

TRINITY NEWS & VIEWS



*'And God said
let there be light; and
there was light'*

(St Agnes church, Isles of Scilly)



*'When you pass
through the waters I
will be with you'*

June/July 2017 Issue 35

From the editor...

As some of you will know, Daphne and I recently enjoyed a week on the Isles of Scilly. We know of at least two other couples from Trinity who have made trips there in the recent past and no doubt others have as well. The small scale of everything combined with its remoteness, beauty and palpable community spirit will be familiar to those used to island life but for us was a unique and inspiring experience.

Apart from boat trips to other islands (see the front cover!), walking, visiting the Abbey Gardens on Tresco and watching gig racing, we were able to attend a Sunday service where the preacher was Anne Browse, president of Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB). During her sermon she shared this quotation from the daily devotional 'Streams in the Desert': ***"Jesus Christ is no security against storms, but he is perfect security in storms. He has never promised you an easy passage, only a safe landing."*** Not only true and important to hold on to – but very apposite for anyone visiting the Scillies! It is a theme which is echoed in Rabson's piece which appears on page 29.

We are grateful to Hugh Bowerman for sharing a message with us in this issue of TNV.

A word from Hugh Bowerman

I don't know whether I have ever been quite so confused at a general election. Each of the main parties has some policies I like, some I strongly dislike, and others I simply don't think will work. Then there is Brexit hovering over the election . . .

A few years ago Rowan Williams stated that the UK had moved into the post-Christian era. Whilst a lot of our history and culture still have the hallmarks of Christian influence, policy proposals and the country's forward path are increasingly dominated by secularism. Certainly where once it would have been thought a positive trait to be standing for Parliament as a practising Christian, these days it can be a millstone, as poor Tim Farron has found out. Maybe my discomfort is because this election I am realising the extent to which we have become a post-Christian culture – I am increasingly irrelevant!

If we are in a post-Christian era, then Pentecost would have to be defined as occurring in a pre-Christian era. We can understand something of the diversity of culture and expression operating in the towns around the Mediterranean at that time, and I get the impression it wasn't so very different from today's post-Christian culture. Yet that was the culture into which Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. The result was fired up individuals who converted (saved) individuals and families, building them into Christian communities. We are the succession of those communities – no wonder Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the church.

This Pentecost my prayer would be that, as well as celebrating, we will all find time to reflect on the world in which we live. Is it slowly moving away from core Christian values? Are our own values grounded in Jesus, or are we drifting under the influence of the surrounding culture? And of the Holy Spirit - can we embrace it in all its wholeness and wonder, letting it renew and transform us?

Many people observe that as our world loses sight of its Christian history and culture, so those who have never heard the gospel are more open to receive it. What an opportunity that is for a generation of fired up people to tell the good news of Jesus and demonstrate to the world what it is missing! Could you be one of those people? Should you be one of those people?

Whether at home or away, fired up by the sun or the Spirit (or both!), may this Pentecost season be one of refreshment and joy as we again give thanks to God for yet another of His generous gifts to us.

May God bless us all.

Hugh Bowerman

Early Morning Communion



The dates for our 8.45am services in the coming months are:

- 25th June
- 23rd July
- 27th August

Images of new life....



Trinity on Easter Sunday morning, 16 April 2017 and our former 'benches' looking resplendent in the new church at Marakissa, The Gambia



Remembering Margaret Say

Margaret Say died recently. You may remember her and her husband Ralph who were very faithful worshippers at Trinity until a few years ago. Sitting usually on the right hand side of the church, they were a distinguished looking couple - both tall, Margaret with her white hair tied back with a clip, and Ralph with a neatly trimmed beard. After Ralph died a number of years ago, increasing ill health meant that Margaret found it difficult to get out to church.

Both Margaret and Ralph were in my pastoral group and I got to know them very well. They both had a strong sense of social justice and actively campaigned for matters close their heart including CND and Amnesty. They both cared deeply about the world we live in, and people mattered to them.

Margaret (or Peggie as she was often known), had a great sense of humour and a very positive and cheerful outlook on life. She was a gracious lady. Despite often being in pain I never heard her complain, and I always left her house the better for having spent some time with her. Her grandson Leo moved from his home in Liverpool to care for Margaret in her own home, and her daughter Sue visited and stayed very often. About 18 months ago, Margaret moved to a nursing home in Liverpool to be close to her family.

Margaret died peacefully in her new home on 4th May. As a wonderful way of remembering Margaret, her daughter Sue has made small cards with a photo of Margaret and a small yellow ribbon attached. The wording on the card says:

'My mum was a true Samaritan, so in her memory she asked

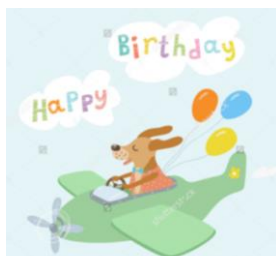
that people not waste their money on flowers or memorials and instead, take a minute out of their day to carry out an act of kindness. Peggie's wish was for you to take this ribbon, do something good for someone else, and pass it on.'

What a lovely way to remember a lady whose influence on those around her was probably more than she would ever have realised.

I have a number of these cards to give to anyone who knew Margaret and would like to honour her memory in this special way - please see me and I will pass one on to you, or please pick one up from the East Entrance. And whether you knew Margaret personally or not, her desire for us all to be kind to each other is a wonderful way to make the world a better place.

Helen Bowerman

Congratulations to Peggy Windsor on her recent 80th birthday. She celebrated with a flight over the south east corner of England in a 2-seater Cessna plane!



Trinity 2020

Two significant fund-raising events have been successfully undertaken in the last few weeks.

The **Treasure & Trash** sale was held on Saturday 20th May. What a sight awaited us first thing that morning – the church laid out with every imaginable item for sale and people queuing at the doors to get in! Thanks are due to everyone who contributed in any way to this event – donating items for sale, setting up, helping on the day. And special thanks are reserved for this dedicated team of workers who appear to have reached the end of their shift!



The sale raised about £530.00 towards the Trinity 2020 building fund, but more will follow from items sold after the event.

Then on Wednesday 24th May four intrepid members of Trinity (Jean Normington, Sue Waddell, David Jones and

David Lander) successfully completed their conquest of **Mount Snowdon**. They were accompanied by three friends who walk regularly with David Jones, and it was he who led the party - with great care! We hope to publish a more detailed report in the next issue but for now thanks to everyone who kindly sponsored our team. From Trinity members and other family and friends over £1,000 has been raised towards the building fund.



Needless to say it is not too late so if anyone else feels like making a donation (now that you have the evidence to prove they did it!) please see John Nelson. Alternatively money can be transferred directly into the bank account set up for this purpose:

A/c name: Trinity 2020 Development Fund
Sort code: 40-52-40
Number: 00019537
Reference: Snowdon

The same details can be used (without the Snowdon reference) if donating at any other time.

'...so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me...'

At Spring Harvest this year the theme was 'One for All'. By studying John 17, we were reminded again and again that if our ultimate aim is to share the Gospel of Christ and to make disciples, then this alone must surely unite us. We were given the image of a wheel with Jesus at the centre and we are the spokes. As we grow closer to Him then we also grow closer together.

The message was not to forget our differences – it was recognised that there are different cultures, attitudes, preferences, and even theological issues that mean we can't always agree – but we should celebrate these differences and not be identified by them. The church is more often known by its disagreements than the good news we share so we need to do all we can to embrace being part of a dynamic and diverse body of Christ. Different does not equal wrong.

Yes, this all sounds very ideological and putting it into practice is obviously not easy. Individually we may think what can we do to make a difference but it has to start with us in our local situation. A couple of examples we were given to express our unity as a church or an individual:

- working together on social action locally, nationally or internationally
- examining how we behave on social media
- not going to bed on an argument – always seek the common ground rather than the differences and resolve any issues
- pray!

Personally I have also reflected on my recent experiences: Working at St Andrew's Anglican church has given me an insight into how another church functions. It is great being part of two church families and I've tried to share 'best practice' ideas. St Andrew's are envious of our pastoral system; I've even persuaded them to use non-alcoholic wine(!); and they are about to embark on Alpha for their own members just as we did. I think Trinity can learn from St Andrew's model of governance that means all staff and volunteers in senior roles have a common focus to ensure all their work is co-ordinated; their emphasis on house-groups offering support to members and a tool for common teaching; and their emphasis on serving their local community. It's all about learning from each other.

The recent Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) Leadership conference was a great event where we heard a wide range of international speakers sharing their experiences and advice from their field of expertise whether that be in reconciliation, peace-making, business, entertainment, - oh and leading a church! Here it didn't matter about background or tradition or denomination. What shone through was the speakers' love of God and their desire to see people's lives transformed and His kingdom come. I might not agree with everything that is said and done at these events but without fail I am challenged to examine my views and how I live out my faith.

Jesus prays passionately that the church may be united and by keeping our ultimate goal of glorifying God in mind, the 'world would see that we are one'. ~

John 17:20-23 - *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them*

the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

(PS We are off to Spring Harvest again next year – we have probably filled the 34 beds that we have already booked but if you would like to join us then bookings open at 8am on Wednesday 21st June. You can book online or over the phone. We are going to Minehead wk 1 (3-8 April 2018). If you've never been – give it a try; if you've not been for a while, make 2018 the year to return. You won't regret it!)



Helen Best

Beyond Trinity

The annual plant sale for Christian Aid on 13th May raised £508.16. Many thanks to all involved in achieving this excellent result.

Our refreshment charity for June is **AGAPE** (see *Henk's article in the previous issue*). For July/August we will be supporting **Let's Read**. This is a local charity which helps to improve the literacy of young people by giving free books to the pupils at 13 of the schools in Woking and by providing one-to-one tuition at four of the primary schools.

Treasure in the Flower Room

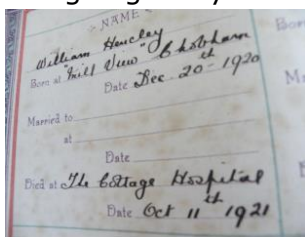
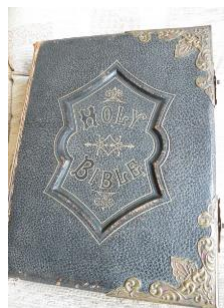
(from Jean Normington)

Whilst searching for some green matting Ruth and I looked inside the top cupboard in the flower room. This is what we discovered.

1. Large Lectern Bible RSV 1959 (Nelson)

2. Very Large lectern Bible RSV 1952 (Nelson)

3. A Family Bible with metal clasps. It has commentaries by Scott & Henry and numerous coloured and engraved plates from the original paintings; Maps; a Family register and portrait album. The family register has the intriguing entry of a child William Hemsley (?) who was



born on Dec 20th 1920 at Mill View Chobham and who died at the Cottage Hospital on Oct 11th 1921. I have access to many family history programs and indexes but cannot find anything that relates to the birth & death of this child

and whether the family were connected with Trinity in the 1920's. So no idea why the Bible is with us. Bonhams have valued this Bible at approx £50.

4. A second Family Bible with notes and references by Scott and Brown, engravings, maps and a family register. There are some entries for the Sellwood family. George Henry Sellwood and Charlotte Catherine Dean married on 22nd October 1884 in Brixton Hill Wesleyan Chapel. There

are entries for the birth of their 5 children born between 1886 and 1898. Again I cannot find any connection with Trinity so how did this Bible get here? This Bible also has a plate with the Lord's Prayer in 13 languages.



5. Holy Bible with inscription "This Bible was given by the people of Christchurch, Woking to Trinity Methodist Church on the occasion of the opening of the new Church in 1965" Probably King James version? No date. (Oxford) NOT FOR SALE!

We would like to use Bibles 1 – 4 to raise funds for our building project. If you would like to make an offer for one of them, or indeed you know anything of their history please contact Jean Normington.

A Sort of Pilgrimage – Chester
(Concluding Graham Warr's journey to the cathedrals in the North West of England)

Apart from railways, first millennium AD British history is a serious interest and was a specialism I studied at Teacher Training College and more recently at Surrey University: Romans, Celts, Saxons, Vikings and the foundation of the Christian Church, particularly Celtic Christianity. When researching for these visits I discovered that there was a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins stored in Chester Museum including rare silver coins from the reigns of Kings Alfred to Edgar; the chief architects of the foundation of England as we know it today.

After my refreshing cup of tea and armed with a city map I had found in the foyer, I set off for the museum. The weather was not so good and it was dull and grey when I left the hotel. Fortunately the rain held off and I found the Museum after only a couple of wrong turnings.

It has an interesting collection of artefacts from Chester's past. The Roman galleries were particularly interesting and stimulating. But could I find the coins? No! After searching for half an hour, I had to seek help. I was amazed that the staff didn't know where they were either. Eventually I was informed that they were stored in the archives and not on display but I could make an appointment to view them in



about a week. However, they were a few on display in a small exhibition tucked away upstairs. This is what I found (*left*). Probably to you just a handful of old coins but to me the very essence of the foundation of Christianity, Education and Justice.

With a profound sense of history and piqued interest I headed for the Cathedral. It had been an abbey dedicated to Saint Werburgh who was a significant figure in the life of King Alfred's daughter Aethelflaed who was married to the King of Mercia. Aethelflaed became the 'Lady of Mercia' when her husband died. She successfully continued the struggle against the Vikings and led the Mercian army that recaptured Chester; she re-established the abbey as well as rebuilding the city walls and successfully defended it against persistent Viking attacks. Aethelflaed had the reputation of not just being a strong leader but also a devout Christian who shared her father's dream of making England a Christian Country. As ruler of Mercia she also supported St Chad's cathedral in Lichfield.

The cathedral is not particularly remarkable from the outside but upon entry you become very aware that this had been a monastic foundation. The Cloisters reflect that tradition and were quiet and peaceful. The Refectory was now, aptly, a café that served a good value coffee and cake.



The interior was much darker than Blackburn and despite its size a bit claustrophobic. Once my eyes adjusted to the darker environment there were some interesting and spiritual features. I particularly liked the ceiling bosses in the Knave and some of the Mediaeval Tiles.



The 'Madonna and Child' with Jesus as a toddler standing up, holding onto Mary's hands and looking into her eyes, reminded me again of how God holds our hands particularly at difficult times. As Isaiah recorded God saying,

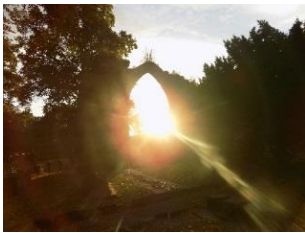
'I will never forget you. See, I have written your name on the palm of my hands' Isaiah 49-15-16



The Lady Chapel is dedicated to St Werburgh and there is a modern statue of her. It was in the Lady Chapel that we celebrated Evening Prayer. It was not as intimate as

Blackburn but equally meaningful. As I walked back to the hotel I felt at peace with myself. My God was very present and I thanked him. After a very pleasant evening meal I went to bed early as the weather forecast was for a sunny early morning but heavy rain before lunch and I wanted to walk the Roman Walls.

I woke early and got up at 6.30 and left the hotel at 6.45 planning to go for about an hour's walk, then have breakfast. It turned out to be a good idea. For the next two hours, I walked the Walls and explored the streets and buildings. It was a wonderful experience. The Romans built some impressive buildings. The Amphitheatre was particularly so but no building could match the sunrise over the River Dee. It was memorable!



I found the ruins of the Norman Nave behind St John the Baptists Church quiet and contemplative and then the sun suddenly shone through the arch. It was inspiring suddenly the shadows had gone and everything was illuminated. I could not help singing:

'When morning gilds the skies my heart awakening cries may Jesus Christ be praised!

God had made it clear that this was not just a new day but a new chapter in my life. I may not have Christine's presence but I have all my memories and Daniela, Bernhard, Jessica, Isobel, Clara and many friends and colleagues and chiefly my God.

'This, this is the God I adore, my faithful unchangeable friend; whose love is as great as his power and neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the first and last whose Spirit shall guide us safe

home. I'll praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that's to come. (Joseph Hart 1712-1768)

I just made it back to the hotel as the rain began and it was heavy rain. So was my grief but now I knew for certain that like the rain it would ease off, but still come back and it does; but like the rain it does ease off until the next time.

My 'Sort of Pilgrimage' turned out to be just that, and I found God or perhaps more accurately he found me.

I am still following my aim to visit the Cathedrals of Britain and since August I have been to Oxford, Christ Church Cathedral, where the Wesley brothers studied, St Patrick's Cathedral in Downpatrick, County Down and a couple of weeks ago Lichfield Cathedral - but they are for another time.

Thank you to all of you who have commented on this piece of writing. I hope it has not only interested you but helped too as it has helped me.

God bless you all!

Graham Warr

Praying together

Psalm 57 New International version 7- 11:

*My heart, O God, is steadfast,
My heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.*

*I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let your glory be over all the earth.*

I was listening to the radio one afternoon and heard some edited highlights of the Dawn Chorus from around the world.



I heard the booming call of the bitterns from the Somerset Levels and the chatter of flamingos as well as the distinctive cuckoo and the humble moorhen. The noise at dawn was amazing. Later that day I came across Psalm 57 and the call to wake

early at dawn to praise God alongside the chorus of birds also waking up with the sunrise. So this TNV praying together is a suggestion to praise God for creation— early in the morning if this suits your schedule or later in the day.

From Quiet Spaces adapted from the January – April 2017 issue page 123:

*As we start the day
May the song of the birds be our music
The flight of the birds inspire our thoughts of freedom
May the plumage of the birds encourage us to dwell on
the beauty of colours in creation
And may God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Bless us today and every day.*

Below are some verses of two hymns by Bishop Thomas Ken who lived from 1637 to 1711 (see H&P 632 and 642). The suggestion is to use the words as a prayer of praise to God for creation.

Awake, my soul, and with the sun

*Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.
 Glory to God, who safe hath kept;
 And hath refresh'd me while I slept;
 Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
 I may of endless life partake.*

*Direct, control, suggest this day
All I design, or do, or say;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite.
 All praise to thee, my God, this night
 For all the blessings of the light.
 Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
 Beneath thine own almighty wings.*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

This second song written by Noel and Tricia Fielding can also be used to praise God for creation. It can be found in Singing the Faith 293:

*All heaven declares,
The glory of the risen Lord.
Who can compare
With the beauty of the Lord?
Forever He will be
The Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
And worship Him alone.*

*I will proclaim
The glory of the risen Lord,
Who once was slain
To reconcile man to God.
Forever You will be*

*The Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
And worship You alone.*

“Lord - thank you for your great love for us. Help us to praise you God for all Almighty God has done in creation. Praise you God for creation. Praise for sunrise, for the dawn chorus and for sunset. Praise you God for sending Jesus to earth to show us how to live and to bring us close to God. Praise you God for the Holy Spirit encouraging, enabling and empowering us to do the will of God and build the kingdom of God here on earth. Amen”

Again, from Quiet Spaces:

*Blessed be this day and all it can bring
Blessed be the places where we live and work and all
who live alongside us
Blessed be this moment of prayer and all who are also
praying. Amen*

Ann Dawson

Harvest 2017



Our Harvest Weekend will be celebrated on 30th September/1st October. The charity selected as the focus for the weekend this year is the continuing work in The Gambia.

Martin Luther's legacy



This year marks 500 years since Martin Luther published his so-called 95 theses - his complaints against the practices of the Catholic Church, including in particular the sale of 'indulgences' to absolve sin.

The BBC have been marking this anniversary with a series of programmes under the title 'Breaking Free', considering the many ways in which Luther's reformation has affected contemporary life and culture. One influence that caught the eye was his encouragement of singing. The BBC commentary said this: "*Communal singing was once a radical, revolutionary practice that brought religion and politics together with an almighty crash.....It was in 16th-century Germany that Martin Luther realised that singing together is about a lot more than just making music. When we sing, we're expressing identity, spirituality and solidarity, whether it's in a church or the football stand.*" Among the many examples of this, the tradition of singing 'Abide with me' at FA Cup Finals stands out as it brought these two worlds together.

For Methodists the most iconic connection with Luther is that it was his preface to Paul's letter to the Romans that John Wesley heard being read when (reluctantly - his morale having been very low after his return from Georgia) he attended a meeting of Moravian Christians at a chapel in Aldersgate Street on 24 May 1738. As he records, he felt his heart 'strangely warmed' and the rest, as they say, is history. The four 'alls' that encapsulate Methodists' distinctive faith stem directly from Wesley's conversion experience and resonate with its Lutheran connection (see page 22).

Methodism's Four Alls

**All people need to be saved:
All people can be saved:
All people can know they are saved:
All people can be saved to the uttermost.**

Wesley's New Room


During May a new visitor centre opened at the New Room, Methodism's oldest building in The Horsefair in Broadmead, Bristol. The New Room was built in 1739 by John Wesley and was used by early Methodists as a meeting place for education and prayer, as well as providing food and medical care to poorer members of the community.

The centre features a café, gift shop, education/conference centre and a newly revamped themed heritage museum.

If you are in Bristol explore the beautiful historic chapel (as featured in Poldark [see TNV issue 31, ed.]) and the new museum – and enjoy a Fairtrade coffee and a delicious cake.

Barbara Phillips

Housegroup Top Tip!

At Y group we have recently studied the 24/7 Prayer Course described as a '*Journey through the Lord's Prayer designed to fuel discussion and deepen the prayer life of your church*'. 

If our housegroup is anything to go by, it most definitely can do just that! I think without exception we have all felt that this course has helped us tremendously in our prayer lives.

The course uses the words of the Lord's Prayer to look at 6 themes of prayer –ADORATION, PETITION, INTERCESSION, LISTENING, PERSERVERANCE, WARFARE.

The weekly theme is introduced and explored through a video interview between Pete Greig (founder of 24/7 Prayer and pastor of Emmaus Road Church in Guildford) and Jonny Hughes (Student Pastor at HTB in London). They talk very honestly about their experiences of prayer, the biblical foundations, and offer some very practical tips to encourage and help us in our prayer lives.

There is also a 'cheat sheet' with questions to help lead the group discussion and further bible study plus gives some other helpful resources. You are encouraged to do homework to 'practice' what we have learnt.

This is a very down to earth course that doesn't have a 'holier than thou' approach. It recognises that prayer can be difficult especially when it appears your prayers aren't being answered. But it also reminds us that prayer can be both exhilarating and reassuring.

Comments from our group members:

'I found this course the most thought provoking thing we've ever covered in housegroup. It really made us all talk about the basics of belief.'

'The breakdown of the different types of prayer using the Lord's Prayer (which everyone knows very well) rather than a crazy acronym was useful.'

'I found the idea of not praying for the great big things but for the little steps on the way works for me.'

'Learning to pray - out loud! In front of people! And not caring how I sound.'

We all thoroughly recommend this course for your housegroup; it can be covered by an individual but would better in a group so ask your friends to join you!

All resources are available from
<https://www.prayercourse.org/>

Helen Best

Believe in Hull



Thank you very much to the ladies who have been busy knitting fish for the enactment of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. I have already sent thirty three fish to Hull.

Barbara Phillips

Alligator Tales

Part 4 – Vienna. “This is the worst trip I’ve ever been on”

Before coming to another instalment from Andy Meal, we have received this appreciation for part 3 which appeared in issue 34 from Rev. Peter Hills at Merrow.

At a recent rehearsal of the Epworth Singers at Trinity, Barbara Phillips handed me a copy of Trinity News and Views. She did so because it contained an article about Joyce Smith, whose service of thanksgiving I had conducted in the absence of both Paul and David. Margaret picked it up first, and as she was reading let out whoops of delight.

Andy Meal’s article ‘Alligator Tales Part 3’ took us back to Rheindahlen, our home for three years in the late 1990s. I was chaplain to the headquarters of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and minister of St Andrew’s Garrison Church (Church of Scotland and Free Churches). Margaret and I had many a delicious meal at Onkel Gustav’s, mentioned by Andy, an authentic German pub in the middle of the forest.

The ACROSS jumbulance still came to stay, the point of contact (if I remember rightly) being my associate minister, the Revd Neil Cameron. Margaret was one of the ladies who ‘made beds and made sure the accommodation was well cared for’. She and Jenny Danby had a wonderful time as they worked together, with many a laugh. More than that, she and several of the same ladies would go back in the evenings and chat to members of the group, and Margaret remembers being one of those who waved them off at the end of their visits. On at least one occasion the Drama Group we both belonged to also provided entertainment.

Interestingly, the senior army chaplain in Germany when we first went to Rheindahlen was one Peter Howson, who was at the same time my Methodist colleague and my boss, while I was his minister! So thanks to Andy for taking us back to a very happy time and reviving many precious memories. Rheindahlen is now an empty shell, but Onkel Gustav's is still serving venison gulasch and hunter's schnitzel in the forest.

This is a trip I undertook in 1989. All travellers, be they ill/disabled (VIPs), helpers or medics had to apply to the ACROSS office, so they could be assigned to a group. The VIPs had quite an in-depth form to complete, giving details about their medical conditions, capabilities, etc. This would allow the office staff to put together a group of a relevant skill mix – hopefully!

Unfortunately, on the Vienna trip, things didn't go to plan. Two groups had been amalgamated due to a shortage of helpers, and some of the VIP travellers hadn't been entirely truthful as to their needs. (Some VIPs thought if they over/under-estimated their needs – usually the latter – they would have a better chance of going on holiday.) Consequently, it was an extremely heavy group, and a very tough week. The problem was: what we saw was what we got, and we couldn't leave anybody on the pavement because we couldn't provide sufficient care.

On this occasion, our accommodation was in a boarding school, where we took over a wing, and went to a central dining facility. There were 3 or 4 beds per room, and VIPs were allocated to helpers with great difficulty. Although we helpers worked very hard to please our VIPs, there was a small pocket of displeasure, and grumbling from certain quarters.

Meanwhile, we just knuckled down and got on with making it

into a good holiday to the best of our ability. We had a boat trip on the Danube, visited the Vienna Woods, a tour of the city, and called in at the Prater Park, where "Harry Lime's Ferris wheel" is based. I'm sure there are still scuff marks on the cabins, where ACROSS groups have over-enthusiastically tried to board wheelchair-based guests.

One day, we went to a village called Rust, which is near the Austro-Hungarian border, and where the legend of the storks leaving babies down chimneys is supposed to have arisen. We found a park, where we had a picnic lunch – and somebody spied a vast area of water. So it was decided to investigate the possibility of a boat trip. We found some electrically powered vessels for hire on an hourly basis, which could seat 4 to 5 people, and a decision was made to take those who wished sailing on the lake. Most of the lake bordered on Hungarian territory, and we were advised to have our passports with us – just in case...

I was in a boat with Imogen, a younger helper who "drove", and two VIPs who were at the core of the grumbling. We quickly set sail, so others could be assisted into other boats. After about 45 minutes, I suggested we look for the boat-hire's jetty. I remembered we had seemed to come out of a creek into the main lake, but we were going round in circles, looking for the way out. The Bermuda triangle came to mind, as did the realisation that we did not have passports, cash, drinks or knowledge of any appropriate lingo. Eventually, we did manage to return to the jetty – much to everybody's relief, after almost 2 hours' sailing. Our ship-mates hadn't realised that we had been lost – fortunately. Patrick, the group leader had hired a boat, against advice, and gone to look for us. We decided to return to the Jumbulance, and waited for some time before returning to "base". Patrick returned by taxi a couple of hours later.

One of the “traditions” of an ACROSS holiday entails a visit to a local café/bar in the evening. We found a pleasant hostelry quite close to where we were staying, so visited it several times. Some of the VIPS came from residential homes, so being able to go out in the evening for a beer/wine, and a cigarette was a highlight of their holiday. Unfortunately, two of the younger helpers said they didn’t smoke or drink, so refused to go with the VIPs they were looking after. This created more work for the other overworked helpers – and some ill-feeling. (Fortunately, these helpers were never seen –or heard from – on an ACROSS trip again.)

A highlight of the holiday was the trip to the Vienna State Opera House. We had a booked tour, and as well as the guide, were escorted by a couple of security guards, who helped manoeuvre the wheelchairs on some of the steps and passageways. Some of the usual route was difficult for wheelchairs to pass, even with help, so we were taken underneath the stage, where costumes and scenery were prepared, and props assembled.

Personally, I was disappointed on two counts. The “Beautiful Blue Danube” that Mr Strauss wrote about in his famous waltz was actually a dirty green. As for the Vienna woods – I didn’t see enough trees to make a wood.

The trip home was subdued because of the problems we had encountered. This must have put off some people from travelling again, but I had met Tom and Liz on this trip, and I knew I’d be bouncing back for more.



Andy Meal

Trust in the Lord and don't despair

Moses said to Joshua, "*Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.*" (Exodus 17:9)

There are a few strings we can pull out of verse 9 but it would be interesting to read Exodus 17:8-16 as a whole. It would make sense to see what God desires of us through this passage. Very often we do not realise how relevant the situations in the Bible are to our daily lives and we choose not to find the meaning of the passages. God was going to deliver the Amalekites into the hands of the Israelites who were led by Joshua with God directing the course of the war through Moses and his aids Aaron and Hur.

This passage has a bearing in our lives. What is of interest is that Moses was not in on the action of the war. He went up the mountain and kept holding the staff of the Lord up. Each time he lowered his hands, the Israelites were being defeated but, in keeping his hands up with the staff of the Lord, the Israelites won. Because the war took long, Moses was also getting tired. Aaron and Hur held his hands up. They even got a stone for Moses to sit on.

Sometimes we get too tired too soon and we fear defeat because we do not keep our hands up when the fight gets tough. We lose concentration and do not know what we should do. God gives instruction and if we uphold the instruction and support each other surely we will succeed. Moses was supported by Aaron and Hur to continue to lift the staff which God had given him while he was at the burning bush. This is the same staff he used to get the Red Sea water parted so the Israelites could walk on dry land. The same

staff was used to perform miracles before king Pharaoh. The same staff was used to get the Egyptians drowned.

We learn of obedience to God's call. We learn of trust in God. God asked Moses to ask Joshua to choose men to go to war. He did not need all the men. The men chosen had good standing probably and were of courage. How often do we have such people to fight on our behalf when we want things to happen? The regeneration of Trinity requires such men as Moses who will stay on the mountain and get supported by others to keep the staff of the Lord up while those that are selected to be active are given the power to continue to fight until the war is won.

We need other people to help us to pray and see our efforts in life through. We need to choose the people that will fight a war for us. We do not all need to be in the battle field ourselves. Other people can intercede on our behalf as long as we remain focused on God's call. We need to be in God's presence. We need to be close to God. Reference to the mountain is indicative of God's closeness to our needs. Jesus took his three disciples up the mountain to pray. They were away from all the distractions. Similarly, Moses, Aaron and Hur were away from all the distractions and close to God. At times we need to endure stressful situations to get God's answer. God is always online like our *WhatsApp*. When we are chatting with friends on *WhatsApp* we can see that they are online and see that they are typing. God is always present and answers right there if we continue as Moses did even when he was tired. As long as Moses held his hands up the Amalekites were defeated. As long as we keep praying, the devil will be defeated.

Each person has wars that they are fighting. These wars may be family relations, children who break our hearts, unwell or elderly parents, money issues - a whole range of life experiences may cause us to despair. I challenge each of

you to continue to focus on the Lord. Keep your faith in the Lord for everything. God promises the same as he promised to Joshua. Moses was strong and with courage. He knew the Lord would be with him to the end of the war. After the war Moses made a covenant to God. The Amalekites were extinguished completely. Like them, our problems will be extinguished and never again to be seen. We need to trust in the support that we get from our fellow Christians, our friends and our families. Stay on the mountain and raise your staff to God and God will do the rest for you. Joshua 1:9 *'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever..... '*

Some of us have been chosen to be on the battle field and others have been chosen to be on the mountain top to continue to raise God's staff while those on the battle field continue to fight until the wars are won. They have to be fought from both the front and the top of the mountain. We will only win if we continue to lift God's staff and have the support of those chosen to be on the mountain top.

Rabson Ziso

Summer Prom

A free concert and refreshments!

The Epworth Choir invites you to join them at their rehearsal concert on **Wednesday 28th June in Trinity at 7.30pm**, followed by tea/coffee and cakes.

The repertoire will be songs for a Summer evening.

Memories of Sunday School

(from Elaine Slatter and Jean Normington)

In the quirky way the mind sometimes works, the recent emphasis on the word 'building' has reminded me of my days in Sunday School, many years ago. We met in a wooden building with a flight of steps up to the front door. It seemed large to me, and it was certainly bigger than the asbestos hut that I had graduated from round the back, which was known as 'The Babies.'

Part of the hour we spent there on Sunday afternoons was dedicated to singing 'Choruses'. These were written in a slim, cream-coloured booklet and contained a few dozen verses, presumably the choruses of hymns, which we roared out, encouraged by the Superintendent, Mr. Mortimer, as he walked around between our class groups.

One chorus was:

*'We are building day by day, as the moments pass away,
A temple that the world cannot see.
Every victory won by grace will be sure to find a place
In that building for Eternity.'*

And another started the same way:

*'We are building day by day,
Not with bricks and not with clay,
Not with hammer blow on blow,
Not with timber sawing so.
Building a house not made with hands,
Following Jesus' perfect plans,
Little builders all are we,
Building for Eternity.'*

I preferred this one as we were allowed to do the actions. They were jolly songs, but I doubt we understood the references to invisible temples. And was it only Baptist Sunday Schools that had Chorus books?

As we grew up we sang hymns with lines such as
'Some day the silver chord will break, and I no more as now shall sing'

and

'Jerusalem the Golden, with milk and honey blest, beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed'.

What terrible stuff to teach to children - death and misery to 8 year-olds! I suspect those hymns only survived because of their lovely tunes. In fairness, we also had songs such as *'All things bright and beautiful'* and *'Summer suns are glowing'*.

Over the years I have sung my way through Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts, moving on to Pratt Green and Fred Kaan. More recently there was a period of modern words which I found difficult to fit into the line of music allotted to them. Now the fashion is for repetitive lines and phrases, some of which, such as *'The Lion of Judah'*, I think may be incomprehensible to many.

The recent winner of the Eurovision contest said that music must come from the heart, and I have no doubt that all hymn and song writers are entirely sincere. It is fascinating to see how the songs we sing have changed over the years, and to await the next developments. For myself, I enjoy singing hymns with a melody and words that are lyrical and meaningful, but then, is 'enjoyment' quite the right word? I guess the purpose of singing hymns is to contribute to worship and praise, and I am grateful that singing is part of that.

Elaine Slatter

Having just read Elaine's article, it reminded me of a conversation we had on one of our walks, about childhood hymns. Below are the words of the song I remember so clearly - especially when out walking and spotting all the wild flowers.

*1. Daisies are our silver,
Buttercups our gold:
This is all the treasure
We can have or hold.*

*2. Raindrops are our
diamonds
And the morning dew;
While for shining sapphires
We've the speedwell blue.*

*3. These shall be our
emeralds
Leaves so new and green;
Roses make the reddest
Rubies ever seen.*

*4. God, who gave these
treasures
To your children small,
Teach us how to love them
And grow like them all.*

*5. Make us bright as silver:
Make us good as gold;
Warm as summer roses
Let our hearts unfold.*

*6. Gay as leaves in April,
Clear as drops of dew
God, who made the
speedwell,
Keep us true to you.*

Jean Normington

Once again, thanks to all who have helped with the preparation and distribution of this issue of TNV.

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