

# **TIDINGS**



**Banstead United Reformed Church**

**Autumn 2023**



## Tidings Autum 2023

Page 3	Message—the apocalypse?
Page 5	From the editors
Page 6	Church family news
Page 9	When Annie met Annie
Page 10	Know your elder — Kevin Dinnage
Page 15	My trip to the World Scout Jamboree
Page 18	Days Out—Afternoon Tea on the Bluebell Railway
Page 20	Halloween
Page 22	Church Secretary’s Annual Report and committee reports
Page 29	North Downs Cluster Eco-Service
Page 31	Days out—Giffords Circus
Page 32	North Downs Surrey Pastorate
Page 34	Days Out—A Walk on the South Coast
Page 35	Recipe—Milk Chocolate & Roasted Hazelnut Cookies
Page 36	Days Out—Painshill Park
Page 37	Days Out—Ightham Mote
Page 38	Autumn Fires
Page 39	Banstead URC service details

# Message

## The Apocalypse?

In our prayers to creator God, we regularly give thanks for the beauty of the world in which we live. And with good reason, because we are very blessed to live in one of the pleasant leafy Surrey suburbs. Additionally, the wonderful pictures taken from outer space of our small blue and white planet, within the maelstrom of the universe, have injected another dimension into our gratitude.

However, nowadays we are also aware that, along with the rest of humankind, we are in danger of destroying the fragile ecosystem upon which our environment exists. This is particularly apparent in the massive extinction of many different species, melting ice formations and rising sea levels, the scale of deforestation, the pollution of our rivers and oceans and now the pollution of the space around our planet, all of which have been caused by our actions in the last few centuries. A very apparent symptom of this trashing of our planet is the impact of climate change, which in recent years has become more extreme and threatening to many more countries.

Many are already, in their daily life, trying to reduce waste and the size of their carbon footprint. In recent Sunday services we have been encouraged as Christians 'to make a difference' and to be a 'lighted window' for the benefit of others. Many non-Christians are also responding to this challenge. So what particular strengths does the Christian Church possess which we could employ to make progress in halting and reversing the damage we have imposed on the planet? This is an urgent and critical challenge which, in my view, should be on the agenda of every church and Synod meeting and should be taken seriously by General Assembly. The guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in these meetings should surely be able to indicate ways in which we can proceed. The URC is already taking some action, but what are the details? The effort seems rather disjointed and not well-publicised. So are here are some

thoughts which could be a basis for discussion:

- The impact of climate change is a moral issue. Experts have produced a table which shows the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced by the industrialised nations in the northern hemisphere since 1850. There is a strong correlation between human industrialised activity, the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> and a damaging increase in the world's temperature, leading to climate change (July 2023 was the hottest month on record). The UK is 5<sup>th</sup> in this table, behind the USA, China, Russia and Germany. Is there not here a responsibility and an opportunity for the UK Government to show moral leadership in the international arena by encouraging other industrialised countries to join us in taking effective action? For example, finance could be provided to emerging economies to help them mitigate the physical destruction they are suffering from the impact of extreme climate, and to help them realise their aspirations for a higher standard of living without having to leave their familiar environment.
- The UK Church as an institution (covering the Anglicans, Catholics and Protestant denominations) claims stewardship of God's world and could provide a united and significant voice in encouraging the UK Government to take this moral leadership. There are bishops in the House of Lords, MPs who are members of a church and a general election within the next 18 months to activate politicians' hearing mode. Ironically, some experts suggest that the effect of climate change on the UK may be benign (our green and pleasant land covered soon in vineyards and solar panel farms?), so this could add credibility to our leadership.
- The URC is selling an increasing number of closed church buildings, as are some other denominations. We could show moral leadership by donating this money to needy nations in the southern hemisphere. This would be for specified projects and to help finance charities working in these countries to save and improve lives.

- Humankind's current model for economic growth is clearly unsustainable. Populations in the industrialised nations need to change their mindset and their behaviour. One way to accelerate this would be to change the measurement of economic growth to an honest model, which measures growth at the point of consumption instead of production, deducting the volume of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Politicians and voters would soon be horrified by the large negative numbers emerging each quarter and be moved to act.

The outlook may sound depressing, but there are many verses in the Bible which can give us hope. God, the Creative Spirit, shines through strongly as in Psalm 33: 'The Lord created the heavens by his command; .....When he spoke the World was created;' and Paul writes to the Romans: 'We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him.' We also need to show love to God's planet.

*Roy Jordan*

## FROM THE EDITORS

Our 'Days Out' feature has proved to be very popular and we have been delighted to receive a number of further contributions which we include in this edition of the magazine. No doubt many of you were concerned reading the newspaper stories from South Korea of the problems faced by the scouts at the World Scout Jamboree - 'Armageddon with woggles' the *Sunday Times* called it. Happily Alex Brennan survived the experience and we are pleased to include his account of what was for him, despite the problems, a positive experience. Following our Church Life Sunday in June we include the annual reports from the Church Secretary and from the Church committees. It's Kevin Dinnage's turn to be featured in 'Know Your Elder', and you can read all about when Annie met Annie.

*Fiona, Diana and Cliff*

# Church Family News

## Next Steps

Both James and Georgie Catt are about to embark on the next stage of their lives. Here they tell us about both what they've been doing and the next steps. We send them both our very best wishes.

### From James:



I am pleased to announce that as of last month, I am the holder of a First Class Bachelor of Arts degree in Politics and Chinese! It hasn't been the easiest of courses, with Covid and industrial action marring much of my time in Manchester; I have persevered, nonetheless, and really enjoyed my time up North.

In other news, I have landed myself a graduate job - I will be starting work in September at Ocado Group, joining their two-year Business Management Graduate Programme. The company focuses on completely online grocery retail and is an industry leader in designing automated warehouses. My first six-month stint at the company will be spent as 'Associate Product Manager' -

essentially streamlining the company's methods of operation and designing a roadmap with key targets for the upcoming financial year. I'm looking forward to getting stuck into my new role and learning more about robots and artificial intelligence along the way. It promises to be a very people-focused role so I'm sure I will thrive in it!

### **From Georgie:**



I've recently come back from a month of inter-railing, exploring Europe by train with a couple of friends. I had a fabulous time trying new foods and doing a lot of sight-seeing. I've been working at The Rambler's Rest to fund my travels, and earlier this year I went to the Dordogne for a month, where I volunteered as a gardener at an 18th century château. It was great being able to explore rural France, and there were three very friendly sheep who would often wander indoors to keep me company!



I'm coming to the end of my gap year now, and soon I'll be off to university. I'm going to Bristol to study French, Spanish, and Russian.

I'm a little nervous about starting a new chapter, but mostly excited!

## **Engagement**

We send our congratulations to Ishbel Harris, daughter of Chris and Mike Harris, and Taylor Hopkins who became engaged on 4<sup>th</sup> August. We send them both our best wishes for the future.

## Wedding



On 31 July 2023, Rosalyn Chadburn married Malcolm Coles at St Nicholas Church, Godstone. We wish them much happiness in their future life together.

## In Memoriam

### Peter Baikie

Peter Baikie died peacefully in his sleep on 27 July. Peter was a non-serving elder and former Church treasurer. During his time as treasurer he managed the finances for the building of the Sanctum. We send our condolences to Elizabeth and all the family.

### Evelyn Horden

Evelyn Horden died on 28 August. Evelyn was a long-time member of our Church and a former chairman of Monday Club. We extend our sympathy to her niece Barbara, her step-sons Alan and Neil, and all the members of their families.



We will include more details of Peter's and Evelyn's respective lives in the next edition of *Tidings*.

## When Annie met Annie

In 1963, at the Scala Theatre in London, there was a production of 'Annie Get Your Gun'. Annie was played by a young lady named – Olive Worsley.



In August 2023 Olive, together with some of her original company, enjoyed an afternoon at the inaugural production of 'Annie Get Your Gun' at the new Lavender Theatre, near Drift Bridge. This is a new venture for Mayfield, who are developing the site with a gift shop, a café and an open air theatre in the fields behind for an annual summer production.

If this year's show is anything to go by it will be something to look forward

to. It was such fun! And, despite the sometimes dreadful weather, the singing and dancing were so enjoyable to hear and see. Let's hope it can become an annual event.

But to return to 'our' Annie! At the end of the show, Olive was introduced to Sarie ('Annie'). We include a photo of them together. I think they both enjoyed the meeting – which ended a very happy afternoon.

*Mair Dinnage*

## Know your elder– Kevin Dinnage



Given the leadership qualities that Kevin has shown in the many roles he has fulfilled at our Church, it is unsurprising to discover that he has consistently demonstrated such qualities in other areas of his life. At his secondary school he was appointed deputy head boy in his final year. At university in Cambridge, he was president of BATS, the renowned Queens' College drama society. He was elected as a deacon at

Sutton Baptist Church in his twenties and has been an ordained elder in the United Reformed Church for the past 30 years, serving at both Christchurch Walton and Banstead. At Banstead, he has served 8 years as our Church Secretary and is currently both our treasurer and chairman of the house management committee. In his career, he oversaw the design of several petrochemical plants both in the UK and overseas. He was also responsible for developing a graduate development programme for BP Chemicals. Latterly, both as a consultant and in retirement, he has been involved in the development of the engineering profession working with the Royal Academy of Engineers, the Engineering Council and the Institution of Chemical Engineers.

Kevin is a local boy. He was born in Epsom Hospital and, with his brother Gareth, was raised in the family home in North Cheam by his parents John and Mair. Mair is now a member

with us at Banstead URC. After primary school in Cheam, he moved to Sutton Manor (now Sutton Grammar) School. He enjoyed most subjects but decided to go down the science route and studied double maths, physics and chemistry for his A levels. Although the main winter sport at the school was football, Kevin preferred rugby union, and this encouraged his continuing interest in the sport. Kevin and Sue are both season ticket holders at Harlequins and Kevin is a member of the England Rugby supporters' club. Kevin also enjoyed public speaking whilst at school, although this may have had something to do with the fact that the school had a joint debating society with Nonsuch School!

Kevin credits his headmaster and inspirational chemistry teacher for encouraging him to apply to Cambridge and in 1978 he was offered a place at Queens' College to study natural sciences. Although originally expected to be a three-year course, at the end of his second year Kevin took up the option to switch to chemical engineering, which entailed a further two years of study. The start of his third year at Cambridge saw another very significant development in Kevin's life. He was an active member of the university ecumenical fellowship group and one meeting was attended by a certain girl called Sue, who was training to be a teacher at Homerton College. Soon Kevin and Sue were going out together. Kevin graduated in 1982, and later that summer he and Sue were attending a Promenade Concert with Sue's family at the Royal Albert Hall. Kevin decided that this would be a good time to propose but when Sue said yes, Kevin was initially unsure whether she was accepting his proposal of marriage or her father's invitation to buy her an ice cream. Happily, Sue got her ice cream and a fiancé!

On graduation, Kevin accepted a job on the graduate scheme with Air Products, a company that specialises in the production of industrial gases and related equipment. He was working from their company headquarters in Hersham and had moved into accommodation in Wimbledon. Meanwhile, Sue had obtained a teaching position at James Allen Girls' School and was living in

Dulwich. Kevin made a lot of train journeys over the next year either commuting to his work in Hersham or travelling to Dulwich to see Sue. Kevin and Sue were married in 1983 and moved into a flat in Sutton. So, when you read this, Kevin and Sue will have just celebrated their ruby wedding anniversary.

In 1988, Kevin decided it was time to move on in his career and he joined BP Chemicals, initially working out of their offices in Victoria. His move to BP coincided with the birth of Philippa, at which stage Sue gave up teaching to concentrate on being a mother. Kevin's work at BP initially involved the design and overseeing the building of petrochemical plants. By the very



nature of the work, this involved a lot of travelling. The first such posting was to Ube City, at the southern end of Japan's main island, Honshu, where a team was needed to design a plant to be built in Indonesia for the production of polyethylene. Kevin says that living and working in Japan was quite culturally challenging, but it did afford the opportunity to have holidays in such destinations as Australia and Singapore, as well as exploring other parts of Japan.

On their return from Japan, Sue was expecting a second baby and Matthew was born in November 1991. Kevin says that if you look carefully enough you might find a 'made in Japan' label on him!



In 1992, they moved from one different cultural experience to another as the family relocated to Mumbles on the Gower where Kevin's next project was working as a Senior Chemical Engineer at the chemical complex at Baglan Bay. On their return to Surrey in 1993, Kevin's work

relocated to BP's offices in Sunbury-on-Thames, and they moved to their present house in Tadworth. Much of Kevin's subsequent career at BP involved working in a central technology area of the organisation and in HR, which involved a lot of work in graduate recruitment. In 2010, Kevin accepted a voluntary redundancy package from BP, and for the next ten years worked as a freelance consultant including work for engineering professional bodies and two projects with Indian companies based in Mumbai. He also started tutoring students at Surrey University who are engaged in chemical engineering design projects, work that he continues to do in retirement. He also volunteers one day a week at Polesden Lacey as part of the special operations team, which mainly involves clearance work.

In terms of Kevin's faith journey, as a child he attended Sutton Baptist Church (SBC) with his family, initially in the Junior Church and then as part of a large and thriving youth group. SBC became part of the Sutton four Churches' ecumenical project with St Nicholas C of E Church, Trinity Methodist Church and Sutton URC. In the 1970s there were plans for all four Churches to combine on the St Nicholas site, but these ultimately did not come to fruition, although the Methodist and URC Churches did combine as Trinity Church. Kevin remembers that the four Churches' grouping worked well at the youth club level. Kevin was baptised as is the Baptist tradition, by total immersion, when he was a teenager. After university, he returned to worshipping at SBC and he and Sue continued to do so until they moved to Tadworth. At this point, the family started attending Christchurch Walton-on-the-Hill, but although they received a warm welcome there, they decided it would be better for Philippa and Matthew to move to our Church, which at that time had a large Junior Church.

It is traditional to end these 'know your elder' pieces with something that you might not know about the featured person. In Kevin's case, we need to go back to his university days. As already mentioned, Kevin was heavily involved in the Queens' College drama society, BATS. This was in fact a golden age for Cambridge

University drama. On his first day, the first person that Kevin met and had a coffee with was his fellow Queens' College fresher, Stephen Fry. When Kevin was president of BATS, Stephen was the treasurer. Other thespians that Kevin interacted with in his university days included Emma Thompson, Hugh Laurie, Sandi Toksvig and Jan Ravens. In May week 1980, BATS put on a production of William Shakespeare's 'All's Well That Ends Well' starring Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson and produced by a certain Kevin Dinnage.

*Cliff Houghton*

**ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL**

**DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

KING OF FRANCE	STEPHEN FRY
DUKE OF FLORENCE	NICK CLARKE
BERTRAM, Count of Rossillion	TONY McCAFFREY
LAFEW, an old Lord	JOHN DAVIES
The two brothers, DUMAINE,	SEAN BARRINGTON
French lords, later captains	SUNIL KHLIMANI
PARDOLLES, a follower of Bertram	BARRY TAYLOR
RYNALDO, steward to the	LAURIE WISEMAN
Countess of Rossillion	IAIN WRIGHT
LAVATCH, clown in her household	KIM HARRIS
A SOLDIER in the French Army	
COUNTESS OF ROSSILLION,	JUDITH PHILLIPS
mother to Bertram	
HELENA, an orphan protected	EMMA THOMPSON
by the Countess	
WIDOW CAPLET of Florence	SUE ISSERLIS
DIANA, daughter to the widow	SOPHIE THOMPSON

Scene: Rossillion; Paris; Florence; Marseilles.

There will be one interval of twenty minutes during which mulled wine will be available.

DIRECTED BY SIMON CHERRY

**PRODUCTION TEAM**

PRODUCED BY	KEVIN DINNAGE, JULIAN THOMAS, STEVE ROBERTS
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	GEOFF HUNTER
PUBLICITY	JERRY BELL AND BARRY TAYLOR
POSTER	DAVID LEWIS
PROGRAMME	JO OWEN
LIGHTING	PHIL TAYLOR AND PETER WIBBERLY
SOUND	RICHARD SCOTT
PROPS	JANETTE PAYNE, TOM MARSH
BOX OFFICE	STEPHEN FRY
COSTUMES	WILLIAM SIBREE
MULLED WINE	JOHN KERSHAW, CAROLINE ARMSTRONG
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY	STEPHEN BADSEY

BATS are very grateful for the help of Mr. Perry at the Bedford Modern School and Mr. Killick at the Dame Alice Harpur School, as well as Dr. Bull, for kindly providing the seating used in this production.

BATS would also like to thank the President and Governing Body of Queens' College for allowing us use of Cloister Court, and to thank the cooperation of Fellows who live around the Court, our thanks also to Mr. Webb and the Porters, Mr. Bellon and the Kitchen Staff and all those, too numerous to mention, who have helped in this production.

# **My trip to the World Scout Jamboree in Saemangeum, North Jeolla, South Korea**

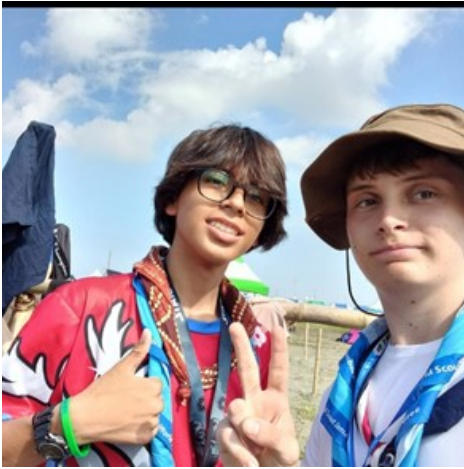
Although my trip to South Korea didn't go entirely to plan, it was one of the richest and life changing experiences of my life. I was exposed to a multitude of different cultures, made friends with the people in my unit from Surrey and from all around the world. I have also learnt to appreciate the mild British weather. We had spent 18 months preparing for it with camps, trips and fundraising events. Even so none of us in Unit 71 (The Surrey Stags) could believe that we were going to South Korea until we actually got there. The culture



shock was unmatched, right from the start. Everyone was so polite and welcoming to us, making us feel at home even when we were 9,000 km away from Surrey.

The first night we stayed in a lovely hotel in Seoul. We couldn't go straight to the Jamboree due to the weather conditions on the campsite. It had been flooded so we had to stay an extra night. Getting down to the Jamboree the next day was a challenge, as our bus got stuck in the mud and we had to be dug out by the fire brigade. As my unit settled into the camp the temperature rose to high thirties with one day at 40 degrees with very high humidity. These conditions meant there were swarms of insects, lots of people were sent to medical tents or the hospital, luckily none from our group.

On the second night there was an opening ceremony attended by all 46,000 international scouts in which there was a parade of flags



and speeches from various VIPs including the president of South Korea and Bear Grylls (the World Chief Scout). While I was there, I made friends with, and traded badges with, people from all over the world. I managed to collect badges from Taiwan, Brazil, US, Luxemburg, Mexico and many more. However due to the extreme heat and poor sanitary conditions, the British contingent decided to leave the

campsite and we were moved back to Seoul.

During my time in Seoul, my unit explored the beautiful city by looking at museums, landmarks, factories, sampling and making food and much more. A huge effort was put into creating a new timetable of activities so that we could make the most of our experience. My favourite thing about Seoul must have been the architecture because it differs so much from the UK. We were lucky enough to experience an invite to the president's house in the countryside. It showed us the cultural significance of the presidency to the Korean people. This felt particularly special, as we were hosted by high-ranking Korean officials such as the Korean foreign minister and the governor of the Chun province in central South Korea. They were all very nice and keen to make up for the disappointment of having to leave the campsite. Another incredible experience was our unit's trip to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the North-South border. It was an incredible experience to see physical living history and slightly unnerving being surrounded by military installations and minefields! We managed to see a North Korean town, which had long since been abandoned, from a distance. We also explored a secret North Korean military tunnel, which was discovered by the South Koreans and has been made into a tourist attraction. It is at a

depth of around 240 feet and is about five and a half foot high. I walked along it for about half a kilometre, spending most of it doubled over. It gave me a sore back.



On a lighter note, we were treated incredibly well all-around Korea, not just by the organizers but by the Korean general public. Many of them would talk to us on the subway. Everyone asked if we were enjoying our trip and some of them told us about when they were Scouts. It really was an incredible experience. There were several culture shocks that amazed us as a unit; the Koreans' cleanliness was in amazing

comparison to London. My whole time there, I didn't see a single piece of litter on the floor, as a matter of fact I didn't even see a single bin on the streets of Seoul! Also, the efficiency of the trains was top notch; they ran like clockwork. The trains themselves are lovely, spacious and clean. After this amazing 18-day trip I will certainly miss the brilliant Korean Subway. All the other countries were forced to leave the campsite a few days after us when a typhoon passed through the area. Even though the Jamboree was closed prematurely the organizers worked hard to make it a great experience. This included rearranging the closing ceremony to take place at Seoul football stadium. This gave us a chance to reconnect with the friends we made on the Jamboree site and one last opportunity to trade badges. Not only that, but as an apology, the Korean government organized a huge concert with the biggest names in Korean pop ( KPOP) performing.

The trip did not go quite as planned but the memories we made and the experiences we had will last a lifetime, and so will the friendships which I made both from among the Surrey contingent and from around the world.

*Alexander Brennan*

## Days Out—Afternoon Tea on the Bluebell Railway



May 2023 saw a 'significant' birthday for me. One of my gifts was afternoon tea on a steam train at the Bluebell Railway in Uckfield, East Sussex. This heritage steam railway has 11 miles of track running between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead. It was built for Lord Sheffield who owned the estate to take him from his home to East Grinstead station. Volunteers have helped restore the station in the style of the Brighton era 1880's. It's been used for TV and films featuring in productions of the original Railway Children, Poirot, Downton Abbey and more recently The Crown.

My son James, who's now 30 years old, was a devoted fan of Thomas the Tank Engine when he was small and train sets filled our home until he was quite old. When he found out where we were going, he insisted that he should come too. So, on a rainy Saturday in August the three of us set off to catch our train. We were greeted by the station master who ticked our names off and



headed straight for the train sheds where James tried his hand at a steam train simulator. Not surprisingly the virtual train driver kept telling him to 'slow down'. It was like having our 6-year-old son with us all over again– only taller and hairier!

When the train drew up, we were directed to the first-class carriage (the only way to travel) which was laid

with crisp white linen ready for our tea. Just as the guard blew the whistle, the clouds parted and the sun shone for the duration of our 1hr 45-minute ride.

Tea was delicious, with dainty sandwiches and an array of cakes, and of course scones and cream. A family debate ensued, was it cream on first or last. A 2-1 decision resulted in jam then cream was best. As well as pots of steaming hot tea, we toasted the day with a bottle of locally produced sparkling wine from the Bluebell Vineyard Estate.

My husband and I reminisced about train journeys from our youth when our parents would rush to shut the train windows when it went through tunnels, to being excited when we were old enough to lean out of the window to open the train door from the outside. This only fuelled James's opinion that his parents really are ancient!

After much debate on whether an additional electric train set needed to be purchased, we left empty handed but full of delicious food and lovely memories.

*Fiona Lynch*

# Halloween

These days we tend to associate Halloween with carving pumpkins, 'trick or treating' (which some find a frightening custom and which, like much to do with Halloween, we tend to associate with the USA) and dressing up in scary costumes.

However, Halloween has its roots in the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. This was a pagan celebration to welcome the harvest and the beginning of winter. Bonfires were lit and costumes were worn as disguises to ward off the spirits that people believed walked the earth at this time. The traditional colours of Halloween date from this time – black represented the death of summer for the Celts and orange the Autumn harvest. Known as All Hallows Eve it was the evening before All Saints' Day, which was introduced on 2 November by Christian missionaries.



Carving 'Jack-o-Lanterns' was a tradition which originated in Ireland using turnips not pumpkins. It is supposedly based on the legend of Stingy Jack, who repeatedly trapped the devil, letting him go with the promise that Jack would not go to hell. When he died Jack found that Heaven didn't want him, so he had to inhabit the earth as a ghost for eternity. He carried a carved turnip containing a burning coal, given to him by the devil to light his way.

There are various theories as to how and where 'trick or treating' started. One is that, during Samhain, Celtic people left out food to appease the wandering spirits. Over time people started to dress as spirits to receive these offerings of food or drink. There is another theory that the idea of giving sweets comes from the Scottish practice of 'guising'. During the Middle Ages, poor children and adults would collect food and money from local homes in return for prayers for the dead on All Souls' Day, the day after All Saints' Day. The prayers were later dropped, replaced by non-religious practices, including songs, jokes and tricks.

*Fiona Gayner*

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'The past cannot be denied, only owned and accepted.

But the past is in God's safe keeping, not mine.

I go forward from where I am – not from where I was

And God goes with me.

Therein lies my hope.'

# Church Secretary's Annual Report

## Looking Back



Looking back should really read 'Life after Linda', since our fantastic Local Church leader left us at the end of last June. Linda instigated the idea of having a separate list of 'Church Friends' and this has resulted in our membership being reduced to the current figure of 76. This action was appropriate since, in the URC, both Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting are required to 'maintain standards of membership'.

The Elders provide excellent mutual support and all of us hope we provide dynamic leadership for the Church. We recognise the need to be creative in the ways we use our time and perform our ministry and pastoral work. Sheenah Mephram, as our Pastoral Elder, has been kept particularly busy of late and we appreciate this and also the work our newest Elder, Glenda Chadburn, has been doing.

We recognise all the work done by lay people in our Church. So far as financial leadership is concerned, we reiterate the Church's thanks to Kevin Dinnage so ably supported by Cliff Houghton. Our charitable donations in the past year have been £9,480, of which £6,885 came from our Church charitable fund and £2,595 from special collections.

The largest part of our income is from hall lettings, and we constantly remind ourselves that we should be maintaining our premises to the highest possible standard. Several years ago, the URC published an article on its website entitled 'Get Smart'. This said that when you know that company is coming, you clean up the

house, you lay out a fresh towel and open the curtains in the guest bedroom. You want your visitors to feel welcome. Those nice touches are no less important to our hirers and other visitors. Here we thank Chris Brittain and Paul Chadburn for all the practical work they do.

We are very grateful to the many other people in our church who do so much for us behind-the-scenes: those who provide us with refreshments after the service, the stewards, the *Tidings* editors, flower arrangers, headed by Fiona Gayner and our gardeners. Ian Catt's AV expertise and innovation is the envy of many people.

Madeline always produces for us excellent preachers. She has already booked next June, Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson, the URC's first black Moderator of General Assembly. The preacher to whom we are so indebted is, of course, our own member Revd David Skitt who, when he is not preaching at our church, is nearly always preaching somewhere else. He is also very generous with his time, giving people a ready ear. We are also grateful for his work with Diana Parsk for the splendid Lent Reflections where we were pleased to see so many other people from other churches and elsewhere. Thanks also to Chris Harris and her team on the Worship and Faith Committee for leading our spiritual life and to Chris and Sue Dinnage for the work they do with our children in difficult circumstances. We should always rise to the challenge of providing a spiritual home to those in our community seeking spiritual awareness and remember that all constructive and creative work in Christ's church is firmly rooted in prayer.

Two of our Elders, Diana Parsk and Sheila Costello, retired at the end of June following six years' diligent service and we are very grateful to them for all the wonderful work that they have done for our Church in a variety of ways.

Recently some of us were fortunate to attend the retirement service at Orpington of our former minister, Revd Jennifer Millington, and the farewell service at Cobham of our former interim Moderator, Revd Kim Plumpton, who has been a stalwart supporter of our church giving helpful advice concerning the



future of our church and recently taking Brian Sheppard's funeral service. Kim is shortly to become the Moderator of Northern Province and we send her our best wishes as she takes on this role.

Following our getting back to something like normality, the majority of our hirers have returned. We have lost some but they have been replaced to the extent that I

have to get permission from our excellent church cleaner, Joanna, to accept any new regular bookings. We have been delighted to welcome two new baby groups, Baby Sensory and Reading Fairy. As an example of outreach, we endeavour to keep in touch with our hirers and Madeline has recently visited these two baby groups where she was warmly received.

Following our having a Saturday social afternoon for Ukrainian friends, we have been pleased to welcome as tenants in our Manse, Natalia and Krystyna and their children, Ksenia and Roman, who attend school locally. We have therefore made it clear that the manse is not available for a potential minister of the four Churches' pastorate.

## Looking Forward



In the current edition of Reform, Naomi Baldwin, a theatre technician writes 'We've had an incredibly difficult couple of years, and so it's reassuring, I think, to know that even if the light may seem dimmed to us in one area, it is brighter elsewhere. So next time you are sitting in church listening

to a sermon, or sitting with your eyes closed wondering frantically what to pray about, or you are distracted thinking about whether your Sunday lunch is burning in the oven, consider this: where is the 'light', where is the focus in my life? Because, as the Bible – a book full of people failing and trying again, misinterpreting God's word and being given the chance to start afresh – shows, there is plenty of time to re-focus the light and make sure it is shining where we intend it to'.

*(Alan then referred to the impending Church Meeting and the vote on whether we should join together with our friends at Dorking, Redhill and Reigate Park United Reformed Churches. Please see the separate article in this edition of Tidings on the current situation regarding this four Churches' pastorate.)*

## **Worship and Faith Report**

What a year we have had since Linda left us! We continue to hold live services with several joining on Zoom and, thanks to Madeline, we have had a wide array of different people leading our worship and have enjoyed some very thought-provoking services. We are so very grateful to David for being with us at least once a month and leading memorable services. We also have a number of regulars – Stephen Thornton, Bill Bowman to name but two, and are delighted that Kevin O'Brien has been added to our regular list, leading our service on Easter Sunday. We are fortunate to have so many friends of our church who are happy to join us on a Sunday morning and lead our services. We cannot underestimate the effort and planning that goes into our pulpit supply as more and more churches are without ministers and we are blessed that Madeline cheerfully takes on this important task.

David also held a series of Bible studies on Zoom looking at Paul's letters from prison and we were pleased to extend the audience to members of Banstead 5 and other local URCs - these always inspire and educate us and give us much to consider.

We also enjoyed, thanks to David and Diana, a varied and

interesting series of Lent reflections, again opened up to a wider audience, which added another dimension to our reflections at this time.

Our joint services with our Methodist friends are appreciated by many and allow us to grow our relationships with them – we look forward to them continuing.

So many people quietly contribute to our weekly worship – Ruth procuring readers, Fiona organising flowers, Sheila arranging stewards, Alan preparing the orders of service emails, Ian and Cliff playing live music, those who prepare communion and refreshments and we are very grateful to them all but our biggest thanks go to Ian for all that he does with PowerPoints, music, Zoom, sound and a myriad of other things without which our services would be poorer. We are the envy of many churches because of his expertise and willingness to help.

As we embark on an exciting new prospect of a North Downs Surrey Pastorate, we give thanks for this exciting new venture and know that our worship opportunities will be enhanced as a consequence.

*Chris Harris*

## **Children and Young People Report**

Sunday Club returned to meeting every week with a 'Messy Sunday' on the fourth Sunday of the month. Our Children's Corner is a great success and we are all delighted when we have children sharing in our service and being part of our congregation.

Numbers continue to fluctuate – some Sundays no children and on others we have had 6 – but regardless our dedicated leaders prepare for the session and are on hand.

Sue organised the young people in their Coronation preparations with Union Jack paper chains and decorated crowns which appeared at our service on Coronation weekend.

As ever we are very grateful to Sue, Glenda, Jane, Karen and Carrie for their continued enthusiasm and commitment.

*Chris Harris*

## **Impact Report**

A number of activities have taken place through the year, and we thank everyone for their ongoing support and input to the range of things we all do.

The banners outside the church are bought and updated regularly to give the message to the local community that we are active and available.

This year we were asked to host some Ukrainian refugee families on a Saturday afternoon for a time of socialising together, both for the Ukrainians and for their host families. A number of volunteers stepped forward to make this a happy and friendly time for a number of local families and children. Now that some of the families have their own homes they are able to be self-organising but we are still in touch with both hosts and families.

You will have read in previous issues of *Tidings* about the lovely tea we had to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, the interesting and informative Oxford Trip arranged by David Skitt and the encapsulating and exciting social evening centred on a Balloon Debate organised by Diana Parsk.

Traidcraft is a practical way to support ethical craft and grocery production from around the world, and we were pleased to welcome Moyna Bridge to our service in October to help us all prepare for Christmas with a sale of the huge range of goods.

The provision of chocolate selection boxes at the Prison Visitor Centre is always appreciated by the organisers and the youngsters who visit over the Christmas period.

We send some of our budget to Crisis to fund a table for 10 people to have Christmas lunch, and we had a lovely letter appreciating this activity too.

We are always pleased to welcome visitors from the Salvation Army to our Toy Service in November and this year was a great success. This was due to the generous donations from some of our hall users and members of the church. We know the toys and the money are put to the very best use.

As there are no longer house to house collections during Christian Aid week, we decided to hold a simple bread and cheese lunch after the service on 14 May which raised £350 for Christian Aid funds.

We are holding an Autumn quiz on 14 October with fish and chips and hope to see you all there!

*Madeline Cranfield*

## **House Management and Finance Report**

I hope you will forgive me once again for combining the House Management and Finance Committee reports, not least because both have an element of 'business returning to usual' about them.

I begin by noting and thanking those involved in both Committees: our assistant treasurer Cliff Houghton who manages the accounts and the production of the figures; Alan Kirby and Pauline Brittain who manage our lettings and collect the lettings' income; Chris Brittain and Paul Chadburn who make sure the fabric of both the manse and the church premises is kept in good condition; Sue Dinnage and Alison Skitt our kitchen stewards and finally our cleaner Joanna Coetzer and our 'night watcher' Phyllis Knight.

Having issued a detailed report on our 2022 Finances at the beginning of the year I will not repeat any of that information, but it is worth noting that, at the end of August 2023, our lettings income stands at £33,364 compared to £19,577 at the same stage last year, so we are very much returning to our premises being fully utilised during the week. In fact, Alan is having to think carefully about accepting new hirers, to make sure we do not overload on parking when we have children or vulnerable adults on site. The Hazel Usher fund is now slowly winding down.

Perhaps the only point I would like to reiterate from my finance report is that offerings in 2022 reduced by 11% compared to 2021 and that just **6 households** now contribute about 50% of our giving. It is very likely that this year well over 50% of our income will come from lettings.

On the house management side, we have been dealing with drainage problems from the toilets – partly covered by insurance; replaced several radiators – funded by our annual synod grant; bought some new easier to move coffee tables and dealt with flooding during the heavy rains. We are also exploring what to do about the side panels either side of the front doors which have clearly suffered from water damage and expansion.

Last summer, with the support of several people, we completely furnished the manse and made it pleasant and habitable for two Ukrainian families who have been living there as paying tenants since last September. They seem very happy with the manse and apart from resolving one or two minor issues and clearing historical rubbish from the garden there has not been too much to do there since they moved in.

The financial implications of our move into a joint pastorate have yet to be considered.

My thanks to all the team members for their continued support and hard work.

*Kevin Dinnage*

## **North Downs Cluster Eco-Service**

On 16 June, eleven of us from Banstead URC joined members from other churches in our North Downs Cluster to participate in an afternoon event generously hosted by Reigate Park URC. A few intrepid souls braved the rain to be taken on a conducted tour of part of Reigate in the early afternoon and then joined a larger number, who had avoided this walk, for a plentiful afternoon tea

and an opportunity to meet people from the other churches.

The event concluded with a service in the Reigate Park church in which the theme was in effect our stewardship of God's physical world in which we live. Sue Knight led the service, and as a framework she reminded us in her presentation of the creation as recorded in the book of Genesis.

There were two subsequent presentations. The first one was from Banstead, and this suggested that the industrialised nations have a moral responsibility to provide technical and financial help to the emerging nations. This would support the plans of many to combat the severe impact of climate change, which is threatening them



today.

Furthermore, it will enable many to leapfrog the fossil fuel age and to use renewable energy to develop their economies and raise their standard of living. It was also questioned

why the Church in the UK is not providing moral leadership and why its united voice is not louder and more urgent in pressing the UK Government to take a leading role on this issue on the international stage. The other presentation was given by Marsh Green URC, which has for many years maintained its Gold Standard Award for ecological excellence. Details were given on how we, as local churches and as individuals, can reduce our carbon footprint and, through a 'green mindset', can save energy and money. Marsh Green has developed a list of practical ways in which this can be achieved and, so far, these suggestions total 66.



There were also various pictures of our planet projected onto the screens during the service and an appropriate message on our responsibility to preserve our environment was presented by a group of ladies from Reigate Park URC. The hope is that we shall keep this reminder of our responsibility

for stewardship of the planet in the forefront of our mind and that we shall follow every opportunity to take relevant ACTION.

*Roy Jordan*

## **Days Out—Giffords Circus**



As a special treat, my daughters took me to Blenheim Palace followed by a visit to Giffords Circus. Wow! If you have never been to see Giffords Circus you must put it on your to-do list.

It is amazing! It is like a village green version of the Cirque du Soleil. In the current show there is a clown, an aerialist, an illusionist and an acrobatic troupe, The only animals in the show I saw were a little group of dogs, although the show does sometimes feature ponies.

The circus travels around the country from Spring to Autumn and in June it was at Chiswick House. When I know the itinerary for 2024 I am hoping to arrange a coach outing to Chiswick House in the morning and Giffords Circus in the afternoon. If anyone is interested, let me know, and I'll start making a list.

*Tweeny*

# North Downs Surrey Pastorate

At our Church Meeting on 25 June, a resolution was passed agreeing to the principle of a group pastorate with Dorking URC, Redhill URC and Reigate Park URC. The same resolution has now been passed at the other three churches and we are therefore now officially part of the North Downs Surrey Pastorate. The pastorate profile has been completed and it is expected that the vacancy will be advertised in September. A Vacancy Committee made up from two people from each of the four churches has been established and our representatives are Alan Kirby and Diana Parsk. We very much look forward to having closer links to the other three churches. We include below some information about these Churches. This information was originally included in the Church Secretary's Report on Church Life Sunday.

## Dorking URC



The Church is located just outside the town centre. It was founded in 1662 by two clergymen who were ejected from the Church of England as a result of their refusing to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity and the present church was built in 1834. Since then, many alterations and additions have been made. It has 93 members and 29 adherents. Average attendance on Sunday is 48 and they have 12 Serving Elders.

They employ 2 part time community workers and have 2 retired ministers among their membership, including Revd Ted Bellingham.

## Redhill URC

The church sits on the border between Reigate and Redhill and has the war memorial in front of it. The current fellowship was



formed at Pentecost 1988 with the merger of two churches, the older of which was founded in 1862 as a Congregational Chapel situated in what became known as Chapel Road. They have approximately 51 full members. Their regular attendance for Sunday worship is 20-25. They say that they have developed a high level of self-reliance.

## Reigate Park URC

Originally there was a church in Reigate High Street from 1831.



Due to the deteriorating state of the building, it was decided to build a new church and they relocated to their present site in 1975. Since then, the premises have been extended. Their membership is 120 and the average attendance at Sunday services is 60-70.

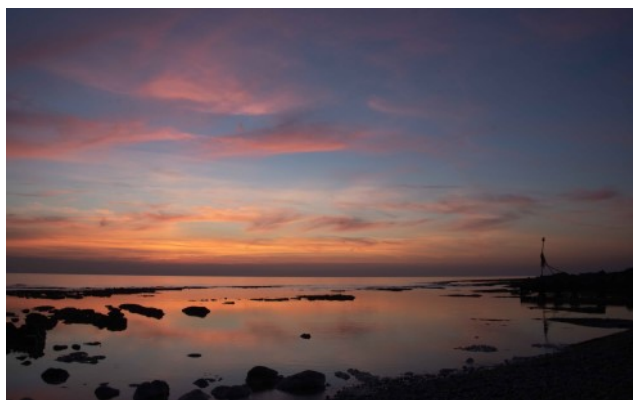
They have a Local Church Leader, Sue Knight, who is about to start a two year training course as a non stipendiary minister and will

remain at Reigate Park. Currently there are 9 serving elders. They are currently seeking to employ a children's and family worker.

## Days Out—A Walk on the South Coast

I have a friend who lives at Peacehaven on the south coast. She has introduced me to a walk beside the sea in a wonderful hidden place. Perhaps you know it, but to me it was new and fascinating. It is the Saltdean to Rottingdean Undercliff. A wide flat concrete path runs at the sea edge. It is so refreshing and exhilarating to walk with the white chalk cliff rising up above you on one side, while on the other is the sea in shades of blue, green and grey, depending on the weather and the tide. On the horizon the magnificent sight of rows of wind turbines between the sky and the sea. It is a good place to go if there is a stiff northerly wind blowing because you are protected from the wind in that direction.

A bonus is the free car park across the road from the Saltdean Lido on Saltdean Park Road. From there walk down to the main road, Marine Drive (A259). Cross the road and go along the fence by the Lido and get to the tunnel under the cliffs. There is also disabled access at the top from the Coast Road. If you are ready for a cup of tea or refreshments, The White Cliffs Cafe is close by the tunnel. Or if you can wait a little longer, walk in a westerly direction towards Rottingdean and Brighton on the Undercliff Park until you reach the Salt Sea Cafe, a ten to fifteen minute walk.



Finally, if you are at Rottingdean at sunset you may have the opportunity to see a beautiful vermillion sunset.

*Helen Chappell*

## Milk Chocolate & Roasted Hazelnut Cookies



*The perfect thick and gooey cookie recipe that's slightly crisp and chewy on the outside, but soft and doughy on the inside. The nuts can be completely omitted if you fancy, without changing any other quantities, but I really feel like they take these cookies to the next level. If you're lazy like me, buy a pack of chopped roasted hazelnuts and you'll be eating these fresh from the oven in no time at all.*

### Ingredients:

225g unsalted butter, 200g light brown muscovado sugar (or just any type of light brown soft sugar), 100g golden caster sugar (or just caster sugar), 2 medium eggs, 360g self-raising flour, 1 tsp cornflour, ½ tsp salt, 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda, 350g milk chocolate (chopped), 100g roasted hazelnuts (chopped).

### Method:

Preheat your oven (200°C fan-assisted, electric 220°C, gas mark 7). Mix the butter and sugar until fully combined, either in a stand-mixer or with a hand mixer. Once creamy, mix for a further five minutes until the mixture gets paler and light and fluffy. Mix one egg at a time into the mixture. Add the flour, cornflour, salt and bicarbonate of soda and mix until just combined – try not to over mix here. Then add in the milk chocolate and the hazelnuts and again mix until just combined. Spoon the mixture out onto a plate into 10-12 mounds (don't compact them down!) and put in the freezer for at least 30 minutes, or overnight. Remove and cook on a foil-lined baking tray for 8 minutes, then turn the tray around and bake for a further 4 minutes until the tops are light golden. If you prefer your cookies to be firmer and crispier, then put your oven down to 180°C and cook for 14 minutes (again keep an eye on them and adjust the cooking time to your personal taste). Allow to cool and firm up on the baking tray for at least 20 minutes, if not longer. ENJOY!

*Rosalind Parsk*

## Days Out—Painshill Park

Between 1738 and 1773, the Hon Charles Hamilton created a landscape garden at Cobham full of eccentric follies and surprising vistas, the centrepiece being a large Serpentine Lake fed by means of a Waterwheel which pumps water from the River Mole below. Money was never plentiful so the Gothic Temple for example was constructed from timber painted to look like stone. Eventually Hamilton became bankrupt.



View from the Turkish Tent

A succession of owners followed until in 1939 the property was requisitioned by the military and by the end of WWII the landscape was a wilderness and the follies had disintegrated. However, in 1981 a Trust was formed to restore it and this has been gradually achieved so, amongst other features, you can now see the productive Vineyard, the Gothic Temple which stands at the end of an Amphitheatre of evergreens, the Turkish Tent created originally from canvas, the magical Grotto with 10,000 crystals, the rustic Hermitage, the imposing Temple of Bacchus and the lofty Gothic Tower, a landmark from the A3, all set off by the tranquil lake, noble trees and 18th-century planting schemes.

You can also visit the walled gardens, one of which has been planted with some of the varieties of plants imported by Hamilton from John Bartram in the USA who sent boxes of seeds at 5 guineas a time with little indication of what plants might result.

The landscape is designed to be seen in sequence. You can follow the Historic Route which takes in all the main features but you need to be reasonably fit as, although only 2½ miles long, it does include some steep climbs. For the less able, the Accessible Route around the lake is 1½ miles of level walking and includes a view to the Ruined Abbey and a variety of waterfowl to enjoy.

There is a café close to the Visitors Centre near the entrance and in the summer months refreshments are available in the Gothic Tower. There is plenty to occupy people of all ages – lots more information about opening times, access, events, etc. is available on the website: [www.painshillpark.co.uk](http://www.painshillpark.co.uk).

*Marion Woodward*

## **Days Out—Ightham Mote**



Recently, we visited Ightham Mote, a National Trust property near Sevenoaks. The weather was kind to us and we enjoyed a coffee in the cafe before hearing about the history of the house and estate. After touring the house, which was extremely interesting, we walked around the gardens and the North Lake with areas for picnicking and just sitting and enjoying the view.

A very enjoyable day out!

*Glenda Chadburn*

## Autumn Fires



In the other gardens  
And all up the vale,  
From the autumn bonfires  
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over  
And all the summer flowers,  
The red fire blazes,  
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!  
Something bright in all!  
Flowers in the summer,  
Fires in the fall!

*Robert Louis Stevenson*



## Service Details

Our morning worship at 10:30am on Sundays is held in the Church building and on Zoom.

The Zoom link for services is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9922047878?pwd=SmxXY0lKckkvcFhJdFM1UTFHYjR0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 992 204 7878

Passcode: 126600

Recordings of the services are available on our website  
[www.bansteadurc.org.uk](http://www.bansteadurc.org.uk)

*Tidings* is edited by Fiona Gayner, Diana Parsk and Cliff Houghton

e-mail: [tidingseditors@gmail.com](mailto:tidingseditors@gmail.com)

We are happy to receive your contributions, ideas and suggestions for *Tidings* at any time but copy for the Winter 2023 edition should be with us by

**Sunday, 12 November 2023** at the latest.





**TIDINGS - Autumn 2023**