

THE HADLEIGH MESSENGER

March 2021



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

Lockdown easing: Key dates

● Step one: 8 March

Schools open. Outdoor after-school sports allowed

Two people allowed to sit together outdoors

Care home residents allowed one regular visitor

● Step one: 29 March

Six people or two households allowed to meet outdoors

Outdoor sports facilities open, organised sport allowed

Travel outside local area allowed

● Step two: 12 April*

Non-essential retail and personal care open

Hospitality outdoors open

Indoor leisure eg gyms, swimming pools open

Self-contained holiday accommodation open

● Step three: 17 May*

Outdoors most social contact rules lifted

Six people or two households can meet indoors

Indoor hospitality and hotels open

● Step four: 21 June*

All legal limits on social contact removed

Hope to reopen final closed sectors of the economy

*Earliest possible date

Letter from Adrian

Dear friends,

The world is a dangerous place. In thinking back over the last few months, I imagine that is an almost inevitable conclusion. Covid-19 has invaded and destroyed so many lives. There is a sense in which we see its destructive force and wonder where it will end; we can feel so weak and helpless in the face of such devastation.

What can our faith say into such a situation? We must face the consequences of the claim made in the very first sentence of Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. Furthermore, the last verse of this chapter says, “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good”. So then, the bible teaches that God created our world and it came up to His standards as a good job. We must also remember that the only standard that God is willing to call good is perfection. It’s not good if it isn’t perfect.

It may seem quite difficult to bring these two experiences together and accept the truth of both. It is quite clear from all our experiences of God that to say that God is good is an understatement. Yet he created an environment for us which is both dangerous and destructive and called it good. If our experience of God is to be worth having, then it has to be able to stand up to these questions and give answers that are both true to the God who was revealed in Jesus and do not deny our experience of the world.

If we believe in the God of the Bible, then in some way he must be responsible for the world we experience daily. This must be true because He makes this claim Himself and comes Himself to rescue and restore His creation to Himself. The one factor that we are reluctant to take into account is the effect that man’s decision to violate God’s law actually had on the creation itself. Romans 8 vv. 20-21 says: “For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

The result of man’s disobedience affected not only himself but the whole of creation, destroying God’s perfect creation and throwing the whole thing off course. We therefore live in a world in which the forces of evil are at work determined to undermine the perfection that God placed in our world and to destroy the way in which the world speaks of its loving creator. The devil hiding behind our reluctance to accept his power or even his existence encourages us to either blame God or better still to deny Him.

In this situation, we as the church, first need to acknowledge the source of the problem and then work together so that the redeemer of the world may be known.

Yours in Him,

Adrian



From the Bible – Genesis 1:9-13, 20-25 (NIV)

Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the third day... And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.’ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’ And there was evening, and there was morning – the fifth day. And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

From the Editor

Welcome to the March 2021 edition of the *Hadleigh Messenger*. This month's edition is another random mix of articles, mainly plucked from the Internet.

With a roadmap out of lockdown there is now light at the end of the tunnel to our current situation. However, the removal of restrictions is dependent on satisfactory downward progress in the various coronavirus statistics. The Moderators of all the URC Synods have published advice urging caution with reopening of churches and I've included it in the magazine for all to see.

I recently received the papers for the next Eastern Synod meeting to be held on Zoom on 20th March. It was sad to read that four URC churches have closed in the last few months – Great Baddow, Princes Street (Norwich), Long Melford and Wickhambrook (Suffolk). Declining congregations were the biggest factor in the

closures but building issues were also a factor in the closure of Princes Street and Long Melford.

The church at Princes Street URC in Norwich is a listed building and underwent some renovation in 2015. However, in 2019, a survey revealed that the slate roof needed to be replaced and such a large project was deemed to be too big an undertaking for the congregation. Long Melford URC is also a listed building and the complex of buildings eventually became too much of a burden to maintain.

We are fortunate that our church building is relatively small and of simple construction but, as with any old property, there is always something that needs repairing or maintaining. Most of this work is managed by Royston, our Church Secretary and acting Treasurer, for which we should be extremely grateful.

Malcolm Brown



One-liners

- I dusted the whole house once but it came back. I'm not falling for that again.
- Never trust atoms. They make up everything.
- A cement mixer collided with a prison van on the A127. Motorists are asked to be on the lookout for 16 hardened criminals.
- I have kleptomania. When it gets bad, I take something for it.
- Whoever said 'out of sight, out of mind' never had a spider disappear in the bedroom.
- My aunt Marge has been so ill for so long that we've started to call her 'I can't believe she's not better'.
- Red sky at night. Shepherd's delight. Blue sky at night. Day.
- A friend of mine has just been sacked from the dodgems. He's suing them for unfair dismissal.
- If we're not meant to have midnight snacks then why is there a light in the fridge?
- When I was a kid I used to pray every night for a new bike. Then I realised that The Lord doesn't work that way, so I stole one and asked him to forgive me.

HADLEIGH URC OFFICERS

Interim Moderators:

Rev. Jim Tarrant/Rev. Celia Whitman

Hon. Secretary:

Mr Royston Brackin (01702 558862)

Acting Hon. Treasurer:

Mr Royston Brackin

Serving Elders:

Mr Royston Brackin

Mrs Heather Brown (01702 557678)

Mr Malcolm Brown (01702 557678)

Miss Jean Reeve (01702 554907)

Useful information

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

Website: 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.

Chapter & Verse – Reform, March 2021

The shape and form of love is the shape and form of Jesus

Mother Theresa once observed: ‘In this life, we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.’ Doing small things with great love is to allow our theology – our knowledge of God – to drop down from our heads to our hearts.

In the midst of a highly technical culture, within which we tend to prioritise intellect over friendship, independence over community and power over weakness, the suggestion that our calling is to small things can seem rather odd. And yet, when we think about it, it is in the small things that we encounter our most meaningful moments.

A few years ago, I was in Atlanta attending the Summer Institute for Disability Theology. The Institute meets every year in a different US city. It involves a broad range of participants: people with disabilities, carers and supporters, theologians, philosophers, professionals and other interested parties. We come together to make new friendships and to learn together. One afternoon, I was walking along the corridor of the conference hall when a woman passed me in a wheelchair. She called me over. ‘I owe you something,’ she said. ‘What’s that?’ I said. ‘Money, I hope!’ She began to cry. I stood with her. Eventually, she said: ‘Three years ago, at the conference in Chicago, I was feeling like killing myself. Indeed, I was on my way to do it when I met you. You smiled at me. I decided not to.’ There is a tremendous power in small gestures. A smile can save a life; a look can touch a soul.

Our job is to love. In Ephesians 3, the Apostle Paul says this: ‘That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of God’s love.’

As creatures before God, we are rooted and grounded in love. Before we loved, we were loved. We are called to love. It was Thomas

Merton who pointed out that, as God’s creatures: ‘Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy.’ Love reveals itself in the small things.

Thomas Pieper, a scholar of Thomas Aquinas, describes love in this way: Love is saying to the other: ‘It’s good that you exist; it’s good that you are in this world.’ When we learn to think about one another in such a way, love comes alive and finds its home within our bodies. The shape and form of our love is, of course, the shape and form of Jesus.

In Matthew 11:29, Jesus says to his disciples: ‘Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’ Jesus’ words are startling: ‘I am gentle.’ Jesus, who is God, is gentle. God’s power is revealed in the gentleness of Jesus.

Imagine what it would be like if we were to live our lives gently. Imagine doing politics gently, economics gently. Imagine doing church politics gently. It may be difficult to imagine, but we are called to be gentle people who humbly find their rest in Jesus.

Weakness, foolishness, gentleness. What a strange world it is that we are called into. We are not called to act with power and worldly might, winning our battles with force and coercion. Rather, Jesus urges us to be weak, foolish, gentle, peaceable. The task of the Church is to signal the kingdom through small gestures that have deep power. You may say to yourself: ‘But what could such a way of life look like in the real world?’ Fair question! However, Jesus came to show us that the ‘real world’ is the world of the kingdom, within which the way of the heart is the rule of life.

Mother Teresa was on to something. Perhaps doing small things with great love is just what our broken world needs now?

John Swinton

John Swinton is Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at King’s College, University of Aberdeen.



Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. – *Ephesians 4:2*

Synod Moderators issue new guidance on reopening of churches

As lockdown restrictions and governments' stay-at-home requirements begin to gradually ease across the UK, the United Reformed Church (URC) Synod Moderators provide updated advice to churches. The Moderators know that churches are keen to make plans to reopen for public worship and other activities and so provide the following guidance:

We want to urge continued caution, both in the timing for reopening and what happens afterwards. Information is still being gathered about how new variants are spreading and whether people who have been vaccinated spread the virus. The pandemic is not over and neither will it be for some time yet. Pay attention to the relevant government guidance on what you can and can't do, and, vitally, follow it.

Additionally, we remind you of 1 Corinthians 10:23: "All things are lawful but not all things are beneficial, and not all build up."

Even though it may be lawful for church buildings to be open in the later season of this pandemic, it might not yet be the right time to open. Covid prevalence and consideration of local 'hotspot' information must take precedence over any date of the diary, which might mean further delay to opening up, with decisions being reversed at short notice.

The decision to re-open must properly be made by Elders' Meetings, considering the regulations/restrictions in place, local prevalence of the disease and pressures on the NHS, and measures in place to control risk of infection both in the church and the grounds.

Even if/where it is permitted, we urge churches to consider carefully whether they should open as soon as Easter Day, unless the current improvements are sustained and the risks are properly assessed and managed. Rather, we suggest that Pentecost may be a better time to consider as a point for the resumption of in-person worship, subject to a number of important conditions being met, as described below.

Specific guidance

1. Firstly, we want to state clearly that decisions must not be governed by dates – whether proposed dates for the staged easing of restrictions or particular festivals or anniversaries. The driving factor must be public safety. Consider:

- How many Covid cases are there locally and is the case rate falling?
- Is the rate of spread (the 'R' number) sufficiently low?
- How is the vaccine rollout progressing and how many of your known congregation have been vaccinated?
- What is happening with 'variants of concern' locally, which may be more infectious or more resistant to known vaccines?
- Remember that churches are public buildings: what are the risks to visitors that you may not know and who may be at greater risk than your "regulars"?

2. Before re-opening, the Elders' Meeting must review and revise thoroughly your risk assessment, and make sure you can implement it and if necessary, enforce it robustly. The pandemic is not yet over and people's lives are still at risk. The Elders may be criminally liable if serious breaches of Health and Safety occur. The questions we originally posed in *Emerging into the 'New Normal'* are, we believe, still relevant.

3. Only when all safety measures are in place can you begin to re-open.

4. Not every member will remember the rules about hand hygiene, social distancing and face coverings. It will be the Elders' responsibility to remind them (repeatedly). Be especially aware that once people have left the building they will want to stop and chat. Reinforce the guidance on distancing and the size of groups that are allowed to socialise – it must not be a "free-for-all" mingling. As well as potential breaches of regulation and the risk of Covid fines being imposed, consider the witness to passers-by who might see "those Christians" flouting the rules!

5. Congregational singing is still not allowed in England, Scotland or Wales. There is no information as to when this will be allowed. The best inference we can gain from the UK government is that the ban is likely to exist well into the summer and quite possibly beyond and that it will not be tied to any of the four "roadmap" steps in England. Will this prohibition on congregational singing affect your decision on the timing to reopen? It is such a key part of the non-conformist worship experience: will some prefer to stay away/worship online until it is deemed safe and legal to sing together?

6. In all three jurisdictions, the dates for successive easing of restrictions are provisional and subject to review as data on infection rates, hospitalisations and vaccinations are scrutinised (and the Welsh government have not even announced provisional dates). Do not assume that because we are due to reach Step X of easing that we can/should definitely reopen on the following Sunday.

7. From what we know of the government plans for England and Wales (the Isle of Man, and the States of Guernsey and Jersey are in different jurisdictions), we do not recommend resuming public worship on Easter Sunday.

8. If the governments continue to link specific activities with the progressive easing, think about what public/in-person worship is more like? Popping into a newly-opening non-essential retailer for ten minutes, or lingering in a place of hospitality for a longer period? We believe this will be a helpful guide, subject always to points made earlier about safety, to shape your thinking.

We do not encourage churches to reopen any earlier than the point at which non-essential retailers re-open. In Scotland, depending on government decision, it may be allowable to be open on Easter Day, though with limited numbers (probably 20). Congregations are urged to consider carefully whether to make use of this opportunity, if it arises. We have survived one Easter Sunday under lockdown restrictions: we can do so again.

9. In England, the earliest date for the hospitality sector to fully reopen is provisionally set in the week before Pentecost. Across the UK several million more people are expected to have received at least their first vaccination compared with the number by Easter Sunday.

The same step is provisionally intended to the point when, in England, up to 30 people will be allowed at weddings, baptisms and other key life moments. We stress that the date is provisional. If the Covid situation is sufficiently under control in your area, we see real symbolism in returning for in-person worship at Pentecost, “the Church’s birthday.” At Pentecost we celebrate how the Holy Spirit brought new life to the Church and drove the message of the Good News about Jesus out into the world. We suggest that this may be a helpful target point for re-opening, stressing the conditionality of the date, the need to consider current virus risk, and that different jurisdictions will be moving at different speeds and may not, at this point, allow your church building to be open for worship. We have come through one Pentecost under lockdown. We hope it will not be necessary to do it a second time, but it would not be the worst thing in the world if it is necessary.

10. Regardless of the date and festival/season when a church decides to open, safety must be the priority. The last thing anyone wants is for church buildings to become a hotspot for infection with coronavirus. The World Health Organisation has identified six conditions for safe easing of restrictions; the first five are related to data around virus prevalence and control measures.

As well as working to ensure the premises are as safe as possible and that locally the risk of infection is at a reasonable level, Elders may wish to consult with the congregation and move no faster than people are ready to move. But neither must the Elders be under pressure to reopen when the indications are contrary to that decision being taken, as they bear both a legal responsibility for this and the denominational responsibility.

Published on the URC website on 5th March 2021.



Extracts from a Daily Mail Online report from 9th March 2021

Data from the Government’s Covid dashboard show there have been 393 confirmed virus victims per 100,000 people in Castle Point [population 90,070 in 2018], the highest of any authority in the UK. In second worst-hit Tendring, the rate is 381. These figures are the equivalent of almost 0.4 per cent of the population in each borough, or one in 250 people. The figures offer yet more proof that Covid is much deadlier than flu, which kills around 0.1 per cent of everyone infected. Not everyone in England has even had coronavirus, meaning the true infection fatality rate (IFR) of the illness will be much higher. No 10’s top scientists believe the overall IFR is around 0.5 per cent but the disease is a lot deadlier to the elderly. The fact all three of the most badly-hit areas are in the South East of England is because the region bore the brunt of the second wave of the crisis this winter. Castle Point had a Covid death rate of just 91 per 100,000 people, at the start of September, before the new variant took off, revealing the scale of the winter wave.

Family News

A Prayer for Lent

Dear God,

In this season of Lent, we're reminded of our own difficulties and struggles. Sometimes the way has seemed too dark. Sometimes we feel like our lives have been marked by such grief and pain, we don't see how our circumstance can ever change. But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong on our behalf.

Lord, rise up within us, let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've walked through. Allow your power to be manifest through our own weakness, so that others will recognize it is You who is at work on our behalf.

We ask that you would trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your Presence. Trade our mourning and grief for the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit. Trade our despair for hope and praise.

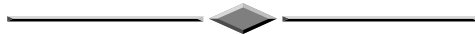
We choose to give you thanks today and believe that this season of darkness will fade away. Thank you that you are with us in whatever we face and that you are greater than this trial.

We know and recognize that you are Sovereign, we thank you for the victory that is ours because of Christ Jesus, and we are confident that you have good still in store for our future. We thank you that you are at work right now, trading our ashes for greater beauty.

We praise you, for you make all things new.

In Jesus' name, *Amen.*

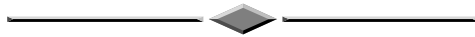
Written by Debbie Mcdaniel (from Christianity.com)



For Mothering Sunday

She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. – *Proverbs 31:26-28*

Loving God, we thank you for mothers –
for all they mean or have meant,
for the love they have shown
and the care they have given.
We thank you for the qualities of mothers –
their patience, their kindness,
concern and understanding.
We thank you for the part they play in our lives,
and we thank you for this day of saying ‘thank you’;
this opportunity to say what we so often mean to say
but so rarely do.
For mothers and motherhood,
for children and families,
we bring you this day our grateful praise. *Amen*



The following humorous observations were first published in the March 2008 Hadleigh Messenger.

Mothers

- Mothers only offer advice on two occasions: when you want it and when you don't.
- The more you try to stay on your mother's good side, the harder it will be to figure out which side that is.
- If you can't remember whether or not you phoned your mother, you didn't.
- The motherly advice you ignore will always turn out to be the best advice she ever gave you.
- Never lie to your mother. And if you do, never think you got away with it.
- The harder you try to hide something from your mother, the more she resembles a webcam.
- Mother's way is best. If you don't believe it, ask her.
- If you don't have time to study the Highway Code, drive your mother somewhere and get a quick refresher course.
- The more expensive a gift you give your mother, the longer she will "save" it before she uses it.
- No matter how wrong you are, your mother will not hold it against you. She may remind you a number of times, but she will not hold it against you.
- If your mother does not have an item, she will have the recipe or the directions.
- Accomplishments are made possible by your mother - failures are your own fault.
- Mother can always tell you a better way to do something after you've already done it.
- The longer it's been since you cleaned the house, the more likely it is that mother will visit.
- The more you detest an item that belongs to your mother, the more likely it is that she will try to give it to you.
- There are always two sides to a story - the way it really happened and the way your mother remembers it.

URC News

Buxton URC feeds 5,000 through community project

A church-based community service set up to distribute surplus food during the pandemic has recently served up its 5,000th parcel. Since the first lockdown began last March, Waste Not Want Not, based at Buxton United Reformed Church (URC), has given away thousands of pounds worth of food to the local community, some of which would have ended up in landfill.

The project is led by church member Cath Sterndale and her son Dan who first came up with the idea four years ago.

“It’s amazing to have got this far – it makes me think of the Biblical feeding of the 5,000!” said Cath. “We originally started collecting left-over fruit and veg, which would be thrown away even though most of it was in excellent condition. Goods were donated because they had only a short sell-by date left, but they could really help someone struggling financially.”

Initially, the aim of the scheme was to help the homeless people and was operated under the banner of High Peak Homeless Help with surplus donations distributed by local community groups. But when the Covid-19 pandemic started it was decided to open the scheme up to everyone.

A grant from the Bingham Trust – a grant-making charity primarily focused on the SK17 area around Buxton – allowed mother and son to develop the scheme. In March 2020, Waste Not Want Not was adopted by Buxton URC as a local community service, supported by a management committee and five volunteer drivers.



Buxton URC

Initially, the project was intended as an eight-week stop-gap measure, it has now been running for nearly a year. It operates six days a week, from 11.00am to 1.00pm. Cath and Dan set up tables in the church yard and pass bags of food over the wall to maintain social distancing.

Food has been donated by a variety of shops, including Tesco, Morrisons and Waitrose as well as the Fareshare scheme. Resources have been supplemented by donations and now other local churches are getting involved too – along with the nearby villages of Litton and Cressbrook.

“Food support is open to all,” says Cath. “We’ve served large families who have struggled financially, especially when the schools are closed. We’ve delivered to people who are shielding, afraid to go out, as well as those who couldn’t get a home delivery, were too frail to wait in a long queue or who had lost their jobs. We’ve also worked alongside agencies to assist their service users, including local schools, police, social services and health visitors.”

New Moderator of URC’s Mersey Synod nominated



Rev. Geoffrey Felton, Minister of Plume Avenue Church in Colchester, has been nominated as the next Moderator of the United Reformed Church (URC) Mersey Synod.

Geoff was born and raised in Higher Bebington on the Wirral where he spent his teenage years before moving away to study. He became a Christian in 1984 at Anfield during Mission England, a gathering led by late American evangelist Dr Billy Graham.

Having passed his Geology degree at Portsmouth Polytechnic, now the University of Portsmouth, Geoff worked for six years in the North Sea on various offshore installations as a geologist. It was during this time while on leave he met his now wife, Sarah.

At St George’s URC in Hemel Hempstead, Geoff began to explore his call to ministry by attending the London Bible College and Westminster College in Cambridge. Geoff was ordained in 2000 and inducted into the Canterbury pastorate in the URC’s Southern Synod, which he served for ten years. He then moved to Plume Avenue URC, his current pastorate, in 2010. He has also served as a trustee of various charities and as a governor of a local junior school.

The nomination will be presented to Mission Council, the executive body of the URC General Assembly.

URC member becomes Rector of Edinburgh University



A human rights lawyer who began attending the United Reformed Church as a refugee has been named Rector of Edinburgh University.

Debora Kayembe fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2005 after a criminal investigation into war crimes led her to being persecuted as a lawyer. When she first moved to the UK, she became a member of Central URC in Darwen, Lancashire, but since 2011 has lived in Scotland.

Ms Kayembe, who becomes the third woman and first person of colour to take the prestigious job since its creation in 1858, starts the role this month.

Speaking to *The National*, Debora said: “I am delighted and deeply honoured. I am fully aware of the importance of my role at such a critical time. We are facing so many challenges, from the Covid-19 pandemic to the battles for racial justice and the reckoning from the past in the wake of the killing of George Floyd and the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

“Respect for the values of humanity and kindness lies at the heart of all my work and I look forward to working with staff, students, and the whole university community to ensure that everyone is valued.”

Ms Kayembe believes her faith has prepared her for the role. “As a Christian, I believe everything I have gone through was for the purpose to prepare me for this very moment. God has placed employment and voluntary opportunities along my path so that I can do my work efficiently.”

The lawyer is also a member of the office of the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Court Bar Association. In 2019, Ms Kayembe’s achievements and contributions were honoured when she became the first African to have her portrait erected on the wall of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. She recently launched the Freedom Walk campaign, a civil rights movement promoting social reforms, racial justice and community harmony.

Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, said he was delighted Debora was joining the university.

Coming out of lockdown – the impact on individuals

The URC Equalities Committee issued this statement in advance of the announcement of the roadmap to easing of the lockdown restrictions.

The Equalities Committee is mindful that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way the URC, its committees and churches work. It celebrates the way in which virtual meetings have facilitated participation by people who are unable to travel. However, the Committee recognises that new ways of working, while they provide new ways of participation for some, mean that others are excluded.

The Committee wishes to draw attention to the fact that different ways of working affect different people in different ways. In order to be truly inclusive, it is important that we consider:

- Who might unintentionally be excluded from a particular activity?
- What are the barriers to their participation?
- How can we remove those barriers?
- Is there support we can offer?
- Is there equipment we can provide?

For almost 12 months it has been impossible to make future plans with any level of certainty and that uncertainty continues today and will do for some time. When restrictions start to be lifted it is essential to recognise that people are in different places on their own journeys out of lockdown.

We currently have a population of those who are vaccinated and those who are not, those who have disabilities and those who do not, those who are suffering from mental ill-health and those who have good mental health, those who look forward to greater freedom and those who are wary of it. We may make assumptions that people are able and will be willing to do what they did before lockdown, but this will not always be the case. If so, care must be taken not to prevent them from giving of their service and ministry.

An individual’s response may well be influenced by their age or disability. To avoid unfair treatment, it is important that individuals are treated with consideration and respect. For some the wounds of the pandemic will take a long time to, or may never, heal. We must continue to support and love everyone for who they are and their own individual situations.

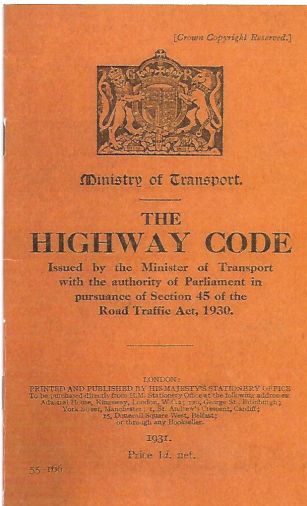
Equalities Committee, February 2021

The Untold Story of the Highway Code

The British Highway Code – ‘...a guide to the proper use of the highway and a code of good manners...’ – celebrates the 90th anniversary of its first publication in 2021

The early years of driving

The late 19th century saw the first motorcars in Britain – a country whose roads had evolved for horse-drawn traffic. In the early years of the 20th century anyone could drive a vehicle – the minimum driving age of 17 was not introduced until 1930.



When the Highway Code was first launched in 1931, there were 2.3 million motor vehicles on British roads, along with tens of thousands of horse-drawn vehicles. To be on the road was glamorous. Drivers put their foot down. Pedestrians were often considered in the way; at fault if they became a casualty.

In this dangerous heady world, around 7,000 people lost their lives in accidents every year. (By comparison, in 2019, there were over 40 million vehicles on British roads and 1,870 deaths). Little had been done in terms of control or legislation. The Highway Code of 1931 was a first attempt to educate early motorists about driving carefully and responsibly. It cost one old penny and contained 21 pages of advice and information.

Speed limits, driving tests and pedestrian crossings

Leslie Hore-Belisha's 1934 Road Traffic Act introduced a 30mph speed limit in built-up areas (the speed limit of 20mph had been controversially removed by the 1930 Road Traffic Act after it was universally flouted and court cases built up). There were also stronger penalties for reckless driving and cyclists were required to have rear reflectors.



In addition, the Act instituted a compulsory driving test that came into force in 1935, but only for new drivers. Around one quarter of a million candidates applied. Tests were suspended four

years later for the duration of the Second World War (1939-1945), not resuming until 1946.

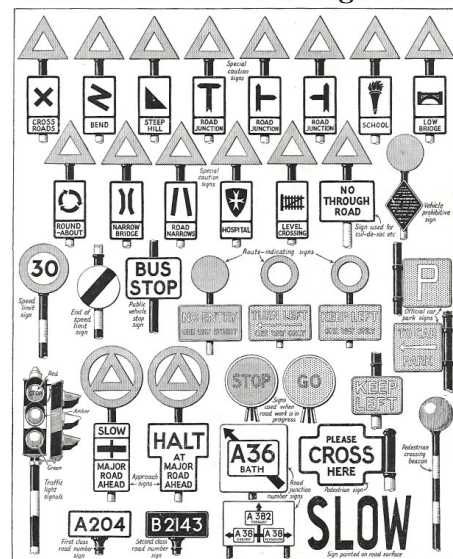
Minister of Transport, Leslie Hore-Belisha, rewrote the Highway Code (second edition, 1934), and introduced pedestrian crossings as part of the Act. 9,000 pedestrian crossings, with their distinctive flashing yellow globes (‘Belisha’ beacons), were erected in London in 1934, with the scheme extended to the provinces in the November. Initially crossings were marked with steel studs; zebra markings not appearing until 1949.

Other early road developments included white lines, which came into widespread use in the 1920s, prototype roundabouts and traffic lights dating from around the mid to late 1920s (the red/amber/green traffic light system began to be more widely adopted from 1933), and ‘catseyes’, patented in 1934, which came into their own during the blackouts of the Second World War and have been a common feature of roads ever since.

Early Road Signs

Early road signs were standardised under the 1930 Road Traffic Act. The second edition (1934) of the Highway Code also carried diagrams of road signs for the first time – just 10 in all – along with a warning about the dangers of driving when affected by alcohol or fatigue.

What Does That Road Sign Mean?



An illustration in a vintage journal of all the official Ministry of Transport road signs in the late 1930s.

Stopping distances – broadly similar to today’s, despite huge advances in braking technology – made their first appearance in the third edition, published just post-war in 1946, along with new sections giving advice on driving and cycling.

The 1954 Highway Code carried brand new colour illustrations. There was an expanded traffic sign section which included an extended section on road signs, while the back cover gave instructions about first aid.

The first motorway

England’s first completed motorway, a revolutionary development in British roads – the 8 mile Preston bypass, later part of the M6 – was opened by the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan in 1958. To reflect how motorways would radically affect motorists, the 1961 Highway Code was updated in its fifth edition with a section on motorway driving, including how to avoid drowsiness.

There was no speed limit on motorways. Drivers were free to go as fast as they wanted. ‘Doing the ton’ (100mph) was a badge of honour, especially for motorcyclists. Ernest Marples, shocked by the speed of driving, introduced a national speed limit of 70mph in December 1965.



Graphic designers Margaret Calvert (1936-) and Jock Kinneir (1917-1994) were commissioned by the government,

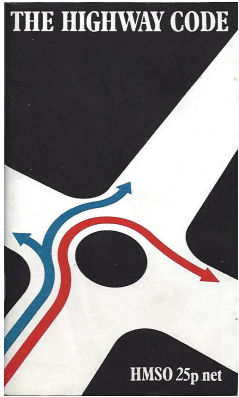
in the late 1950s, to design new motorway signs. Calvert and Kinneir’s motorway signs were modern, simple and easy to read when driving fast. The government became concerned that these signs made other British road signs – a chaotic mix of different words, styles and fonts – seem inadequate and outdated and asked them to redesign and rationalise the whole national road sign system.

The new signs came into force 1 January 1965 and the designs are still in use today on Britain’s roads and motorways.

The evolution of the Highway Code

The completely modernised 1968 Highway Code was the first to use photographs and 3D illustrations. It also introduced the ‘mirror – signal – manoeuvre’ routine when overtaking.

With mounting pedestrian casualties, the 1978 edition introduced the Green Cross Code to educate pedestrians about road safety (children were taught it in school, helped by superhero the ‘Green Cross Man’). The safety mantra was: ‘Think, Stop, Use Your Eyes and Ears, Wait Until It Is Safe to Cross, Look and Listen, Arrive Alive.’



This edition also launched new orange badges for people of disability, as well as having a section on vehicle security in response to rising car thefts.



Windscreen (mandatory)



Rear (optional)

As vehicles became more sophisticated, and roads busier and more complex, the Highway Code – most of whose rules are legal requirements – responded over the years with new instructions and advice in ever-growing sections. Among them the use of seats belts, using mobile phones while driving, in-vehicle distractions such as Sat Nav, driving with illegal drugs in the system, remote control parking, smoking in vehicles, using mobility scooters, and the Theory Test – introduced in 1996 and replacing questions about the Highway Code that were originally posed during the driving test itself.

Today’s Highway Code is now 189 pages long and sells around 1 million copies annually. It is always listed in the annual best-seller list.

Based on a blog post by Nicky Hughes viewable at: <https://heritagecalling.com/2021/02/12/the-untold-story-of-the-highway-code>.

The Highway Code can be read online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>.



Remembering the 21 Libyan martyrs

Peter Pay, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, talks about an eye-opening commemoration for persecuted Christians that he attended in February:

I was recently invited to represent the United Reformed Church by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Coptic Orthodox Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a distinguished panel of guests to mark Contemporary Martyrs Day on 15 February. The event was held in remembrance of the 21 Libyan martyrs and members of the Coptic Orthodox Church who lost their lives in 2015 as a result of religious persecution. Pope Francis also contributed on the day.

I have to admit, my first reaction was that I was not aware of this event, but on checking I discovered that a five-minute video had been published showing the beheading of the 21 Christian (mainly Coptic) captives by ISIS on a beach along the southern Mediterranean coast.

A caption in the video called the captives the 'People of the Cross, followers of the hostile Egyptian Church'. Few people I have mentioned this to have heard of the outrage. It leads me to wonder what else I may be unaware of.

Speaking on the significance of this day, Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, said: "While the barbaric murder of these 21 men on the shores of Libya was incredibly painful, not only for the Coptic Orthodox Church, but people of all faiths and none around the world, it was an opportunity for

them to practically demonstrate their courage and dignity while practicing their faith to, quite literally, their last breath."

The Coptic Orthodox Church is in a unique place, through its own experience of persecution across the centuries, to speak for those of all faiths and none who continue to suffer today. It is for this reason that we will gather to raise awareness and advocate for those who are not able to speak for themselves.

According to the Bishop of Truro's report, approximately 80% of the world's persecuted religious believers are Christian. This webinar allowed for reflection and discussion around the ongoing plight of those who continue to face persecution as a result of their Christian faith, as well as of those of all faiths and none.

I am grateful to have been able to participate in this remembrance event alongside many church and faith leaders. It certainly opened my eyes. In addition, it was heartening to hear speakers, including Pope Francis (see below) and the Most Revd Justin Welby, express solidarity with persecuted Christians of all denominations and people of all faiths who are persecuted. They specifically mentioned Muslim people, especially those from Riga and the Rohingya people.

May we hold all in our prayers.

Peter Pay

Posted 4th March 2021

Message from His Holiness Pope Francis regarding the 21 Libyan Martyrs

"They, are our Saints, Saints belonging to all Christians, Saints of all Christian denominations and traditions. They are those who have washed their lives white in the blood of the Lamb...they have received the greatest gift a Christian can ever receive: to bear witness to Jesus Christ to the point of giving his own life. I thank the bishops, and the priests of our sister Coptic Church who have brought them up, and taught them to grow in the Faith. And I thank the mothers of these men, these twenty-one men, who have passed the faith to them...in a dialect which goes beyond languages, the dialect of belonging. I join all of you, my brother bishops, present at this commemoration. To you, great and beloved Tawadros, my brother bishop and friend. To you, Justin Welby, who also wanted to participate at this meeting. I also join all the other bishops and priests, but above all the holy faithful people of God who in its simplicity, with its fidelity and infidelities, with its graces and sins, carries forward the confession of Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is Lord."

Computer Corner

Pipes in Pieces – the story of the Hadleigh Kingsway Compton organ

Interesting website

Local illustrator, Sarah Judd, has created a virtual museum that tells the story of the Compton organ that was a feature of Hadleigh's Kingsway cinema. The website also has interesting information about how cinema organs are constructed and how they work plus some information about the Compton organ company. The museum has many beautiful illustrations by Sarah, which require a widescreen monitor/screen to be appreciated properly. The Kingsway Compton organ was moved to Rochford Hospital when the Kingsway was demolished. It was rescued in the nick of time when the hospital was demolished and installed in the Red Barn in Sutton where it was heard again in several concerts. The organ is now in storage and needs major renovation.
URL: <https://pipesinpieces.cargo.site>

Crow Stone, London Stone and an Estuary Airport

Interesting blog post

Most readers will be aware of the Crow Stone located in the mud off Chalkwell beach but may not be aware of the London Stone, its equivalent on the south bank of the Thames. This very interesting blog post covers both historic markers and also has a short section about the airport that was mooted for the estuary.

URL: <https://alondoninheritance.com/the-thames/crow-stone-london-stone-estuary-airport>

IObit Unlocker

Useful free software

If you've ever tried to delete a file in Windows and received a message that the file can't be deleted because it's locked then this program will unlock the file and, optionally, delete it for you.

URL: <https://www.iobit.com/en/iobit-unlocker.php>

Word Search – Viruses

K	N	R	B	P	X	G	V	J	S	Z	T	O	Q	I	Y	L	Q	G	E
U	D	Q	U	L	C	S	B	M	S	O	T	J	M	Q	F	Z	X	I	K
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W	E	O	Q	L	I	O	B	H	O	S	C	S	Y	G	L	R	D	U	F

- ANTHRAX
- CHOLERA
- DENGUE
- EBOLA
- INFLUENZA
- LEPROSY
- MALARIA
- MEASLES
- MERS
- MUMPS
- NOROVIRUS
- PERTUSSIS
- PNEUMONIA
- RABIES
- RUBELLA
- SARS
- SMALLPOX
- TETANUS
- TUBERCULOSIS
- ZIKA

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

My Thankfull Heart with Glorying Tongue

My thankfull heart with glorying Tongue
Shall celebrate Thy name,
Who hath restor'd, redeem'd, recur'd¹
From sicknes, death, and Pain.

I cry'd thou seem'st to make some stay,²
I sought more earnestly;
And in due time thou succour'st³ me
And sent'st me help from High.

Lord, whilst my fleeting time shall last,
Thy Goodness let me Tell.
And new Experience I have gain'd,
My future Doubts repell.

An humble, faitefull⁴ life, O Lord,
For ever let me walk;
Let my obedience testefye,
My Praise lyes not in Talk.

Accept, O Lord, my simple mite,⁵
For more I can not give;
What Thou bestow'st I shall restore,
For of thine Almes I live.

Anne Bradstreet (1661)

¹ "recur'd" – cured, healed.

² "stay" – delay. That is, she cries out to God about the delay in her recovery.

³ "succour'st" – succour; to give assistance in time of difficulty.

⁴ "faitefull" – faithful.

⁵ "mite" – a reference to the widow's mite (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2).

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)

Anne Bradstreet was born in Northampton on 20th March, 1612, to a wealthy Puritan family. Her father, Thomas Dudley, was a steward of the Earl of Lincoln. At the age of 16, she married Simon Bradstreet and, in 1630, Anne and Simon together with Anne's parents emigrated to America. After several moves, the Bradstreet family ended up in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They had their first child in 1632 and had eight children in total. In the 1640s, the family moved to North Andover, Massachusetts. Both Anne's father and her husband were instrumental in the founding of Harvard University in 1636, from which two of her sons graduated.

Having been afflicted with smallpox as a teenager in England, Anne again fell prey to illness as paralysis overtook her joints in later years. This featured in her poetry, which centres on her role as a mother, her struggles with the sufferings of life, and her Puritan faith.

In 1650, her first collection *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* – composed by "A Gentlewoman from Those Parts" – was published in London and, as a result, Anne became America's first published poet. The book was widely read in England and America.

The poem *The Thankfull Heart with Glorifying Tongue* was written on 11th May 1661. On that day, Anne wrote in her journal about mixed feelings following four months of illness. She wrote of her physical distress, acknowledged that she was now feeling better, and confessed that she was not as consistently grateful or faithful as she felt she should be: "... it pleased the Lord to support my heart in His goodnes, and to hear my Prayers, and to deliver me out of adversity. But,

alas! I cannot render unto the Lord according to all His loving kindnes, nor take the cup of salvation with Thanksgiving as I ought to doe." She then wrote *The Thankfull Heart with Glorifying Tongue*, in which she expressed the gratitude and submission that she confesses she cannot always feel as she ought.

Anne Bradstreet is noted for her large body of poetry, as well as her personal writings, which were published posthumously. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 60 on 16th September, 1672. In October 1997, the Harvard community dedicated a gate in memory of her as America's first published poet.

