

The Link Magazine

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February 2020

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MINISTER'S LETTER

If I had to ask you what are the guarantees in your life, what would they be? What can you hold on to when everything else is falling away? The saying goes that there are only two things you can guarantee – taxes and death! But joking aside when there is so much turmoil in the world, unknowns, inconsistencies in our lives.... we all need something strong and secure to hold on to.

And I would say what we can all hold on to is love – the love you have for family and friends, for animals, for dear loved ones no longer with us, for creation around us and just as important the love that they all show you. The world can feel a dark place at the moment, many of you may have struggles, money may be tight: showing and sharing love is free and actually not that hard.... but what does love look like to you?

Love is...



...being there for each other.

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Do you remember the little cartoon couple in the late 60s and early 70s who have different words after the statement 'Love is....'?

So, what does 'love' look like to you?

Just as diverse as the little cartoon was and continues to be, you can show love in so many different ways: from helping a stranger, looking out for a neighbour, remaining calm around someone who winds you up, giving up precious free time.... the list is endless! Have some spare food or clothing? Give it to Foodbank. Available to help neighbours? Join the Good Neighbour Scheme. Enjoy reading? Volunteer to be a reader in a local school or nursing home.

And that is the best thing about it – you can change someone's day in a matter of seconds through a smile or spend an hour drinking tea with a lonely person. Sharing love does not need planning, can cost nothing, can happen anywhere and most importantly can be beneficially to both the receiver as well as the giver.

So, what is stopping us being more loving to one another? Fear? Embarrassment? Society acceptable norms? Busyness of our lives? Opportunity? Whatever it may be, we must try and overcome the hurdles that are in front of us and make our community as loving as it can be.

Just as we expect people to do the job they are paid to do, we should, in a way, expect each of us to live up to being truly human. Humanity - a word for the qualities that make us human, such as the ability to love and have compassion, be creative!

We may only have 29 days this month, but the task is simple: show love. As the hymn says, as Nat King Cole sang and the front page tells us – Let there be love!

Every blessing, ***Rev Tanya***

WORSHIP FEBRUARY

LIDGETT PARK

02 Feb	10.30 am	Mr John Summerwill
09 Feb	10.30 am	Revd Tanya Short <i>Holy Communion</i>
16 Feb	10.30 am	Revd Dr Madeleine Andrews
23 Feb	10.30 am	Revd Tanya Short
	6.30 pm	St Edmunds Church <i>Ecumenical</i>

SHADWELL

02 Feb	9.30 am	Revd Tanya Short
09 Feb	9.30 am	Revd Robert Creamer
16 Feb	9.30 am	Revd Tanya Short <i>Holy Communion</i>
23 Feb	9.30 am	Revd Dr Madeleine Andrews

PRAYER FOR CHANGE

These prayers are published also in the magazines of our ecumenical partners, St Andrew's Church and St Edmund's Church.

Winter Thoughts.

Winter sometimes has a bad press – with its cold, damp, bleak mornings, feeble sunlight, icy roads, long dark evenings – and all nature seems dead. But winter is the season of growth, where creation is held in quiet suspense, as if pausing for breath and new endeavour. Bulbs with their roots nicely established are building up their resources for a life in flower and colour.

Let us remember that God's creation is alive, though hidden away and very soon, green shoots will be appearing.

This rhythm of nature is like our own lives. We have times of difficulty and sadness, when life seems dark, but with God's reassurance we will reach the brighter days of spring and feel renewed – winter is the season of growth.

SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCH



We had a busy Christmas, with many events. The concert with the Elysian Singers was very good, a social and enjoyable evening raising money for our church charities All We Can and Maecare.

Our Christmas Café Morning was very well attended – we even ran out of seating at one point (!) - and we raised £230, which in view of the cold weather that day was good. It was donated to St George's Crypt to support the homeless in Leeds.

The Village Carol Service in the Village Hall was well attended, and included a number of thoughtful readings and a touch of



comedy, with participation from many organisations in the village, along with a good sing and refreshments! Later in the week a hardy band of singers from our church roamed the streets of Shadwell. Mulled wine at the vicarage helped us complete our circuit, and

we raised over £200 for Action For Children. Thank You to all who donated.

We held further Carol Services on the Sunday before the holiday, and on Christmas Day – which was a real family celebration of the season, with audience participation and wonderful music from our mixed band.

And we started the New Year hosting an Afternoon Tea and Entertainment for Maecare, for about 50 older people. Back into routine now, The Saturday coffee and cakes are on the 1st February (hope you get notification in time) with Café morning sweet and savoury pancakes for an early Shrove Tuesday celebration on February 18th.



BUY A BULB – WHAT NEXT?



At the October 2019 Saturday Coffee morning there was the opportunity to buy a variety of spring bulbs – snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils and tulips. They would then be planted in the Church

grounds as needed or as requested. You could also have them planted in memory of someone. Any money raised to go to the Church Project.

I am pleased to advise that we eventually had to plant over 700 bulbs and over £200 was then given to the Church Project. Many thanks to those who assisted with the planting – Liz, Margaret and my sister, Sue.

Spring will soon be here and hopefully we will all then benefit from the garden blooming with the bulbs giving us a display of new flowers. So do come and join us at the Coffee Mornings on Saturday 1st February, 7th March and 4th April and take time to have a wander round the gardens and see what may be there.

Some of the bulbs were given in memory of someone and this is the list of those being remembered:

Malcom Firth	Andrew Benson	Betty Sadler
Michael Bowers	Bryan Christopher	Barbara Bull
Howard Belsham	Irene & Stanley Mitchell	Eileen Kemp
Elsie & Cis	Gwen Brand	Grandma of Sandra
Cyril Carr	Our friend Ron	Connie Wager
Enid & Arthur Philo	John Sanders	

For those in need of a little sunshine on dark days.

With thanks to Val



THANK YOU TO YOU ALL.

Jackie Bennett

LIDGETT PARK DRAMA GROUP
presents

'Sleeping Beauty'
by Irving Theaker



on Friday/Saturday 14/15 February
and Thursday/Friday 20/21 February
2020

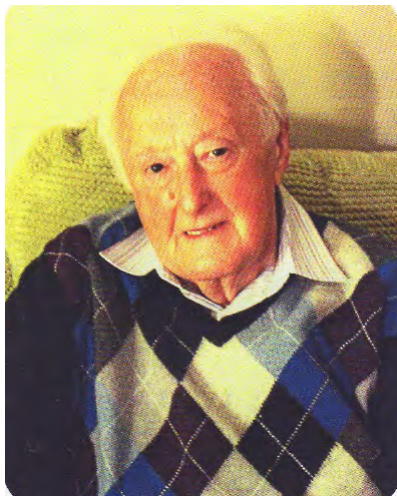
at 7.00pm

Adults £7

Children £3

Tickets - 0113 267 8506

GEORGE STANSFIELD 17.09.1929 - 25.11.2019



George was a man of many interests and did so much in his life. He had the gift of being able to talk to anyone. There was no side with him. He could talk easily to anyone.

George's parents married late and were in their forties when George was born and he was brought up as an only child. So far as work was concerned George had a varied career. Because his father died, when he was only 14 George had to go out to work. He started off

working for a firm of coach builders, particularly trams. He then had a spell as a police constable which he found quiet stressful. He worked for the AA for a while, then he moved to be an insurance collector before working for a firm of insurance brokers until he retired at the age of 65.

As a young man George was a keen sportsman and joyed playing snooker, table tennis, cricket and football. He was a life-long supporter of his beloved Leeds United and was disappointed not to see them return to the Premier Division which they surely will at the end of this season. Apart from his sport, George had three main loves in his life: his family, singing and the Church.

He met Shirley in 1954 when he was a member of the Oxford Place Youth Club. They were married in 1957 and enjoyed 72 years of happy married life. Carol was born in 1961. In 1963 they were expecting another baby. Quite by chance, a week before the due date someone happened to mention to Shirley something about twins. The staff had thought that someone else had told Shirley but no one had done so. So Alison and Claire arrived a week later.

Carol, Alison and Claire have lots of happy memories of watching dad at work and “helping” him in his garage. They also helped on his allotment near Roundhay Park planting seeds and helping with the potato harvest. The potatoes, onions and other produce were stored in the garage. They also had some great family holidays by the seaside where George always built a boat on the beach out of sand. George loved all his family including his grandchildren, Danielle, Lauren, Rachel and Michael. During his spare time George found time to make articles in wood. He made fitted wardrobes and occasional tables. He also made rocking horses for Danielle and Lauren.

George also loved good food and Shirley is a good cook. His son-in-law, Ian, remembers the first Christmas he spent with the family. They had a massive Christmas lunch and then odd bits during the afternoon. Ian was feeling bloated. However at 5 o'clock George said “What are we having for tea?” Within a few minutes the table was laden with all sorts of food – pork pies, various cheeses etc. George put it away without delay. He also made home brewed wine for many years. The sound of demijohns burping in the lounge punctuated their lives. A particular favourite was peapod wine made from the pods of peas grown on the allotment. Apparently it made a hideous smell during preparation but tasted very nice. Another favourite was elderberry wine made from elderberries from next door's garden.

One of George's other great passions was barbershop singing. He was introduced to it by Keith Tattersall. George was not sure about joining but Keith called round one evening saying he was going and persuaded George to go with him. Well, George came back hooked. He already liked jazz, particularly Dixieland jazz, but barbershop singing was something different. George sang in a group called the White Rose Barbershop Singers. They sang on stage at the Leeds City Varieties on a number of occasions being on the same bill as Acker Bilk and Roy Castle. The White Rose Barbershop Singers never won any prizes and George would say that they reached the heights of average! George was elected as Chairman of the British Association on Barbershop Singers in

1986. I remember him telling me quite a bit about the competitions he helped organise at Harrogate and other places. George and Shirley were able to travel to Barbershop Conventions in Canada, Holland and the United States.

When George retired he took up Crown Green Bowling. He did not like the idea of Shirley being left at home on her own so she went along as well. They both enjoyed the bowling and also the social activities at the Rownhegians. George was also a member of Probus and played bowls for them too.

George was active in church life. He had a distinguished career in the Drama Group at this church. He enjoyed building the sets. He was very enthusiastic even hammering and sawing away totally oblivious to the fact that people were trying to rehearse. In later years he was Front of House, a post for which he was ideally suited. He gave a warm welcome to everyone. Ian was saying that when his brother came to stay Ian invited him to a production at Lidgett Park. He and Carol were in the play so could not look after Ian's brother. However George in his usual fashion chatted to him and looked after him so he was not on his own. This was typical of the man.

Apart from his interest in drama, George was an active member of the church choir, the leader of the youth club, a church steward and a communion steward. George had a strong faith and worked out his faith through his actions. He was a man of the people if you like. George used the talents he had to get alongside people. People always felt better for having met George. He was a real Christian gentleman and we give thanks for his life and for all that he meant to us. We believe that he has moved on to greater things and is now with the Saviour who he worshipped.

With thanks to David Laycock

CHURCH PROJECT 2020/2021

Over the last three years there have been 2 church projects. From September 2017 until April 2019 we were raising money for the improvements to the Lidgett Place Entrance to the Church. From April 2019 until August 2020 we are raising money for two charities, Oasis Relief, Zambia and Sreepur Village in Bangladesh. If we follow the normal pattern we will be looking to support a new charity or charities from September 2020.

The decision about who we support from September 2020 will be taken at the General Church Meeting to be held on 26 April 2020. Who or what do you think we should support. If you have an idea that you would like to be considered at the General Church Meeting can you write a few words about your idea and let Stan Pearson (Editor of the Link) have it by the middle of March so that others can read about it in the April Link before the Church meeting. I'm sure that members of the current project group will be willing to help with ideas for fund raising but anyone nominating a charity will be expected to be involved in the fund raising if their charity is selected for the 2020/2021 project

Graham Saunders Chair of the Church Finance committee

ANOTHER DEADLINE

As a separate exercise to the above we need to produce a booklet of reports for the General Church Meeting.

I have written to representatives of the various groups and activities associated with the church and asked for a short report (a paragraph or so) preferably sent as a word document by 29th March. This will allow me to get it printed and available for the meeting on 26th April.

Stan Pearson

A THANK YOU FROM ROBERT CREAMER

I have bought these two pictures and an accompanying set of mats and coasters with the generous gift the Lidgett Park folk gave me after my enjoyable 12 months with you. We love having pictures in the house and these two are for our dining room.

Happy memories and kind regards to all at Lidgett Park,
Robert.

Here are Robert's pictures Ed.



THE PERSON BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Joseph J. Mazzella • October 3, 2019 (amended)

I woke up in a bad mood this morning. I'd had a fitful night's sleep and my bad back was sorer and tighter than ever. My shoulder was starting to feel just as sore too. I tried to stretch them out to no avail and stumbled into the bathroom. I looked in the mirror and saw the pain on my face. I certainly wasn't looking any younger either. My hair was now mostly gray and mostly gone on top. I was getting more and more age spots on my face. My wrinkles were deeper than ever. The enamel was worn out on my teeth. I'd recently had to get a stronger pair of glasses. My skin was thinner. My toenails were thicker. My prostate was bigger. And to top it all off my haemorrhoids were hurting. I griped to God about it all. "Why do our bodies start to wear out just when we finally learn how to live?" I asked.

Suddenly, I felt this thought drop into my mind, "The car you drive isn't as important as the person behind the wheel!" I smiled at that because I'd had so many old, used cars in my life. They all had "personality". They all had quirks, troubles, and problems. They all required patience and repair. But they always got me where I was going. Now that my body was starting to wear down, rattle, and backfire God was reminding me that I wasn't that body. I was the driver inside of it. I was the bright, shining soul within. I was the spirit that was both ageless and eternal. And while my car wasn't going to last forever, the driver was.

Take good care of this body you drive around then. Nurture it. Keep it in good repair. Make it last as long as you can. But always remember it isn't you. You are the person behind the wheel. You are the loving soul within. You are the Child of God destined for eternal life.

With thanks to Rachel Mounsey

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS 29th DEC 2019

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” (StF 330). Isaac Watts great hymn based on Psalm 98 is frequently used in Christmas services. I have often chosen it when leading worship at Christmas and other times of the year, and I always enjoy letting rip when singing it. The tune (Antioch) is lively and complements the words beautifully and I can’t help singing it with gusto and a great big smile. But not the first Sunday of Christmas last month.

The service on the Plan and in the notices was LA (Local Arrangements). Church Stewards can dread LA because it means they have the responsibility for such services because no preacher available. The Lidgett Park stewards worked well together for the 29th December. They had the Lidgett Singers, chose a good selection of carols, meditations, prayers, and used two of the three lectionary readings for the day – not easy ones either in this current cycle. But they had “Joy to the world” as the final hymn, and I couldn’t sing it. I just welled up with a lump in my throat and I just could not join in. I managed to mouth the words but join in? No way. I thought, “I’m a preacher. This is what I have been doing for 60+ years. This is Christmas. These words are so true and I should be, and I am, happy.” Why cry when you are happy? I don’t “do” happy clappy (with the exception of “Come and join the celebration” StF196). Emotion is such a strange business. There I was – helpless. Yes, there were moments of sadness in the service, but they were covered in the prayers for the sick and the bereaved and all those needing our thoughts and prayers.

Val told of her granddaughter’s experience in going to London in recent days with her local rowing team for a competition. While the teams were racing all their clothing was stolen. The girls had nothing other than the gear they were wearing. An appeal was made, and sufficient clothing donated from other teams and the general public for them to dress and return home. Charley handed her black bin liner to Mum for washing and said, “This is all some people have.”

Jennifer, who led the service, told of her severely disabled granddaughter, Sophie, who wanted to climb Pen y Gent and was pushed up in her wheelchair, by members of the family. Many fellow mountaineers gave words of encouragement and great big smiles. No sermon; no thoughts just examples of the new life the coming of the baby at Christmas brings.

“Joy to the world” indeed. Stewards – you set a high standard with your earlier Local Arrangements services last year. You have raised it again.

Peter Harper

A FEAST OF MUSIC AND CHRISTMAS GOOD CHEER

The annual Christmas concert by the Wendel Singers and the YEP Brass Ensemble was very well received this year. This was the second time the choir has been conducted by their new conductor, Joe Reeves. (The concert last year was the first time Joe had done this after taking over from our previous longstanding conductor, Joe Roberts.) Everyone remarked on how well ‘young Joe’ (as we call him) has settled into the role and we received many remarks from members of the audience saying how well the choir sang.

The YEP Brass, as always, gave us a splendid programme. They were conducted this year by Jackie Armitage who had stepped in at short notice and did us proud.

Many said that this was the best Christmas concert they could remember and in total we raised £750 for our two charities, Oasis Zambia and Sreepur Village, Bangladesh.

Stan Pearson

PROJECT NEWS. FEBRUARY 2020.

I think you will all know by now that the Christmas concert by the Wendel Singers and the YEP Brass Ensemble raised the magnificent sum of over £750 for the Project. We are, as always, grateful for all your support and it was also good to see many people there who were not members of our congregation. The band and singers gave marvelous performances and the concert has become an established favourite, which we hope will continue for many years to come!

Our next Project event is the Church Sunday Lunch after the service on February 9th. This will be a two-course meal and will replace the usual bi-monthly Sunday Lunch. The cost of this is £8 per person and all profits will be for the Project. Do please join us by putting your name on the list in the foyer – numbers will be limited so sign up fast!

As well as the Elysian Singers concert in July, we also have one or two ideas in the pipeline for the Spring and Summer, including our own take on the Bake Off idea as well as a celebration for VE Day. Watch for news of these in the weekly bulletins and the next Link.

On behalf of the Project Group, may I wish you all a happy and peaceful 2020.

Margaret Farrar.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Reproduced with the permission of the BBC.

Passion and Pain

How good was your Christmas Cracker joke this year? Mine normally just leaves me groaning, even if they're written by friends, such as this year's: "How many vicars does it take to change a lightbulb?" To which the answer of course is: "Change?!!" You see, we all find change difficult. When I was a management consultant, I used to explain that the two main drivers of change are always "passion" and "pain". People change either because they have no option to, as the pain they are enduring is just too great, or because their desire (or

passion) for something better is so strong. Passion and pain. Passion is always preferable, although sadly it is usually pain that ultimately spurs us into action. I know this to be true in my own case – where the mental anguish of trying to square the impossible circle of wanting to love and be loved by another woman, which I thought was totally unacceptable in the eyes of God, nearly cost me my life. My story of the pain I endured is echoed by so many others who have found themselves trapped between their religious beliefs and their intrinsic human desire to love and be loved. Indeed, this “living hell” originally drove me to seek out conversion therapy, involving yet more pain and trauma and resulting of course, in no change, save to my ever-diminishing levels of hope. Finally, faced I felt with no other option, I took what has to be one of the most difficult decisions in my life – I dared to believe that whoever I chose to love, God would continue to love me - for that is the meaning of unconditional love. Love with no caveats or exception clauses. I allowed myself to love and be loved, and the impact of that love was transformational. While I acknowledge that people have different theological positions on this, I know from experience that changing one’s religious view is possible and is usually due to a revelation made through love. One person who has spoken powerfully about changing her views is Megan Roper-Phelps, who was once part of an American Church that condemns homosexuals. In explaining what helped her most, Megan shares that it was the kind and patient interactions of the people that she met on social media. Surprising as this may seem, Megan says: “they did not abandon their principles, just their scorn”, proof, if we ever needed it, that the best way to help someone change is always through loving engagement rather than angry or painful exchanges. For love changes everything.

Jayne Ozanne 26/12/2019

The highest form of ignorance is when you reject something you don't know anything about.

Wayne Dyer

KEEP YOUR FORK

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. As she was getting her things 'in order,' she contacted her minister and had him come to her house to discuss arrangements for her funeral. She told him which hymns she wanted sung at the service, what Bible readings she would like, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in. Everything was in order, but as the minister was about to leave she suddenly remembered something very important to her. She wanted to be buried with a fork in her right hand.

She explained that her grandmother had told her that whenever she attended a dinner or other social function, often as the main course was being cleared someone would lean over and say, "Keep your fork." She always did because she knew something better was to come in the form of a delicious dessert. When people came to pay their respects before the coffin was closed, she could imagine them saying "Why the fork?" and she asked the minister to explain to them that it was because the best was still to come. Sure enough, when people came to pay their last respects over and over again they asked about the fork and when he gave the funeral address the minister was able to explain that it was to symbolise her belief in a better life to come. The next time you reach down for your fork let it remind you, ever so gently, that the best is yet to come. Family and friends are important in this life. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed but better is to come.

With thanks to Rachel Mounsey

Kindnesses, like grain, grow by sowing. *Proverb.*

The grass is always greener once you don't have to mow a lawn anymore. *Randy Mulholland.*

A FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I have long been a fan of Jake Thackray. A few may remember him from "That Was The Week That Was" with his topical songs, unusual voice and guitar accompaniments. I was a Primary School teacher working in Bramley and he taught English and French at the local Intake High School. He would get on my bus at Headingley cricket ground with guitar and I would pray he would sit next to me. Yet another unanswered prayer **but** Bliss! I was given "*Jake in a Box*" with 97 of his songs and played it constantly during the Christmas period!

A less popular present was a book "*Curious Cures of Old Yorkshire*." When not listening to Jake and perusing the strange cures inflicted, I surprisingly came across the mention of "*Primitive Physic*" a book written by a certain Rev. John Wesley and brother Charles for the poor folk of Yorkshire. It proved to be very popular and the profits from sales went towards the maintenance of Methodist preachers in the industrial parishes and rural areas of Yorkshire. The Wesleys advice on:

Whooping Cough. Rub the feet thoroughly with hog's lard, before the fire, at going to bed, and keep the child warm. Swallow four woodlice alive in a spoonful of jam or treacle and the whoop will vanish.

Earache. Ear-ache from Cold. Boil Rue or Rosemary or Garlick and let the steam go into the ear thro' a funnel.

Toothache To prevent the Tooth-ache rub the teeth often with Tobacco Ashes. Lay roasted parings of Turnips as hot as may be, behind the ear. Wear round the neck a double hazel nut, this not only cures the complaint but you will never suffer the pain again. A sheeps tooth in a bag will cure the Tooth-ache.

I wonder how many survived! (The punctuation and spellings belong to the Wesleys.) Keep well in 2020!

Barbara Holmes

(It might be better to stick to their theology rather than their medicine. Ed)

BOOK REVIEW*THE SQUARE AND THE TOWER* by NIALL FERGUSON

Niall Ferguson once recalled that when he was seven years old in a Glasgow art gallery he was approached by two teenage girls who grabbed hold of him by the ears and said to him, 'Which are ye?' This question meant, of course, Rangers or Celtic? Despite his youth, Ferguson realized that the wrong answer would mean painful retribution, and so he replied, 'Partick Thistle.' The two girls were disgusted and released him at once. The conclusion that Ferguson made from this incident was that he was destined for great things, which prediction turned out to be prescient because he has become a world famous historian. I first discovered him when I read his book *The Pity of War*, published in 1998, which argued that Britain could have lived with a German victory in what became the First World War, and should have stayed out of it, fighting that country if deemed necessary at a later date on its own terms. As it was, Britain went to war relatively unprepared which led to catastrophic costs. It was 'the biggest error in modern history.' My own view was that Germany was too big for Europe anyway (and still is, despite having been denuded of its former heartland, East Prussia), and armed with the resources of an entire continent might well have been too formidable a foe to have been overcome by Britain at a later date, and who exactly would we have had for allies? That said, though, Ferguson had made his mark, apparently being the inspiration for the character in Alan Bennett's play *The History Boys* who gives the impression that a career can be built on the trick of contrariness.

Anyway, when in 2011 Ferguson produced another challenging book, this time called *Civilization. The Six Killer Apps of Western Power*, I was only too pleased to have the opportunity to read it, marvel at its range of material, and to wonder how he had the ability to write it. After all, the most familiar way to make your way up the academic ladder is to find some usually quite limited area of an academic subject and make yourself the acknowledged expert, or, some would say, milk it to death. Ferguson does not seem to acknowledge or to need limits.

Could he bring off another book in the same intellectual league as *Civilization*? Yes, he could, because in 2017 out came another massively impressive book. This was called *The Square and the Tower. Networks, Hierarchies, and the Struggle for Global Power*. According to one reviewer, Eric Schmidt, whoever he is, 'Silicon Valley needed a history lesson and Ferguson has provided it.' The book is in nine parts. Part I is about Networks and Hierarchies. Part II is about Emperors and Explorers. Part III is about Letters and Lodges, with the most interesting chapter being about The Economic Consequences of the Reformation. Part IV is about The Restoration of Hierarchy. Part V is about Knights of the Round Table. Part VI is about Plagues and Pipers. Part VII is called Own the Jungle, with the most interesting chapter being about The Fall of the Soviet Empire. Part VIII is about The Library of Babel. Part IX is the Conclusion. Frankly, this book is gripping stuff and held my attention on a couple of air flights and on a holiday characterized by blistering sunshine. Ferguson has now written no less than fifteen books, and even an admirer like me has come to note that in some respects he tends to repeat himself, as I fear we all do. He has become what is called a public intellectual, a breed that attracts distrust, but I can recommend this latest book of his as being well worth reading. Some of the insights are challenging, and, after all, you don't have to concede to him. You just say to yourself 'Partick Thistle.'

GEOFFREY K FRY

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Two stories in the media caught my eye just before Christmas – the season of goodwill. The first story concerned a robbery from a house in Kensington, London when gems worth £50 million (Yes, £50 million!!), including a bangle worth £80,000, were stolen. The owner of the jewels was stated to be 'shaken and devastated', though not as shaken and devastated, I would conjecture, as people without a job and unable to feed their families adequately, especially over the Christmas period.

The second concerned the founder of the gambling firm Bet365 who pocketed a mere £323 million pay package (ie £1.3 million for every working day) in 2019. However, when considering gambling, we know that for every big winner, there are thousands of losers. As we are all too aware, gambling easily becomes addictive, resulting in many destroyed lives. It also impacts on the young as well as the old. For example, some official published data for 2018 indicates that there are 55,000 problem gamblers aged under 16. The report also stated that much of the £14,500 million annual spend on gambling comes from the poorer sectors of society and who can least afford to take economic risks.

Reported response in the media to the above two stories was almost non-existent. Perhaps they were published too close to Christmas. However, one letter appeared in the i newspaper dated 23 December, and I quote. ' Every hospital has highly skilled care assistants (HCAs) who would make great nurses. However, their personal circumstances don't allow them to take on the £40,000 debt of a nursing degree.' This week I was reminded of the extreme wealth of two UK-based women, one because some of her jewels were stolen, the other due to her grotesque salary, along with the staggering fact that there are over 500 super yachts under construction. If one, or more, of these individuals were to identify 10 hospitals, and within these 10 HCAs, and offer to pay for their studies, we would begin to have the kind of society I want to live in.' One could, of course, list many other occupations which would benefit from such largesse.

As far as we are aware, Jesus never wrote anything to hand down to his followers. But, from even a cursory reading of the gospel records where we learn that he championed the poor and underprivileged against the domination and exploitation of the rich, we can anticipate the kind of letter that he would have written to a newspaper. In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25. 31-46), Jesus is reported as saying that those who feed the hungry, satisfy the thirsty, clothe the needy, visit the sick, and who welcome the stranger will enter into eternal life (i.e. the kingdom of God). And in another saying, Jesus said, ' It is easier for a camel

to pass through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy person to enter into the kingdom of God.' Perhaps we should meditate on why Jesus stated this so bluntly.

But what is the kingdom of God? The eminent Methodist preacher of the 1930s – 1960s, Dr Leslie Weatherhead, who finished his ministry at the City Temple in London after serving here in Leeds at Brunswick Chapel, was unhappy with the phrase kingdom of God and preferred to use the term the kingdom of Right Relationships. His reason was that this emphasised the kind of society that was needed in the world and where compassion, justice and equality were pre-eminent, and where greed, exploitation and blatant self-centredness had been thrown on the scrapheap.

Gerry Leake

GETTING RID OF CLUTTER

Before I moved home seven (I think) years ago, I cleared out an enormous amount of 50 years' clutter, but I got to the point when I really couldn't do any more, so decided that I would take the rest with me to my new flat, and there I could continue the process at my leisure. Did I do so? NO! It is still here. So, the other day I started again, emptying an old chest that had belonged to my mother-in-law. I really enjoyed looking at photos of the family, and our holidays on the continent. And then I put them all back, intending to ask the family if they want them (they won't!)

But I found a large envelope, inside which were newspaper cuttings, and a few oddments. They were all dating back mainly to Methodist Conference in Llandudno, when Neil Richardson was President. There is a report of Neil's address to Conference, as well as other things, and photos (including a view of Peter Howdle's back!), and also a photo of Neil, Rhiannon and their sons meeting the Queen at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

I don't want to bin these. Would anyone like them? If so, get in touch with me. If you don't see me, my phone number is 266 8727.

Margaret Mattocks

I am the Bread of Life (John 6: 48)

Be gentle
when you touch bread.
Let it not lie
uncared for, unwanted.
So often,
bread is taken for granted.
There is such beauty in bread:
beauty of sun and soil,
beauty of patient toil.
Wind and sun have caressed it;
Christ often blessed it.
Be gentle when you touch bread.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Democracy means government by discussion, but it is only effective if you can stop people talking. *Clement Attlee.*

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves. *Carl Jung.*

Cherish each hour of this day for it can never return.
Og Mandino.

If you wish your merit to be known, acknowledge that of other people. *Oriental Proverb.*

It is only possible to live happily ever after on a day-to-day basis.
Margaret Bonnano.

SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCH

Cafe Morning 10.00 am - 12.30 pm

18th February

Pancakes

17th March

Soups

21st April

Paninis & Toasties

There will also be the usual wide range of delicious home-baked cakes and scones and a variety of styles of coffee. The company is excellent so come and meet the people of Shadwell.

LIDGETT PARK LADIES' GROUP

Meeting on alternate Thursday evenings at 7.45pm in the Community Hall. There is a small charge of £3 to cover the cost of refreshments and Speakers' fees.

6th Feb. OPEN evening. "More from the Methodist Minister gone AWOL" - Andrew Atkins. You won't want to miss this.

20th Feb. Has been cancelled - due to the Pantomime being performed on that evening.

5th Mar. A change to the programme. An OPEN evening. Jan Rippin's talk on "Sreepur Village, Bangladesh" will take place tonight. Please come along and support one of the Church's projects for this year.

Lynne and Anne

QUIET TIME @ Lidgett Park

Quiet Time begins at 11.30am and finishes at noon. We then, for those that would like to, have lunch and a coffee. You are invited to bring your own lunch and we will share fellowship over drinks and our lunch from home. Every body is very welcome. Usually communion is the last Thursday of the month. Look forward to seeing you there. ***Tanya***

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