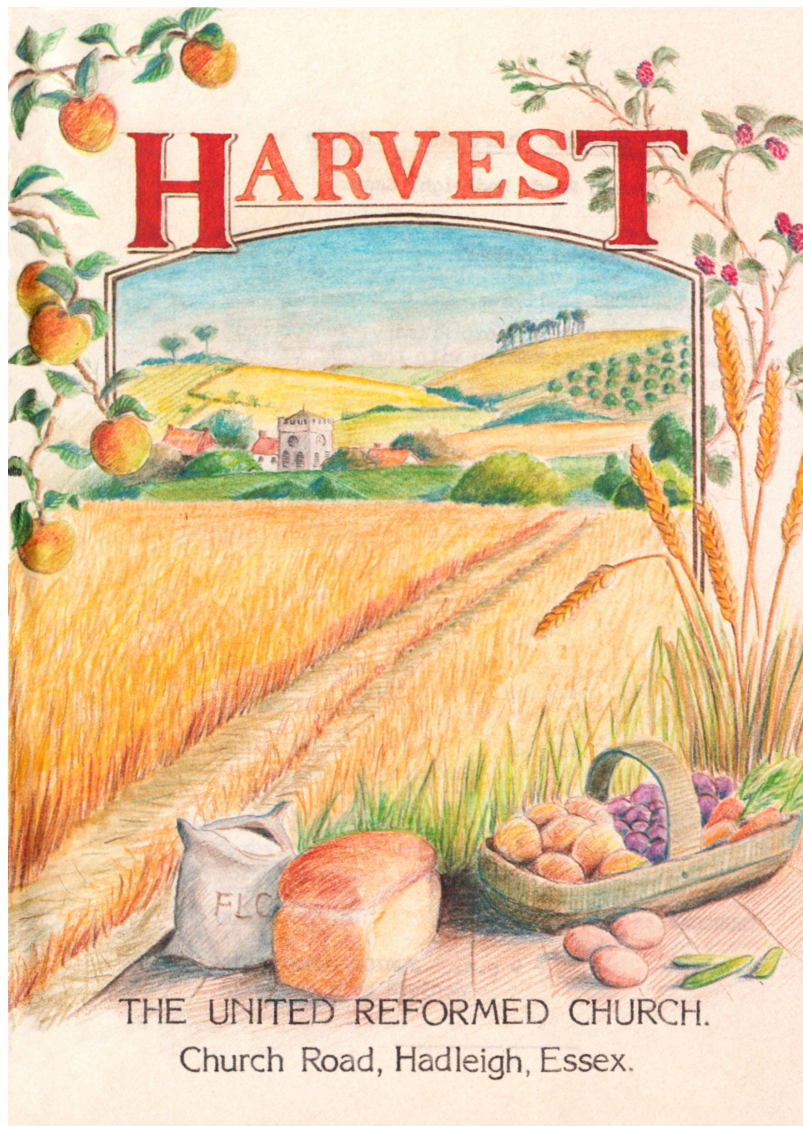


# THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

September 2020



## SUNDAY SERVICES - SUSPENDED

10.30am every Sunday  
with Holy Communion on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

6.30pm on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday only  
with Holy Communion

# First Fruits

## A reflection for harvest time



You may bring them to the Lord as an offering of the first fruits - *Leviticus 2:12*

That's the easy bit, isn't it, Lord –  
giving you the first fruits of the earth?  
Not many of us grow corn these days,  
but the idea's still the same:  
a few potatoes from the allotment,  
or maybe apples from the garden  
or, if we've no trees ourselves, from the greengrocer,  
or tins of beans from the supermarket shelf.

And I bring my gift,  
a symbol of the earth's bounty  
to symbolize the first fruits of the harvest.  
and I am reminded  
that you are the creator and sustainer of life,  
that you are indeed the Lord of the harvest.

Don't get me wrong, Lord –  
it's right that I do this –  
that I recognise, humbly and with gratitude,  
all that you have given me –  
but it is the easy bit.  
And perhaps the dangerous bit as well.

Easy because these gifts *are* just tokens,  
because my larder is full  
and I'll barely miss what I've brought.  
And dangerous because in my short-sightedness  
I may convince myself that these gifts are all you want –  
that bringing them here fulfils some duty you want of me,  
as if you, the Lord of all creation, need apples or pears from me.

Lord, you taught your people of old that walking in your ways was more important  
than offerings laid on the altar –  
and so still today you ask me to bring not just the first fruits of the harvest  
but the first fruits of my life as well.  
So, Lord, I have done the easy bit  
And with joy brought these gifts – the first fruits of the harvest.  
Now grant me the grace and strength to do the difficult bit,  
And, with the same joy, bring you the first fruits of my life.

## Letter from Adrian

Dear friends,

Life seems to get more complicated every day. The choices we have to make more complex and the moral dilemmas less and less obvious. The quest for knowledge seems to have no boundaries. I was listening to the radio a little while ago and they were interviewing a scientist about the way in which the current work seemed to be going into areas which as Christians we may find hard to countenance. This question was put to him: "Don't you think you are in danger of playing God?" I thought his reply very interesting and revealing. He said "If, as Christians believe, God created us, then he created us with the ability to explore all these areas and to discover all that we are discovering. It would therefore be unchristian not to explore all the areas that are open to us."

It sounds very plausible and quite convincing doesn't it? All we are doing is going through doors that God has placed before us. However, we have to remember that, because God didn't want to create puppets but beings which would have real choices to make, there were some doors which, although they were available to us, God never wanted us to explore. A typical example of this is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There it is a part of the Garden of Eden, that perfect home created for Adam and Eve. A tree that God created, an experience that was open to them, but one which God longed that the human race should never explore. Just because it's available to us does not mean it's right.

In fact, that simple statement if followed to it's logical conclusion would make us much less than God wants us to be. It would rob us of the very thing that God wanted to give us, our freedom. In essence this is saying there are no moral boundaries, whatever you do is the will of God and

so everything is His responsibility because if He didn't want us to do it then He shouldn't have given us the choice. Scientists cannot be allowed to hide behind this smokescreen of self-justification. For too long scientists have tried to occupy the high ground and claim that science itself is amoral and that it is only the uses that discoveries are put to that can be judged moral or immoral. So, the scientist would claim that while the attempt to split the atom is amoral, the Bomb may be seen to be immoral, but the nuclear power station is moral.

I must admit that as time goes by, I become less and less sure that the stand "don't blame the scientists for the mess, blame the politicians for misusing their discoveries" is really tenable. It may be easy from hindsight to say that this or that discovery has been a blessing or a boon to civilisation but yet again even this depends upon your viewpoint. Currently, there are a number of discoveries that the scientists are trumpeting as the great boons of mankind. We can think of cloning of animals or human beings, embryo research, the mapping of the genetic structure of man or genetically modified crops. What are these discoveries going to do for mankind?

In the end, as Christians, we are responsible to God for how we treat His creation and so we need to come to Him with the possibilities that scientists are putting before us and reflect to the world the things that God reveals to us. Where a line of experiment is in itself immoral then the voice of the Church needs to be heard as it reflects God's will into our world.

May God bless and guide you,

*Adrian*

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## From the Bible

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food? Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding? To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his."

**Job 12:7-13 (NIV)**

## From the Editor

Welcome to the September edition of the *Hadleigh Messenger*. Again, this is not a typical magazine owing to the continued closure of the church building as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Although its publication has been delayed, I do at least have lots of family news this month!

Although the church remains closed, I can report that it is being well looked after. In the last few weeks, Heather Brown and Kay Watson have spent many hours cleaning all of the church apart from the office and I have assisted by removing cobwebs from high places. Heather has cleaned all the chairs in the Small Hall, which were covered in black marks from the rubber feet that were attached some time ago. I am in the process of fixing tape around the outside of the rubber feet in an effort to minimise future marking.

I have done some gardening to cut back the laurel bush and the vicious pyracantha hedge along the front wall of the store room and John Rice kindly continues to cut the lawn. The two of us also had

a session recently to remove, or at least cut back, bramble thorns which had spread through the front and side borders, climbing high into the trees in some places.

Various other maintenance jobs are being carried out around the church by our regular contractor. The woodwork on the foyer doors and window panels has been revarnished and the glazing beading has been replaced where necessary. The main entrance door has been refurbished. The front of the church is now looking very good. I have removed weeds from the front patio to help.

Sadly, we won't be celebrating harvest in the church but I've included a harvest reflection in the magazine. Our former minister, Rev. Jack Roche, has kindly written an article about a lockdown wedding that he conducted and I have included something about the Pilgrim Fathers, who set off for America four hundred years ago this month. You can also learn a bit about an ancestor of a member of our congregation.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Uxbridge English Dictionary definitions

I listen to the comedy radio programme *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* and enjoy the alternative definitions proposed by the panel for entry in the imaginary Uxbridge English Dictionary. Here are some examples:

**Antelope** – To run off with your mother's sister.

**Hydrant** – An ant with three heads.

**Loathing** – Any object on the bottom shelf.

**Lymph** – To walk with a lisp.

**Manoeuvre** – A vacuum cleaner that even men can operate.

**Mirth** – A French moth.

**Polygamy** – The ancient art of wife folding.

**Scandal** – Footwear to be ashamed of.

**Volcanic** – Someone who fixes voles.

**Reincarnation** – Being born again as a tin of condensed milk.

*Malcolm Brown*

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### HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS

#### Interim Moderators:

Rev. Jim Tarrant/Rev. Celia Whitman

#### Hon. Secretary:

Mr Royston Brackin (01 702 558862)

#### Acting Hon. Treasurer:

Mr Royston Brackin

#### Serving Elders:

Mr Royston Brackin

Mrs Heather Brown (01 702 557678)

Mr Malcolm Brown (01 702 557678)

Miss Jean Reeve (01 702 554907)

### Useful information

Address: 1 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2DQ

Website: [www.hadleighsexurc.org.uk](http://www.hadleighsexurc.org.uk)

#### An invitation

When the church re-opens, we invite you to join us for worship and fellowship at any of our services. In the meantime, if you are in need of help that the ministry of the church can supply then be assured of our interest and concern. If you are suffering from ill health, loneliness or bereavement and feel that we could help, or if you would like to ask for a prayer or personal visit then please let one of our church officers know. All such requests are treated in the strictest confidence.



## A Covid-compliant Wedding or The Course of True Love...

Some of the congregation at Hadleigh may remember Terry Care, who came to the church in August 2016 when Janette Stevens preached there for the first time. It was Janette's final trial service in the URC Training for Life and Service (TLS) course and I was there to assess her.

At the time, Terry was Janette's pastoral Elder at Christ Church Wickford and he was also mine. Since then, Terry has stepped down from the Eldership and I am now his Elder!

I was more than happy to oblige when Terry asked me one day last year if I would officiate at his future wedding ceremony. I am able to do this as long as a registrar is present to do the registration bit. Christ Church no longer has an Authorised Person for reasons that will become clear.

Terry and his fiancée, Murdena (Dee), who is also a member at Christ Church, made the legal arrangements late last year and looked forward to a Spring Wedding on 25<sup>th</sup> April. But early this year we had a 'break-in' at Christ Church when the only thing stolen was the church safe. All that the safe contained were the church marriage registers and Terry and Dee's certificate! As a result, the Church now has no registers and no safe to keep them in even if we did have.

Terry and Dee had to re-apply for a registrar's certificate, which they obtained, and the wedding was back on track again – until along came the Coronavirus lockdown!

It was almost impossible to get any direct information from the registrar's office, as they only seemed to be dealing with applications for future marriages. We were more or less in the dark as to when, where and how we could proceed.

At one point, Terry was told that, subject to the required cleaning regime, a limit of six people present/taking part and a very brief ceremony – without hymns, obviously – the wedding could take place. Then, before we had time to think 'better than nothing', the permission was rescinded!

Eventually, we were contacted by a very helpful lady who introduced herself as the registrar allocated for the next agreed date of Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July. It was a date that she had only just been given and, it was fortunate that she checked with me because she had been given the wrong time!

Volunteers from the church carried out the necessary cleaning of the Sanctuary and a side room where the registrar could interview Terry and Dee before the ceremony.

On the day itself, I turned up in good time to meet the lovely registrar who, as a Christian, wanted everything to be as meaningful and happy as possible in the circumstances. I hasten to add that, in my experience, registrars have always been discreet and professional but this lady went the 'extra mile' being interested in and engaged with the event, subject to covid compliance!

In good time, the bride and groom arrived, looking radiant and dapper respectively. The permitted six attendees was made up by two equally radiant ladies, Dee's daughter and granddaughter, acting jointly as bride's attendants, 'best person' and witnesses. The registrar opted to set up shop in the sanctuary rather than an adjoining room, which is the usual practice, and all proceeded as planned, minus hymns but including some words of wisdom from the Minister!

The subdued mood changed as the happy couple left the church (with some of us da-da-ing the wedding march!) to be greeted in the Church car park with confetti and about twenty church friends to congratulate them and wish them well.

Personally, I have had some very odd and unexpected marriage experiences over the years but never one in such unusual circumstances, or one that I have enjoyed so much.

*Rev. Jack Roche*



**Terry & Dee with Jack**

Editor's note: Thank you, Jack, for writing the article. We send our love and best wishes to Terry and Dee and ask for God's blessing on their life together. Hopefully, we may see them at Hadleigh one day.

## Rev. Edward Russell Horwood

When I delivered a copy of the June magazine to John Horwood at his home in Daws Heath, we had quite a long chat outside in the sunshine. John told me a bit about his family, including the fact that he and his father had played cricket for Hadleigh & Thundersley. John also mentioned that one of his ancestors had been the vicar of All Saint's Church, Maldon for a remarkable fifty years. This sparked my interest and has led to the following article.



Edward Horwood was the vicar of All Saints' Church, Maldon (actually All Saints' with St Peter) for 51 years from 1850 to 1901.

Born in 1821, Edward was the second of ten children born to Edward and Harriett Horwood

who lived at Aston Clinton, in Buckinghamshire. Edward senior was a very wealthy man who started the business of Horwood and James, Land Agents, who at that time worked closely with the Duke of Buckingham. The company still exists but are now Horwood and James, Solicitors.

Edward senior's wealth can be seen by a codicil to his will of 1849. It made provision for an advowson in the name of his son Edward Russell. An advowson is the right in English law of a patron (avowee) to present to the diocesan bishop a nominee for appointment to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice or church living, a process known as presentation (*jus praesentandi*, Latin: "the right of presenting"). The money paid to exercise this right – which could be refused by the bishop – was used to assist with the upkeep of the church. The advowson that Edward made was in the sum of £3,965, which would be of the order of 375,000 in today's money.

Edward was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford where he gained an M.A. degree in 1846. Appointed to the living at Maldon at the age of 29, he was an extremely popular man and led a very active life. He was a Justice of the Peace, school manager, member of the Maldon Board of Guardians, Governor of the grammar school, Librarian of the Plume Library and an all round sportsman. He participated in rowing, cricket, golf, lawn tennis, swimming, hunting, shooting and he was described as being a capital horseman and the fastest runner and best jumper at his college. He was a Founder President of Maldon Golf Club and served as President of Maldon Rowing, Cricket and Lawn Tennis clubs, as well as the amateur dramatic and philharmonic societies. One might wonder where he found the time to carry out his job as vicar!

Edward was also a very prominent Freemason and one of the early members of the Lodge of St. Peter who supported All Saint's with St Peter over the years.

Maldon was unusual in having had three parishes at one point – All Saints, St Peter's and St Mary's (at the bottom of the High Street near the river.) St Peter's and All Saints' were united way back in 1244, with All Saints' being regarded as the mother church. St Peter's Church building became redundant in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the nave and chancel fell down. The only part that remains, the west tower, became part of the Plume Library.

In 1866, the Lodge of St Peter gave the carved oak lectern to All Saints' Church that still bears their brass plaque. The black-and-white floor in the Chancel was laid in 1870 to celebrate the Rev. Horwood and churchwarden JP Jay becoming members of the Lodge.

Of possible interest to historians is that Edward firmly believed that Maldon, not Colchester, was the Roman town of Camulodunum. The Romans were said to have built a hill-top temple on a site of more ancient worship which Edward considered to be a perfect description of All Saints'. "Where", he argued, "but on the crest of a hill, under some wide-spreading oak would the druidal temple stand?"

He believed that the Romans were later massacred inside the temple and that their blood, aided by the natural drainage of the location, flowed straight into the river below, turning its waters black. The Romans called it "Aestuarium Idumanum" – the Blackwater. Although many claimed that the large number of Roman coins found at Colchester proved it to be Camulodunum, Horwood was not one of them. He reasoned that if a town had been sacked and pillaged then the riches would surely have been taken away. Very few such coins have ever been discovered in Maldon and therefore, he argued, it proved that Maldon was Camulodunum.

Edward died around the age of 80 after being ill for some time. One wet day he was caught without an umbrella and was lent one to get home. An hour or two later, with the rain still falling, he



took it back to its owner and returned home unprotected. He died at 3.00 a.m. on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1901. On the day of his funeral, the town of Maldon virtually closed down and the streets were packed with mourners – such was the respect in which he was held.

In 1902, the present East Window was installed and, in the bottom right hand corner, it is inscribed: “To God’s eternal glory and the beloved memory of His faithful servant E.R. Horwood, vicar of this parish from 1850 to 1901, this window is dedicated by his parishioners and family 1902.”

Edward’s son, Faulkner Russell Horwood, also went into the ministry and was Vicar at St Mary’s Church, Aldermaston, for 38 years.

In case you were wondering, Rev. Edward Russell Horwood is a great-granduncle of the present day John Horwood. Edward was the brother of John’s great grandfather, Lt. Col. George Horwood. George married a Welsh lady named Jane Hughes and they had a son Frederick, who was John’s grandfather. Frederick married a Swiss lady named Louisa Koenig and they had a son George, who was John’s father.

**All Saint’s Church, Maldon**

Owing to its proximity, I’m sure that many readers will have visited All Saints’ Church at Maldon. It stands on the highest part of the High Street at the top of the hill on which the ancient part of Maldon is built.



**All Saints’ Church, Maldon**

The south side of the church, facing the High Street, is especially interesting due to the range of terraced windows, no two of which are quite alike in design.

This part dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and on the buttresses between the windows are modern statues of notable men connected with Maldon: Mellitus (companion of Augustine), who tried to

convert the heathen East Saxons; Brithnoth, hero of the famous battle of Maldon; Robert Mantell, founder of Beeleigh Abbey; Sir Robert d’Arcy, who gave the Moot Hall to the town and built the d’Arcy Chapel; and Dr Thomas Plume in the robes of a Cambridge Doctor of Divinity.



**Mellitus**



**St Cedd**



**Brithnoth**



**Mantell**



**D’Arcy**



**Plume**

Above the roof rises the tower, unique in its triangular plan and with a hexagonal spire from which projects a 15<sup>th</sup> century sanctus bell. This mid-13<sup>th</sup> century tower is the oldest part of the existing church, but an excavation in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century revealing re-used 13<sup>th</sup> century stones and the charter of Richard I (1159) prove the existence of an earlier Norman church.

The church is of architectural interest, having been considerably altered, especially in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The outstanding feature of the interior is the rich wall arcading of the south aisle which ranks among the finest work of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the county. The south aisle was extended eastwards in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to form the d’Arcy Chapel. The Washington window was unveiled in 1928 to the memory of Lawrence Washington, great-great-grandfather of George Washington, first president of the Unites States of America. This was the gift of the citizens of Malden, Massachusetts, which was founded about 1649 by Joseph Hills and others who went out from this Essex town.

**Malcolm Brown**

Sources: John Horwood and the following websites:  
[www.allsaintsmaldon.com](http://www.allsaintsmaldon.com),  
[www.maldonandburnhamstandard.co.uk](http://www.maldonandburnhamstandard.co.uk),  
[www.thomasplumeslibrary.co.uk](http://www.thomasplumeslibrary.co.uk).

# The day the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to America

It is one of the most well known dates in history – on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1620, a group of men, women and children departed Plymouth aboard the Mayflower for a new life in America.

A large number of the people who boarded the Mayflower were known as Separatists, originally from towns and villages in an area of Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. They had broken away from Henry VIII's new Church of England, becoming known as Separatists – but they faced prosecution for not following the King's church.

## Escaping England

A Separatist congregation in Gainsborough, led by preacher John Smyth, decided to leave England for Holland in pursuit of religious freedom. They first attempted to escape the country in 1607 from Boston in Lincolnshire but the captain of the ship they had chartered to smuggle them out of the country betrayed them and they were arrested. Some of them were tried and held at Boston Guildhall for a month but they attempted the escape again the following year - this time successfully. They fled from the port of Immingham in England, sailing to Holland where they settled in the city of Leiden.

## Settling in Holland

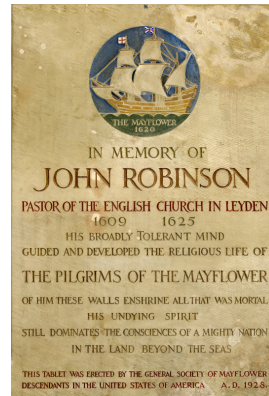
Leiden, known for being a liberal city of free thinkers, was home to the Separatists for twelve years. They set about creating new lives for themselves, bought land near the Pieterskerk church and built houses that became known as the Engelse poort - which means English Alley.



The Pieterskerk in Leiden

John Robinson, one of the founders of the Separatist movement in England, became 'pastor

to the Pilgrims' during his time in Leiden. He was



one of the leaders in planning the journey to America on the Mayflower. He was to accompany a second wave of Pilgrims to America, but he never made it to the New World, dying before the journey. He was buried at St Pieterskerk Church in Leiden where a plaque is situated.

During the twelve years they were in Leiden, the Separatists found life hard. They earned little money and were not used to the urban location - having come from rural English villages. Parents started worrying that their children were being heavily influenced by the Dutch and would eventually forget their English roots. They were also worried a war between Holland and Spain was imminent and that this would mean danger for the freedom they had fled for.

## Getting aboard

They decided to move on again, so were in touch with their Separatist counterparts back in England to forge a plan to all travel together to Virginia, America and start a new community there, where they could live and worship as they wanted.

To help fund the expensive trip, they made an agreement with the Virginia Company in London – created to establish colonies on the coast of North America which needed people to settle in them and send back goods for trade.

It was another Separatist John Carver who had a key role in planning the journey. He and fellow Pilgrim Robert Cushman were successful in negotiating with the Virginia Company for land in America where they could legally land and settle. William Brewster also knew a prominent member of the company to negotiate with too.

John Carver also won the key financial backing that was to pay for the trans-Atlantic voyage. He approached businessman Thomas Weston in London and the Merchant Adventurers in 1620 and convinced them that if they funded the journey, they would see a return on their investment. Thomas Weston agreed and hired the Mayflower which sailed from London to Southampton to meet the Speedwell, the ship which brought the Pilgrims from Leiden.



## Setting sail on 22<sup>nd</sup> July

The Separatists in Holland had sold their personal belongings to buy the Speedwell. After one last joint meal and service in the house of Rev. John Robinson, 16 men, 11 women and 19 children made the journey from Leiden to Delfshaven near Rotterdam to set sail to Southampton on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1620. They travelled on foot, on horseback and by carriage carrying their possessions, ready to board the Speedwell ship, meet the Mayflower, and sail onto a new life in America.

The night before the Pilgrims departed was spent praying in front of the church, now known as the Pilgrim Fathers Church.



**The Pilgrim Fathers Church**

The following morning residents of Delfshaven and friends of the Pilgrims gathered to see them leave. John Robinson led prayers and after an emotional goodbye, the Speedwell set a course along the River Maas out to the North Sea and en route to Southampton.

A few days later the Speedwell arrived in Southampton and met up with the Mayflower which had sailed from Rotherhithe in London carrying the other Separatists from England. The plan was to stock up in Southampton and sail to America together. The town was a thriving seaport so as well as offering all the commercial facilities needed to equip the long sea voyage, it also had established trading links with Virginia and Newfoundland. Living there was a group of seamen who had experience of the Atlantic crossing which proved helpful.

The Speedwell had been leaking during her journey from Holland, so was repaired in Southampton's extensive ship building and repair facilities near West Quay. Southampton proved the right choice, not least for its offering of all the supplies required for the journey and to establish a permanent community in America. The Speedwell and Mayflower were anchored just off West Quay, and the Pilgrims spent all day shopping for supplies, before sleeping on the ships at night.

And they were certainly in the right place – of the 153 merchants in the town in 1620, 118 were involved in the wool trade, but the remainder would have been able to help the Pilgrims with all the other items they would have needed to become self-sufficient.

A Hampshire man called Stephen Hopkins joined the Mayflower in Southampton, and is known as the only passenger to have had any experience of the New World, having been shipwrecked in Bermuda in 1609.

## Leaving English shores

After a hectic few days of repairs and preparations, both the Mayflower and Speedwell left Southampton on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1620. But the Speedwell took on water again – thought to be either because she carried too much sail, straining her timbers, or the result of sabotage by the reluctant crew.

Both ships were diverted to Dartmouth, and over the course of a week the Speedwell was repaired. They set sail out into the English Channel towards the North Atlantic, but 300 miles off Land's End the Speedwell leaked again and it's decided they cannot risk continuing.

They turned around and headed for Plymouth, having already spent up to six weeks at sea since originally departing London and Leiden. The Speedwell was finally declared unfit to sail, and after some Pilgrims dropped out and stayed in Plymouth, the remainder boarded the Mayflower for the voyage.



**Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor by William Halsall, 1882 at Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, Massachusetts, USA**

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1620, the Mayflower, with 102 passengers and up to 30 crew onboard, left the Mayflower Steps on Plymouth's Barbican. This was the last time the Pilgrims were on English soil before heading to the New World and a new life.

Source: [www.mayflower400.org.uk](http://www.mayflower400.org.uk)



Editor's note: This month there are two blog posts for the price of one. These are the first blog posts of the new Moderators of General Assembly, Rev. Clare Downing and Peter Pay, who were inducted on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

## My learning journey

**In her first blog post, Rev. Clare Downing shares new discoveries, and encourages lifelong learning with Jesus.**

I've been learning some new skills. As of this week, I can not only record myself on video, and edit out the mistakes, I can add photographs while not losing the voiceover. Sermons can have visual aids again.

Other recent discoveries include polls on Zoom, the video conferencing platform, which can be made so that they have multiple possible answers; if someone is screen sharing, you don't have to let their document take up most of the space; and, just because a YouTube clip works perfectly well in a PowerPoint presentation when you try it on Zoom and you're the only person in the "room", that doesn't mean the clip will work when you're in a real meeting.

That's just a start – it's some of the practical things. The restrictions that we are all living under have meant that I've been learning about myself too – or at least being reminded of some of my foibles and failings. Despite the fact that I don't come into any of the high risk categories, I've not been easy to live with. I've had to learn

to do things differently, whether that is around spending most of my time at my desk, or drastically reducing the number of times I pop to the supermarket.

The old saying "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" may be true of dogs (though I have my doubts) but one of things about being human is that we are eminently adaptable. In other words, we learn. And, as disciples of Jesus, we are – or at least we should be – constantly learning.

If we are walking the way with Jesus, then we should be seeing new things, being challenged in new ways. The question where do we see God at work in these times is a vital one.

I hope that, in the coming two years, I will have plenty of opportunities to learn from people all around the United Reformed Church, and beyond. I'm looking forward to hearing about what you are learning in your journey with Jesus.

God bless,

*Clare Downing*

Posted 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## Virtual lives

**In his first blog, Peter Pay reflects on how much of our lives now takes place digitally, but how God's remains ever present.**

Much of my life seems to have become virtual. Two years ago, I watched my election as Moderator at General Assembly virtually whilst in hospital. Then, on 11<sup>th</sup> July of this year the URC held its first digital General Assembly and I was inducted virtually as Moderator.

I have a five-month-old grandson who I have only met virtually. I go to virtual meetings and councils, virtual worship and virtual family get-togethers and celebrations. I shop virtually, manage my finances virtually and do my giving virtually. I have doctor's appointments virtually. I

could even do cooking virtually using delivery services if I wished.

There are some pluses: we can join meetings and go to worship anywhere without having to travel, which benefits the environment; we can link up with folk who we would struggle to see physically; information and news are easily accessible and instant, and correspondence is also potentially much easier and quicker.

But what we all miss most is the physical, face to face contact. We miss the informal chats, the body language, the handshakes, the hugs. We miss the physical care. We miss being and singing together. We miss social and cultural events and activities.

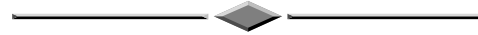
This all causes me to reflect on my relationship with God. In many respects this could also be described as virtual as I have never physically met Him, although I have frequently felt his presence. Yet, I know that my relationship with the Lord is far from limited despite this.

He is always accessible. His presence, His guidance is very real. In my prayers I can always “have a chat”. He is always there. His Spirit is still present at our virtual meetings and certainly at our virtual worship in the same way as before.

Some of you may find the present restrictions difficult. You may long to “get back to normal”, although perhaps not the old “normal”. I certainly long to be in a worshipping community again, singing praise to Him although I recognise that may take time. Yet whatever happens, I continue to hold that special virtual relationship with my Lord as something precious that will remain with me.

*Peter Pay*

Posted 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

This poem first appeared in the May 2012 edition of the magazine

### Favourite Things – for the Older Person

Statins and eye drops and needles for knitting,  
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,  
Recycled newspapers tied up with string,  
These are a few of my favourite things.

Cataracts, hearing aids and pensioner bus passes,  
Polident and Fixodent and dentures in glasses,  
Pacemakers, zimmers and armchairs with wings.  
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak  
When the knees go bad,  
I simply remember my favourite things  
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,  
No spicy hot food, or food cooked with onions,  
Dressing gowns, heat pads and hot meals they bring.  
These are a few of my favourite things.

Back pains, confused brains and no chance for sinning,  
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinning,  
And we won't mention our short, stunted frames  
When we remember our favourite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break,  
When the eyes grow dim,  
I simply remember the great life I've had  
And then I don't feel so bad.

*Author unknown*

Based on the song *My Favourite Things* from the film *The Sound of Music*



## URC News

Two long-serving URC ministers have retired in recent weeks. Rev. Richard Church and Rev. John Proctor have between them clocked up 73 years of service. Richard came to Hadleigh URC in May 2005 in his then role of Synod Training & Development Officer to lead a session on *Responding to Christ's Call*. We wish both Richard and John a long and happy retirement and give thanks for all that they have done for our denomination.

### Richard Church retires after four decades of URC ministry



Rev. Richard Church has retired, after 39 years of ministry in the United Reformed Church (URC). Richard has served the URC as Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) since May 2015. His last working day was on 17<sup>th</sup> July. As staff were unable to celebrate the occasion in person, a leaving party was held online, using Zoom.

Richard began his URC ministry on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1981, as a Minister of Word and Sacraments. He later served as Moderator of the North Western Synod. His appointment to the role of Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), eight years after becoming a synod moderator, was the last to make up the then-newly-formed General Secretariat – the URC's senior leadership team.

Before becoming a minister, Richard worked as a drama teacher and a baker. Since accepting his call to ministry, Richard has been known to bake delicious cakes for his discipleship team.

Speaking of his and wife Sheila's plans for retirement, Richard said: "Currently, Sheila and I have two granddaughters. All being well, in August we will welcome a new grandson and in September another granddaughter. So, I think those little people might want to see their granddad and grandma."

### Rev. John Proctor, outgoing General Secretary, retires

**Rev. John Proctor retired on 14<sup>th</sup> August after serving the Church for 34 years. Due to coronavirus, colleagues and friends gathered digitally for a virtual leaving do. In his own words, John reflects on his time in the role and offers thanks to those he has worked with:**



It was refreshing to read the interview in July's *Reform* with our new General Secretary, John Bradbury. The Church has made a fine choice. John will get a grip on the job very quickly, and he will serve with great creativity and much good sense.

Meanwhile I am retiring. There are many people to thank. The General Secretary has a special vantage point across the life of the URC, and I've often been mightily impressed by the commitment, care, witness and energy in our local congregations. Our people make a difference in God's world. There is much we should rejoice in and persist with, and I salute everyone who is a part of it – tens of thousands of you.

The team at Church House in London is an excellent bunch of people – gifted, committed, hard-working, helpful. I enjoy their company and have learned a lot from working among them. David Grosch-Miller and Alan Yates have line managed me on behalf of the Church, wisely and attentively, for three years each. Krystyna Pullen, Helen Munt and Tasneem Choudhury have given me important PA support. Our Deputy General Secretaries are really outstanding colleagues – Jane Baird, Francis Brienen and Richard Church. The Assembly Officers with whom I have worked give able and generous service to our Church, all of them voluntarily. My wife Elaine, invisible to most of the URC, is an absolute rock to me.

Being trusted as a minister is an immense and humbling privilege. I've spent forty years working for values I believe in, generally among pleasant, well-motivated and supportive people. My family and I have lived from the Christian giving of others. I don't apologise for that; I've worked hard. But I am certainly grateful.

What about hopes? The good news of Jesus Christ – God taking our flesh, dying for our sins and defeating our death – is a hope to hold onto through thick and thin, and a hope to hold out confidently to the world. May God bless you, and may this hope hold you firm.

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## Computer Corner

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### Thames Estuary Partnership

**Interesting website**

The Thames Estuary Partnership is an independent charity that builds understanding and appreciation of one of the world's most famous rivers. It brings together key stakeholders in the Thames, working in partnership to improve the river both for London's inhabitants and for the ecosystems that it holds. The website has a free downloadable *Talk of the Thames* magazine and podcast.

URL: <https://www.thamesestuarypartnership.org>

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### MiniTool Power Data Recovery Version 9.0

**Useful free software**

MiniTool Power Data Recovery can deep scan hard drives, memory cards, SSDs, etc. on Windows-compatible devices and recover data lost by human error and system crashes. It supports 100+ types of files including photos, videos, audios, documents, and more. The free version is limited to restoring 1GB of files.

Download from:

<https://www.minitool.com/data-recovery-software/free-for-windows.html>

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### Yale Course - Epidemics in Western Society Since 1600

**Interesting videos**

Yale University has uploaded videos of many of its course lectures. This course of 26 lectures, recorded in 2010, consists of an analysis of the impact of epidemic diseases on western society and culture from the bubonic plague to HIV/AIDS and the more recent experience of SARS and swine flu. If you can find the time, do watch lecture 25 in which the possibility of a devastating novel coronavirus, like SARS-CoV-2, is highlighted.

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3AE7B3B6917DE8E6>

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## Word Search – Agricultural machinery and tools

Inspired by harvest.

P	D	V	H	N	B	E	L	E	F	D	Y	T	C	S	P	J	J	W	G	BALER
L	L	L	I	R	D	Y	E	S	P	E	R	P	X	A	E	K	O	E	F	CHOPPER
O	C	C	W	S	L	A	S	R	Q	A	I	E	K	K	C	E	Z	P	Z	COMBINE
U	I	H	U	B	R	G	F	E	K	J	R	P	Y	O	W	J	D	O	Z	CULTIVATOR
G	L	S	O	L	N	D	D	S	V	H	M	O	M	A	S	Y	L	E	L	DRILL
H	K	E	P	P	T	U	K	D	H	I	B	B	T	P	R	O	K	Y	R	HARROW
O	S	G	A	R	P	I	H	Q	L	R	I	E	R	A	X	P	S	U	O	HOE
I	P	V	X	C	W	E	V	L	F	N	E	E	F	X	V	Z	S	P	U	MILL
U	O	A	T	A	O	S	R	A	E	X	A	D	W	X	J	A	K	N	V	MOWER
Q	T	R	R	B	R	C	K	K	T	D	C	E	D	E	M	I	T	J	A	PITCHFORK
Z	W	E	Q	E	R	Y	S	J	E	O	V	E	W	E	U	M	S	O	L	PLOUGH
E	F	W	O	X	A	T	D	R	E	U	R	O	B	U	R	T	G	H	R	ROTAVATOR
W	H	H	W	S	H	H	M	H	U	M	B	W	A	T	A	C	G	J	H	SCYTHE
F	M	K	S	N	Z	E	H	F	L	R	G	S	L	M	H	H	C	F	M	SEEDER
V	E	T	R	A	C	T	O	R	A	F	O	F	E	Z	C	E	Q	O	T	SHREDDER
U	A	G	Y	T	Q	X	M	A	Q	E	H	P	R	P	E	R	W	L	L	SICKLE
L	M	K	Y	V	T	I	I	M	F	W	H	R	E	H	S	E	R	H	T	SPRAYER
F	E	N	V	P	G	K	R	O	F	H	C	T	I	P	R	D	N	S	Y	SPREADER
X	W	S	I	C	K	L	E	U	R	W	O	D	H	T	C	A	U	O	X	THRESHER
P	T	X	B	O	E	G	V	A	I	T	C	A	K	K	M	T	Z	F	F	TRACTOR

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

# Hope is the Thing with Feathers

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.

*Emily Dickinson*

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## Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

Emily Dickinson was born on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1830 in Amherst, Massachusetts where she spent most of her life. She became a recluse in the early 1860s and is said to have rarely left her room. However, she was a prolific poet, and after her death on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1886, her sister discovered nearly 1800 of her poems hand bound in several volumes. She never gave titles to her poems so they are known by their first line.



The first volume of her work was published posthumously in 1890, although much of her original punctuation, and some wording, was changed to fit with 19<sup>th</sup> century conventions. It was only in 1955 that the first complete edition of her poetry was published in which the poems were printed as written in the original manuscripts. Dickinson is now widely regarded as one of America's greatest poets.

For those who would like to know more about Emily Dickinson, there is a very detailed entry on Wikipedia. There are also two radio programmes about her currently available on BBC Sounds. The first is an episode of Radio 4's *In Our Time* programme hosted by Melvyn Bragg, available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08p5lbp>. The second is an episode of *Great Lives* hosted by Matthew Parris, available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0137ynp>.

*Malcolm Brown*

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## Hope from the Bible

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)