B Minor Mass, Belshazzars Feast, to name but a few! One of my most precious memories from those days is singing unaccompanied at the big University entertainment, "I sing of a Maiden that is make less".

Then on to living in London, where I sang in the West London Bach Choir. So Magnificat, Christmas Oratorio, more Passions etc!

I must have had a few years off, while producing daughter and son, so when we got to St Ives in 1970 I was delighted to join the Choral Society, directed by Charles Cannon, rehearsals in the Free Church. I think Martin was amongst the tenors, and dear Chris Banks in the altos!

I did have a few years off when I began teaching full time, but when we lost Lucy, I decided life was too short, and I needed the therapy that a choir gives. SO Verdi's Requiem, Elijah, Dream of Gerontius. Dvorak's Stabat Mater, I won't list them all, far too many!

And now I have finally decided to sit back and listen, (that is until I decide to join up again!??) and look back on all the joy singing has meant to me over the years, and the wonderful blessings of not only the music, but the fellowship of all those I have sung with, a real communion of wonderful people. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

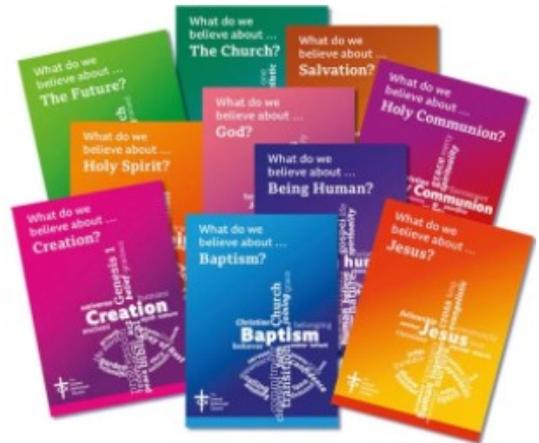
Liz Denham



What do we believe?

When we were discussing our website at a Media and Comms meeting a little while back, we talked about how it would be good to have some items about what it is that we believe. There seems so much confusion and ignorance among many non-Christians about what is important in our faith and what Christianity is all about.

Catherine decided to raise this issue at a subsequent Faith & Order meeting and suggested that the URC look at providing something which could be used by all churches. The suggestion was taken up and the process of producing a number of booklets has recently been completed. These have been written by a range of people within the URC Faith & Order Committee and have then been published as attractively formatted leaflets by the URC's media team.



We have added links to these on a new 'What We Believe' page on our website which can be found under the 'About Us' section.

[St Ives Free Church | What We Believe.](#)

We are hoping that these may be useful to anyone interested in finding out more about our Christian beliefs - as well as to those of us who are Christians, as a prompt to make us think again about what is important to us in our faith.

We could also use them as the basis for future discussion groups to consider whether we agree with what has been written and whether we would have wanted to add, alter or remove anything if we had been given the task of producing these. We are of course each unique and have our own unique experiences, thoughts and insights.

It would be great if you could find time to take a look and see what you think.

***Ed. A huge thanks goes to Pete Davies and Catherine for seeing this project through from its inception!
An enormous thank you to Pete who is currently putting all our worship on the website and facilitating the music that goes with it.***

Volunteering at the Covid Vaccination Hub in East Street—from Heather Johnson

Exhilarated, tired, joyful, thankful....this is how I feel at the end of another volunteering stint at the East Street vaccination hub.

I've been a volunteer for several weeks, now, and am happily ready to do more. In a time when I felt useless, confined, and even lonely from time to time, I jumped at the chance to do my bit for the community. And, rather selfishly, it's something that also benefits me with mixed company, chat, and a reason to be out of the house in addition to the allowed grocery shopping and exercise.

A 5.30am start last Friday (I take time to come-to in the morning!) sees me groggily getting ready to face a cold (sometimes freezing) morning and a 20 minute walk to East Street. Dressed in several layers so that I can operate indoors or outdoors, in all weathers, wherever I'm needed, it's a wake-up walk that I'm more than happy to do this morning: glorious sunrise, birds singing, the odd car passing, a dog walker happy to say "good morning"; pure bliss....

By 8am, I'm at my post in the waiting room. It's mainly the Pfizer vaccine today, and there's a mandatory 15 minute wait afterwards in the designated areas: indoors (with me), outdoors if they wish, or in the 'magnificent marquee' that I happily call the 'Rave Tent', or 'Beer Tent' – sadly without either the music or the beer! But with a similar volunteer on call. This waiting period means that every seat used needs to be sanitised as soon as the patient's time is up (not a fortunate expression to use, so when their timer goes off, I normally say 'you're cooked!') and also to collect and sanitise the timer ready for re-issue. And when a batch of timers go off within seconds of each other, it's the busiest of times. All the seats look the same, did I do that one? Hmmm, maybe a second clean down is preferable to missing it out! (Nightmares about the timers going off are regular now, as my alarm clock has the same sound!! Am I asleep, or am I at the hub?!?) And if someone is about to sit down on an unsanitised seat I'll stop them by saying that I need to do it, or I'll have to wipe them down instead! The former is usually the preferred way and at least we get to laugh about it.

Some light chat is really important to help those who want to interact a little, they've perhaps been scared of having the jab, or of needles, or simply being amongst so many people after a year of self-imposed isolation. This can be really difficult for some people to get through, and they deserve the most praise when they come through it, but sometimes all they need is some time to settle a little before going home. There can also be questions that they didn't think to ask the doctor at the time – if necessary I can ask the doctor or nurse for them, and hopefully reassure them. Keeping an eye open all the time for anyone who may be feeling unwell, or unsure, and fetching the on-call doctor if they're needed. In my time here I've only had two people who had a 'reaction' – and that reaction was because of the relief they felt on having had the jab: the strain and worry was over!

Lunch time came and went and I didn't even notice! Patients were still waiting for their 15 minutes to pass and the 1pm patients were starting to queue ... at 1230!

In the last hour of the day, we switched to the Oxford vaccination, so it was just a case of showing people out to the exit, and reminding them not to drive for 15 minutes. Also checking whether they felt well, or if the doctor had asked them to wait for a while (usually due to other medical conditions) and ensuring they were OK while in the waiting room.

At 5pm the last appointments were filtering through, and the atmosphere became light-hearted as the jab stations gradually used up the last of their phials and closed down. I sanitised the last of the chairs and tidied up the area, gathering the timers together and putting the volunteers' bright yellow vests in their box...phew, another 20 minute walk home and relax a bit....before the alarm goes off again for the Saturday morning session!

But I love it.....!

ED. Well done Heather and all those like her that are making this remarkable roll-out possible!

A poem from Malcolm Guite sent in by Liz

Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.
The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.

He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.
But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.

Signs of Spring from Babs



I was amazed when the sun was out last weekend to find several clumps of ladybirds around the garden.

Some on the fruit cage and others on an evergreen shrub. Not sure what it was all about but lovely to see. Is anyone out there an expert on such things and who knows which of the 40 species of Ladybird found in Britain these are?

House Group Memories—from Barbara



David and I are part of this year's Lent Group, led by Catherine. So far we have covered wilderness and temptation! It is really good to join with others from our church and have something different in lockdown, but yes, it is another thing on Zoom! What would we have done without it over the last year?

Discussions last week prompted memories of the first time we were part of a lent group. Back in the 1980s long before digital media or zoom, small house groups were set up to follow a lent course on the radio with accompanying questions. Sometimes we found these questions helpful, at other times less so and our discussions led us down another route entirely. Our discussions were invariably lively and always good natured! At the end of the course the group decided to carry on. Since we had very young children David and I continued



to host the house group for the next five years. Various new people came and went, which kept our discussions fresh but the core group remained the same. The age range was late twenties to 80! An 80th birthday was celebrated with bubbly of course.

The picture shows the original group, taken at the 1984 Church Weekend at Hengrave Hall near Bury St. Edmunds. Can you name the people in the photo? Answers next week!