

THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

June 2020



The Magazine of the
United Reformed Church, Hadleigh, Essex

SUNDAY SERVICES - SUSPENDED

10.30am every Sunday
with Holy Communion on 3rd Sunday of the month

6.30pm on 1st Sunday only
with Holy Communion

George Floyd

The following statement and prayer comes from Karen Campbell, the URCs Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, and the Moderators of the URC General Assembly, Rev. Nigel Uden and Derek Estill:

“I have come that you might have life in all its fullness.” Jesus Christ said this more than 2,000 years ago. But when will that fullness of life be afforded to all people – irrespective of the colour of their skin?

The United Reformed Church has no hesitation in adding its voice to the outrage and dismay expressed following the brutal killing of George Floyd. Floyd is the latest in a long line of black people killed in the USA by police officers – those whose sole authority comes from the motto “to protect and to serve”.

Together with our sister Churches in the USA, the United Reformed Church declares that racism – in any form – is a sin against humanity, and a sin against God, who created all people in God’s own image and likeness.

Even as we condemn the violence meted against black communities in the USA, we recognise this violence as just one symptom of a deeply rooted issue impacting black communities and people of colour right across the globe.

For too long, black communities have borne the brunt of systemic injustices, impacting their health, their finances, their education, their prospects, their lives.

The outcries following George Floyd’s death are testimony that many in these communities are tired of the injustice, tired of the struggle, tired of having their dignity undermined and their voices ignored.

As Christ’s Church, we must actively share in God’s particular concern for people who find themselves oppressed by systems of privilege and power.

We are reminded of the deep injustices which impact Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities within our own shores. The issue of white privilege shaped much of the Brexit discourse.

It can be seen at work in the hostile environment, the Windrush scandal, the Grenfell Tower scandal, stop-and-search policies, the over-representation of BAME people in the prison system, and the deaths of BAME people in police custody.

Systemic racism is prevalent. So, it is not enough that we are ‘not racist’, we must be anti-racist - actively working to recognise and address bigotry in our own lives, and then to dismantle the structures of racism and injustice in our world.

As Christians, we heed Christ’s call that we should be one, we reaffirm our unity with all people through the love of our one parent-God, and we declare that it is meaningless to claim that “all lives matter” until Black Lives Matter.

We offer this prayer, bringing to God the pain and concern of our fractured world, condemning all violence and yearning for change:

Prayer

*Eternal God,
deeply troubled by what is happening following
George Floyd’s death,
and by too much other inhumanity that doesn’t reach
the headlines,
we cry to you as the one
whose love was the victor at Easter and
who pours it into our hearts at Pentecost.*

*As we observe the pain of a fractured world,
use your love to drive us from sadness to
compassion;
as we watch the pain of the bereaved,
use your love to move us from pity to
companionship;
as we are faced with the pain of marginalised people,
use your love to point us from complacency to your
commonwealth.*

*In our praying,
let us not just talk to you,
but yield to your love;
in our anger,
let us not just rail against injustice,
but manifest your love;
in our actions,
let us not just flail about aimlessly,
but build the civilisation of love.*

*Until none of us are disregarded for who we are
nor any diminished by what we fail to be,
we keep on praying in the name of Jesus Christ,*

Amen

Editor’s note: For space reasons, the statement has been shortened by removing several paragraphs.

Letter from Adrian

Dear friends,

Last evening after Carole had gone to bed. I was looking for something to watch on TV.

Normally, I have a list of saved programs that I can enjoy but not last night. I think I spent almost half an hour flicking from channel to channel looking for something to watch. In one respect, because of the sheer volume on offer, it was beyond my ability to make a reasoned choice. In the end I gave up and put a disc in and watched an episode from a box set of *Last of the Summer Wine*, which is always good to pass half an hour on.

I made the choice because it at least had some entertainment value. So many channels, so much choice! If I had an interest in candle making, and there was a programme on that, then I guess I would have watched that, if – and it's a big if – I could have found it. Ok, I might be a bit of a luddite but there was something to be said for the value on offer when there were only 5 channels and most of the output was worth watching.

My problem was you see there was just too much going on and so I settled for the easy life by falling back on our what I knew was good. I really believe that there were other programmes on offer that I would have enjoyed but I could not see the wood for the trees. "What has this got to do with me or the church?" I hear you say.

It struck me that so many of the people in our world today are in the same position as I was on Tuesday night bombarded with choice in a variety of areas and unable to find their way around the sheer volume of communication. Like me, they will naturally stick to the rut they are in rather than try to find their way through a maze.

As far as the people around us are concerned, we are just another group trying to get our message across. Just another channel among several hundred that they are not particularly interested in so why should they bother to tune in; it's safer to stick with what you know.

So then, how are we going to get our message across? It is vital if we are to fulfil our calling that we attempt to help people, not only to receive our communication, but to make an informed decision to absorb it. On Tuesday night, I received communication from many different sources all of which I rejected in favour of what was essentially something I had watched many times before. There was a sort of programme listing, but I still had difficulty selecting a program.

I suppose what I really needed was a friend who actually knew their way about the system, knew what I enjoyed and was able to explain the choices to guide me towards the best programmes. I suspect that is why people have found that friendship evangelism works so well. People are interested in Jesus but need to have a safe link into the channel, someone who they trust who can guide them.

The trouble is that making friends takes time and it doesn't have instantaneous results. However, if we are really to communicate, we cannot just rely on shouting at them from a distance. There are too many other people already doing that. We must try to come alongside others and lead them to the living water. I am not at all sure how to do that, how to actually make contact with the people in our area, but I am sure that we need to try.

Yours in Jesus,

Adrian



From the Bible – Luke 19:1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him...

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

From the Editor

Welcome to the June 2020 edition of the *Hadleigh Messenger*. Some of the usual content remains absent owing to the continued closure of the church building as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

I would like to thank those who have sent items for inclusion in this magazine, particularly, Rosemary Harrison-Smith, Beryl Hunt and June Gargrave. For those who are not aware, Beryl

was Interim Moderator of our church for four years, including 2004, the year of our centenary.

Although many of the lockdown restrictions are being lifted, it is unlikely that the church will be open for services and other gatherings in the near future. Continue to keep in touch with each other, particularly with those who live alone, and, do please send me family news.

Malcolm Brown

Family News

Pandemic Ponderings

We've learned a lot during this pandemic. We've developed a new vocabulary and 'Stay safe' has overtaken 'Take care' as a form of farewell. We've learned to estimate differences, especially 2 metres, and everyone has a greater appreciation of the NHS and those who serve us every day in all manner of ways. Our technical skills have improved as we stay in touch in new ways. Working from home and home schooling requires greater tolerance from all the family.

What interests me most, though, is the concept of the rate of infection, the R number. COVID-19 spread so rapidly because the R number was high. Social distancing has reduced it to below 1. This has reduced the spread. An R number of 0.4 means that for every 10 people who have the virus, only 4 more get infected but with an R number of 2, for every 10 with COVID-19, twenty more get infected, rapidly increasing the spread.

Applying this principle to evangelism it gives me great hope. We don't need to be like Billy Graham preaching to thousands though that is good if God has called you to it. All most of us need to do to play our part is to lead 2 people into faith and encourage them to do the same. 2 becomes 4 then 8, 16, 32, 64 and so on. Before long we have a revival on our hands and God honoured once more. Witnessing to two people is a much more manageable way to spread the gospel. Two will do the job. Let's give it a go, starting now.

Beryl Hunt

Please remember friends in need of prayer...

- **All our friends who are feeling depressed or lonely, particularly those who live alone.**
- **Enid Rundle** – in Palmerston care home in Westcliff.
- **Mary Milne** – in Catherine Miller House care home in Leigh-on-Sea.
- **Jean Hodges** – in Bradbury Home care home in Prittlewell.
- **Irene Harrington, Peggy Hughes** – at home.

URC News

Former URC Youth Moderator helps battle Covid-19 on NHS frontline

The dedication and commitment of frontline NHS workers helping to battle COVID-19 and save lives



across the UK has received much deserved recognition and praise. Katie Henderson, Immediate-past URC Youth Assembly co-Moderator, is a much-valued nurse who gives an insight into what life is like on a hospital ward.

“Throughout my career I have always questioned the path God has sent me down. It has never been a straightforward path, often taking me a different route than I expected which frequently lead me to wanting to give up and go my own way.

Nursing in a pandemic has been no different. I find myself working in an adult intensive care unit (ICU) in a different hospital to usual. I’ve gone from nursing 3kg babies to 100kg adults, from using a high-tech specialised software system to using paper charts, from nursing one patient at a time to nursing three. Everything is similar but different, making every aspect of my job difficult.

Due to the shift work of my job, I haven’t been able to regularly attend a church service for many years now. Despite this, I have always been heavily involved with URC Youth and have a wonderful group of friends that help me to grow spiritually without having to attend church every week.

Since the beginning of lockdown my friends and I have met for worship on Zoom every week. This is by far the most consistent I’ve been able to attend “church” in years and it couldn’t have come at a more needed time. Having dedicated time to spend in the presence of God at a time when I feel my life is more chaotic and uncertain than usual has allowed me to find God in the little things.”

URC produces plan for “new normal” post-COVID-19

URC Synod Moderators have produced a new booklet to help churches and ministers move forward once the COVID-19 lockdown eases. The booklet, *Ready for the new “normal”: A discussion paper for a pandemic recovery and resumption plan*, aims to help carry the URC past the lockdown and into a healthy future.

The booklet is split into three parts; the first offers a roadmap to start thinking about the journey



ahead, the second deals with practical issues and the third provides some wider principles of question.

Topics such as what activities must resume, what shouldn’t, and what things churches and ministers might do differently, are discussed. Dealing with trauma, planning the use of space, what to do to ensure social distancing is maintained for the months to come and many more topics are also explored.

Rev. Steve Faber, Moderator of the URC West Midlands Synod, said: “Although ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever,’ unfortunately Christ’s Church isn’t. It will take time for church life, including public worship, to begin to resume safely and this resource will help ministers and churches explore what needs to be in place for that to come about.”

URC cancels 2020 General Assembly

The URC has announced the cancellation of its 2020 General Assembly, the first time the meeting has been cancelled since the URC was founded in 1972. It was due to take place at the University of Aston, Birmingham, from 10th to 13th July.

The General Assembly is the URC’s main decision-making body. It makes the serious and far-reaching decisions on the life, work and priorities of the denomination at home and abroad.

However, some parts of the General Assembly will go ahead digitally. A full Book of Reports has been prepared, which will be available on the URC’s website in early June.

The Mission Council, the executive body of the URC, will be convened for a few hours’ business on Friday 10th July. This meeting is open to Synod representatives and their Moderators to attend as normal.

The officers are also arranging a meeting on the morning of Saturday 11th July. This will primarily be an act of worship to induct the new Moderators of the General Assembly, Rev. Clare Downing and Mr Peter Pay, and the new General Secretary, Rev. Dr John Bradbury, into office, and will be live streamed.

A cruise along the coast of Norway

On the 20th February, Tony and I set off mid-morning for Tilbury dock to board the cruise ship Magellan to cruise up the coast of Norway for nearly two weeks. It should have been fourteen nights but, due to a bad storm in the Bay of Biscay, the previous cruise had been forced to go further inshore and was delayed. This meant that we would lose one night, and also miss three stopovers and have to endure the first three consecutive days at sea.

We settled into our cabin and departed Tilbury on revised schedule at 4.00pm on the 20th February for our first stop in Rotterdam where we had now been given an extra hour. Although Rotterdam is only just over the channel we had never visited it before and found a very eclectic city. We even saw a Delft painted cement mixer! The shopping mall had an art deco ceiling which seemed to reveal another design every time you looked up.



Rotterdam cement mixer

After Rotterdam we spent three days on board but as we got further north, we could see land in the distance and even the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) appeared, a bonus sighting prior to the Aurora tour we were paying for in a few days' time!

Every stopover we had from then on was at a place where we had booked a tour. The first stop was Alta and it looked a typical Norwegian city.



Alta new cathedral

We moored at the end of the runway and watched snow ploughs continually clearing it of snow.

Alta has two cathedrals: the old small wooden church mainly hidden from our view and a round very modern, titanium one called the 'Northern Lights Cathedral'. Most nights we could see the Aurora and the night we had the tour we viewed it from a slate quarry at Paeskatun.



Aurora Borealis seen from Paeskatun

Our favourite stopover was at the furthest north point we visited. Honningsvag is a very pretty town with large statues of rescue dogs and trolls and even a shy young reindeer to greet.



Honningsvag rescue dog statue



Honningsvag troll statue

All too soon we had turned around and were now heading south, passing through Trondheim, with its coloured warehouses and ornate cathedral, and other stops like the 'Troll Wall' at Andalsnes which is a giant, slate, vertical mountain used by climbers..



Trondheim cathedral

Then we were in Bergen, our last stop before crossing the channel to home. We had visited Bergen over ten years ago but it was very different to the place we remembered – it had grown very much larger. The newest museum is the rock-climbing museum with an indoor climbing wall.

Whilst in town we had an arranged tour of an ‘ice bar’ with a complimentary alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink. It’s very interesting what you can do with ice! (See photo.) We now understood why we were kitted out with heavy mackintosh-like capes and gloves – it was extremely cold! The staff only do three hours before a warm-up break.



Ice vase with rose in a Bergen ice bar

This was a holiday that we had wanted to do for many years and it did not disappoint. We have our photo album of memories to remember this delightful country.

Soon after our return the virus started to gain its grip but, because of lockdown restrictions, our air quality has improved so that it is now much closer to the quality in Norway. Will we able to maintain it after the restrictions are lifted? That is a million dollar question!

Rosemary Harrison-Smith

Auroras

An aurora is a natural light display in the earth's sky, predominantly seen in the high-latitude regions around the Arctic and Antarctic. The word “aurora” is derived from the name of the Roman goddess of the dawn, Aurora, who travelled from east to west announcing the coming of the sun.

Auroras are the result of disturbances which occur when highly-charged electrons from the solar wind interact with elements in the earth’s atmosphere. Solar winds stream away from the sun at speeds of about 1 million miles per hour. When they reach the earth, some 40 hours after leaving the sun, they follow the lines of magnetic force generated by the earth's core and flow through the magnetosphere, a teardrop-shaped area of highly charged electrical and magnetic fields.

Electrons in the solar wind will encounter atoms of oxygen and nitrogen at altitudes from 20 to 200 miles above the earth's surface. The resulting ionization and excitation of atmospheric constituents emit light of varying colour and complexity. The colour of the aurora depends on which atom is struck, and the altitude of the meeting. Oxygen gives off the green colour of the aurora, whilst nitrogen causes blue or red colours. All of the magnetic and electrical forces react with one another in constantly shifting combinations. These shifts and flows can be seen as the auroras "dance".

Most auroras occur in a band known as the “auroral zone”, which is typically 3° to 6° wide in latitude and between 10° and 20° from the geomagnetic poles, and can most clearly be seen at night against a dark sky. A region that currently displays an aurora is called the “auroral oval”, a band displaced towards the night side of the earth. Day-to-day positions of the auroral ovals are posted on the Internet.

In northern latitudes, the effect is known as the aurora borealis or the northern lights. The former term was coined by Galileo in 1619, from the Roman goddess of the dawn and the Greek name for the north wind. The southern counterpart, the aurora australis or the southern lights, has features almost identical to the aurora borealis and changes simultaneously with changes in the northern auroral zone. The aurora australis is visible from high southern latitudes in Antarctica, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, and Australia.

Sources: Wikipedia, howstuffworks.com.

Reach out – a blog post by Tim Mullings

When I used to work for a parcel courier company we had problems with theft from our sorting centres. As a deterrent thick, black horrible anti vandal paint was very effective. Once you get it on your clothes and hands it's really unpleasant to get off. It leaves you dirty and unclean. If it were on my hands this morning you wouldn't want to go near me. You might even try to avoid me.

It's exactly like this now with the Coronavirus epidemic. There are regulations to follow. Social distancing means we must stand at least two metres from anyone. There are very strict precautions around hygiene in washing our hands, wearing facemasks and disposable gloves. Lockdown has forced a change in lifestyle and I wonder whether we will shake hands with someone ever again.

In the same way in the Bible there were strict regulations. Nobody would touch a dead body (animal or human), or go anywhere near someone with a skin disease, or internal bleeding. It's not that surprising. This was eras before modern medicine. So the Good Lord, in His wisdom, provided cleanliness laws to keep people, not just healthy, but pure or holy. Those considered unclean were excluded from the community.

As part of my permitted daily exercise I go out walking. At first it was disconcerting seeing someone walking towards me and deliberately take a wide birth. This is happening because of the virulent spread of the Coronavirus. Anyone of us could be asymptomatic, have mild symptoms or worse. The point is though it makes you feel shunned. Also, nobody wants to say "Hello" or "Good Afternoon" as they walk past, as they are holding their breath in fear of catching the disease. This is becoming normal but initially it made me think of the lepers, the sick and diseased back in Jesus' day. And in this gospel passage we see Him reaching out and touching a little girl who is dead and an utterly desperate woman, with a severe menstrual disorder, reaching out to touch Him.

There are Gospel moments that are real gems, particularly, when Jesus speaks to people as our Heavenly Father. Here he says to the woman, "My daughter your faith has made you well." (v.22). Because, to reach out and touch the divine takes faith and perhaps a loss of dignity. As demonstrated by the Jewish official (who we know was called Jairus) who comes to Jesus as his

last hope, throws himself down on the dusty road in front of his neighbours and reaches out: "My daughter has just died; but come and place your hands on her, and she will live." (v.18). His faith contrasts sharply with that of the mourners who laugh at Jesus' confidence that the girl will awaken.

Amazing isn't it that the Most High God is also Our Father – who, in desperate times when we're lost in darkness, battered, and tossed about in the storms of life, wants us to reach out in faith and allow His holiness to transform the impurity of our sinful nature. The hemorrhaging woman didn't infect Jesus. Something in Him infects her. He turns round, and tells her that she is well instantly healing her. Likewise, if our hearts are receptive, Jesus will reach out to us, for by the Easter wounds of His crucifixion we can also be healed and made worthy to be in the presence of God.

Of course no one is above reproach. We in our modern world have many ways of dealing with personal impurity. Vigorously scrubbing anti-vandal paint or Coronavirus off your hands will eventually make you physically clean. But like the woman and the dead girl we need Jesus' grace and inner healing touch to be brought to life, for there is the pollution which gets into our minds and hearts. How can we get rid of that?

Well one way is to re-read the Gospel passage and imagine ourselves participating in the story. Are we the official, or the woman with internal bleeding, or one of the flute players in the house, or someone in the crowd looking on? How do we respond? We know all too well that many hear about Jesus, but few fail to act: "The gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it". (Matthew 7:14).

To that I would add that believing in Jesus, His sufferings and the power of His resurrection is the most important knowledge we can have in this earthly life. Those who benefit are those who believe. Those who reach out and touch the Healer will be given a clean heart and begin changing into a godly person.

Rev. Tim Mullings

Minister of Tettenhall Wood & St. Columba's URC, Wolverhampton.

Posted 19th April 2020

I am... back on the medical frontline – Reform, June 2020

Susan Salt, a deacon at Blackburn Cathedral, returns to medicine after ministry

In March 2019, after a 30-year career in medicine, I resigned from my post in palliative medicine. I voluntarily removed my name from the General Medical Council's register and was ordained deacon in Blackburn Cathedral at the end of June of the same year.

Having wrestled for some time with God's call to leave medicine behind and become a full-time stipendiary curate, I never imagined that a year later, in March 2020, I would find myself back on the medical register and returning to the hospital trust I left. Making the decision to return was not easy. It meant leaving my curacy in five rural parishes, and self isolating from my family, to reduce the risk to them. Returning to the trust where I had previously worked also meant negotiating the challenge of re-engaging with colleagues who knew me as a doctor.

Returning to frontline healthcare has on one level been straightforward. The computer system is as cranky as it always was. Colleagues have welcomed me with open arms, and it has been reassuring to walk familiar corridors, even if all the wards have changed. I have found myself drawing on both my pastoral and medical experience to be a listening ear to staff and patients as all of us navigate the impact of this pandemic. It has been a profoundly humbling and exhausting experience which continues to challenge and inspire in equal measure.

But finding ways to reflect on the current situation is incredibly difficult. The national narrative is framed around the metaphor of battle, with those on the frontline 'heroes', who, if they have sufficient resources and courage, will defeat the unseen enemy.

That narrative suggests that key workers are engaging with a frontline which is somehow distant from the rest of the community. It portrays key workers as invincible saviours who, even though stretched to the limit, will ultimately triumph. It implies that, with enough research and pooling of 'Do not rush to forget this time of lament' knowledge, we will defeat the virus and regain a sense of certainty about the world and our place in it. It is a narrative that has long been applied to cancer and other chronic illnesses, with the consequence that when death comes (as it will), it is seen as a defeat, the result of either the

patient having 'given up' or the healthcare team not 'doing enough'.

The reality is different. There are no winners or losers. There is no frontline far away from our communities, just common sense and people taking responsibility in following the guidance around hand washing and social distancing.

A less attractive but more realistic metaphor is one of exilic journey – a whole community journeying together, uncertain about when or where the journey will end. A journey where all are equally vulnerable, all are dependent on each other and on God. A journey where there is real fear and anxiety. Fear of falling ill. Fear of not being strong enough to cope with the lockdown. Fear of being judged and found wanting by others for not caring enough. The fear of death and dying is tangible.

This unprecedented pandemic is being played out in the glare of social media. Even the most experienced physicians and nurses are taking one day at a time and adapting minute by minute, as they do not know what will happen next.

Sitting with someone who is scared, very breathless and dying is incredibly difficult, no matter who you are. People across every community have witnessed significant and overwhelming trauma, some multiple times.

It is important each community does not rush to forget this challenging time of lament and look too soon for good news stories, losing the reality of the pain and struggle experienced by so many. We need to find new responses that enable communities to engage with the suffering that all have lived with, and the randomness of tragedy both lived with as well as witnessed from a distance.

The need to create spaces where people feel safe enough to share their vulnerability and experiences will be essential as we find a new way to be. There will also be a need to find new liturgies that enable lament to be heard, as well as a clear theological approach to trauma along with ways of developing and maintaining resilience.

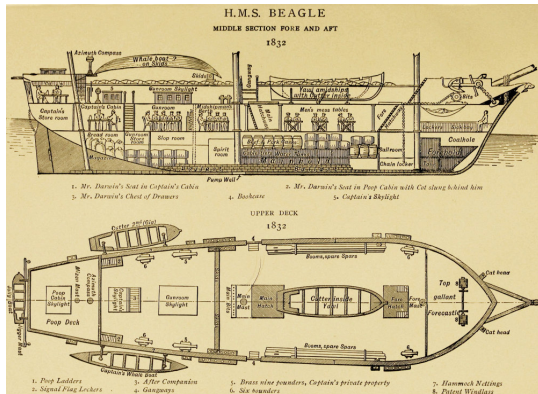
Susan Salt

Note: *Reform* magazine is still available free online. You can read the digital edition by visiting <https://ocean.exacteditions.com/magazines/762/issues>.

HMS Beagle and its last resting place

On 11th May 2020, Historic England announced that the remains of a rare 19th century dock, built to accommodate HMS Beagle when it was serving as a Coastguard Watch Vessel in Essex had been given protection as a nationally important site. The submerged mud berth on the River Roach near Paglesham has been designated as a scheduled monument by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England.

HMS Beagle was a Cherokee-class 10-gun brig-sloop of the Royal Navy, one of more than 100 ships of this class. The vessel, constructed at a cost of £7,803 (£628,000 in today's currency), was launched on 11th May 1820 from the Woolwich Dockyard on the River Thames.



Blueprint of HMS Beagle

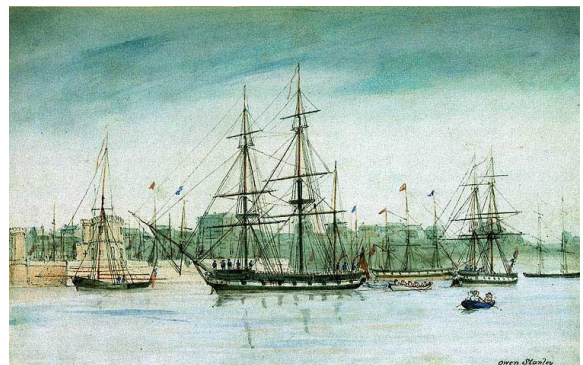
Later reports say the ship took part in celebrations of the coronation of King George IV, passing through the old London Bridge, and was the first rigged man-of-war afloat upriver of the bridge. There was no immediate need for Beagle so she “lay in ordinary”, moored afloat but without masts or rigging. She was then adapted as a survey barque and took part in three coastal surveys of Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Australia.

The second voyage of HMS Beagle is notable for carrying the recently graduated naturalist Charles Darwin around the world. Captain Robert Fitzroy was appointed commander for the voyage on 4th July 1831 but before setting sail, the Beagle was taken into dock at Devonport for extensive rebuilding and refitting. As she required a new deck, FitzRoy had the upper-deck raised considerably, by 8 inches (200 mm) aft and 12 inches (300 mm) forward. The Cherokee-class ships had the reputation of being "coffin" brigs, which handled badly and were prone to sinking. Apart from increasing headroom below, the raised deck made Beagle less liable to top-heaviness and possible capsizing in heavy weather by reducing the volume of water that could collect on top of the upper deck, trapped aboard by the gunwhales. Additional sheathing added to the hull added about seven tons to her burthen and perhaps fifteen to her displacement.

The ship was one of the first to be fitted with the lightning conductor invented by William Snow Harris. FitzRoy spared no expense in her fitting out, which included 22 chronometers, and five examples of the Sympiesometer, a kind of mercury-free barometer patented by Alexander Adie which was favoured by FitzRoy as giving the accurate readings required by the Admiralty. To reduce magnetic interference with the navigational instruments, FitzRoy proposed replacing the iron guns with brass guns, but the Admiralty turned this request down. (When the ship reached Rio de Janeiro in April 1832, he used his own funds for replacements.)

The second voyage started from Plymouth in December 1831 and was planned to take two years but ended up lasting almost five. The Beagle returned to Plymouth in October 1836.

While the survey work was carried out, Darwin travelled and researched geology, natural history and ethnology onshore. His findings were documented in a diary, which was published in 1839 as *The Voyage of the Beagle*. He gained fame through the book and his findings played a pivotal role in the formation of his scientific theories on evolution and natural selection.



A watercolour showing HMS Beagle in 1837 when she set off on a survey of Australia, painted in 1841 by Captain Owen Stanley of Beagle's sister ship HMS Britomart.

In 1845, the Beagle was dismasted and refitted as a static coastguard watch vessel (CGWV) and transferred to the Customs service to control smuggling on the Essex Coast. Moored mid-river in Paglesham Reach, the Beagle (now renamed CGWV No 7) kept watch over part of the River Roach Tidal River System. Census records from 1851 and 1861 show that the ship accommodated seven coastguard officers and their families.

In 1850, local oyster traders petitioned for the Customs Service to move the ship as it was obstructing the river and its coastal oyster-beds and so it was moved to the shore on the Paglesham side of the river. In 1859 the Royal Navy took over operation of the coastguard service. The 1859 Navy List shows the vessel renamed Southend “W.V. No. 7” at Paglesham with a corresponding chart and early Ordnance Survey mapping showing an indentation on the river bank at Paglesham Reach where CGWV No 7 would have been berthed in a purpose-built mud dock. The 1st epoch Ordnance Survey map (1843-1893) shows a boat-shaped mud dock at Paglesham Reach with a hard, later confirmed as a brick platform, extending alongside the dock (and therefore the ship) allowing pedestrian access across the foreshore down to low water.

The mud dock

Construction of the Paglesham mud dock would have included the need for shoring (to stabilise the dock sides) and stocks (to support the ship). An accumulation of archaeological deposits from refuse discarded overboard into the dock can also be expected. A mud dock of the type at Paglesham can be seen in John Constable’s 1814 painting ‘Boat-building on the Stour’.

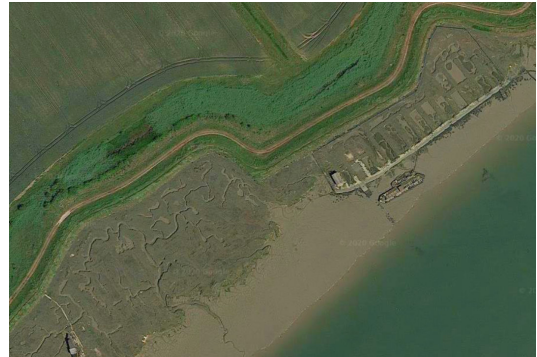


Boat-Building on the Stour by John Constable

In 1870, the ship was sold to be broken up in the dock; the lower portion of the vessel (comprising the keel, futtocks and inner planking) is considered to have settled into the mud and therefore potentially survives. It is believed that timbers from the upperworks were repurposed and used in local building construction.

Investigations in 2000 by the late Dr Robert Prescott, University of St Andrews, investigated the area of the mud dock which was associated with many fragments of Victorian pottery and discarded toys. A geophysical survey carried out in November 2003 recorded traces of timbers forming the size and shape of a vessel’s lower

hull, indicating a substantial amount of timbers from below the waterline remain in place while a GPR survey in the same year revealed anomalies consistent with a vessel similar in size to CGWV No 7. A programme of coring in 2009 recovered timber samples – though an auger survey in 2017, limited to 5 cores, did not.



Site of mud dock – centre of image (Google Maps)

Fieldwork across the mud dock commissioned by Historic England in 2019 comprised a drone survey and two geophysical surveys. This integrated survey examined not only the health of plant life over the dock and brick platform (using the principle of differential growth to identify sub-surface deposits) but also sought to identify buried archaeological features through magnetic and electrical differences. These surveys identified the outline of the mud dock at Paglesham Reach which matches the location and size of the indentation of the riverbank recorded on Ordnance Survey mapping and the associated brick platform.

The Paglesham mud dock – a specifically cut mooring place in which a vessel rests on the bottom at low tide – was constructed sometime after 1847. Despite what was probably once a common feature on England’s major waterways, particularly in the absence of designed dockyards, the locations of purpose-built mud docks are not well known. Only five mud docks are recorded in England.

To commemorate HMS Beagle, Rochford District Council are planning to create a new observation platform at the RSPB Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project, overlooking the River Roach where the ship was moored. From this spot, visitors will be able to immerse themselves in a Computer Generated Image (CGI) Tour of HMS Beagle simply by holding their smartphones or tablets up to the horizon.

Malcolm Brown

Sources: Historic England, Wikipedia, Rochford District Council.



Thriving today and beyond

The Rev. Nigel Uden, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, discerns how Church must change, amid and after the coronavirus pandemic.



The River Cam at Midsummer Common

There is so much for us to be discerning about at the moment. How shall we care for each other? What might we think about God? How can we maintain good mental and physical health? What will the future look like? I sense that many people will have asked themselves those questions during the lockdown, as much as ever before.

I've relearned that, among the best ways to care for others, there is the telephone. I know that because of how much it has meant to me when, completely out of the blue, people have picked up the receiver to find out how we are. Thanks be to God for Alexander Graham Bell (inventor of the first practical telephone) and all his successors.

Given all that Covid-19 has thrust at us, considering what to think about God has also seemed important. I have discovered, as so often before, that grappling with the scriptures remains irreplaceable. They are the highest authority for what we believe and do, and they are as eloquent for me as when first I started to explore them forty years ago.

A family in one of the churches I serve recently endured a protracted health difficulty in hospital. One of them cried out: 'Where's God in all of this?' His father replied: 'In the hospital with you.' That with-us-ness of the Bible's God is a pearl without price.

For many, maintaining good mental and physical health hasn't been easy, either. I cannot overstate how grateful I am that ten minutes' walk from our front door is the scene pictured in the photo. It's there for me to enjoy whenever I go for a constitutional walk. Striving for the wellbeing of people for whom such places are not available – for whatever reason – has to be a significant dimension of the policies and strategies that bear us through the crisis.

And then there's our discerning of what the future will look like. In part, it is out of our control. The virus will do its thing, and has already altered life unrecognisably. To what should we long to return, and from what old ways should we be pleased to be released? I can't discern the specific answer but I do know the we don't have the luxury of simply getting back to what was.

From the early 19th century, the story has been told of the Quaker meeting where a person objected to the creation of the Erie Canal in New York State. He opined: 'If the Lord wanted a river to flow through state of New York, he would have put one there.' Then, after a profound silence, another member rose and, referring to Genesis 26 in his King James Bible, said, simply: 'And Isaac's servants digged another a well.' In the footsteps of Abraham, Isaac didn't just long for what was; he made provision for the new circumstances in which he found himself. And so shall we. Our circumstances will be different in the future. Yes, there will be old things to which we ought to return, but there will also be new wells to be 'digged'.

Wells are the source of life-giving water. If the Church is to be a life-giving well in the world that Covid-19 has re-shaped for us, then we must be dug where and how we can be most fruitful. We are called to be the Church in new ways, and in new places. That, of course, is not only about a 2020 pandemic. Being dug in new ways and in new places is what it has always meant to be the Church effectively – from those to whom the Spirit was first given at Pentecost, through every generation until now.

Along with many others to whom I speak, my own sense is that the combination of coronavirus and a contemporary Pentecost will challenge us, as the United Reformed Church, to be re-dug quite fundamentally in how we are structured and organised, in how we worship, and in how we serve God's mission in today's world. It's not because what we were was wrong for yesterday, but that not all of it is right for tomorrow.

The world has changed, and among our most urgent discernments is how we must change for the times. As the theologian Walter Brueggemann has it in one of his prayers: 'The news is that God's

wind is blowing. It may be a breeze that cools and comforts. It may be a gust that summons you to notice. It may be a storm that blows you where you have never been before. Whatever the wind is in your life, pay attention to it.' (*Prayers for a Privileged People*, Abingdon Press, 2008)

May that Spirit of Pentecost renew us for a renewing work in the world. Even so, may the same Spirit also breathe God's peace, such as the world cannot give.

Nigel Uden

Posted 1st June 2020

Outgoing Moderators reflect on their two years in office

As their time as United Reformed Church (URC) General Assembly Moderators comes to a close, the Rev. Nigel Uden and Derek Estill reflect on their two years in office.



Derek Estill & Rev. Derek Uden

Derek Estill: My two years as General Assembly Moderator – visiting churches, being welcomed and appreciated – have been a joy and a privilege. These visits have reinforced my opinion that we are blessed to have dedicated people living out their faith

It has been great to meet many young people at their meetings, in their churches, and at Youth Assembly, which demonstrated again that they are full of new ideas and keen to make a difference for God's sake wherever they can. URC young people are wonderfully supported and guided by great leaders nationally and locally and I feel sure our future is safe in their hands.

My interest in interfaith provided me with opportunities to visit Israel with Rabbis and Christian faith leaders and more recently as part of the URC group visit to meet Christian Palestinians in that conflicted country. Representatives from all 13 Synods took part with a remit to relay their experience to the rest of the URC and this is actively ongoing.

I have been delighted to have been involved in supporting action to raise the profile of climate change and eco-church and was able to go along to support the anti-fracking action near Blackpool

which has yielded positive results. Helping to judge the Community Awards highlighted for me the community focus of many of our churches with 27 great project entries received.

My ambition at the beginning of my term as General Assembly Moderator was to focus on faith in action. I am pleased to say that from my experience, there is no shortage of this as many of our worshipping communities are reaching out in love to meet needs by getting alongside people and living out their faith in action.

Rev. Nigel Uden: At General Assembly 2018, I spoke of my aspiration to listen – with one another in the church, to the insights of the world, and for God. Gratefully partnering Derek Estill, I've met someone worth listening to. He has insights from local church life and interfaith relations, and a passion for justice. Two years on, and thankful for the privilege the church bestowed, I have heard much else, but two things stand out.

First, I heard anxiety about the world and the church. Ignored, it eats us away; heard, it prompts us to keep changing - only a dead thing doesn't. In the last four months, Covid-19 enforced a reset of daily life. It's equally true for the Church. If we listen to the pandemic's impact, there will be some things from the past to which we discern we must return, but there will be much that needs resetting if we are to flourish for today and tomorrow, and for the glory of God.

Secondly, wherever I went, I heard profound trust in Jesus Christ, the truth about God, the way to God and the giver of new life in God. Hearing the second will strengthen us to answer the first.

The World's First Mini-Roundabout

Friends in the Benfleet Community Archive group are proud to claim that the first mini-roundabout in the world was installed in South Benfleet, by St Mary's Church, at the junction of High Road, High Street and Essex Way.

The concept of a mini-roundabout was developed by the late Frank Blackmore. He first developed a roundabout with a 2 to 4 metre wide central island that could be used in restricted urban areas. The first such roundabout was installed in Peterborough in October 1968 but was replaced by traffic lights in 2008.

However, Frank went on to develop a small roundabout which had no central island and was just a painted white circle. This was the first roundabout to be over-runable or fully traversable by cars and became officially known as a mini-roundabout. As the first of this design was installed in South Benfleet in May 1970, it makes it the first in the UK and probably the world. It is still in operation today.



The Benfleet mini-roundabout being installed in May 1970



A close-up from the same photo is thought to show Frank Blackmore in the foreground

Frank Cuendet Blackmore OBE DFC had an interesting life. He was born on 16th February 1916 at Fort National, Algeria, where his British father worked as a missionary and established a cataract hospital. The family later moved to

Lausanne, Switzerland, the birth country of his Swiss/French mother. He studied civil engineering at the University of Lausanne and was awarded his diploma in 1936.

He then moved to Britain and worked for Colchester Borough Council until the outbreak of World War II in 1939 when he joined the Royal Air Force, serving as a pilot. He received the Air Force Cross in 1944 for his actions when he made an emergency landing on the beach at Ardnamurchan Point. After the war, he worked for the air ministry in London and then for a time in France with NATO. His final posting was at the British embassy in Beirut, where he was air attaché and interpreter. He retired from the RAF as a wing commander in 1959.

In 1960, Frank joined the Road Research Laboratory, which became the Transport and Road Research Laboratory in 1972 and the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) in 1992. He was motivated by a desire to see an end to choked-up junctions, which he found frustrating and unnecessary. He came up with several ideas to improve the flow of traffic at junctions.

One of his ideas was the offside-priority rule at roundabouts, which overcame capacity and safety issues at such installations, greatly increasing their usefulness. His mini-roundabout idea was officially adopted in 1975.

Frank went on to develop multiple roundabouts, officially known as ring junctions, the first example of which was the so-called "magic roundabout" in Swindon, which opened in 1972. This roundabout, which still exists, joins five roads and consists of a two-way road around the central island, with five mini-roundabouts meeting the incoming roads. The name derives from the popular children's television series, *The Magic Roundabout*, and is considered "magic" because traffic flows in both clockwise and anticlockwise directions around the central island.

Frank Blackmore was honoured with an OBE in 1976. He left the TRL in 1980 but, in his retirement, he continued to work as an overseas consultant in Bangkok, Baghdad, and California. He died on 5th June 2008 at the age of 92.

Malcolm Brown

Sources: Benfleet Community Archive website, Guardian website, www.mini-roundabout.com.

Photo courtesy of Castle Point Borough Council.

Computer Corner

Are you a hedgehog or a fox?

Interesting video

Statistician David Spiegelhalter explains how woodland creatures can help us understand our ability to predict the future.

URL: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/are-you-a-hedgehog-or-a-fox/p07f9xl9>

Stickies

Useful free software

I last recommended the Stickies program in November 2009 and I'm glad to say that it's still being updated. The program allows you to create 'stickies', computerised sticky notes that will stay on screen unless you choose otherwise - just like real sticky notes.

Stickies can be resized and their appearance can be customised; fonts, colours and buttons may be changed, and styles saved. Stickies can be hidden for a certain period, until a specified date and time, or made to wake every day, week or month, to act as reminders. Stickies can have alarms set to ensure you notice them at a point you choose. Stickies can also be encrypted to hide sensitive information.

Download from: <https://www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/index.html>

Dr John Campbell YouTube channel

Interesting YouTube channel

Dr Campbell is a retired Nurse Teacher and A&E nurse based in England. He does a daily video on the COVID-19 pandemic reporting on the situation in countries around the world, the latest research and progress on vaccine development. He has nearly 700,000 subscribers to his channel, many from abroad. He is a big advocate of taking vitamin D supplement to boost the immune system to improve one's ability to fight coronavirus infection. (Check any existing medication before following this advice.)

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Campbellteaching/videos>

Word Search – Shells

F	D	E	L	K	N	I	W	I	R	E	P	L	U	J	G	X	Y	Y	M	AUGER
C	O	W	R	I	E	Z	C	W	S	D	Q	I	L	K	F	A	D	F	S	BARNACLE
W	I	V	M	S	D	S	F	K	H	J	Q	M	L	D	A	J	P	B	Y	CLAM
V	B	B	R	U	F	I	F	P	O	J	V	P	H	F	E	C	S	E	W	CONCH
W	G	K	B	R	S	L	P	H	E	O	I	E	N	Q	H	I	R	E	R	COWRIE
J	A	L	O	J	R	E	M	O	X	A	Z	T	E	G	E	H	N	Z	B	GAPER
N	J	C	E	H	B	O	M	A	L	F	C	V	T	T	C	T	B	L	L	LIMPET
C	W	A	C	L	O	F	J	P	L	L	F	N	V	E	L	J	U	V	K	MACTRA
I	E	N	N	M	G	B	Y	M	E	C	A	T	L	E	F	Y	W	M	H	MOON
J	O	I	K	F	I	W	U	O	F	J	T	C	T	S	F	C	U	N	A	NECKLACE
C	N	V	N	I	L	L	E	T	E	A	A	R	S	I	L	S	C	G	X	OYSTER
H	A	D	F	X	L	O	F	V	U	N	A	O	R	O	S	C	W	K	Y	PERIWINKLE
E	C	A	L	K	C	E	N	V	R	P	P	D	Y	E	D	D	L	C	Z	MUSSEL
I	M	H	U	P	P	O	S	A	W	P	V	B	L	M	G	Q	R	O	S	PIDDOCK
C	K	G	T	Z	R	I	B	J	Q	M	X	F	F	B	E	E	J	D	E	SCALLOP
W	I	N	K	L	E	E	L	P	I	O	N	C	P	H	G	K	R	D	D	TELLIN
Z	O	S	V	Q	F	C	T	U	G	O	X	E	R	U	E	L	Y	I	R	TULIP
O	O	P	T	U	Q	X	D	S	T	N	V	N	A	L	I	E	Q	P	B	WENTLETRAP
Q	H	F	P	W	X	L	M	D	Y	N	T	A	S	K	F	H	Q	C	T	WHELK
F	R	N	A	R	T	C	A	M	Z	O	H	L	D	C	Y	W	O	L	O	WINKLE

Words may appear in any direction including diagonally, back to front and upside down.

How one country got over the problem of too many students for the available classes and teachers

Keith and I spent several holidays in Yugoslavia many years ago. It was so long ago that we flew from Stansted Airport when it was still using the old RAF huts. Also, there was such a shortage of aircraft fuel in Europe in those days that on one occasion the Yugotours pilot had to fly around to various airports to pick up enough fuel to get to Stansted in the first place!

On the occasion I am referring to, we went to the beautiful island of Korcula. Times were still very difficult soon after the war and food was very limited. I still remember going into their one and only minimarket which had whole shelves full of 'Slap', which we assumed was shampoo.

A visit from the ferry which had supplies of washing powder and soap would mean whole columns of women with several large bags hurrying to the docksides where they bought it straight off the ferry! (The ferry, incidentally, was not like the elegant ferries that go to and fro the Isle of Wight — it was basically a ship that carried the fresh water supply to Korcula every day.)

One morning we saw a stream of children going down to the ferry stop with packs on their back and it was obvious they were going to school. The time was about 7.30am and so we asked our waitress why they were leaving so early. She said that it was because the school on the mainland

could not take all the children at the same time and so they had split the classes in half.

The morning classes arrived early and started at 8 o'clock and went through until 1 o'clock. The children then went home and either had their lunch when they got home to Korcula or had a packed lunch on the ferry.

The afternoon classes arrived at school at about 1 o'clock having had their lunch before they left home, and worked until about 6 o'clock. I don't know whether they had the same teachers for both classes, probably not. The children had to do some homework in the time they had spare and it apparently worked well.

I hope I have got the times right but you will see the system. I wonder if this could be considered here when all the children go back to school since there is a lot of talk about the children having to distance themselves and classes not taking more than 15 children.

It would mean that there would be no risk of children eating at tables too close together at lunchtime. Nor would there be a need to have canteen staff in the schools if lunch was not provided. After all, it would, hopefully, only be for a limited period.

June Gargrave



Jokes to make you groan

- I work as a waiter. The pay isn't great but it puts food on the table.
- I got really emotional this morning at the petrol station. Don't know why, just started filling up.
- I've been working in a mirror factory for years now. It's what I've always seen myself doing.
- I tried to get my local chippie interested in selling minnows in batter. But the boss said he had bigger fish to fry.
- All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.
- So what if I can't spell Armageddon? It's not the end of the world.
- Someone keeps adding soil to my allotment overnight. I'm waiting for the police to investigate. Meanwhile, the plot thickens...
- My son took his first steps this morning. The window cleaner is furious.
- We formed a band called "Half Man Half Bull" and played five gigs. It was a minor tour.
- I don't like Russian dolls... they're too full of themselves.
- I went to the best ever burger van today. It was so good, it had four Michelin tyres.