

Shirley Methodist Matters



Special
Platinum
Jubilee
Edition



Ella Webster met the Queen in 2003



June 2022

www.shirleymeth.org.uk

80p



Praise and Worship in June

SUNDAY SERVICES ARE HELD IN CHURCH AT 10.30AM

SUN	5 JUNE	HOLY COMMUNION GENERAL MEETING	REVD CHOI BENNIE HARMS
SUN	12 JUNE		REVD LESLIE GRIFFITHS
SUN	19 JUNE		ALISTAIR MACFARLANE
SUN	26 JUNE		LOCAL ARRANGEMENT

The services are available on Zoom - watch on your screen or listen on your phone. To get the link email smchurchzoom@gmail.com. An audio recording is available on the website. Many thanks to those who are making these different forms of worship possible.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this very special **Jubilee Edition** of Shirley Methodist Matters.

Our Jubilee articles, begin on page 8 and are marked with this symbol.



Revd Soon Cheol Choi
choi_sc@hotmail.com 020 8654 5481



Mr Bennie Harms (Lay Pastor) 07900 890384
bennieharms@croydonmeth.org

Shirley Methodist Church Eldon Ave, Shirley, CR0 8SD



Revd Choi writes our Circuit Letter

Dear friends,

As I am retiring this summer, this must be the last time for me to contribute to the magazine. And, I'd like to take this as an opportunity of sharing my journey so far since I've been in this country.

In March 1996, exactly 26 years ago, I arrived at Heathrow Airport with my wife and two children. We had no one to welcome us, no friends or relatives in this country. However, we were greatly welcomed by a man who was standing with a big banner 'Welcome, Choi's family'. He was a taxi driver from Bristol, arranged by the English language centre. That surprising welcome was the beginning of our new life in this foreign land.

"What brought you to this country?" has been the most frequently asked question to me. My answer was and still is "God called me". This answer might be too pious to some, too trite to others, or a little

curious to others. But, to me, it is a genuine answer. Apart from that, I cannot find any other reason to have come over to England.

In September 1995, I attended an event, called 'The Early Morning Prayer Week'. Before the event, I was asked to submit prayer requests, one of which was 'Help me, Lord, to escape from my work and go abroad to study'. I thought it was nonsense, although it did reveal my heart's desire. Then, when the service began, I was completely struck down by the message to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, which was the theme of the event: "Leave your country and your people, and go to the land I will show you".

Six months later, I left my country, giving up my job and the 13 years

I'd spent as a fashion director. I was leaving behind my friends and relatives who were worried about this seemingly reckless decision.



My only desire was to study theology, without recognising it was part of the call. Wesley College, Bristol, generously accepted me to study, despite no background in theological education.

We hugely enjoyed our new life in a foreign land - as if we were on holiday, even though I had to struggle everyday with 'English', not only the language, but also the people. But, this joyous time lasted only for 18 months. It ended when the Korean economy collapsed during the Asian financial crisis in 1997. It was a hard time as head of the family.

However, it was then that I came to realise God's call, and why he had called me to this country. It was Christmas time, but I was feeling depressed, with no light for the future. Then, I was so amazed and deeply moved by the huge number of cards and presents from the people in the local church. My entire family were absolutely bombarded by their priceless love and care. This unexpected love woke me up to realise why God had called me to this land - to,

share His love with the people here in this country.

Having heard what I was feeling, my local minister encouraged me to start local preacher's training and begin candidating for ministry later on. Candidating was not an easy process. It was very challenging to me for various reasons, one of which was my visa condition as an overseas student. At every stage of the process, I was stopped, and rejected several times. However, by the grace of God and the huge support from my church and the circuit, I got through the final interview which allowed me to enter preordination training. It took five years to complete the candidating process and training.

Then I was stationed to the Skelmersdale circuit in the Liverpool District. Here, I was given the unreserved yet tough discipline for my formation in ministry. Now, I truly appreciate all the efforts that were made with extended meetings and extra sessions, for me to stand on my own two feet as a British Methodist Presbyterian. I am so grateful for their patience and tolerance as they had to wait until

they could see the growth in my ministry. This continued when I moved to the Sherborne - something new - a rural ministry. Then I moved to Kingston and then Croydon circuit. This helped open my eyes to the multicultural societies and issues around ethnic minorities. Overall, 18 years of my ministry seem to be mostly occupied with my formation and learning. And I often felt that I was a caretaker minister. But on the other hand, I think 'take care' is what the ministry is all about. It has been a privilege to take care of the people around me, rejoicing with

those who rejoice, mourning with those who mourn; to help them grow through preaching; to put the bread and wine into their open hands.

It has been an honour to serve the Lord as a British Methodist Presbyter, and I am so grateful for all of the enormous support for the most unlikely ministry candidate. And I praise God that he has led me to endure all the ups and downs, challenges and sleepless nights.

Thank you, Lord.

Choi & Sarah's Coffee Morning & Garage Sale

We invite you all to this fundraiser event

Saturday 25th June 10:00 – 12:30

The Manse, 38 Barnfield Avenue CRO 8SE



All proceeds will go to support the Foodbank.

Family News

Elizabeth Smart writes;

June is certainly a month of celebrations! We have the excitement of the Queens Platinum Jubilee. Flags and memorabilia are everywhere. And we have Vicky Lynch-Shyllon's 80th birthday on June 26. She will be celebrating with her family. We send her greetings from the Church family.



Sarah and Eamonn Belaon brought Elisia Poppy to be baptised by Revd Jennifer Potter a couple of weeks ago. Jennifer and 'big sister' Amelie took Elisia round the church so we could all say hello.

We wish families who will be travelling to see loved ones this summer a joyful reunion. For some it



will be the first time in more than two years. We think especially of Kate and Graham and send Nicola and Owen and the boys our love as they have lots of hugs! Have a great time.

Our thoughts and prayers are with these members of our church family – Jose Riddiough, Rosemarie and Stanley Nalliah, Vicky Lynch-Shyllon, Peggy and Maurice Graham, Pam and Alan Harper, Lambert Rae, Reg Young, Alan Correya, Anthony and Lesley Vigurs, Gwen Richardson, Sureya dos Santos and Marcos, Adele and her brother John.

We remember the residents and staff, volunteers and chaplains at Hall Grange.

Did you know that The Wilderness Garden is now open each Saturday and Sunday until September 25. It is open 10am – 4pm (last entry 3pm) Everyone welcome - even dogs on leads! No need to book. It

is such a peaceful space - why not get away from the busy day to day?

The Church Anniversary garden is another place for everyone to enjoy -

The team work hard to keep the weeds under control. There is a bench to sit on (no guarantee of peace and quiet - rather too near the Wickham Road for that). Thank you to everyone for creating these beautiful spaces which lift our spirits and help our mental health.

It has been lovely to see new faces in church - we are delighted and

look forward to getting to know you better.

We will be saying our personal and fond farewells to Revd Choi and Lay Pastor Bennie and their families on June 18. We have been truly blessed by their ministry.



Leaving Party for Choi and Bennie

Saturday June 18 5pm

We hope as many of you as possible will come to say thank you to Choi and Bennie. Both are retiring from active ministry although it's impossible to imagine them retiring from doing God's work.

We will look back and remember what we have been through over the last few years - sad times and happy times, to share food, to listen to music and to voice our appreciation of all Choi and Bennie have meant to us.

Let's give them a right royal send off.

*Please look in the Church Notices
for more details*

Please contact us if you would like someone - or yourself - to be prayed for by members of our Prayer Chain. Names are only taken with the consent of the person concerned and stay on the chain for a week. Elizabeth Smart 020 8777 2055 or via the 'contact us' form on www.shirleymeth.org.uk

The Duke smiled at Peggy



In 1953 Peggy Graham was a young teacher at Purley Oaks school. She was delighted to be chosen to take a group of pupils up to London by train to watch the Coronation procession. They found an excellent position on the Embankment and waited. When the golden coach came past the children - and Peggy - cheered loudly. Peggy was rewarded with a smile from the Duke of Edinburgh!



Ella gave the Queen a bouquet

Ella Webster writes:

On November 5 2003 I had the great privilege of presenting flowers to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. The occasion was Royal Russell School's 150th anniversary and the Queen was the Patron. I had only joined their Kindergarten that term, aged just 3 ½. I was not expecting to be chosen but it was such a thrill although I really didn't understand too much about what was going to happen. I just knew it was very exciting. I had to practise my curtsy and how to hand the

flowers over to the Queen. I did this with a little boy in



my class, called Teo. My mum (Donna) and grandma (Christine) were in the crowds cheering and waving as the Queen drove up to the school. She was lovely, I remember her asking me if I liked school. This is such a fond memory and one I will never forget. We had our photos in The Advertiser and mum has kept them all - of course!

Roy Pritchard is presented to Her Majesty



extended her hand for a brief and light handshake to which I responded 'Your Majesty' and said a few brief words about MHA. I took my leave and passed on to the Duke of Edinburgh for another handshake and an explanation of our work.

Alma Pritchard reminds us that in 2013 her husband Roy was invited to attend St James Palace to receive the Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award in recognition of his volunteering at Hall Grange over many years. Roy wrote about the occasion for our magazine in 2013 - here is an edited version of that article.

I was pleased to attend the presentation ceremony at St James Palace on May 29. There were representatives from 60 different charities - myself and a lady from Lincoln represented MHA. We joined a queue outside the palace - thankfully under cover as it had started to drizzle. My ticket was taken by the equerry and my name given quietly to the Queen. After a short bow to Her Majesty she

We then passed through a doorway into a room complete with a throne. Here we met the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. We chatted about MHA and our volunteer activities. We mingled and talked about our various charities and roles with other volunteers. I wish I had 100% recall of all those conversations but I am afraid that would be expecting too much!

We were able to meet Her Majesty again as she made her way through the reception room and we had a longer conversation about the care of older people throughout the country.

I have a lasting memory of a gracious lady who has a bright smile..

Television and Ponies

Jenny Crook writes:

Both my husband David and myself watched the coronation on small black and white sets in 1953. My father bought a television especially for the occasion. I remember watching children's TV programmes (like Muffin the Mule) but my recall of the coronation comes from seeing recordings of the event. David's family was living in Yeovil in 1953. A friend of his parents was a telephone engineer who built his own TV in order to watch the coronation! They invited neighbours, including David's family, to join them for the day.



When our daughter Bryony was a youngster in 1993 she attended Diamond Riding Centre in Carshalton. She was one of a group who were presented with rosettes by Princess Anne, who is President of the Disabled Riders Association.

What a thrill !



Sharon Routledge Brown was thrilled to go to Buckingham Palace when her brother Paul received the MBE for services to higher education while working at Imperial College. Paul is the father of Andre and Nicole who you may well remember as regulars in Sunday Morning Club for many years.



What do you have tucked away in a cupboard!

Carolyn Sherrell has albums of postcards - gathered over many years. Here are a few Royal ones. Brian has a collection of coins celebrating Royal occasions.



Did any of your family have these treasures ?



Have you spotted the new plaque which is on the church wall nearest the dual carriageway. New trees have been planted in our grounds and have been registered as part of the Queen's Platinum Canopy. Thanks to Margaret Chan for having the idea in the first place - and for buying it and arranging for it to be hung.

Should we start calling this area the Jubilee Lawn?

Queen Mother and the lumpy custard!!



Sadly Jean Beecher is just out of shot in this photo from *The Advertiser*. She was one of a group of pupils who dressed in replicas of Tenison school's original 17th century uniform when the Queen Mother paid the school a visit in November 1959. The reporter wrote that the Queen Mother walked down a red carpet into the school, wearing a mink-trimmed brown velvet coat.

Jean writes:

This photo was taken when the Queen Mother came to officially open Archbishop Tenison when it relocated from Selsdon Road to Selborne Road. My class had been selected to prepare a special tea for Her Majesty - each of us was

given a specific task by the new domestic science teacher. Mine was to make the custard. Three times I feverishly mixed the custard powder with milk and three times it was a lumpy mess. The teacher ended up having to do the job. Was my face red!



Coronation chocolate tin



Ann Hatherill writes:

This tin was my mother's button box - I loved tipping out the buttons and sorting them into colours, sizes and shapes. In 1953 my parents had a TV with a small screen and little doors that folded back. The neighbours all came in to watch the Coronation. My strongest memory is of the Queen of Tonga sitting in her carriage with the hood down in the pouring rain waving happily to all the crowds.

Hearing the news - the King is dead.

Maureen Hunt writes:

On Wednesday February 6 1952, I had a day off from work, so my mother and I went up to London for a shopping spree. As we walked along Oxford Street, we noticed that the shop windows were being emptied and the window dressers were hastily draping rolls of black material inside. It could only mean one thing. "The King is dead" was being whispered by all passers by. Mum grabbed my arm and said "Come on, we must get home straight away". We scuttled down to Charing Cross station. There was an eerie silence all round and we were so relieved to get home to Lewisham. Amongst my many souvenirs I have found this copy of the Daily Mail dated February 7 1952



Coronation Day in the rain.



In 1953 David, my future husband, who had recently finished National Service, and I planned to join the Coronation crowds. We had previously reconnoitred the pavement along Piccadilly and found a point which would give us a view of the procession. It was inevitable of course that a tall and wide policeman or soldier would stand directly in front of us and block our view.

We had worn all our waterproof rambling gear and carried a rucksack full of food and drink ready for a night on the pavement! We intended to sit on an old army blanket which my dad had 'salvaged' from the ARP's' post in our road at the end of the war.

Well, we got there early evening and claimed our pitch, feeling very pleased with ourselves --- until we were soon squashed in by the world and his wife! It then started pouring with rain, so we had to sit under the moth eaten blanket which became heavier and heavier and smelt awful. However, the rain eased and we all cheered when the

street cleaners arrived very early with their brooms and trolleys. Then of course came the 'very tall policemen and soldiers' to take up their positions in front of us, to the sound of many loud and indignant protests!

It seemed such a long wait until until the sound of cheers and bands approached. We then stood up to shout, cheer and to greet our new Queen who was not much older than us. And we are still here to celebrate and remember.

So come on everybody - hip hip hip hooray. *God Save the Queen!*



(I wonder if Maureen and David are in this photo !)

A desert memorial for the King



David Hunt writes:

In February 1952 I was serving with 3 Para in Egypt. Just a few days before fighting in Ismailia between British troops and the Egyptian police, had resulted in riots in Cairo. In order to counter any move towards the Suez Canal by Egyptian Armed Forces, we were deployed to a point in the Eastern Desert somewhere between the Suez Canal and Cairo. At around mid day on February 6 we received news that the King had died. This photo shows me sitting outside our Field Kitchen. It was taken on that day. We held a Memorial Service in the desert a few days later.



The Protocols of a Royal Visit.

Graham Marsden writes:

I was working as Town Clerk in Honiara, Solomon Islands in 1982 when it was announced that the Queen was going to pay a visit to this Pacific island en route home from Brisbane. Needless to say this created a lot of excitement! Everything had to be planned with great care (not a typical Solomon Island strength). Protocols had to be followed - whatever they were!

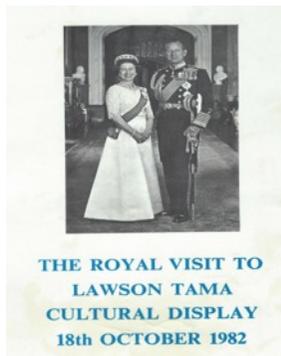
So there had to be committees! Some dealt with the 'big picture' (having representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, from the Governor General's Office and the British High Commission, which gave us links to Buckingham Palace). This was how we learned of the necessary protocols and also the dress code. It was relaxed somewhat due to the climate and the limited range of clothing available in Honiara shops. One example was that ladies were not

expected to wear hats, and simple cotton dresses were the order of the day!



Then there were committees for individual events. This is where I got involved - my 'brief' was the Cultural Display at the main football ground. Money was mysteriously found for the capital to be spruced up – more trees planted, rubbish collected and bins (actually 44 gallon oil drums) repainted in the colours of the national flag). To lapse into pidgin - 'Fitim Solomon'. Care had to be taken that each of the nine Provinces and the different ethnic groups (Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian) were given equal opportunity to show their distinctive culture and their 'kustom' dress. We had singing, dancing, and warriors brandishing spears! Such things were not part of the syllabus when I trained as an accountant by the way!

Then there were more protocols - who was to be invited and who was to sit where. The Lego bricks used by our grandchildren



still include bricks marked Q, GG, PM etc. We used them to get the the seating plan right!

We feared a tropical downpour - but awoke to sunshine. The event was a big success, to my great relief. The Queen watched from the seating area (shaded from the hot sun) but came down to greet us at the end. The committee all wearing matching white trousers and red island shirts were presented to Her Majesty and Prince Philip. (I still have the shirt but sadly it no longer fits!).



After an opportunity to shower and change, my wife Kate and I went to a Garden Party at Government House that afternoon. My lasting memory of this was Prince Philip spotting me and saying 'You are a lucky chap, I have not had an opportunity to change'.

Everyone involved in organising the visit was invited that evening to a drinks 'do' onboard the Royal Yacht Britannia. We had been told the protocol - to address Her Majesty as Ma'am - no bowing or curtsying and we were to let her initiate any conversation. The Queen (very tiny) seemed to be on castors as she approached our little group. One of my committee colleagues (seen next to the Queen in this photo) was so nervous that he kept popping peanuts into his mouth - one after the other - not swallowing them! Certainly not protocol!

The evening ended with us on deck while the Royal Marines marched up and down the wharf playing classics such as 'Life on the ocean wave' and 'Men of Harlech'. A stirring sight and sound - so far from home. We were slightly taken aback though when one of the ship's officers started a conversation with us by asking 'When in England, do you hunt?' Somewhat surprised by the question, I answered 'No. There is not much opportunity for hunting in Croydon'!



HM visits Croydon!



The Queen visited Croydon in 1996 and this picture appeared in the Advertiser. Thank you Anna (Bateson) for sharing this photo of your grandmother Edna Richardson with her friend Daphne Smith - another church member.

Shirley Methodist Platinum Jubilee Community Garden Party

When you read this our big event will be a thing of the past. A huge thank you to everyone who stepped up to run a stall, bake a cake, greet our visitors or simply do what was asked of them. Let's hope the Shirley community will have had a really positive glimpse of life at our church

An early start - but well worth it!

Chris Graham writes:

Kate and I decided to go up to London for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations - it meant getting up at 5am but we did get the perfect spot on the Mall to see the Queen go past in her coach! We then joined the huge crowd outside Buckingham Palace - what a wonderful day it was.



Balmoral, a silver baton and a corgi.

Leslie Griffiths writes:

August 2012 – a few days after the closure of the Olympic Games. I'm on a plane from Heathrow to Aberdeen. I'm in role as President of the Boys' Brigade and we're off to see our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, in Balmoral. This is her Diamond Anniversary year and she wants to meet representatives of all the charities of which she is patron. It's our turn. So we're obeying a royal command.

A car awaits us at the airport and whisks us through what seems like an unending and dramatic Scottish landscape. But we're less interested in the scenery than in matters to do with protocol. How will we be received? How should we address our Head of State? How much time will she give us? It's a long way to go for a handshake!

We need not have worried. An equerry shepherds us into a comfortable sitting room. We're wearing our Brigade uniforms, twitching our cuffs, straightening our ties, talking gibberish to each other. She enters the room. No

formal announcement, no fanfares, just an elderly lady in a cardigan and plaid

skirt, holding out her hand to greet us. We're immediately put at our ease. But now comes the difficult part. I have to make a speech.

In imitation of the procession of the Olympic torch which toured all corners of the land, we've dug out of our store a silver baton that was given to us by King George V, the Queen's grandfather. We're going to enclose a handwritten message from Her Majesty and then send it by personal courier, members of the Boys' Brigade in relay, on a similar trajectory. So we're at the beginning of that great marathon event. We have a Scottish boy, a running champion in his own right, ready to speed away on the first lap. My speech must set all this up.



I cough. To clear my throat. I'm nervous. I congratulate the Queen on the packed programme she's undertaken during her celebratory year – foreign tours, state occasions, great events all in quick and heavy succession. "And your triumphal entry to the Olympic stadium," I rhapsodise, 'what must it have felt like to be part of a James Bond plot?' She chuckles at the memory. I'm now in my stride. 'Wonderful to see the dogs enjoying it too,' I burble. Looking down, I see a corgi sitting at her feet. 'Was this one of them?' I ask. She nods 'Where's the other one?' I ask. 'Dead,' she replies in a staccato voice before explaining that it had some condition that made it necessary to have it put down. This little exchange completely throws me. I go on talking but my voice is no longer connected to my brain. What a relief when, finally, I draw



my remarks to a conclusion. We have a cup of tea and then, the pièce de résistance, we move to the french windows to set the Scottish runner on his way and the great Boys' Brigade relay is launched. The Queen has entered into this simple activity with what seems like genuine interest and enthusiasm. Fond memories. A homely scene. Simple pleasure. Our conversation bubbles as we make the return trip home.

Just over a month later, at the Annual Council of the Boys' Brigade in Cardiff, we await that much-travelled baton. In it comes. In the hands of a Welsh running champion in his own right. He hands it to me. I open it in as ceremonial a manner as I can rise to. I take out the document, unroll it, and read it out to the assembled company. It offers greetings and good wishes.

For me, of course, there's a strange irony in the fact that it was I who put the Queen's letter into the baton and sent it on that long journey. And now, here I am, taking it out again. What goes round comes round.



Jubilee - a different perspective

When Kate asked me if I could write a Blog that reflected the theme of Jubilee in some way I thought - What can a 'nice boy' from the Colonies possibly say!

What can I say of someone whom I've been taught about all my life and who I've been taught to respect? Well quite a lot actually! And not all of it would make pleasant or interesting reading either. When I was a child in Rhodesia 'God save the Queen' was my national anthem until my early teenage years. Then Right Honourable Ian Douglas Smith announced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on November 11 1965. We claimed '*our independence*'.



Things changed rapidly after that - the Queen's image was removed from our currency; the National Anthem was changed; even our Scout pledge was altered to 'God and country'.

Those were heady days and as a 'privileged' member (albeit living in youthful, ignorant bliss) of a suppressive society I simply went along with all that was happening and copied the slogans of 'independence and freedom'.

I am now a 70-year-old individual - I have been alive as long as Queen Elizabeth II has been on the throne. In 2015 my status changed, and I became a British Citizen (something which my colonial heritage had already given me but which through the stroke of a pen later I was to lose). When I was made a Citizen, I swore an oath of allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II, her heir, and successors by law. So, having come full circle what can I say?

It is my prayer that at this time when we celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, we give God thanks for her reign, for the standards she has maintained and for her example. May she continue to know and experience His hand upon her life.

When the time comes for her to hand over to whomever becomes her successor, may he move into the position of power and authority

with the same dignity she possesses. May his rule of the nation be for the good and benefit of its people and may they constantly and consistently keep in mind the need for justice, peace and equality for our nation as a whole.



May God bless you.
Bennie

*O Lord, the Way, the Truth, and the Life,
we give you thanks for your servant Elizabeth our Queen.
May she ever be provided with all she may need
for her ministry among us,
strengthened to meet every demand
which her office may make,
and in all things nourished by your word and example,
who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign,
world without end.*

Amen.

Church of England Platinum Jubilee Liturgy

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday June 11
9.15am to finish by 10am,

Do come along - a little earlier if you would like some refreshments .

All prayers that are offered are heard by God, those offered in the quiet of our hearts or heard by all.

The important thing is that we gather together in fellowship with each other as the body of Christ.

Brian Sherrell

House group

Thursday June 16

I thought it might be a good idea to tell you what it is like to be part of this House Group. We gather at 10 am for a 10.15am start. In May we finished a course called 'Glimpses of God ' which we found stimulating.

We are a small group of ordinary people like you who have doubts and fears and learn from each other's experiences. We find it helpful to share our own thoughts and ideas with others knowing that what we say is treated in confidence..

We use a resource from York Courses and read a few pages before we meet. Then on the day we listen to a conversation between some reasonably well-known religious folk on the relevant topic after which we work through a number of questions.

You would be very welcome to join us in the Lounge and don't worry if you can't come every month (it's always on the third Thursday) - we all live busy lives. From June we are going to discuss some of The Psalms.

Jonathan Baxter

Pick-pockets - BEWARE

Sadly there have been quite a few reports on local Facebook sites of 'distraction thieves' working recently in West Wickham.

One lady lost her wallet when approached by a stranger as she entered Emmanuel Church for a funeral. Another had her purse stolen in Card Factory when a woman asked her to read a birthday card ,saying she had mislaid her spectacles.

So sad - in West Wickham!

Christian Aid

Jean Beecher writes:

I am writing this during Christian Aid week - the colourful envelopes and 7 day devotional leaflets have been given out, Christian Aid bunting is flying outside our church door and we are getting ready to count the money raised. Thank you to all of you for your generous, faithful giving. We shall let you know the total raised.

Local partners are working with Christian Aid in Zimbabwe where the climate crisis is causing aching hunger for families like Jessica Mwedzi's pictured here.



For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. The combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict, and drought have robbed communities like Jessica's of the power to provide for their children.

✝ We stand with the resilient women - like Jessica Mwedzi who are determined to lift their families out of hunger.

✝ We raise our voices to call for climate justice

✝ We pray that families will stay strong during times of drought

✝ Together, we hope to restore justice to our world, and protect the future for our children and grandchildren.

With your help Christian Aid can help women grow crops from drought resistant seeds. You can help turn hunger into hope.

With every gift, every action, every prayer, every one of us can change lives.

Loving God
We give you thanks
for the work of our partners in
Zimbabwe.

May their work continue
to be fruitful
and bring joy
to those they work with

Amen

Come and visit Wesley's Chapel

Ruth Tayler writes:

The Guild are organising a visit to Wesley's Chapel on Friday July 1. We invite church members to join us. The day is being led by Jennifer Potter and Leslie Griffiths.

We will meet at East Croydon station booking office area at 9.10 and then to proceed to the platform to catch the 9.30 train to London Bridge. Once there we will catch a bus to Finsbury Square. This takes us to 200 yards distance from Wesley's Chapel.

We will have time to have a coffee before setting off to view the features of the chapel guided by Leslie and Jennifer.

Then it will be time for lunch. There are many local shops along the street where lunch can be taken or folk can bring their own packed lunch and a suitable spot within the chapel grounds can be used.

Afterwards, we will enjoy a walking tour of the graveyard at the rear of the chapel grounds, again guided by Jennifer and Leslie. There are many interesting

features. Well known people have found a resting place here.

Following this tour there will be a further conducted tour of the Bunhill Cemetery just over the road. Here more things of interest are to be found including the graves of Susannah Wesley (mother of Charles and John) and of William Blake.

Between these two tours those who may wish to start their journey home can do so, and can make their own way back to London Bridge. I am told however that the Bunhill Cemetery is very much worth a visit especially when led by Jennifer and Leslie!

I have opened a list of people who would like to come. It will be first come, first served!

I will be in church on Sunday mornings clutching the said list! I will require names, email addresses if available and telephone numbers. Those who made it to the list of those who can be invited to come will be told during the week of June 6. There will have to be a reasonable limit on numbers.



Sarah Choi: Minister's Wife and Sculptor



Jenny Crook writes:

You may not have realised that Sarah Choi is an accomplished sculptor! With

Choi's imminent retirement, I took the opportunity to find out about Sarah, the artist.

As an artist, what would you say is your profession?

I am a professional sculptor, although I work using a range of mediums.

When did you realise that you were creative?

At kindergarten I liked drawing and making things which were often praised! My best subject was maths; if I had not been an artist, I could have studied maths. Pure mathematics is quite creative too!

What influenced you to become a sculptor?

It was natural – everyone expected me to - I hadn't thought of another way.

Where did you train?

After studying for a BA in Fine Art, specialising in sculpture at Ewha Women's University in Seoul, I took a one year Art Teaching degree course. In the UK, after a Foundation Art course at Yeovil College, I did a postgraduate course at the University of West England in Fine Art and have taught both in Korea and the UK.

What materials do you use ?

I use different materials, such as metal and clay, and methods such as building, welding, carving, plastering, drawing, painting, engraving, glazing and firing. Practically, in my various scales of work, I like to combine 2D and 3D works together. My work can be very physical, for example welding which needs to be carried out in specific workshops. When I make pottery, I do not use a wheel to throw the clay; I build up a vessel or container by hand from coils of clay.

What factors influence your work?

After I am inspired by a theme, I spend time thinking and researching before I start the work. My experience, being a Londoner and also as a minister's spouse, have

given me more opportunities to meet beautifully different and unique people created by God. I'm interested in many different aspects of humanity - love, comfort, hope, joy, solitude, loneliness, and tragedy are all interspersed with a clear message of my concern and hope for humanity.



In this hand-built clay work, I celebrated London; one of the most splendid cities in the world, possessing its own beauty and diversity. The capital's unique architectural scenes inspired me, along with my Christian belief.



Another piece is *An Olive Tree*. I used a living olive tree, some good soil, a ham cloth thread and a real ammunition box which had been used to

carry weapons. I planted an olive tree to symbolize peace and hope. The tree will grow with the hope for the new generation, although the box will certainly decay. I dedicated this installation to hope for the children in conflict. This is an



on-going project - the tree is still alive, growing in my garden while the box is gradually decaying. The olive tree will survive and

bear fruits of hope: the bomb box will rot away... "The darkness will never overcome the light".

A metal sculpture, *Being* (see page 25) was made by welding hundreds of pieces of metal wire together. I had to cut the wire into small lengths before welding them. I suffered many cuts to my fingers and hands creating this piece! The wire pieces represent the ups and downs of our lives; despite the sharp pieces of wire, however, the fragments come together to form a smooth whole which expresses the dignity of a completed human life.



How long does it take to complete a sculpture from start to finish?

At least four months, from the initial

inspiration, followed by research, lots of sketching and then making, if all goes well! A larger piece, such as those using welded metal, takes longer. I usually concentrate on one piece at a time; although I can work on more than one if they have the same theme.

Where do you work?

I rent a studio in Kingston, where I do the majority of my work.

What are the circumstances for your work to be exhibited?

I may be invited to contribute to an exhibition and I can also apply to



show my work in a gallery. Often I have to pay a gallery fee for my work to be

exhibited– which means I don't make a living from being a sculptor!

Do you do commissions? How do they come about?

It may be through exhibiting my work in small public galleries or through an Open Studio (when a group of artists come together to open their individual studios to the public).

What happens to your finished pieces?

They will be taken to an exhibition or sometimes a buyer. Occasionally I have to hire a vehicle for a larger piece, but usually Choi and I can transport pieces. Choi then has to be a labourer, in fact, being an artist's husband is harder than being a minister's wife!

Thank you Sarah for such a fascinating article

On Sarah's website

<https://www.sarahechoi.com/>

are many examples of the range of her work, including sculpture, clay vessels and drawings. She has also exhibited her work in nearly 40 different galleries in London and Korea, and has been a prize winner on occasions.

Kate Marsden writes:

A friend who is finding life a challenge and a struggle at the moment has found this poem helpful. It may provide some comfort for others for whom life is proving difficult.

A Portable Paradise

And if I speak of Paradise,
then I'm speaking of my grandmother
who told me to carry it always
on my person, concealed, so
no one else would know but me.
That way they can't steal it, she'd say.
And if life puts you under pressure,
trace its ridges in your pocket,
smell its piney scent on your handkerchief,
hum its anthem under your breath.
And if your stresses are sustained and daily,
get yourself to an empty room – be it hotel,
hostel or hovel – find a lamp
and empty your paradise onto a desk:
your white sands, green hills and fresh fish.
Shine the lamp on it like the fresh hope
of morning, and keep staring at it till you sleep.

Roger Robinson

© Roger Robinson, A Portable Paradise (Peepal Tree Press, £9.99)

I emailed Roger to ask permission to print this and his (immediate) response was 'Go for it! Roger Robinson is a black-British performance poet and writer who has received many awards. The collection 'A Portable Paradise' won the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2019.



MHA Wilderness Activities



The Wilderness Garden is now open to the public every Saturday and Sunday until the end of September. 10am to 4pm. No need to book. Just turn up and enjoy the tranquillity of the garden!

Marco Galli is organising so many wonderful activities - too many to list here in detail. But here is a taster: dementia friendly walking groups, mindfulness and well-being sessions, pub lunches, green care and gardening, coffee and conversation, sessions with bereavement counsellors from St Christopher's Hospice. There is even going to



be Bingo al Fresco! A real treat is planned - a day trip to Wisley on June 30 (cost £25)

If any of these things appeal to you (or you may have a neighbour or friend who might be interested) please contact Marco Galli on 07597135220. He can let you have all the details.

Marco.Galli@mha.org.uk

Gardening and being in green spaces have for many years been known to improve your health both physically and mentally. Connecting with nature improves your mood, reduces stress and increases self-esteem. The NHS are beginning to suggest such activities as 'social prescriptions'. The evidence points to people needing friends, and a sense of belonging and of purpose.

Adam Fuller - the head gardener has moved on to a new position. His team of volunteers are continuing his good work - following his detailed day to day plans. It is hoped that his replacement will be in place before too long.

As the number of activities increase - so does the opportunity for volunteering. Maybe you or someone you know might like to do a spot of volunteering. It may well suit a newly retired person or a school leaver on a gap year needing to enhance their CV.

If any of the following volunteer roles appeal



to you please contact Marco. 07597135220.

Marco.Galli@mha.org.uk

Gardening Volunteer
 Event Volunteer
 Education Volunteer
 Driver Volunteer
 Wellbeing Volunteer.
 Gardening Volunteer.
 Public Opening Volunteer.

Association of Church Editors Annual Meeting

This takes place at Westminster Central Hall on June 25. Jenny Crook will be 'flying the flag' for Shirley Methodist.

Over the years, attending this meeting has proved to be really useful - meeting other editors, sharing ideas and expertise.

There is an annual competition to find magazines that show excellence in various ways; content, quality of the religious message, lay out, use of graphics are just some of the things the judges look out for.

We always enter Shirley Methodist Matters - and appreciate the encouragement, suggestions and positive feedback. We are a very 'small' enterprise. Some magazines serve a large readership (like SPAN magazine), most have revenue from advertisements and are professionally printed. But we persevere! And have our eye on the prize as they say!

Keynote speakers are invited and this year Jenny will have the pleasure of hearing a familiar voice: Leslie Griffiths!



Shirley Methodist Matters

The magazine can be read on line www.shirleymeth.org.uk. Printed copies are available at church. Thank you to all our contributors. Jenny Crook will be the next editor. jenny.crook@blueyonder.co.uk
katemarsden747@gmail.com



The next magazine will be published (and be on the website) on Sunday 3 July. Please send contributions by Sunday 26 June.



Shrublands Foodbank

Every donation makes a difference. By contributing you help provide a vital support to local families in need. This is becoming an ever more urgent problem as prices are rising and families are finding it so hard to cope. There is a list of items needed in the Welcome Area - and a basket for your contributions. If you prefer you can put items in the box at the Coop on Wickham Road. Bev at Shrublands Foodbank is looking for more volunteers - could you help?

020 3441 7887 or info@shrublandstrust.org

Shirley Neighbourhood Care

We are based at the West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church. We run shopping buses lunch clubs; transport to medical appointments; a befriending service; and a range of outings to tea shops, pubs and restaurants for lunch and garden centres; as well as a monthly film club showing up to the minute movies at Shirley Methodist Church.

It is only with the help of volunteers that we can do any of this. If you have a few hours to spare each week, please get in touch with Suzy Stoyel snsc@shirleyneighbourhoodcare.co.uk 020 8662 9599.

Shirley Methodist Church one of 'Churches Together in Shirley'

As followers of Jesus Christ, our mission is:

✚ *to honour God by our daily living as individuals and our corporate life as a church*

✚ *to offer God worship which is both lively and dignified*

✚ *to offer welcome and care to all, regardless of age, status, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, ability or disability*

✚ *to stimulate one another to grow in our faith and develop our discipleship*

✚ *to work with our fellow-Christians in Shirley to serve our neighbours and share with others our experience of God's love*

