



ST PETER'S METHODIST CHURCH

St Peter's Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2BE

www.canterburymethodistchurch.co.uk

Charity No. 1128069

St Peter's is a full member of Churches Together in Canterbury

St Peter's is part of the Canterbury & East Kent Circuit

Web address www.cekmethodist.org.uk

Sunday 21 March Fifth Sunday in Lent (Passion Sunday)

Quote and Prayer provided by Revd Michael J Walling

For I'm convinced that the pandemic we're currently living through is both a manifestation of and a mere interruption in the relentless march towards an interconnected world, one in which peoples and cultures can't help but collide.

In that world – of global supply chains, instantaneous capital transfers, social media, transnational terrorist networks, climate change, mass migration, and ever-increasing complexity – we will learn to live together, cooperate with one another, and recognise the dignity of others, or we will perish.

Barack Obama. Preface to his latest book "The Promised Land".

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.

Deuteronomy 30.19 NRSV

Father and mother of us all, You are love through and through and we bless You. Let Your new world come, let what You long for be always done, in everyone, everywhere – and in us. Be near enough to reach our need every day. Be gentle enough to forgive us the hurt we have done to You – as we are gentle and forgive in our turn. Never let us fall, but draw us away from evil and the dark. For we know the world that is coming is Yours, all Yours, in richness and beauty and splendour. Amen.

Simon Bailey

We pray for all who are unwell or may be unable to get to church especially **Francine & Meindert Aits, Anne Baird, Barbara & Ted Bishop, Fred & Jessie Collinson, Edith Dyson, Enid Lazell, Rita Maxwell, Bernard Powell, Shirley Pullen, Nina Seaman, Sheila Thompson, Joy Webster, Graham & Joyce Whistance, John & Marie Wilkins. Bob & Jean Want, Margaret Ritchie** – Alison Garratt's sister. There are others amongst our members and friends not mentioned above who are either of an age or have underlying health conditions. We pray that they are able to receive contact and support from family and friends.

Eileen Tresidder passed away peacefully on Monday 8 March in MHA Bradbury Grange. **Her funeral service will be at Barham Crematorium on Wednesday 31 March at 2.40pm.**

These are the login details for the funeral webcast.

<https://www.obitus.com/>

nupo6999

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Joy Sharman will be pleased to take orders for Easter cards from Traidcraft and Fairtrade Easter eggs. The flier giving full details of the cards and Easter Eggs can be found in the Downloads Section of the Church website

Traidcraft Exchange is the charity which has always benefited from the proceeds of refreshments at our Fairtrade fairs. As we have been unable to hold our last two fairs, they will have missed about £900 from your support. The good news is that Traidcraft Exchange has been successful in its bid for UK Aid for its Regenerators appeal.



The Regenerators live in vulnerable communities in Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal and Bangladesh and this project will enable them to fight back against the devastating impact of climate change.

By learning new skills and changing how they farm, the Regenerators can increase their profits and turn their work into businesses - drastically increasing their incomes.

With basic climate friendly technology, and knowledge and skills about how to adapt to erratic weather patterns through things like growing new crops, investing in beehives or fisheries, communities will be able to earn more from the hard work they already do.

These changes mean that whatever the climate crisis throws at them, they'll be able to

feed their families and earn a decent income.

Not only this, but by switching to green technology and planting trees, they can regenerate their land - and protect the earth for generations to come.



Donations to The Regenerators Appeal between now and 7th June 2021 will be doubled by the UK government to help the most vulnerable stand strong in the face of climate change.

For more information please contact Joy Sharman 01227 634571.

www.traidcraftexchange.org/regenerate2021

News of Francine and Meindert Aits



Francine's daughter, Hermance, has told me that at last she is able to visit both her mother and brother. She can visit Francine once a week for up to two hours in her room which she has been able to do twice so far. They sit together, chat and look at cards and photos.

She has also visited Meindert in the care home where they had coffee in his room and played scrabble.

Hermance herself is starting a childcare bubble with her daughter, Helen, who hopes to start a new job now that her baby is six months old. Hermance is looking forward to being able to return to church with Francine once we are allowed.

She has sent a lovely picture of her garden flowers which I thought I would share with you.

I didn't think a posy of flowers would be acceptable at the home for Mothering Sunday so sent Hermance an electronic card from St Peter's which she was able to share with Francine.

Jenny

Determination from Audrey Bigley

*I worked and no one thanked me,
I waited and no one came,
I knocked and no one answered'
But God said, "Try again."*

Church Pantomime



Win Kentish was the Director of the church pantomimes that were staged in the 1990s - Roy Irons has video recordings of three different ones put on in 1992, 1993 and 1994. I have made enquiries but have been unable to find out who was behind the camera.

Jenny

Helena's first trip upriver *by Phil Myers*

A few days later a group of us were due to go up-river to the main hut that we used when working in the river communities.. Two of the Peruvian girls from the Health Team, Irma and Anna were going to conduct hygiene lessons and Helena was to join them to gain experience. Ernesto and I made up the group, in part to handle the boat, in part to modify a water-catchment tank that I had fitted at the hut a month earlier, and in part for security. I hated the idea that any of our female staff national or international should be 'out there ' without male company. Society in our part of the world was a ridiculous Macho. Every time groups went out by boat I always wanted there to be at least one man in the party.

Ernesto, my companion, was married to one of our senior health workers, and was supposed to be seeking permanent employment. Encouraged by his wife he had asked if he could accompany me on jobs where a second pair of hands could be useful. Totally unpaid Ernesto had become my permanent assistant / labourer / minder and friend. Proper paid employment would not be as interesting and enjoyable, and had I ever gone upriver without him he would have been devastated.

The journey up river was enjoyably uneventful. Warm sunshine with a gentle breeze created by the boat's movement through the water made for a very relaxing trip. Being the dry season, the water was restricted to the deeper/narrower channels, giving Helena a good introduction to the huge highway. Other river traffic passed close, educational for Helen to see how overloaded and under-powered most of the other craft were.

After two hours we unloaded the boat and moved everything into the hut. The hut was basic, a square structure underpinned with short wooden pillars to avoid any flooding, with a corrugated tin roof. We had to bring all of our food with us. The villagers would willingly sell us fish, but the supply was unreliable; sometimes the fishing was poor and sometimes they had not bothered to try. Chicken, rice and yucca was the staple diet for the charity workers on the river. Without electricity we had to bring the chickens live to guarantee that they were fresh.

When the evening meal was over we settled down for the night. The hut was divided into three by internal walls; cooking/eating, male sleeping / female sleeping. I rigged my mosquito net from a rafter and over a mattress in the men's sleeping room. Ernesto would be sleeping the night on the boat, which would otherwise be stolen. The two Peruvian girls Irma and Anna slept together in the female room on one single mattress under a single mosquito net for security and comfort. They showed Helena how to rig the top of her mosquito net from one of the rafters and how to tuck the ends of the net firmly under the mattress all the way round so that nothing, but nothing could get inside the net during the night. Mosquitoes have a wonderful ability to be able to enter through the smallest of gaps, so do spiders, mice, rats, geckos and snakes. Irma and Anna thoughtfully resisted from informing Helena about the possibility of visits from these unwanted night time guests, but they could not resist the occasional giggle. When all of Helena's arrangements were sorted they finally settled down.

The jungle at night can be a noisy place. To add to the natural sounds of animals and birds, our chickens tethered by a leg below the hut did not like being sniffed at by the local dogs. There was also a noisy family of rats somewhere in the roof. All of these sounds were somehow amplified by the darkness of the night.

No sooner had I fallen asleep than Helena came stomping into my room to announce that she was sleeping with me, because she was frightened and she also needed to go to the loo. The pit latrine was way behind the hut in some bushes. Needless to say I was instructed to accompany her as she was petrified. I also had to check that there were no unwanted 'things' in the latrine, and was instructed to wait outside until she had finished and 'not to listen' On returning to the men's sleeping room I was told very firmly to keep my hands to myself. It was impossible to lie back-to-back on a single mattress under a single mosquito net, so we lay like spoons with her bum nestled into my crotch and my arms around her. When we awoke at dawn she said that she had had a wonderful nights' sleep; the best nights' sleep since arriving in Peru. I had not slept much having my face full of Helena's curly brown hair, and suffering - for although Helena was a ' Right Stropky Madam ' she was also a very attractive stropky madam.

Town twinning today *by Vicky Davis*

The twinning between Duisburg and Portsmouth was the first Anglo-German link in this country after the end of the Second World War, connecting the large inland German port on the banks of the rivers Ruhr and Rhine with the city on the south coast where we lived. I became involved by accident when teaching in Portsmouth, being one of the few members of staff who spoke German. Following my first tentative steps into town-twinning, with a group of twenty boys in tow, I was hooked. We shared everything together with our hosts, a German school and its staff, including a few days in their youth hostel in the countryside outside Cologne. Since then, our family has visited our friends in Duisburg on several occasions, and from time to time they turn up on our doorstep. We have been sailing with them and attended their parties on the Rhine, while they have come to our birthday parties in Kent. Some of the original pupils keep in touch, too, and their parents have become friends with their counterparts abroad.

More interesting, perhaps, is the special link between Canterbury and Vladimir in Russia, both historical centres of Christianity. This partnership is part of a triangular 'twinning' including the city of Bloomington-Normal in Illinois (not, as far as I know, especially famous for its churches, but a place once visited by Abraham Lincoln). Canterbury Three Cities Association started in 1985, at the height of the Cold War, inaugurated by a small group of Herne Bay clerics to bring together ordinary people in the interests of peace. Bypassing complex diplomatic channels, members of the association were able to visit friends in the other two countries, experiencing their generous hospitality and developing a genuine interest in life in another country.

Thirty delegates attended our twentieth anniversary celebrations in Canterbury in 2005, including the mayors of all cities. Much fun was poked at the 'Normal' mayor who flew over with his counterpart, the 'Bloomington' mayor. They were both interested in the history of Kent, whereas the Vladimir mayor seemed drawn to London and its shopping opportunities rather than the culture offered by the twinning association. The Lord Mayor of Canterbury was also famously 'lost' on one trip to Vladimir, and then arrested for a few hours for having the wrong visa. We have also had to contend with would-be defectors and the uncertainty following the collapse of a Russian airline hours before travel, but have managed to avoid large-scale diplomatic incidents.

Over the years I have organised visits of delegations in every direction: hard work but most worthwhile, as twinners share each other's lives and food, hopes and sorrows, and gradually become great friends. Groups of singers and dancers, firemen and academics, boxers and businessmen have all crossed borders. My most memorable visit to Vladimir involved a week's pilgrimage to visit the main Orthodox churches, cathedrals and monasteries of the area. In 2015 we celebrated our thirtieth anniversary with a visit to Canterbury by two American and six Russian delegates, all long-term friends. Official gifts were exchanged and inspiring speeches were made by our patrons, the Lord Mayor of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover. However, the memories that remain are rather of the fun we had together, the impromptu discussions about politics that our leaders could only dream of, and the long-term plans drawn up to encourage the younger generation to continue the path of friendship and peace.

Over the years, however, the pioneers of town twinning in our area have aged. Many of the original members have died; others have become too frail to take part in twinning activities. At the same time, we have failed dismally to get our young people interested in developing links with counterparts abroad. As its membership dwindled, Canterbury Three Cities Association decided to pause its regular domestic meetings. And then came Covid...

Sitting at home during lockdown, we have found ways to further our friendships and develop new links with our partners in Vladimir and Bloomington-Normal. We exchange spontaneous thoughts and photos with our longstanding friends via WhatsApp. (What's the temperature in Russia today? How is lockdown with you? Are your children at school? Have you been vaccinated yet?) We've taken part in international conferences and competitions together, as Zoom has come to our rescue. Friends in Bloomington-Normal have tuned in to talks on the history of Canterbury and the US presidential inauguration, for example. Christine Hoffman in Florida has joined us for talks, including one by Doreen Rosman. Regular online encounters have brought us closer together as we exchange news and greetings. Perhaps the most exciting outcome, though, has been the foundation of a new umbrella organisation incorporating all UK-Russian twin towns, thanks to the determination of one Russian woman living in Coventry. During the spring of last year she meticulously trawled through the records, finding evidence of all 22 existing links, including our own Canterbury-Vladimir partnership. Once she had gathered us all together, we started regular online meetings and events which have dramatically revitalised our declining local association. I have even succeeded in bringing together representatives from Plymouth and Novorossiisk, whose city councils had virtually lost touch over the years. Now it is a huge personal pleasure to see university students from 'my' town on the Black Sea able to contribute to international meetings with confidence. If only our local young people would do the same!

The UK Twin Towns and Sister Cities Foundation, this by-product of the pandemic, will soon celebrate its first anniversary. The twinning between Coventry and Stalingrad was the first Anglo-Soviet link after the war, bringing together two cities devastated by aerial attack and vowing to promote peace and friendship. Governments may struggle, but communications between ordinary citizens continue to transcend diplomatic barriers. This year Coventry is the UK's City of Culture. I'm looking forward to visiting when possible, hoping finally to meet in person fellow town-twinners from across the UK together with representatives from the Russian embassy.

Vicky Davis

www.canterbury3ca.org.uk

<https://uktwintownsandsistercitiesfoundation.org>



Mother's Day Biscuits received from one of my sons - they look too good to eat!

Jenny

War Stories by Margaret Hofmann

My war started when I was about three months old. My Dad had been called up into the army and my mother had been living in a small apartment in East London. The German planes had already been flying over London and dropping bombs, mainly at night. After one raid, my mother took me in the pram to post a letter to my Dad to tell him that we were all right. While she was away, an undetected land mine exploded and the apartment was just brick dust so she returned to her father's house in the dock area of London.

This was an unfortunate move because the next thing the Germans bombed was the dock. They bombed it by day and night until even the water burned with the contents of the warehouses tumbling into the water. My Grandfather had forbidden all his 'children' (all grown up with families) to go into the large warehouse down the road because he said it was a death trap. It's funny what you go through to escape from noise and to get away from the scream of bombs. People crammed into the large warehouse, someone brought in a piano, and local teachers and others organised singing to take peoples' minds off the bombs. The warehouse received a direct hit and over 200 people were killed by the blast. Others died, not directly as a result of the bomb hitting them but they were crushed to death by the huge heavy walls of the warehouse.

Apparently we were three days and three nights in an underground shelter in Grandad's garden. Crowded together, the family were not too pleased when the local police knocked on the door and made them take in two more people who had been a mile away from their home when the air raid began, especially as they were none too clean. After the dawn broke and everyone crawled out of the shelter, not only were we covered in dust, but covered in fleas from our two uninvited guests!

Out of London

Grandad said if we stayed where we were we would not survive another round of bombing like that. He had already bought a small plot of land in Essex and built what he called a wooden holiday home there - it was not so much a holiday home, more of a two room shed! Anyway the garden was pleasant to look at, which was a good thing, as we ended up with eight of us living in the wooden house and the men camped in a tent in the garden.

Eventually we sorted ourselves out, poor Mum had to live with her mother-in-law, who was hardly a sweet tempered person. Dad's mother, although born in England, had Irish parents and she was prone to be bad tempered and a bit of a drama queen. She made matters worse by telling Mum all the BAD news of the war, and her prediction of what was going to happen.

Mum moved out and rented a small bungalow which got us away from Grandmother Nan but made it more difficult for Mum when the air raids started. By this time she had another baby and when the siren went, my Grandad Hickman, (kind sweet and gentle - how on earth did he choose my Grandmother for a wife) would come and carry me round to the big underground shelter in his house and Mum would carry the baby.

Our Shelter.

It was called an Anderson Shelter and built half in the ground and half on top. The top half had curved corrugated iron sheets and you piled lots of earth on it and hoped for the best. It tended to be damp and if it rained you all had to lift your feet up because the water seeped in from underneath. Grandmother Hickman had chosen the house just after the war started because of the large garden and peaceful neighbourhood. Unfortunately she failed to realise it was quite near the railway lines and in a direct line with the Shell Oil Refinery five miles away. Consequently Germans coming in to bomb the oil refinery would miss and others would continue to have a go at the railway. I don't know how old I was when we sat through the German planes coming over to London and we had to sit there until they had bombed and then come back. Of course if they missed their target they would jettison their bombs before they were over the Thames Estuary. My Uncle was home on leave, he was only 19, an aircraft engineer and he was stationed in some quiet backwater. He was fascinated by the planes and my Grandmother was having hysterics. "Come inside the shelter. They will see you."

Uncle was a fidget and wanted to see the planes coming back so he made us all a cup of tea and we sat there until the familiar drone came nearer and nearer. Suddenly I realised He didn't know about the railway lines. I didn't say anything, everybody else was getting ready with their hands over their ears when suddenly four bombs cascaded on

to the railway lines now gleaming in the moonlight. It was so near the whole shelter lifted up and then went down. My Uncle dived in head first in a state of shock and our tea went everywhere.

The V1 Rocket

At one stage we used to go to sleep with our clothes on. It was called a siren suit, kind of like a child's stretch pyjamas, so that we could get into the air raid shelter quickly and not get cold.

We had gone to bed at about 8pm. We were cold. Coal was rationed and bed was the warmest place. I slept with my mother and she would read in bed. It must have been winter because it was dark. We had thick lined curtains so that the light would not show through and in a raid you just kept the lights off anyway. Suddenly the air raid siren went. I was half asleep but my mother was up and into the back room for my baby sister (I say to her now, "I don't know why she chose you first to get into the shelter.").

By the time it was my turn large lumps of jagged shrapnel were clattering on the top of the shelter and the ground, my sister was crying, my mother was frantic to get me, but I didn't care I was warm and probably tired anyway. Suddenly the railway lines got hit again, the house shook, two windows broke, then my mother came rushing in. In the explosion the vibration had shaken open the wardrobe door, my mother walked straight into it and walked around holding her head. I laughed and laughed, it was like something out of a Charlie Chaplin film. She was so mad, she clouted me round the head and said, "See if you think that's funny."

We rushed into the shelter. She was a nervous wreck and nursing her head and my sister screaming. Suddenly I looked up and saw in the sky a long object with fire coming out of the back of it, but really quite close. "Isn't that wonderful" I said. "Yes so wonderful, that is what is going to kill us all if you don't get inside." The V1 was certainly a marvel of German technology but we all knew that as long as you heard the engine you were safe. Once it cut out its descent was rapid and it could take out six houses.

Food

My children asked me what our food was like. "Pathetic" is the answer. We grew potatoes and tomatoes, picked berries, and swapped things with neighbours. We were rationed so severely that even now I don't eat meat as my ration had to go to my sister who used to be ill with asthma. After the war when we came off ration I had got used to not eating it so never bothered. For a family of three we would have four ounces of meat a week - two, if it had been a difficult time for the supply boats coming in. England as an island depended on overseas help for food. If the U-Boats were active we all went without as most of the food went to our army. Two eggs a week or else that dreadful egg powder.

I always thought our food rationing was pretty dreadful until I met my husband who was a child in Holland during the war and who really knew what starvation meant.

As for our little family, Dad survived D-Day and went on with the Middlesex Regiment through France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany and through great good fortune came back to us.

How did the war affect him? Well, he couldn't stand noise--we never had the radio on very loud. Also, he would never listen to a memorial service. He would never go swimming. Years later I learned he was dropped too far out and the vehicle he was driving was nearly submerged. He negotiated debris, burning vehicles and bodies to get his crew on to Sword Beach and then off into Normandy. While his officers were having a meeting near him, mortar fire sped over the trees killing them all in front of his eyes. His confidence never returned, he could never make a decision and was left with stomach ailments that plagued his life.

He looked after us both when my mother was ill immediately after the war and our bed time stories were Operation Overlord and the time he just missed a mine in France. We knew all the generals and battle plans. We often spoke of old battles but he would never return to France with me. He died of a heart attack at age 69 but his war time stories are etched in my mind for ever.

Census 2021

Margaret King thought that, if you are having problems completing your Census form, you might like to know you can get help from the Census Support Centre, tel: 0800 141 2021, after 10.00 am, who will complete the form for you over the phone.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition. The next Newsletter will be ready on **Friday 2 April (Good Friday)**. Please let me have your items to share with friends at St Peter's by **Wednesday 31 March**. I can be contacted by phone, 01227 456359, 07905 826299, email jenny.deven@btinternet.com. (Postal address will be supplied on request)