

The Link Magazine

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MINISTER'S LETTER



Dear friends,

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. It may seem crazy to call it Eastertide when Easter is clearly over! - but these are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to his disciples, following his death and resurrection.

The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds during those forty days. Jesus was seen by numerous disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged his disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent him, he was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as his witnesses.

As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with his return to his Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless his disciples. He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection!

Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at with love and memories in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: “While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.” (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: “I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...” (John 20:17) The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history.

Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have him look on you with love. No wonder that Luke goes on: “they worshipped him - and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.” (Luke 24:52,53) No wonder they praised God! They knew they would see Jesus again one day! “I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

Every blessing,

Rev Tanya

THANK YOU.

Thank you Tanya for all your daily meditations during the Covid-19 pandemic and also your streamed services during Holy Week. It really has been appreciated and helped us to maintain our sense of community. Ed.

WORSHIP IN MAY (Covid-19 willing)

LIDGETT PARK

03 May	10.30 am	Prof Peter Howdle	
10 May	10.30 am	Revd Tanya Short	<i>Holy Communion</i>
17 May	10.30 am	Local Arrangement	
	6.00 pm	Colton MC	<i>Circuit Service</i>
24 May	10.30 am	Mr Grenville Jensen	
31 May	10.30 am	Revd Phil Chilvers	<i>Pentecost</i>

SHADWELL

03 May	9.30 am	Revd Tanya Short	
10 May	9.30 am	Mr Ted Britton	
17 May	9.30 am	Revd Tanya Short	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	6.00 pm	Colton MC	<i>Circuit Service</i>
24 May	9.30 am	Mrs Naomi Polson	
31 May	9.30 am	Mr Steven Jones	<i>Pentecost</i>

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year, as mentioned in last month's Link, the women of Zimbabwe were responsible for the day. Below is a picture of the occasion sent by Dr Martin Schweiger of the Friends.



PRAYER FOR CHANGE

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

Typical Spring weather

Sunshine and showers maybe even snow and gales amidst warmth and cold. Almost predictable Bank holiday weather.

Father God we live in times, globally, nationally and personally that may seem to reflect the unpredictable weather traditions of Spring in our climate. May we always lift all this unpredictability to you whose love and steadfastness is absolute. Let us feel the warmth of the brighter days penetrate the cold of the dark ones, so that we may see the hope of the spring growth around and within drawing us all ever closer to your love.

Amen

POND LIFE

by John S Summerwill

Some twenty years ago, whilst laying out a design for our front garden, I decided I'd like a pond with a waterfall. At the height of a hot summer I sweatily dug out a two-foot deep hole in a heart shape, about eleven feet across, and piled up much of the heavy clay soil to make the base of a hillock rockery. I buried a drainpipe from the pond to a drain near the house to convey excess water. It also carries a hosepipe from a rainwater butt to a float valve for topping up, and an electrical supply from under the house. Another drainpipe runs from the pond to the top of the rockery, where a chamber of breeze blocks houses a filter. The pump sits in the pond and the water goes up through a tube inside the pipe then splashes down the waterfall giving a soothing sound in the

garden. The system, which has needed some improvements adjustments over the years, works pretty well.



On a ledge one foot deep, the pond is surrounded by plants in containers—irises and primulas, rushes and many other marginal plants. Oxygenating plants float in the pond, and in summer the pond lilies bloom. Just now the kingcups make a glorious splash of cheerful golden yellow.

The occupants of the pond are goldfish and shubunkins, frogs who come back each year to spawn, clumps of frogspawn turning into tadpoles, and all manner of creeping and hovering things. Birds come to drink from and bathe in the stream. It has given me great pleasure to create it, maintain it, and watch the changes in it through the seasons. Every morning the first thing I do when I get up is look through the window to see how it's doing today.

However, I have an enemy who is bent on spoiling the pleasure, and we have battled for years. This is a heron who disputes my ownership and insists that it is his (or her) pantry. In the past I have known when this sneaky bird has visited because it has usually been followed by the fish hiding away nervously for up to a fortnight. On one occasion, whilst we were on holiday, this heron (plus friends and relations, perhaps) ate almost the entire shoal apart from one wily old survivor who



has taught all the new youngsters I have bought in how to evade the predator.

I read that herons like to tread gingerly into the water avoiding disturbance so that they can position themselves ready to strike when an unheeding fish swims by. A wire around the pond can stop them from gaining entry. It worked quite well for me for several years, but then it stopped working when a particular heron was undeterred by it. I covered the pond with a net for a whole season. It kept the fish safe, though it spoiled the look of the pond. Then one day I disturbed a rat that was using the net to get at the floating food that the fish hadn't eaten. This explained the various holes that had been appearing mysteriously in the net. Providing a trampoline for rodents to jump on was not my idea of fun, so the net had to go.

Floating plastic hexagons shaped like spiders' webs were not completely successful as a heron barrier, so last year I installed the ultimate deterrent—an electric fence. It gives a little pulse that is noticeable and unpleasant. Within days our grandchildren came, so they were solemnly warned not to touch. George, of course, did—and nothing happened! The unit had stopped working and had to be sent back to the manufacturer to be replaced. Then, a few months ago, we watched as a heron landed and boldly stepped over the wire to take up position on a planter that had been put there deliberately to place the fish out of reach! Investigation showed that the wire was earthing where it touched a metal spike I'd added to repair a broken plastic post. I got the system going again and added another strand of wire a foot or so inside the perimeter wire to double the obstacles. We watched with satisfaction when the murderous robber arrived again and had to give up in the face of my reinforced defences.

My emotional self sees this heron as a terrorist and thief who attacks 'my' fish. My rational self realises that it is just a hungry bird trying to keep itself alive with no tools or weapons other than its own body, instincts and skills, doing no more harm to its fellow creatures than I do when I eat fish and chips. I cannot but admire its resourcefulness and patience. The fish are 'mine' only in the

sense that I paid someone for them or for the ancestors of the ones spawned in 'my' pond. The pond and its life are a daily reminder to me that we are but passing tenants in this beautiful and wonderful world, which we share with other creatures that have just as much right to be here. We will one day have to leave it all behind. A shroud has no pockets, as they say. Learning to enjoy without possessing, to share and give, to value most highly the qualities of character that generate treasure in heaven, are keys to a contented life.

Even so, I will not let this big-bellied bird have the fabulous fish under my protection. Let him steal from the Earl of Harewood, who has more to spare, or join the anglers at Yeadon Tarn.

FOODBANK DONATIONS

We are very grateful for the support of Lidgett Park Methodist Church. I know how generous you are as I have been at Moortown when you have arrived with donations. We are trying to keep open, although we have had to close our Hawksworth distribution centre because the building from which this operated has been closed.

I totally understand that food donations are not possible at the moment. We are always grateful for money and if need be, we can buy the foods which we are short of. If people go to our website - www.leedsnorthandwest.foodbank.org.uk There is a Donate button there and the money will come to us.

If you would like to make a donation by cheque, please make this payable to:

Leeds North and West Foodbank and post to: LN&WFB, 62a
Burley Road, Leeds, LS3 1JX

Thank you again,

Audrey Reed, Church Liaison Volunteer, Leeds North and West Foodbank

SPRING

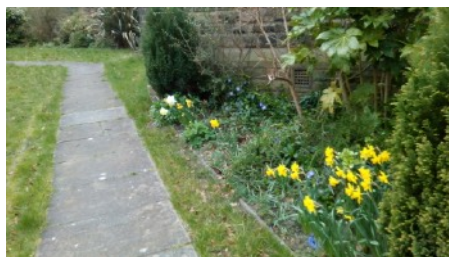
The trees are flowering,
 The flowers are growing
 Baby animals are arriving
 It's warming up every second
 At last spring is here!
 Remember when Spring is finished,
 It will be back next year.



Sophie age 7

SOME PICTURES OF THE CHURCH GARDEN THIS SPRING

Until Covid-19 imposed its restrictions upon us, a group of volunteers worked hard to make the grounds of the church attractive this spring. Jackie Bennett has send some pictures so that we can all share in this. *Ed.*





A BRIEF ENCOUNTER

As I am having to self isolate and time hangs heavy I try to do an hour's gardening each day, missing my daughter's and grandson's help and trying if possible to sit down when I can! Recently sitting and forking over a garden bed a little robin flew down and stood close up to my feet. He (?) started to tell me such a tale looking up into my eyes. Perhaps he spoke about his love life or more probably to clear off and leave him to the worms just forked up. Whatever, we had a conversation and I told him about the virus and my deep concerns and he listened. After half an hour I moved and he flew away but he helped to brighten my day and in these dreadful times small things can matter.

Barbara Holmes

BOOK REVIEW

CITIZEN CLEM. A BIOGRAPHY OF ATTLEE by John Bew

After the Conservative Party resoundingly won the December 2019 General Election, there was no shortage of political commentators ready to reflect in the year 2020 that of the hundred and twenty years that the Labour Party had been in existence only thirty had been spent in office. Of the various Labour Governments, though there never has been in recent times any shortage of Labour supporters among the ranks of the journalists and academics who favour us with their opinions of British politics only the Attlee Governments of 1945-50 and, to a much lesser extent, that of 1950-51 attract praise. Far too great expectations would seem to be the explanation especially as quite a few of those expectations were unlikely to have been shared by most of the electors. The Attlee Governments, though, did carry out the programme that they promised, and one of the reasons for this was that in the years 1940-45 the Labour Party had been well represented in the Churchill Wartime Coalition Government. This meant that they inherited the ideas of Keynes in relation to economic policy and those of Beveridge in relation to social policy. This was just as well because any visitor to the Labour Party archive in Manchester will find an absence of any serious preparation for office before the Second World War. There was little there but the expression of good intentions, and as for the nationalisation programme it proved to have been a mistake to have assigned preparations to Herbert Morrison. When, as Minister for Fuel and Power in 1945, Manny Shinwell went to Transport House, the then headquarters of the Labour Party, to find the plans for the long-promised nationalisation of the coal industry he found that there weren't any. Ironically, the most impressive thinking about nationalisation had emanated from the then Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, who had nationalised electricity generation in 1926 in the teeth of much opposition from the economic liberals in his own party. The hard truth was that little went right for the Labour Party down to 1940. It certainly disgraced itself in relation to defence and foreign policy matters, declaring its faith in the morally bankrupt League of

Nations and opposing rearmament, though, of course, this latter attitude may well have reflected majority opinion among voters, a reality that the electorate later seemed to choose to pretend had not been the case. Only Churchill and the Right had clean hands in relation to defence and foreign policy in the 1930s, though the Conservative Government generally did effect an economic recovery in that decade that was in reality more impressive than the American New Deal.

The Labour Party won the 1945 General Election resoundingly, and, despite the efforts of Morrison to replace him as its Leader, Clement Attlee became the first Labour Prime Minister to lead a majority Government. In this biography of Attlee, Professor John Bew does an excellent job in telling the story of the man's early life and career. The hard facts, though, would seem to be that Attlee was in many respects a political fool down to 1940, and then in the role of Churchill's deputy he did an excellent job. Indeed, there were many in the Government and among those in the higher reaches of the Armed Forces and the Civil Services who preferred dealing with him than Churchill, who may well have been a military genius but one who was organisationally all over the place. In the famous Labour Governments of Attlee there were, of course, Ministers who had served in the Churchill Coalition with him, notably Ernest Bevin, Hugh Dalton, Stafford Cripps, and, of course, Morrison. A role was found too for Aneurin Bevan, and there were talented younger men Hugh Gaitskell and Harold Wilson who were found roles together with the deadbeats that you get in any Government, notably Shinwell and John Strachey. Shinwell's incompetence was evident in the fuel crisis of 1947, which he assured his Cabinet colleagues would not take place. That the coal mining industry was about to be nationalised had not proved an incentive for either the owners or the miners to improve productivity or output in the meantime, and there was a coal supply crisis before the bad weather took its toll. Dalton seemed to think that the Labour Government was never the same again, but most voters seemed to blame the weather, which, believe me, was not difficult to do. Given that right at the outset, that Truman's American Government had terminated Lend Lease just like that, it would seem that whatever obstacle it faced Attlee's Labour

Governments would implement their programme. Thus, there was nationalisation of the coal industry, the railways, the electricity industry (meaning bringing electricity distribution within the State's remit too), the gas industry (meaning, in fact, that it was regionalised), the airlines, and the iron and steel industry. When it came to social policy, in effect the Attlee Government implemented the Beveridge Report of 1942, which itself took further the advances made by Lloyd George in imitation of the social welfare provisions advanced by the German Conservative Bismarck and developed too by the interwar Conservative Governments. This was not just a matter of confirming provision for old age pensions and other forms of national insurance, but, importantly, the establishment of a National Health Service. As Minister of Health, Bevan had to be told by his Higher Civil Service advisers that he needed to nationalise the privately-owned hospitals, but he did prove effective in eventually establishing the N.H.S., prevailing after combative negotiations with the British Medical Association. When it came to economic policy generally, neither Dalton, Cripps, nor Gaitskell got much credit for its conduct, but another view would be that, given the challenging inheritance that the Labour Governments faced, they kept the show on the road.

Attlee shared with Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary for all but the latter months of these Governments, the credit for their overall success in dealing with defence and external affairs. With the Labour Government soon committed to conscription, once it became clear that the Americans could not be relied on to share knowledge of them, Attlee was instrumental in Britain developing her own nuclear weapons, keeping the matter from the Cabinet generally, though, of course, not from Bevin who wanted 'the bloody Union Jack on top of it.' The pair of them were well ahead of the Americans in recognising the reality of the ambitions of the Soviet Union and to wage what became known as the Cold War. Then came the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Bevin's critics would, of course, cite the failure of British policy in relation to Palestine, and for years afterwards, for example, the likes of Richard 'Double' Crossman did so. Nobody in their right

mind – which excludes Crossman, of course - would suggest now that the Palestine question was easily answered.

In his book, John Bew deals lucidly with Attlee's life and times in a lucid and measured manner. His book has attracted prizes and in my view merits the heavy praise it has received. Without in any way suggesting that Bew missed a trick in this admirable biography, I would merely add the thought that, to judge from his last piece of writing, published in *The Observer* in 1967, it seems clear that the politician Attlee modelled himself on was Stanley Baldwin, thrice Prime Minister in the inter war era, much reviled later, but the man of moderation who prevailed in times every bit as challenging as those which faced the redoubtable Clement Richard Attlee.

GEOFFREY K FRY

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TELEPHONE

Many readers of the Link will remember the days during the Second World War and the decade immediately following it. We will recall the many food restrictions that were part of everyday living, and we may even remember how difficult it was to find out what was happening in the world, in our country, and even in our local community.

To find out what was happening, we were dependent on the newspapers (national dailies and weekly locals) and the Pathe newsreel when we went to the cinema. In addition, of course, we had the radio (still operating under the influence, even though not under the direct control, of the first Director General of the BBC Lord Reith) which operated three channels – the Home Service, the Light Programme, and the Third Programme for more serious listeners. For more intimate communication we wrote letters (Yes, we put pen to paper!), and if we were lucky, we may have had access to a telephone. Where we lived in Shrewsbury only one neighbour had a telephone, which was made available to other people in the street for emergencies. Otherwise, it was trying to find a public telephone in its little red kiosk, and which hadn't been

vandalised. Do you remember pressing button A to make the connection, or button B to get your money back?

Since those days we have witnessed great changes. We now have the Internet which enables us instantly to access all kinds of information. We have mobile phones, with all their apps, which enable people to text or talk to their friends and acquaintances with ease. We have multiple television channels to fill up our days and evenings with some wonderful programmes, and some not so wonderful! Why is it that so many of the latter focus so much on violence in some shape or form?

At this time of Lockdown, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many people, especially the elderly and those living on their own, can easily feel isolated, forgotten, left out of things. And it is here, I think, that the humble telephone can play such an important part. So much of our modern technology, important though it can be, is impersonal (e.g. Texting), but the telephone is personal – it enables us to have a real conversation, to exchange news, to go down 'memory' lane, and to show that we care and are concerned for the wellbeing of the person to whom we are talking: so important at this difficult and trying time.

One of the easiest things to do is to pick up the telephone, and to talk to someone who welcomes and appreciates our call. For them it may be one of the few intimate contacts they have with the outside world, and one of the highlights of their day. We know how much these contacts mean to us when we are on the receiving end. So, as the saying goes – 'Don't delay. Do it today!' Continue to make those calls.

Gerry Leake

Apt words have power to suage
The tumours of a troubled mind
And are as balm to festered wounds

John Milton

EASTER PICTURES FROM CHURCHES IN ROUNDHAY



LIFE

Life, believe, is not a dream so dark as sages say;
 Oft a little morning rain foretells a pleasant day.
 Sometimes there are clouds of gloom, but these are transient all;
 If the shower will make the roses bloom, O why lament its fall?
 Rapidly, merrily, life's sunny hours flit by,
 Gratefully, cheerily, enjoy them as they fly!
 What though Death at times steps in and calls our Best away?
 What though sorrow seems to win, o'er hope a heavy sway?
 Yet hope again elastic springs, unconquered, though she fell;
 Still buoyant are her golden wings, still strong to bear us well.
 Manfully, fearlessly, the day of trial bear,
 For gloriously, victoriously, can courage quell despair!

Charlotte Bronte

We need the courage to accept that we are accepted in spite of being unacceptable.

Paul Tillich

AMENDED PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT YEAR.

Firstly, may I open with my hope that you are all keeping safe and well in this very disturbing and strange time in our lives. As a church family, we are all so grateful to Tanya for her daily messages of love, hope and prayer and for each other, as we keep in touch in all the different ways that are open to us.

Our physical church life is beyond us at the moment and thus we were not able to hold the Annual Church Meeting in April, when, amongst other items, we vote for the charity that the church wants to support over the next year. As yet, we do not know when we will be able to hold this meeting.

Our two current charities, Oasis Relief Zambia and the Sreepur Village may well be suffering the loss of giving that all charities are experiencing currently. Obviously, we are going to lose at least six months of fund-raising events during the current crisis. The Project Group would like to suggest that we carry on fund-raising for these same two charities for the next year, alongside the two proposals in last month's Link: to purchase a new dishwasher and to start to raise money for replacing the windows in the Youth Hall. This would mean that when the GCM of 2021 is held, we will be in a position to vote for a new charity following any proposals that are made and including Homeless Street Angels which would have been voted on at April's meeting.

This is a suggestion and not a forgone conclusion. I have contacted Tanya, Howard and Stan and they are all in agreement with this. The current Project Group are all happy to continue on the committee and are already trying to arrange events, hopefully starting with the Harvest Lunch. This could also, perhaps, be seen as a thanksgiving meal for God's help in guiding us through all this.

I am happy to receive your thoughts and comments on this, be they positive or not!

Thank you. ***Margaret Farrar, on behalf of the Project Group.***

THE WAY IT WAS

That Saturday was special. Hard work had made it so, but hard enough, that was the question. Mid-morning was IT - but let us go back a little. The weekend started quite normally with a boisterous Friday scout troop made slightly more important with preparation and inspection of camping gear. Annual summer camp, that year to the Lake District, was almost upon us. After troop dismissal and facing the usual sniggers and comments from the local 'big boys' about our spindly legs protruding from now less well pressed shorts, we made our way to the comfort of the local 'chippie'.

Salt and vinegar enhanced chips eaten within the shop soon dispelled 'big boy' taunts and thoughts of some of the group turned to tomorrow. Thoughts only, they were not for all, so chat was tomorrow's activities, lie-in, football and cinema.

Leaving the 'chippie' to go our separate ways, the 'big boys' having dispersed after proving once again to the girls their superiority over the uniformed few; getting home to mum and dad, giving a rundown of my day, especially the scout camp preparations, and having a mug of cocoa prepared for bed with knowing looks, for they were aware, of course, of the importance of tomorrow, mum and dad bade me good night and hoped I would get a good night's sleep.

In all honesty I think I did. No use worrying now - the die was cast. I was woken up around 7.00 am hearing Dad go off to work. Not much point in getting up at that time. Breakfast usually between 8.30 and 9.00 am or when our dog 'Rex' was sent upstairs to jump on me. Breakfast was quite a quiet affair. Was it 'Children's Favourites' in the background? As usual, Rex had his muzzle almost resting on my left thigh - that side nearest the kitchen - waiting the odd morsel that may, but quite often, 'fall' from my plate. Suddenly his ears pricked up, a few barks and he rushed to the fortunately closed back door. The postman. The moment of truth. It didn't make a sound as it fell onto the mat behind the front door. Well, a postcard wouldn't, would it. Gingerly

I picked up the self-addressed, self-stamped and well written card (well I did it, so I have to say that).

With much relief I could turn on Mum and declare I had got more P's than F's in my 'O' Level results. What joy - I could apply to most of the professional bodies I had in mind.

I started work 8 weeks later, after being to camp, and to this day do not know exactly how many of my school year got on, although the only other scout at the 'chippie' that Friday night awaiting results must have done well as two years later he enrolled at Leeds University.

Funny that the postman knew my results before my family.

Colin Watson

In his note to me, Colin mentions how things have changed from a very simple and private conveying of 'O' level results in 1958 to the almost hysterical scenes we now see through social media and wall to wall television images. Colin is not a fan of modern communications, but I think he is making a valid point. Ed.

WHY WAS THE CLOTH FOLDED?

The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the cloth, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The cloth was neatly folded and was placed to one side. What is the significance of this? Here is a possibility. After a servant had set the dinner table for his master, he would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating. If the master was finished his meal, he would rise from the table, wipe his hands and mouth, and would toss his napkin onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not touch the table, because the folded napkin meant, "I'm coming back!"

Happy Resurrection Sunday. He is Alive for evermore!

THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

Barbara Belsham had recently visited Sri Lanka as part of a group liaising between the Diocese of Leeds and the Dioceses of Colombo and Kurunegala in Sri Lanka. Here is the second part of an account about what she found out about the work of the church in that very different country. The first part can be found in the April Link Ed.

We left Colombo at 4 p.m. accompanied by Rev. Chamil and did not arrive in Jaffna until 2a.m., the state of the roads not encouraging quick travel. Jaffna and the north of Sri Lanka is much poorer than the rest of the island and suffered badly in the civil war; many people from this area were killed and many are still missing. The majority of the population are Tamil and at 8 a.m. next morning we visited two of their schools, St John's College and Chundikili Girls' College. Both had suffered damage to their buildings in the war and both had security cameras across the campus. We joined them for morning worship and then had tours of the schools. The classrooms were reminiscent of the 1950's. We then visited the Nuffield School for Hearing Impaired Children where the striking note was silence and birdsong. The students were taught in very small groups and were actively engaging with their teachers. The headteacher was totally committed to the students and was prepared to do everything she could to ensure they had every opportunity. The students are Tamil and so had been learning sign language in that tongue, but she recognised that if they wanted to do well, they would need to learn Sinhala as all public examinations are in this language. When she employed a teacher to do this, she received abusive emails and death threats from local people, but she stuck to what she believed was right and eventually won. She said she was prepared to fight the government if it was for the benefit of the students. We learned later that her sister had written a book during the civil war, putting the view of both sides in the war and she had been killed by the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) as a traitor.

At each place we visited we were given refreshments, usually comprising sandwiches, savouries and cake so we passed on

lunch but did enjoy drinking the juice of the king coconuts at the Archdeacon of Jaffna's office. Sam is the youngest of the Sri Lankan archdeacons and he told us how during the civil war many Christians had left Jaffna so the numbers in the churches were much smaller, however, the church had never taken sides in the fighting. In the afternoon we visited a local beach and Jaffna Fort before another excellent meal at Sam's followed by ice creams at Rio's, a famous ice cream bar.

The following morning, we left at 5 a.m. for a long drive to Batticaloa on the east of the island, with a number of stops on the way. The first was at Karuna Nilayam at Kilinochichi where Rev. S K Daniels is the priest. As well as four churches (all with trained lay people to lead worship) he is responsible for a women's refuge and a school for orphans and children with emotional needs. We were told that during the war he stayed with his parishioners and had to move the women and children from one site to another when they were in danger. The mission had originally been set up, like so many in Sri Lanka, by a missionary from England who had taught in schools but then felt that many women who had mental health problems or had been abused, lacked care, so she started the centre for women and children, the poorest of the poor. So that she could identify with them she learned Tamil and adopted the customs and life style of the Tamils. When she retired the church took over the work. This is another place relying, to a large extent, on voluntary contributions and the faith of those in charge is admirable.

The second stop of the morning, still before 8 a.m. was at Oppurvillam near Vavuniya, an area which was the last place the war ended. Here is a pre-school which caters for children from both Tamil and Sinhala villages, bringing the parents together when it can, and so is an important project in reconciliation. The journey, with a very capable driver at the wheel, took us through more than a dozen military checkpoints as security has increased since last year's Easter bombings, but we also saw an abundance of wildlife: a mongoose, monkeys, peacocks, eagles, pelicans. Eventually we reached Batticaloa where we were greeted at the hotels with garlands of flowers, another tradition which was also

followed when we visited St Paul's church project at Mylambavelly, a compassion programme with 280 children and 14 staff covering four areas of child development: physical, cognitive, socio emotional and spiritual. The children come after school (schools in Sri Lanka finish at 1.30 p.m.) from the surrounding villages and they are given food, medical care and a variety of activities. We were greeted with great enthusiasm and challenged to a game of cricket. It was entertaining to watch clergy in cassocks bowling and scoring runs.

After a delightful time with these young people our visit in the evening was very different as we went to Zion Church where a suicide bomber had killed 31 worshippers, many children, last Easter. He had intended to target the much larger Roman Catholic church nearby but had mistaken the time of the mass. The church building is being restored but at the moment is a ruin. We met the pastor's wife who told us about the atrocity. She herself had spoken with the bomber who had been outside the church and she had invited him in to worship. He refused then but a church steward had steered him to the church porch, and he was facing outwards when he detonated the bomb. The pastor's house next to the church was set on fire as was the church and she described the outside as a scene of carnage. Out of 100 people injured 72 were children. The charity World Vision has been involved with counselling but clergy from several denominations went to their aid and several major companies in Sri Lanka have helped fund educational, health and social work in the wake of the event. Some children are still receiving treatment.

The following morning, we set off to travel to the Kurunegala Diocese which is in the centre of Sri Lanka. We made a stop near Polonuarawa, once the medieval capital, where we enjoyed herbal porridge, it tasted like pea soup, and other home cooked fancies made by local women and served up in a government sponsored kitchen. Our journey continued through beautiful countryside including the Angammedilla National Park until we reached Kandy. Here we met with Archdeacon George who would care for us for the rest of our time.

Kandy is a very attractive town and filled with tourists. We first visited two churches, St Paul's and Trinity. The first could be any church in England but the latter was definitely Sri Lankan, having no walls or windows but attractive pillars carved like palm trees and open to the surrounding gardens. It was also different in that the pictures of Christ on the walls showed him as a Sri Lankan. Our next visit was to a very different place of worship-the Temple of the Tooth, regarded by some as the most sacred Buddhist site in the world. We were greeted by the Buddhist leaders as VIP's and served refreshments in a special room before being shown around the temple. As it is a sacred place for Buddhists, I knew I would have to remove my shoes, but I had also to wear a long skirt and cover my arms- apparently if I had been wearing a clerical collar the latter would not have been necessary!

We spent the night at the TCL: Theological College of Lanka several miles south of Kandy. This is a Methodist college, but it trains Anglican and Baptists as well. Here students train for 4 years and have to be familiar with Sinhala and English. The Principal of the college, Aruin, made us very welcome and we met Anne Baldwin, a Methodist Mission Partner, who has worked there for two years helping students with their English. We stayed at the hostels where the facilities are very basic and made us aware how very lucky we are. On Saturday morning the students teach 120 children from the nearby villages and we were able to watch their classes. They were particularly keen to improve their skill in English.

We then visited two more schools, Mowbray and Hillwood both of which I had stayed at in the past. This year is Mowbray's centenary. It was started to cater especially for the girls from the tea plantations, so its pupils are Tamil. It has only 120 pupils as many parents are sending their children to International schools, but the new principal has plans to market the school and increase the numbers. The pupils we met were very confident and articulate and we were given a lovely demonstration of Sri Lankan dancing. Hillwood is a much wealthier school with excellent facilities and has a link with St Aidan's school in Harrogate.

We then returned to St Paul's to meet the Board of Trustees. Apparently, the church is not managed by the Church of Ceylon but by Her Majesty the Queen! It is almost surrounded by the grounds of the Buddhist Temple so funerals cannot take place there, but weddings and baptisms are acceptable. The church has a steady congregation of 150 -200 people and numerous activities. We then travelled to Kurunegala and enjoyed a meal with the Bishop and lay and ordained members of the diocese who gave us wood carvings as a gift. Next morning when having breakfast by the lake we thought we saw an alligator or even a crocodile, but it turned out to be a water monitor, a rather large lizard. A great disappointment!

Our worship that morning was at the cathedral, another building in the Sri Lankan style and we could see some monkeys outside in the grounds. There is a lovely statue of Christ at the front of the church. We were each asked to say a few words about our visit. I spoke of the welcome we had received everywhere, Mark spoke about the schools, Richard was impressed by the faith of the people and Julie about prayerfulness. Andrew then preached a sermon on Creation Sunday followed by young children dancing down the aisle with flowers. They then knelt at the communion rail for a blessing with all the other young children there before the rest of us took communion. The service was rather long as everything we said had to be translated into Sinhala.

We then began the final stage of our travels back to Colombo and another meal with Bishop Dhilo, his wife Harshini and other Archdeacons and diocesan staff. Again, there were speeches, excellent food and more gifts. I had met Dhilo and Harshini when I first went to St Thomas's School in Bandarawela and he had taken us to see the effects of the tsunami in Batticaloa. We had kept in touch ever since and it was lovely to see them again. Dhilo is a Tamil and Harshini is Sinhala but they see themselves and their children, first and foremost, as Sri Lankan.

The following day we had some free time! I went for a walk in the city park and to Galle Face, an area in front of a famous hotel on the coast where people fly kites. Our day finished with dinner on an open-air terrace high above the city with Rev. Chamil and his family. There were more gifts before we said our final farewells. Next morning, we again arose early to travel to the airport and begin our journey home.

It had been an amazing visit in good company and meeting some lovely people. Everywhere we had gone we had been met with kindness and hospitality, given food that some could ill afford. We had been impressed by the faith of the people and the time they were committing to what they considered to be the work God was calling them to do; the professionalism in the schools, the joy of the children being taught and their strong presence in the churches. Although only a small number of Sri Lankans are Christian, about 7%, they have a far greater impact on their country than you might expect but are keen to work closely with those of other faiths. Over the last thirty years they have suffered from civil war, a tsunami, serious floods, the Easter bombings and a government which has not served the people well but they are spiritually rich and have much to teach us.

Barbara Belsham



CHRISTIAN AID

This year there will be no Christian Aid house to house collection for the first time since it began in 1957. Lidgett has supported the collection for over forty years despite the limitations of age which have reduced our collectors down to ten. So now seems a good time to review what we have done, how

Christian Aid uses the money and the future.

The good news is that a surprising amount of money has come in those little red envelopes; over £36,000 since the Millennium. This

is just what comes from the May collections. Harvest, the Lent count your blessings scheme, disaster appeals plus individual giving and legacies add to this. As part of the annual church project Lidgett supported the Community Partnership scheme to help indigenous women in Central America suffering abuse and very limited health care. The £5,000 raised was tripled by EU funding. In addition, the annual project usually alternates between a domestic and an overseas charity, Oasis Relief Zambia and Sreepur village Bangladesh, are the current ones and the Traid Craft stall is available at the monthly community coffee morning. All this has involved most of the church, so a very great Thanks to all who have contributed in any way.

Has it been worth it?

The media is dominated by bad news; so many natural disasters, cyclones, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis plus man-made disasters, mainly wars. Now it's the pandemic with its global health and economic consequences. All this leads to compassion fatigue and questioning of the effectiveness of aid. Safeguarding procedures have been tightened since the revelations that some agency staff, not Christian Aid, had abused disaster victims in Haiti.

Nevertheless the good news is that on a global scale there has been a sharp decline in the most extreme poverty, i.e., those existing on under \$2 per day. Back in 1990, over a third, 36%, of the world population was in dire poverty. Now, thirty years later, this figure is under 8%. Of course, this is still 600 million people.

India is a success story, under 3% in extreme poverty, despite being the second most populous country in the world. It is Africa which now has 70% of the world's poorest, over 400 million people. Despite their natural resources, people in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo are the poorest in the world.

Christian Aid is part of this success. Founded in 1945 to help refugees after the Second World War, it now works in 37 countries with 700 local partners. The goal is to end poverty, "We believe in life before death". It is ecumenical, supported by 41 different

churches, a witness to Christian Unity. It strives to help the poorest most vulnerable people, often women, and those in inaccessible places. Help is not tied to being or becoming a Christian.

In common with other aid agencies ,it has a three pronged approach:

Emergency Aid

Long Term development

Campaigns

Emergency Aid

As Christian Aid already works in disaster prone areas, it can offer long term help after emergency aid. These disasters lead people to flee their homes. However, as 2/3 of displaced people remain in their own countries they do not qualify as refugees and lack refugee rights. Christian Aid works with both groups.

Long term development

Here the emphasis is on sustainability to offset climate change e.g., adapting fishing techniques in Philippines to reinvigorate fish stocks. Many projects target women who do 2/3 of the work, fetching water, farming in addition to all their other tasks.

Campaigns

These are the attempts to change public opinion and the policies of governments and international agencies, which impact most harshly on the poor.

The Jubilee campaign in 2000 was successful in changing the stance of the IMF and World Bank so that 30 poor countries benefitted from debt relief. Tax justice is an ongoing effort to ensure major international companies and very wealthy individuals, pay their tax. The Fair trade campaign has successfully moved from church stalls to supermarkets, though support is still needed to help small producers grow . Climate

change is now the main campaign as its impact is greatest on the poorest countries. New projects try to build in resilience to climate challenges.

The Future for Christian Aid

The house to house collection has been declining locally and nationally for some years as has charitable giving generally. It is the sole nationwide collection and raised £4.5million from 1300 collectors. Christian Aid week overall stimulates churches and £10 million was raised in 2019 This is its main source of income. This year more fund raising will be online and hopefully there will be innovative ideas.

It is difficult to predict the effect of the virus. Will we be more aware of the interconnectedness of the world and our dependence on each other? Or will we revert to being self-centred?

Whilst the help we are able to give is a drop in the ocean, the ocean is made up of drops. Every water pump, health worker, shelter, school, agricultural trainer, lavatory, has a life changing impact on a group of people. Christian Aid is an example of a United Christian response to poverty, a practical effort to follow. Jesus' command to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Heather Fry

SCHROEDINGER'S VIRUS

A closing note for those familiar with the Schroedinger's Cat of Quantum Mechanics:

We all have Schroedinger's virus at present.

We don't know whether we have the virus or not as we have not been tested.

We have to act as if we have the virus, we have to keep our distance from others so we do not pass the virus on to them.

We have to act as though we have never had the virus and we are vulnerable to infection, so have to keep our distance from others.

Therefore, we have to act as though we have and have not had the virus. We therefore all have Schroedinger's virus.

SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCH
Cafe Morning 10.00 am - 12.30 pm
Covid-19 willing

19th May
16th June
21st July

Bacon Butties
Paninis & Toasties
Quiches

There will also be the usual wide range of delicious home-baked cakes and scones and a variety of styles of coffee. No harm in being optimistic. The company is excellent so come and meet the people of Shadwell.

LIDGETT PARK LADIES' GROUP

Just to confirm what most of you will have been expecting, there are to be no Meetings for the foreseeable future, not even our popular Coffee Evening. Nor will the AGM be held (slightly less popular). Maybe, if the Covid 19 Pandemic passes, we may be able to get together in August. But, failing that, we shall start the new Autumn/Winter season when we can.

Anne and I send you our good wishes and hope that you remain well throughout this very strange and dangerous time.

Till we meet again,

Lynne

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Never, for the sake of peace and quiet, deny your own experience or convictions. *Dag Hammarskjold.*

People for the sake of getting a living forget to live. *Margaret Fuller*

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