

New Horizons

MAY 2020



When you walk through the waters
I'll be with you;
You will never sink beneath the waves.
Do not be afraid

THE CORNERSTONE



The
United
Reformed
Church

Bournemouth Park Road,
Southend-on-Sea, SS2 5JL
(For car park on Central Ave, sat navs
use SS2 5HR no 59)

www.thecornerstonesouthend.org.uk
Email:
cornerstonequestions@outlook.com

Suspended for the time being

WORSHIP AND ACTION

Sunday 10.30 am **Morning Worship** and Junior Church.
Holy Communion is celebrated during Worship on the
4th Sunday

FAIRTRADE Coffee and tea is served after Morning Worship

Please stay to talk with each other in an informal atmosphere.

Tues 10.00 am **Time of prayer** together for, the Fellowship, those
with special needs, our neighbours, and the world-
wide Christian Family. All are welcome to join with us.

Church Meetings are generally held in alternate months on the third
Thursday at 7.30 pm. The dates and times will be published in this
magazine and announced in Church.

Tues 10.00 am Tea and Coffee in the Foyer
11.30 am "Cornerstone Crafters"
(1st and 3rd Tuesdays or as announced)
2.30 pm Christian Forum (2nd and 4th Tuesdays)
4.00 pm Messy Church (1st Tuesday in the month)
19.30-21.00pm Digging Deeper (3rd Tuesday of each month)

Wed 9.30 am The Cornerstone Toddlers during Term Time
5.45 pm Pilots. Ends at about 7.00 pm.
6.00 pm Beaver Scouts and Cub Scouts
7.45-9.15 Scouts

Thurs 7.30 pm Elders' Meeting (1st Thursday)

Fri 7.00-9.00 Youth Club

**We do offer Christian Marriage, Baptisms and Funerals so please talk to
the Secretary or any Elder if you feel that we can help.**

We hope to be back soon

Little Turtles Pre-School meets on Monday to Friday from 9.00 am during
term time. Please see one of the Junior Church Leaders for details.

But closed until further notice.



Letter to the Fellowship

Recognising Jesus

While reading the story 'on the road to Damascus', it reminded me of another event when the disciples failed to recognise Jesus and his power.

The disciples had lived with Jesus. They knew him in a very personal and intimate manner. Yet from this incident we understand there was a moment when they did not recognise Him.

We know that we are going through those times, those unexpected circumstances of our lives in which we simply find it difficult to recognise the Master's presence?

Perhaps easier to be aware of him when on our knees in prayer, or when engaged in those obvious Christian duties, activities such as witnessing, ministering to the sick or having a fellowship?

But what of the night? What of the darkness? What of the lonely moments, the totally personal struggles, the times when our hearts yearn to reach out and touch someone else and there is no one there or no possibilities? What of the trying times? What of the storms? Are we then able to recognise Jesus?

The disciples did not! They were too wrapped up in the struggle of the moment. They saw the tossing waves. They felt the threat of death. They heard the wind, saw the lightning, felt the pelting rain. But they did not recognize the Lord. In the same way, the disciples on the road to Damascus were wrapped in their fears and sadness, their minds and eyes were unable to see the reality all around them.

Life has a way of teaching us. Life has a way of reminding us. Just when we think all is running smoothly, all is well, all is under control; then comes the startling realization that storm clouds are blowing over. No matter how often we have been down the road, there are yet surprises. We still have more to learn. Such is life.

The disciples were about to learn the greatest lesson they would ever receive, the truth of Jesus in the storm. They knew Jesus already as the supplier of their needs. They knew him as a great teacher. Still, never having met Jesus in a storm, they did not recognize him. All too often we find ourselves in similar situations and make the same mistake.



We believe Jesus for our salvation and for the forgiveness of our sins. We look to him as the supplier of all our needs. We trust him to bring us into glory one day. But when everything is falling apart, we find it difficult to see Jesus.

We can't seem to believe that he would allow a storm to teach us how to trust Him. We are never quite sure he is nearby when things really get rough. The ship is now tossing. It appears to be sinking, winds are blowing. Everything is going contrary and it seems all hope is lost. Does it sound familiar?

They were afraid, full of fear! Fear is a destructive force that plagues each of us at certain times. Of course, some fear is normal. It helps us survive certain dangers.

Oxford dictionary online definition of fear is: *"the bad feeling that you have when you are in danger, when something bad might happen, or when a particular thing frightens you."*

Most of us have known fear in these varying shades of meaning especially in difficult times we find ourselves in at the moment. But fear is also a spiritual force. It can actually destroy us if we yield to it. One thing we need to remember is that fear is not of God. God is not the author of fear. God does not send fear upon his people. He made all things. He sustains all things. He holds the key to all things. He is in charge of all things.

We are so often like the disciples, not one of whom recognized Jesus when he came walking on the water. It could be that we believe and expect Jesus to be at the Samaritan well, or in the temple driving out the money changers. We expect him one day to be at the right hand of the Father, to make us kings and priests. But never do we expect him to be with us in the storm!

For the disciples, that storm was just an act of nature, an unexpected disaster, a tragic accident of fate, an unwanted and unnecessary trial, a lonely and fearful journey into despair. It was a night to be forgotten.

If we could only remember: *"He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed."* (Psalm 107:29); and *"It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain"* (Isaiah 4:6).



Paul tells us, *"In Him we live, and move, and have our being"* (Acts 17:28). Again, he says, *"God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (2 Timothy 1:7).

With God living in us, fully, there is no room for fear. We must discover in him and through his Holy Spirit the power to cope with fear in all its many expressions.

And when we recognise him among us, with us, our eyes and minds will open not only to see and recognise him but also to experience his fellowship and power, the saving power that was the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen.

God bless,
Sohail

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While the surges rage and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow.

**We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love**



**Priscilla Jane Owens - MP 770
(Used by permission, CCL Licence No. 7114)**

Prayers for our Fellowship and those we know

Prayers can be for joy and sorrow, health and sickness, good news and bad in addition to those for our own needs and guidance.

Please pray for all of our fellowship at this troubled time as many of our elderly congregation will be self-isolating. We remember Mick Thorp who is unwell at present. For those who have to work, go shopping or leave the house for any reason, we pray for their safety Lord.



We especially remember in our prayers Shelagh, Beverley and the family of Ron Root who passed away last month. Be with them Father God and let your love surround them at this difficult time. We also remember any others of our fellowship who are mourning the loss of a loved one or friend and cannot give them the send-off they would wish for. Remember, it's not the ending that matters but the lifetime of love. Give them peace of spirit and the knowledge that God knows of all their difficulties and hears all of their prayers.

Remember that when this is all over, we will meet together again and give heartfelt thanks to the Lord our God.

Father, hear our prayers

Amen

Prayers for peoples and matters outside of our fellowship

There are many prayers being offered for those in need at this time and we shall need to continue to do so for a while yet. However, do not forget that we must also give prayers of thanks for those who are selflessly doing so much to help others, often at great risk to their own well-being. So many of them are people of faith who are living it out to its extreme and are having it severely tested.

We all know someone who needs that faith, so please call them and share yours with them

Please pray harder then ever.

Keep your distance and stay indoors if at all possible.

Say One For Me

There is a dedicated post box on the railings by the Bournemouth Park Road entrance inviting members of the neighbourhood to send us their prayer requests for our Church Prayer Group.

We pray that this scheme will help The Cornerstone be and be known as a church that cares.

SECRETARY'S NOTEBOOK



“The Church is not closed, the Church has been deployed.” So said a meme I came across on Facebook and it is quite obvious that many churches have responded to the Covid-19 crisis with alacrity, and social media has more overtly Christian content than ever before. But the thing about social

media is you have to go looking for the things that interest you, they don't necessarily drop into your newsfeed uninvited. In other words, so far as spreading the Gospel is concerned, it is not much different than expecting people to come through our church doors without a clue what goes on inside, so it is still up to each of us to take the gospel to others as best we can in the current situation. I came across a page on Facebook “Together at Home” which produces resources for young families which has been very useful in lieu of Messy Church and Pilots.

However, I do think technology can be of some use in creating and maintaining community and fellowship, which we are all missing greatly while we cannot meet face to face. We have tried to plug the gap with regular newsletters, a chatty more social one collated by Alison (please send her contributions) and some reflections from Sohail. There are also social media options. For example, the Christianity Explored group is using the Zoom conference call app for the discussion part of the course, and I have heard of at least one church using Zoom for a virtual coffee morning, which we might want to think about if social distancing is to last much longer.



For our worship times, we have been sharing the Sunday services produced by the URC Daily Devotions team and thus have heard ‘visiting preachers’ we would not otherwise have the opportunity to hear, sung along with hymns we had forgotten we knew, and worshipped in the huge variety of styles that is the URC. We began on 29th March with Rev. Phil Nevard - he serves in the South-West Synod so it would definitely be difficult to get him to The Cornerstone. I've met Phil so I was not surprised that he managed

to get his wit and humour into a sermon on the Valley of Dry Bones and show us hope in the midst of apparent chaos.

The following week, Palm Sunday, it was Rev. Andy Braunston from Glasgow, as we followed the events of the Passion and heard a message about reversals in all of life, how we are now valuing health and care workers, supermarket staff et al like never before. On Maundy Thursday, our Minister Sohail shared a reflection on Jesus' agony in the Garden and on Good Friday Andy again arranged a service of readings and prayers for the day.

On Easter Sunday Rev. John Bradbury led the service; John has been appointed to follow John Proctor as URC General Secretary. His message was very apt, considering what does resurrection mean at a time when we cannot honour the dead as we would wish. The service also included a 'together apart' communion which was particularly moving for the times, and we should appreciate the theological discussions that had taken place to enable this to happen, in a departure from tradition.

Rev Nicola Furley Smith, URC Secretary for Ministries, led the service "Behind Closed Doors" on 19th April, considering whether the fear we are experiencing in these times is comparable to that of the disciples in the weeks after the Resurrection, and the following week Rev Martin Knight of Croydon led thoughts on our response to the Gospel in the light of this new experience of our times.

At this point, I would like to thank those of you who volunteered previously unknown email addresses to enable these services to be shared, and the team of people who are printing and burning CDs for delivery to the people who do not have email. We have been able to reach almost everyone.

I appreciate that not everyone is comfortable with the unfamiliar - the different hymns (carefully selected not to infringe copyright law), different practices and unusual voices can be a bit disorientating at first. But personally, I have rediscovered the joy of *listening*, untroubled by the normal Sunday need to be doing, and that has been a blessing

We were saddened to hear of the passing away of Ron Root during April. Ron and Shelagh have been regular worshippers for many years and it is only recently ill health has stopped him attending. Please remember Shelagh, their daughter Beverley and her family in your prayers. Remember too, if you are yourself under the weather or concerned about anything, your elder is just a phone call away.

Of course, we are all now spending far more time at home than before, and life has evolved a much slower pace and will continue to do so once all the curtains are washed and spring cleaning done. My son, on furlough from his chef job, started some redecorating; it turned out a wall needs to be replastered before this can proceed, and it is currently impossible to buy bags of plaster. I looked into this and found that British Gypsum is focussing all of its production to the manufacture of the cubicles for the Nightingale Hospitals- a very necessary effort so we can't complain even if it is frustrating.



My garden has been tidied and got ready for the growing season and the greenhouse is full to bursting point. I had a collection of mostly out of date seed packets, so sowed more than necessary thinking they may not all germinate but it appears they all have! So later in the month I should have plenty of spare tomato plants, chard, cucumber, peppers. that is assuming I can find compost to buy, to pot them on. Watch the newsletter for further information. It's also around this time of year I empty the freezers and make jam and chutney which raises a fair bit for church funds. I'm undecided about that this year until we get some idea when we can come together again. When that does happen, I'm sure we will have a big celebration!

Ruth Dixon

**Clothe yourself with
compassion, kindness, humility,
gentleness and patience.**

Colossians 3:12

A message from the Treasurer

Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you well and with enough to keep you occupied in these different times.

Those of you who have been receiving the written text of the URC services on a Sunday will see that each service includes an offertory and one minister even elaborated on the need for regular contributions to aid the upkeep of church buildings and general running costs. I would like to add to this that some Cornerstone Church attendees have already sent me cheques or paid in money to the church account. Thank you to all those who have done this.

If you find yourself in the position where you are able to continue with your regular giving, please do so. There are two options:

- A. Bank transfer into The Cornerstone URC bank account - Metro Bank Account No: 34688941, Sort Code: 23-05-80. Please use your envelope number as the reference.
- B. By writing out a cheque and delivering or sending it to me at 56 Inverness Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9DX. Please include the dates the cheque is intended to cover or simply include the relevant envelopes with the cheque.

I appreciate that some members and attendees will not be in a position to continue to contribute if on a reduced income but also thank those who continue to donate by Standing Order.

Praying that you all keep safe

**Ann Thorp
Treasurer**

**And the world came together
as the people stayed apart**



Bronze Award

For those of you who do not already know, The Cornerstone has been awarded the Eco Church Bronze Award. In time there will be a wooden plaque in the church. However, this has been delayed as the supplier, Grassmarket Furniture (a community project) is currently closed and so unable to send out the award plaques. They are not sure when production and delivery will be resumed but will be in touch with an update in a few months. They thank us for our understanding and patience during these uncertain times.

So, we must keep up the battle at home, recycling, cutting down on plastic etc. I guess we, like many of you, have had car journeys curtailed so that must be of some help in the fight for a more sustainable planet. The interest in growing your own food is also encouraging. It is good to find the positive messages at this difficult time

Mike and Linda Mead

10-16th May, 2020, Christian Aid Week is NOT cancelled because of the Lockdown



Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, CEO of Christian Aid writes,

“Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, so will build on this experience to continue to stand together with communities living in poverty during this period. If infection rates start to develop as they are in Europe, then people in poorer countries will be hit even harder. Many are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps and in countries which do not have the healthcare infrastructures needed to combat widespread disease. We will be working on

the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. Please pray for us in this vital work, and support us where you can by making an online donation. We are praying for all those affected by this new virus, both in Britain and overseas, for all those working on the frontline and for wisdom for our leaders. I am keeping you all in my prayers.“

So, what can you do?

Because of the Lockdown, Christian Aid Week is going digital for 2020 with online resources and ways to give. As there will be no church or house to house collections, I have set up a Southend JustGiving page, linked to the Christian Aid page, where individuals or churches can give. If you feel this is something you can support in these difficult times please use the link below.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cawsouthend>

During the week itself, there will be daily worship online, together with a virtual Fun Quiz. Here is the link. When you go online you can sign up and then you will be sent more information.

[Daily Live-Streamed Worship and the Daily Fun Quiz](#)

There will also be a ‘300,000 steps in May’ challenge that people can get involved with from home. This will be launched on the main [Christian Aid Facebook page](#) on 1st May. A video sermon from Rowan Williams will also be made available soon. A big thank you to The Cornerstone for your previous support of Christian Aid Week. We hope and pray that those greatly affected by COVID-19 across the world will get the help they need through Christian Aid partners.

Mike and Linda Mead

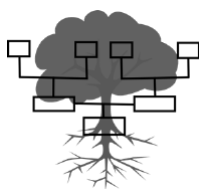
What can I do with myself today?- Alison Shannon

Even in these very strange times there is good to be found. One thing the enforced period of lockdown has given us is time, there never was enough, now we have plenty to spare.

I decided to set myself a task for every day when I would have been going out, to the Coffee morning, Forum or Crafters, to Local History, 'Towie' (another history group with the U3A) or to my Book Club. All that time to fill!

So, it was time to start on the filing system which had deteriorated into a pile next to my printer. Bills, letters to be kept, you know the sort of thing. I had box files ready and waiting but they were full of old out of date stuff, so that was task number one, sort through them before I started putting the newer things away.

One blue bag at the side of me, lots of tearing off of addresses and names, headings too where necessary. Soon it was heading for the rubbish collection later in the week. That was Day1.



BUT in the process of all that, things turned up, often in the wrong file which set another train of thought going. One such was a marriage certificate of one of my Great Uncles, one John Jackson. He was a Lincolnshire man but had worked with his father, my Great grandfather on Dad's side, who was a gardener for "The Big house". As and when the "Big House" family moved so did the employees, to homes all over the country. At the time of the marriage in question John was in Stroud in Gloucestershire, in Acre Place, the house they were working in at the time. Enos, his son John, John's sisters Ethel, Carrie and Lydia (later to become my grandmother) were all employed in the same place, a real family affair.

What did I learn about John when I first sent for the certificate:- he was a gardener, he was 52 years old and a bachelor at the time of the marriage, April 13th 1927, and his bride was Lottie Elizabeth Harmer, aged 39 also of Acre Place. Her father had died but had been a labourer, his father as we know was a gardener, and their

witnesses were her sister and brother. (I found that in later research it is only names on the certificate). Oh, and they could both sign their names, not something that earlier generations were always able to do.

I started looking into my family history twenty years ago and I am still finding bits to add to increase the knowledge about the ancestors. It gets almost addictive and in the early days of retirement I had no difficulty in filling my time!

Have you ever thought of doing it - if you haven't already?

It is so easy to get started, and I am sure you have all heard of Ancestry, a family searching site on the World Wide Web. You can log on and have a month's free trial and that can open up a lot of information with very little effort. Births, marriages and deaths back to when registers were kept officially in 1837 are all free to search. This then leads into the census returns, kept and open to us all from 1841, every ten years until 1911. They are opened to the public, and now put on line after 100 years. We may find that is the last one we will be able to access as they don't allow us to see living folk as a general rule. They set the barrier at 100 years old and now if they open 1921 next year there will be a lot of centenarians still alive, such is the change in life span of the population.

I particularly like the social history searching opens up, where did your family come from, what work did they do, did they move around the country? What difference did the coming of the railways make? Where and from what did they die, some ended their lives in the workhouse simply because that was where they were treated when ill, their home was lost to them if they were in for a while, and they stayed in the workhouse, but working and earning a living.

My "lot" were all from farming stock on both my maternal and paternal sides of the family but apart from our back gardens and the occasional allotment there isn't a groundworker amongst us, How did your grandparents meet, that has always fascinated me, and you never seem to get around to asking the questions while they are alive. My paternal Grandfather was one of seven brothers and one sister living on a farm in a small village in Gloucestershire.

There is just not enough work on one farm, rarely owned but tenanted anyway, for seven young men. So, one may stay as the wheelwright, one as the herdsman etc, but the others would have to be apprenticed out, often having to leave home. This is what happened to grandad. He was indentured to a master-carpenter, it took eight years to get to the journeyman stage (when he was considered trained enough to get his own work) and a further ten years to become a master carpenter in his own right. Grandad became a cabinet maker, until WW1 came and he was seconded to work in the wooden aircraft factory in Bristol.

He and Granny met somehow, married and moved to Gloucester, or rather to a village Barton on Severn, then near Gloucester, but swallowed up as the town developed. My Dad was the first to get a grammar school education and the die was set for no more farming or allied trades in our family. He trained as a hospital pharmacist, moved to Hastings, then Hull and the family roots become very much less well established in any one place.

I feel a sense of jealousy when I am in coffee mornings and some of you still live within streets of where you were born. And this is the first time in my life I have lived anywhere for over ten years. If I look at the widest family, we are in almost every part of Great Britain, in Canada, Australia and America and I am in contact with extended family members in all those places. The oldest member actively still adding things to our family tree is my father's much younger cousin now aged 94, and my aunt who is 90, so still have a way to go yet !

How about giving "Your Lot" a search, you never know what you might find out. If you get started and, in that month, you can get a long way, and if you get stuck give me a call and I can try to help. I have a permanent subscription to Ancestry so I can log in and help you search. Go on give it a try, then you can hand over to the younger generations and tell them it's down to the Lockdown!

Alison Shannon



Harvest Festival 26th and 27th September 2020



The Cornerstone Annual Harvest Festival Service will be a Parade and Family service taking place on 27th September 2020. But back by popular demand of the Tuesday Coffee Morning Group is also our Harvest Supper and Entertainment on the evening before.

Yet again we are looking for volunteers to be on our great stage and give forth with your inner Thespian in whatever way you want as long as it is legal and relates to a 'show'. Your Supper Needs You.

There will also be a number of items on the Big Screen along with songs for all to sing along with music from our Musical Directors.

Just let me know soonest so that I can slot you into the programme. Title of piece, name of performers and length of performance as well please. Somewhat earlier than a week before the event is really good with programming. And if you have any idea of a song or two that you would like us to sing then also let me know. Something from a 'Show' would be good. And, even better, something we know and have the music for.

The Tuesday Coffee Morning also requested a Fish and Chip Supper so prices and booking forms will be out mid to late July.

And for your diaries -

Date - 26th September 2020

Arrive from 5.30pm

Food served at 6.00pm

Concert to start at approx. 7.15pm and finish around 8.30pm (ish)

All are Welcome to this fun-packed evening but pre-booking and paying is essential for the meal.

Roger Brett



Peter's Piece

Some thoughts on COVID19.

These thoughts, which came to me as I was writing to a close friend the other day, about the unexpected suddenness of COVID19, I feel are worth sharing in Peter's Piece.

I still can't get my head round how suddenly and totally unexpectedly the resultant separation and isolation was upon us, with its life changing implications, sadly, for a number, never to go back to how things had formerly been.

There was not even a hint of anything like this the morning Sarah and I had the privilege and responsibility of leading Worship on Sunday 15 March.

We all met as usual, great worship time, good message, lovely customary fellowship afterwards, and then we cheerfully parted: life was all so normal. Then the next day Coronavirus was upon us, very contagious and with a high death rate, especially for the vulnerable. That's a fair number of our congregation!

I don't think in all my life has the exhortation of Proverbs 27:1 NIV been so true.

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring;

What is more it made me think 'I wonder if I will ever be able to do this or that again?' Especially, bearing in mind my age, it dawned on me that if I went down with COVID19 I would most likely have it badly, with only a 50% 'chance' of survival!

Chance is in inverted commas because I know it's not chance, as the world sees it, because all is in God's hands. But from a human point of view there is much I wish I would have done, there are things I would still yet like to do and not to be cut off suddenly, without the chance to say goodbye!

Enjoying life, as so many of us are privileged to do, we so easily and unthinkingly slip into a laid-back acceptance of life and not see that each single day is a gift from God, designed to be used in his service which he can call to an end according to his divine purposes.

Revised Common Lectionary for May - June 2020

Fourth Sunday of Easter - May 3, 2020

- Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 23
- 1 Peter 2:19-25, John 10:1-10

Fifth Sunday of Easter - May 10, 2020

- Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
- 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14

Sixth Sunday of Easter - May 17, 2020

- Acts 17:22-31, Psalm 66:8-20
- 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21

Ascension of the Lord - May 21, 2020

- Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 47
- Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:44-53

Seventh Sunday of Easter - May 24, 2020

- Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
- 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, John 17:1-11

Day of Pentecost - May 31, 2020

- Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13, John 20:19-23

Trinity Sunday - June 7, 2020

- Genesis 1:1-2:4a, Psalm 8
- 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20

* Substituted for OT Reading during Eastertide

As there is not much church news, we asked our readers for some input into the magazine. You have already read one article from Alison Shannon but we have been lucky enough to also have a contribution from Roy Davis. Thanks to both of them for an interesting read. If you would like to write about an aspect of your life, past or present, please do not be shy.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A NATIONAL SERVICEMAN

The National Service Act 1948 was an act of Parliament which extended the British conscription of the Second World War and applied to all healthy young men on reaching their eighteenth birthday who were not registered as conscientious objectors. Already two years into serving a marine engineering apprenticeship, a three year deferment allowed me to complete my time uninterrupted.

The journey to my joining H.M. Armed Forces started in the summer of 1956 when I attended a selection interview and medical examination in the recruitment centre situated in Short Street Southend. As a youngster I had a nasty abscess in one ear which our GP had lanced with me lying on the kitchen table. The doctor noticed the scar and said he required a second opinion for which I attended Southend Hospital. On returning to the recruitment centre I was informed I had passed medically fit for National Service, Grade 1. The interview itself was short, which branch of the services did I wished to join, the navy sir I replied, no vacancies for national servicemen was the reply, next choice, RAF Air Sea Rescue sir, same answer, third choice, RASC Water Transport sir, sorry no vacancies unless you sign on for three years. How about the REME said the officer, why not sir I replied. After a short explanation of what would happen next, leaving in no doubt that body and soul I was about to become inextricably the property of HM Armed Forces, I left the building.

During the first week of November I received the official brown envelope containing a rail warrant and instructions to report to No.1 Training Battalion REME Blandford Forum in Dorset on November 15 1956. Early on the morning of the 15th I said goodbye to my family, having previously said goodbye to Trixie (to whom I was now engaged to be married) and boarded the train at Hockley station, eventually arriving at Blandford Forum camp on the edge of Salisbury Plain mid-afternoon. The greeting and the language left

me in no doubt I was in the army now. Having made sure I had a haircut two days before joining I thought I would escape the regimental haircut, no chance and protestations only made matters worse.

From the Barber shop we had to join a queue outside the Quartermaster's store to be issued with our kit, which was basically thrown at us and which you dare not drop for fear of being trampled to death. By the time you left the building you were buried beneath a battledress, work denims, greatcoat, boots, gaiters, underwear, shirts, jumpers, socks, gym equipment, beret, mess can and mug, jack knife complete with lanyard, packs, dog tags, plus the carry-all I had brought with me. It was now almost impossible to see where I was going, the blind were leading the blind but eventually I arrived in the billet that was to become home for the next six weeks. I had been assigned to A Company No,7 Platoon and my Platoon Commander was Corporal Jim Aldrick a long serving full-time soldier who proved to be very strict but also very fair.

That first evening was very busy indeed, packing and sending my civilian clothes home, organising my locker, making my bed, getting to familiarize with others, and grab a meal and a shower, eventually falling into bed around midnight. Next thing I know an NCO is banging on the metal locker doors and shouting "get out of bed you lazy lot of so-and-so's you're in the army now and your mothers not bringing you a cup of tea this morning" or something similar less polite etc. etc. etc. Through bleary eyes I squinted at my watch, it was 4am. Welcome to service life!

Thereafter reveille was 06:00hrs. Then it was ablutions, make your bed with boxed kit laid out correctly, breakfast, then on parade at 08:00hrs. The mornings consisted of drill whatever the weather and always with a Lee-Enfield 303 rifle, weapons drill, live firing on the firing range with our own issued rifles and the Bren Gun.

Initially evenings were spent removing the pimples from our boots with a toothbrush handle then polishing until you could see your reflection in the toe caps, boxing and applying blanco to the packs, blanco also to belts and gaiters, pressing our battledress with brown paper so you could almost cut yourself on the creases (having shaved them with a razor blade) and scrupulously cleaning the

barrack room which included scrubbing the floor. Inspections were rigorous the first two weeks.

A drill competition took place with every intake, a competition which our Platoon Commander was keen to impress that No.7 Platoon had won the competition on numerous occasions, leaving us in no doubt he expected us to do him proud. Due to his insistence on perfection and dedication to minute detail he was rewarded on the day. Our reward was Christmas at home.

On January 1st each year the MOD closes the road across Salisbury Plain to the public, thereby exercising their right to do so. While the public still use the road, their journey is intercepted at a checkpoint and the reason for closure explained. On New Year's Day 1957 No.7 Platoon A Company inherited the task, fortunately the day was not unpleasant, Salisbury Plain is not the place to be standing around in bad weather without shelter.

During the last week of basic training onward postings are made known, I was going to Norton Manor training camp in Taunton to attend a 16-week Vehicle Mechanics course. 12 weeks into that course I received my onward posting - Light Aid Detachment (LAD) - MOD Underwater Experimental Training Establishment, Instow, North Devon. Great I thought.

Two weeks later I was summoned to the CO's office to be told by the Commanding Officer that my Instow posting had been cancelled and I was now being sent to Cyprus, an active duty posting. The reason, Lt.General Bourne, CinC Middle East Land Forces, was having a launch sent from Malta to Cyprus and he wanted a civilian trained marine engineer aboard. Having given the news to Trixie and my family I finished the course and arrived home on embarkation leave.

With embarkation leave over and rail warrant in hand I made my way to the REME transit camp in Arborfield, Berkshire from where on June 12th 1957 as part of DLKDK Draft I boarded a train for Liverpool, from where at 22:30hrs that evening we set sail for Cyprus aboard H.M.T. "EMPIRE CLYDE" operated by the army.

Ten days later we arrived at Famagusta after a pleasant trip. I was taken to the transit camp in Nicosia where I languished, almost

invisibly with nobody showing any interest in why I was still there two weeks after my arrival, time to make some enquiries I thought.

Within the hour I am heading for Dhekelia, then a modern REME workshop complex. Being a Saturday I reported to the guardroom, explained who I was and why I was on the island. Told to report to the workshops on Monday I was accompanied to a barrack room and settled in.

Sunday morning, as every morning in June, was exceptionally hot, rising to 100 degrees plus in the shade, so after breakfast I decided a swim would bring some welcome relief to my discomfort as I was still acclimatizing to the searing Cypriot temperatures.

On arrival in Cyprus you were told about the heat of the sun and getting sunburnt became a chargeable offence if it kept you from your duties. However, there was no mention of Sand Fly Fever. On my barefoot walk either to or from the beach I was apparently bitten by one (or more) of them and eventually I'm in trouble, with my body temperature rising I was shivering uncontrollably despite the outside temperature and feeling very unwell. Fortunately, there was somebody else in the billet who called an ambulance and I was taken to the military hospital in Famagusta where I recuperated over the following two weeks. I was discharged Saturday lunchtime and had to make my own way back to Dhekelia.

Arriving in my billet I was told I had been reported AWOL (absent without leave) and put on a charge; apparently my absence had not been reported. Having explained my misfortune all was well and I reported to the workshop. Again, I had to explain why I was on the island, and in no time at all I'm on my way back to Famagusta, this time to join the RASC Water Transport Detachment at Golden Sands Camp. No fancy billets with air-conditioning here, just tents. It had taken me more than a month to reach my intended destination. It was a remarkable experience.

I introduced myself to the other WT crew(s) and the following morning, having drawn my sten gun and twenty rounds of ammunition from the armoury, I was on my way to the docks to join "MANNA" a 48 foot (HSTT) High Speed Target Tower complete with three 100 hp. Perkins diesel engines for which I was now ultimately

responsible.

The detachment had three vessels, the HSTT a fast launch and a harbour launch. Weekdays we would transport senior officers to and from the troopships, usually from Famagusta or Larnaca. Fridays we would leave Famagusta for Limassol, then Saturday afternoon make our way to Episkopi Bay where the General and his party would board around 8pm. Anchored off shore in the bay General Bourne would come aft to change, saying he would leave the saloon for the ladies. The General had lost one arm but nevertheless he was a competent swimmer and a very nice gentleman. We would return to the jetty around midnight with the General always thanking the skipper and the crew. The remaining drink went ashore with the party, any food left over was always for the crew.

Despite the risks posed to the military by the terrorist group EOKA who were still active on the island, I considered myself very fortunate to have been chosen. 371 British servicemen were murdered by EOKA during the emergency, many of them National Servicemen. There is now a memorial to the fallen in Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery near Nicosia. I did have one nasty scare while on 'watch' in the docks one evening. It was 23:40hrs on March 31st 1958 when a bomb exploded in the Royal Engineers workshop at the head of the slipway where I and two other friends were standing 50-60 feet away. The bomb had been placed in the crankcase of a Landing Craft diesel engine. I still have photographs of the wreckage taken next morning.

Eventually my time came to return home, and like the outward journey I was to return home by sea, this time it was the RAF operated troopship "DEVONSHIRE". We hit a nasty storm some hours before we were to enter Valletta Harbour in Malta so spent the entire night circling the island eventually entering in daylight. Because of the delay there was no going ashore as we had done the year before. All was well thereafter and we were soon steaming up Southampton Water in the dark with the QUEEN MARY in our wake as escort.

We disembarked the following morning, catching a special train back to Arborfield. Considered having a somewhat demoralizing effect on the lads waiting to leave for their postings abroad I (and others) were

discharged almost a week early. Rail warrant in hand I made my way back home once more a member of the civilian community.

My verdict: Inconvenient as it was at the time, I would not have missed it for the world.



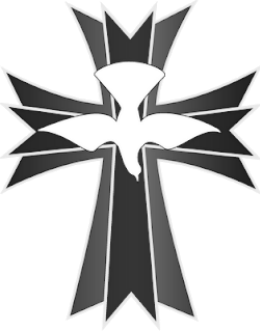
Roy Davis

Time for a Laugh

- Some people only write lockdown because they can't spell kwarinteen.
-
- I've written a book on penguins. In hindsight, paper would have been better.
-
- I taught my dog to play the flute while on the tube train. It took 1 hour to get from Barking to Tooting.
-
- I asked the girl at the bookstore if I could get a book by Shakespeare. "Of course, sir. Which one?" I said "William"
-
- Returned from the grocery store with the hubby. Took masks off. It turned out it was the wrong hubby! Be attentive!
-
- I'm stocking up on ice cream, canned fruit, raspberry sauce and sprinkles. I'm planning to self-isolate for a month of Sundaes.
-
- Most useless purchase of 2019: A 2020 planner.

**Be helpful,
when you see a person without a smile,
give them yours.**

Praying For The Spirit At Pentecost



Come, Holy Spirit,
come with strength for the weak,
courage for the faithful,
light for those in darkness,
comfort for the sorrowful,
healing for the sick and injured,
guidance for those who are lost,
faith for those who are in doubt,
hope for those who have no hope,
and love for those who have no love.

Come, Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love, and we shall
renew the face of the earth.

On Pentecost day, the apostles spoke a new language.
What was this new language?

It was the language of peace rather than of war; the language of co-operation rather than of competition; the language of forgiveness rather than of vengeance; the language of hope rather than of despair; the language of tolerance rather than of bigotry; the language of friendship rather than of hostility; the language of unity rather than of division; the language of love rather than of hate.

Through the gift of the Spirit, people of different languages learned to profess one faith, to the praise and glory of God. That is the real miracle of Pentecost, and it is a miracle which, thankfully, still happens.

Flor McCarthy

It helps to remember the objective:

- We're staying in so we can go back out.
- We're staying apart so we can get back together.
- We're loving one another well so we don't make one another sick.
- All our hard today's are for a lot of happier tomorrows.

Beth Moore



The next edition of New Horizons!

The next magazine will be published on 6th June.

Would our contributors remember to send the Editors their items **by the usual time of 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 28th May please.** We always welcome contributions from any of our readers, wherever they are. Reports, stories, thought provoking articles and even funny stories are all very welcome.

A lot will have happened in the world and in this country over the past weeks and you might care to share thanks for the acts of kindness that you have received during this time. Thank you also for reading the magazine.

**A large print version of this magazine is available.
Please ask an editor if you would like one.
Alternatively, you can view it on line.
See the website address on the front cover**

Not Everything Is Cancelled

Sun is not cancelled
Spring is not cancelled
Relationships are not cancelled
Love is not cancelled
Reading is not cancelled
Devotion is not cancelled
Music is not cancelled
Imagination is not cancelled
Kindness is not cancelled

WHO'S WHO?

Minister	Rev Sohail Ejaz MA (01702) 580879 tcsscp@yahoo.co.uk
Secretary	Ruth Dixon (01702) 464186
Treasurer	Ann Blackwell 07753 348856
Envelopes	Mike Mead 07802 749912
Gift Aid	David Osborn (01702) 611337
Preachers List	Mary Goodhew (01702) 467512
Junior Church	Ruth Dixon (01702) 464186
Joint Leaders	Mary Goodhew (01702) 467512
Pilots	Derek Goodyear 07863 208914
Prayer Fellowship	Peter & Zoy Hunt (01702) 864814
Digging Deeper	Peter Hunt (01702) 864814
C'Stone Toddlers	Mary Goodhew (01702) 467512
Scout Group	Lorna Skippon (01702) 477309
Christian Forum	Alison Shannon (01702) 464737
Use of Premises	Roger Brett (01702) 479874
Flower arranging	Joan Harvey Val Mead (01702) 296189
Editorial Team	Anne Clarke (01702) 293102 af.clarke52@gmail.com Michael Wardle (01702) 613840 mjb23wardle@btinternet.com

**Please remember that your Elders are ordained
to serve our members and friends
who have pastoral concerns.**