



# ACT TOGETHER

Ashram Community Trust

Issue 95

Spring 2023

Ashram Community Trust is a Registered Charity – Charitable Co. No: 1099164 [www.ashram.org.uk](http://www.ashram.org.uk)



October Weekend 2022 at Frodsham

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Some of the textile panels loaned by the national archive of the Loving Earth project ([www.lovingearth-project.uk](http://www.lovingearth-project.uk)) on display in April at the Platform Gallery of the Station, Richmond, alongside work by local refugees entitled "Healing through Creativity" ( see page 19)

People creating the panels were asked to think of something they loved - a person, place or thing and then  
to think how would environmental and climate breakdown affect them  
and what was needed to reduce the risk of harm  
and what action they would take to help

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## Sharing Our Home With Ukrainian Guests

Ten years ago, we moved into a two-bed bungalow in Falmouth. We then had builders extend into the loft space, creating a bedroom/study, bathroom and walk-in loft space.

“What on earth do we need all that extra space for?” was Nona’s comment. “Well, when family or friends come to visit, we need somewhere to put them up” was my defence. And indeed, we did have assorted visitors.

So, when the call went out soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine for UK hosts of Ukrainian families fleeing the conflict, it seemed we were ideally situated to offer a place. Nona researched a number of organisations that were engaged in trying to match up Ukrainian guests with host families; the Methodist Church recommended the organisation Reset.

*Reset is a charity formed in 2018 to grow the Community Sponsorship movement in the UK. So far, they have supported more than 300 community groups to welcome over 800 refugees. Reset trains and support volunteers across the UK to prepare to welcome refugees and to help them settle and integrate once they arrive. They also work with local authorities and other organisations to support volunteers in making community-led welcome happen.*

*Reset’s service matches people fleeing the war in Ukraine with UK sponsors who host them in their own homes or properties. Reset is one of the UK Government’s recognised providers for Homes for Ukraine. [Homes for Ukraine • Reset Communities and Refugees \(resetuk.org\)](#).*

We found their advice extremely clear and helpful, so registered our interest through them, as well as with Cornwall Council,. We completed a fairly detailed questionnaire about us and our household, so that this information could be used to match us up with likely guests. We made our initial inquiries in April and by July we were matched with Kristina\*, a 50-year old graphic artist/designer and her 9-year old daughter Yulia\*. They were currently in Germany. We had several Zoom meetings, including with Kristina’s husband back in Ukraine, and so we had a chance to get to know each other a little despite the language barrier. By July, we had agreed to host Kristina and Yulia; they submitted visa applications and we completed UK Government and Cornwall Council forms. And then we waited. They were supposed to vacate their German accommodation by the end of August; August came and went, then September. Finally, we had a date for when they would arrive in the UK – 28 October!

So it was that Nona and I spent my birthday (27 October) driving from Falmouth to Dover in our campervan to meet our new guests. We booked into a Travelodge and snatched a couple of hours sleep before we needed to meet the ferry at 2.00am. Our guests arrived in a Polish minibus with several other Ukrainians and a mountain of luggage; by the time we had packed the camper, there was no way we could access the toilet at the back, or the fridge, cooker, etc., to make meals! Thank goodness we had a campervan – the luggage would never have fitted into a car! Back to the Travelodge where Nona and our guests grabbed a few more hours of sleep and I dossed down in the front seats of the camper. Up at 8.00am, we were on the road back home to Cornwall. That was probably the most memorable birthday I have had!

Once they had installed themselves in the upstairs room, we had to make a few adjustments to give them enough space; more books removed from bookshelves, trunks of spare

blankets stowed away in the loft, etc. We also installed a small fridge and an electric kettle on the landing so that they did not have to use the kitchen all of the time. We freed up space so they could store frozen food. We were also able to fit in a leather two seater sofa, which they felt they needed. We seemed to work on different timetables when it came to meal preparation, so there were no serious clashes over the cooker!

We have shared the occasional meal, including borscht – is it the national dish? And Saturday night is pizza night for all.

It took a couple of months to get the final residency paperwork through from the Home Office and to get signed up with the Job Centre and English language course. Yulia joined year 5 at the local primary school, where she has made friends and is progressing well. So by Christmas we were pretty well there.

Our guests are good company; they keep to their own space much of the time, but we chat over the dining table and the kitchen stove! One of the nicest things is to hear Yulia practicing her classical guitar – the beautiful sounds of “Greensleaves” often wafts down the stairs as Nona and I eat our evening meal! Yulia also joined in the Live Nativity in Falmouth, dressing up as an angel! Meanwhile, Kristina continues to pursue her career as a designer of fantastic dresswear; she has already made two trips to London to market her designs. They keep in touch with family back in in Ukraine via a nightly Zoom session, and enjoy the delights of the beaches and other amenities of the area. There is a local Facebook group supporting hosts and guests, which has extended their social life.

For Nona and I, it has been a positive experience; it is good to have younger people under our roof. I am getting used to being beaten at Jenga and other games. -The extra energy use from having guests is covered by the £500 that the Government is paying us to host them. And I think they are happy living with us!

*Euan McPhee*

- Not their real names

links to Kristina's work -

<https://www.idesignawards.com/winners-old/zoom.php?eid=9-45034-22>

<https://www.idesignawards.com/winners-old/zoom.php?eid=9-45030-22>

<https://www.productdesignaward.eu/winners/hm/2022/22501222/>



(This lament came from thinking about the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria)

## Empathy

.....

Little child, born out of death, tragedy and despair  
Attached to your life-less mother, her price-less gift  
Whilst entombed with siblings and all the family  
For whom their place of demise was your place of birth

Little child, like every new-born infant but only 'til day-light  
Changed everything and everyone around you  
From forlorn grief, despair and anguish to resurgent joy and hope  
That turned chaotic destruction, into something miraculous and unforeseen

Little child, momentarily numbed and imprisoned like all the others  
Un-named, unknown, unimpaired yet instantly international and renowned  
Exceptional, miraculously special, precious beyond description  
Always to be revered, admired, honoured, never to be forgotten

Little child, born into chaos, human tragedy and lamentable wars  
Where lies, corruption, double-dealing and self-interest abound  
Amidst slanderous words, dreamt-up stories and hurtful actions  
Not with-standing stabbings, deceit and institutional unscrupulousness

Little child, would it be wrong to perceive in you a sign, a signal, a manifestation  
At least something that would help us to believe, believe in the human spirit  
That virtue will triumph over evil, goodness over tragedy and loss  
And honour once again will sit alongside integrity, fidelity, trust and self-respect?

Little child, it is not something inconsequential that has happened to you  
To make the world revere you, honour you and see you almost as holy  
Forbid it that we should make you or turn you into something you are not  
But we want to learn everything we can from that nightmare by which you came to us

So little child, in our reverence to you, in the love and faithfulness that surrounds you  
May the world become a better place, a restorative place, a place of healing and harmony  
Where children will sing and dance, young adults will be kind and grown-ups full of wisdom  
Little child, given the name Aya, may we too embrace a new name and let it be Empathy.

*David Bown*

*In the last edition of Act Together Sandra shared news of the Conflict Mineral Campaign, the Quaker Congo Partnership, and work in South Kivu of the DRC. Below she shares news from North Kivu*

## **INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR LEVI OF FRIENDS CHURCH (QUAKERS) IN NORTH KIVU, DRC**

by Elizabeth Coleman, with Nigel Watt interpreting



I asked George Bani from Uvira, South Kivu, if he could put me in touch with a Quaker in North Kivu, DRC, as I had heard that the armed group M23, supported by Rwanda, had taken many villages in North Kivu, causing hundreds of thousands of local people to flee to refugee camps or to Goma, the capital of North Kivu. This left them without a livelihood, and the people of Goma short of food, as they rely on the villages to supply them with food. People are very short of food, even starving to death.

George put me in touch with Pastor Levi, and we had a conversation on Zoom on 24 March.

### **Pastor Levi introduces himself and describes the history of the conflict**

I am Levi Munyemana, pastor of the Friend Church (Quakers). I live in Goma. We work with Georges Bani in Quakers Network of Peace in the East. I am happy to share with you information from our side that is forgotten by major decision-makers.

We are suffering from international complicity. For many years (since 1993) this part of the country

has been living in very atrocious conflicts. The Quakers have contributed a lot to bring peace, but the results are not satisfactory. The leadership of the country have contributed a lot to push the country backwards, From 1993 to 1996 it was inter-ethnic violence. In 1994 with the arrival of Rwandan Hutu refugees, the country experienced a lot of trouble. In 1996 Rwanda pursued Hutu refugees into Congo, killing a very considerable number of Congolese and Rwandan Hutus and a large number of ordinary Congolese.

The international community has remained silent. The war which continues to cause us harm us is a continuation of that of 1996 which initially had the objective of making Rwanda safe from invasion by Hutu refugees from Congo, and today calls for the revision of the boundaries drawn at the Berlin conference, so that Rwanda can take Congolese territory.

**Could you describe the situation for Quakers in North Kivu at the moment? How many Quakers are there? Where are they? How are they getting food and meeting their other needs?**

Regarding North Kivu where I'm based, we have 6 local meetings. There is one Yearly Meeting (CEEACO) which is shared with S Kivu. In N Kivu we have 580 members, 4 of the local meetings are in Goma the city itself, the 2 other meetings are in Masisi territory a few miles from Goma. The members of Masisi meeting have fled for safety to Goma or nearby.

The situation in Goma is that every road into Goma is closed, the city is surrounded by the M23 rebels. The cost of living has multiplied by 4 as a result of this. Some people are already dying of hunger. There is a distribution of food by PAM (UN World Food Programme WFP). The displaced women are organised to help with food distribution, and priority is given to old people. Only a quarter of the displaced people have received food.

In Goma we have 3 Quaker organisations, and we been involved a lot in conflict management. We have other partners working with us. We haven't got money. We visit and provide counselling. That's all we can do because we don't have any other means. We have put up vulnerable people in our offices. For the displaced members and members in Goma, life has changed. The price of food has increased. Those who are carrying out small businesses are unable to do so as the roads are closed. They can't earn money because everything is blocked so they're not doing well. We feel as if we are displaced even in our homes, because the roads are closed. I am afraid that Quakers will be dying of hunger because we do not have the means to help them.

### **Do you think that Goma itself is in danger of being taken by M23?**

They threatened to enter Goma yesterday, but they haven't done so. The threat of them taking the city is still there, but it hasn't happened yet.

### **Could you describe the work that Quakers have done to try to bring about peace?**

We have done many things. We began in 1999, there was a complete separation between the different ethnic groups. They've created agents and done a lot of community work to bring about peace between different ethnic groups. Today people are working together in the town and outside in Goma and surrounding territories. Relations between ethnic groups are good now, the attack is from outside. We have 600 solidarity groups, each one made up of 25 members.

Those are made up by the general population and Quakers. It was initiated by Quakers. They work for development.

In Congo, people are poor. A small amount of money is lent to poor people through a microcredit scheme. That promotes solidarity between different ethnic groups – they meet regularly and talk about peace making and other things. We have some training centres – there's a training centre to help people take their own responsibility, and to help train women for leadership.

### **Do they get finance from American Quakers?**

AFSC supported us about 15 years ago, but not now. Norwegian Quakers used to give support. They are promising, but there's nothing coming at the moment. Laura was in QPSW and she supported some activities in North Kivu 5 years ago.

### **What do you think needs to be done now to bring about peace?**

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), trauma counselling, restorative justice, social dialogue and mediation.

### **What about the bigger picture – the conflict between Congo and Rwanda?**

We cannot do anything about that, but we can look after our own people and try to solve local problems.

### **I would like to tell as many people as possible about Quakers in North Kivu. Is it OK for me to email this interview to others and ask them to put it on Facebook, in newsletters etc?**

Not a problem

### **Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Thank you very much of for organising this interview. It shows you have our problems at heart. We are undertaking peace activities but we have problems. It's extremely hard to work for peace when people are hungry, people don't listen because they're hungry. The work we do is voluntary, unpaid. We would like to construct training centres for young people and women to train them in trades, but don't have the means to do it at present.

At the May Weekend in 2022 the speaker urged us to take such action as we could to share what she had told us about the situation in Palestine today, so one of the things I thought I could do was write something for Staines Methodist Church (SMS) monthly newsletter. You will find a copy of the article I submitted below. (It was published before Traidcraft ceased trading.) However, it had a further positive effect in that the Editor (Roz Sendorek) was able to add a very moving page about her trip to Hebron in 2017. She also sent a further message about her personal feelings regarding the background to the current situation which you will find as the last two paragraphs to this article.

## Disappearing Palestine

In this important article, Linda Marshall shares her concerns about the fate of Palestinians living under Israeli rule in the 'West Bank' in Israel....[Ed]

At the beginning of May my husband and I attended a weekend conference at Cliff College, organised by a small national Christian community of which we are members.

For some years we had a member in Sheffield who used to go to Palestine to volunteer with a Christian organisation which tried to ensure the safety of Palestinians crossing the borders that had been put in by the Israeli government. In due course he found a Palestinian wife and for a while they split their time between Sheffield and Hebron, sending us news from Palestine from time to time, which made us aware of how things were on the ground for Palestinians. Here's just one item from 2014.

“On 5 January this year Jewish settlers moved onto my wife (Arwa)’s family’s almond orchard with bulldozers and containers. The family protested but were removed and one cousin was arrested. The settlers uprooted the almond trees on the first day and announced their intention to begin archaeological digs. On the 5 February they moved



onto the cherry orchard and removed most of the cherry trees. (The family had planted the trees and tended them ever since 1949)

There were other distressing incidents reported in this letter from Hebron as well as ones from later years, which may have been the reason why one member of our Community, when encountering a passionate member of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in his local area in Lancashire suggested that we should focus on this issue at our next gathering in May. But it was only when being presented with the illustration below that I realised we should indeed focus our time at Cliff College on this situation.



Unfortunately, Britain played a crucial role in the developing of this situation, after Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign secretary, wrote a short letter committing Britain to support the foundation of “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, and this became the basis of the British Mandate, giving the UK full control of Palestine from 1922, just 100 years ago, till 1948. During that time the British military was used to suppress Palestinian resistance and arm and train Jewish militias, permitting a Zionist quasi-government to develop.

In November 1947 the UN decided to partition Palestine and create two states, Palestine and Israel, with over half the land going to the new state of Israel, despite Jewish land ownership at the time being at just 7%. Hundreds of Palestinian



villages lay within the proposed border of Israel and the UN Resolution 181 explicitly forbade the confiscation of people's land. However, Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, said that the borders of the new state "will be determined by force and not by the partition resolution", and his adviser Yosef Weitz said, "It is our right to transfer the Arabs – the Arabs should go".

I must admit that I was not aware of any of this, but the latest map says it all. In the early days 531 towns and villages had been ethnically cleansed and 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees, and the newsletters our Community received in the 21st century were still telling the same story, while making it imaginable in a way the numbers cannot.

The speaker at our Cliff Weekend urged us to take such action as we could when we went back to our own areas, and there were plenty of suggestions. One was to draw people's attention to the realities of the situation – so what could I do here in Staines?

Well, the first thing was to attend the demonstration in London the following weekend, on the hundredth anniversary of the start of the British Mandate, which was photographed in detail by my husband. He even took a picture of me alongside another member of the Community who lives in Streatham, and who we bumped into outside the BBC building where the demonstration began. There were apparently well over 10,000 marchers, including groups of Orthodox Jews who would have walked all the way from home to get to the start, as the event was on the Sabbath. The crowds may well have been bigger than expected because in the week leading up to the demonstration there was the tragic death of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Agleh, who was born in 1971 in East Jerusalem.

The following weekend I joined members of the Richond & Kingston Palestine Solidarity Campaign at their stall in Twickenham, giving out leaflets and having interesting conversations with a very varied group of passers-by. So what next? Well obviously, try to compose a suitable article to submit for Staines Methodist Church Newsletter. But after that? Well, in a leaflet produced by Northern Women for Palestine entitled "Ten things we can do" one of those is to buy Palestinian products, and as it happens, I know where those can be sourced, because Traidcraft can supply you with a variety of Zaytoun products\*\*, from olive oil, couscous, herbs, almonds and dates to soaps and Dead Sea bath salts, "great for soothing aching joints and muscles".

Finally, I must recommend that you listen to a campaigning choir singing in the parish church of the village where Arthur Balfour lived, on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. One of the speakers – the one with the beard - is a member of the community that was meeting at Cliff College in May, and he tells us that the choir has also been to Palestine to sing and were tear-gassed when they did so. (SMC choir members take note!)

Here's the link (the first minute or so of the film is a bit blurry but both the sound and the picture soon become clear); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw-WtPpmFNw>

*Linda Marshall*

Roz adds: **Pictures of Hebron 2017**

The shocking facts about Hebron which Linda refers to in her article, Matt and I viewed with our own eyes during our pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2017. Firstly, our guide, a Coptic Christian, was not allowed to enter the town. An Arab lady was sent, who led us silently through deserted streets with barbed wire everywhere. Here you can see an Israeli flag hanging from the building.



She explained that Israelis who wish to can take over any premises they want to in the town, and whenever they do, all Palestinians in the rest of that street must move out, leaving their buildings deserted. Bishop Michael of Cyprus and the Gulf, our tour group leader, recalled that when he had visited Hebron in 2000, the town had been buzzing with life, with a flourishing souk, and Christians, Muslims and Jews living happily side by side in mixed areas. Now, as the legend on the wall displayed, it is just a ghost town.



But the human spirit is indomitable. In that sad place the Arab lady led us to a tiny workshop where Palestinian Christian and Muslim ladies work together to produce crafts to sell, the



proceeds of which go towards their work promoting peace and harmony in their community. They welcomed us warmly and served us a lovely meal. Our Oberammergau pilgrimage tour company, McCabe, also supports several projects in the area, promoting hope for young Palestinians through education.

Postscript by Roz

The sadness of Hebron really penetrated both our souls on that visit in 2017, especially after having visited Auschwitz in 1975 (long before its commercialisation, when we were on our honeymoon staying with Polish relations) and seen how the Jews suffered there. It just seemed impossible that they could then turn round and treat another innocent race in this way, and in targeting the Palestinians as a people, they are actually persecuting both Muslims and Christians with the openly stated intention of 'ethnically cleansing' the entire region, and that's what they are still actively working on while the world turns a blind eye.

I do recognise that the Balfour Declaration was not helpful in setting up the scenario which developed, but I do believe that its intentions in 1922 were genuinely honourable\*, and had Ben Gurion acted as the British anticipated and expected – with suitable gratefulness for the newly created state – and stuck to the agreement in 1948 rather than immediately starting a war because he wanted the whole area, the 'two state solution' would have at least had a chance, and might have even worked in the end.

\* At the time the Declaration was signed Britain was engaged in secret negotiations with Russia and France to carve up the Levant post WW1, and conflicting secret agreements supporting Arab independence,. There are those who think that

Britain's own wartime interests, especially in preserving access through the Suez Canal to India were its absolute priority. For others the Declaration which transferred the homeland of one people to another without consulting them, and referred to the existing Arab, Christian and Moslem inhabitants as its "non-Jewish communities", is seen as a colonial decision emanating from the myth of the white man's burden.

The British PM Teresa May invited the Israeli PM to London for the Balfour Declaration Centenary and said Britain marked it "with pride".

[www.guardian/news/2017/oct/17/centenary-britains-calamitous-promise-balfour-declaration-israel-palestine](http://www.guardian/news/2017/oct/17/centenary-britains-calamitous-promise-balfour-declaration-israel-palestine).

\*\* Zaytoun products are still available from Oxfam and Fair Trade shops and stockists  
*Act Together Ed.*

## Arwa's Memorial Fund raised £3229!



One of our Day's Income appeals helped fund Arwa's work with children in Hebron( as in the above picture). I was delighted to learn that the Memorial Fund set up after her untimely death from covid had raised £3229 to provide scholarships to women students on the West Bank. What a wonderful legacy.!

I will send the scholarship newsletter with stories from the students alongside this Act Together. It includes a thank you from the Fund founder in Gaza who on the award day last September wrote

"Thank you for giving me this chance to be part of this work and to see the smiles on the young women's faces despite all the difficulties they face. I felt so good. You made one of my days in Gaza, under siege, occupation and social constraint, very special."



Exhibition of Palestinian Art  
 Prints of work by the artists  
**Nisreen Al-Azzeh & Malak Mattar**  
 The Friends Hub, 6 Skinnergate, Darlington DL3 7N  
 Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>  
 10am - 4pm

I had a Fairtrade stall of Palestinian crafts and foods throughout the week of this exhibition. People who had read the informative captions for each picture then had the opportunity to buy a picture or postcard or something from my stall. People were glad to be able to do something positive in response and my stall took over £770 (one person did all her Christmas shopping because she knew what a difference it would make to the producers, and how much her family and friends would appreciate her gifts)



The work in the right is by Malak Matar from Gaza. We heard from her via a video link at the official opening. She's 24yrs old, and grieving for a 22yr old fellow artist who died in an Israeli airstrike on her home near the boundary fence. She is distraught that her friend's paintings have survived, but she has not. Malak wrote

“To be a painter in Gaza is to carry the pain of those around you from the moment you are awake until the moment you sleep....

It is to paint the anxiety, isolation and joy of the faces around you, exhausted by seige and war”

She has now left Gaza and after 4 years eventually got a visa so she could exhibit at Greenbelt last year and later she had a solo show entitled ' Prison' in the Museum of Modern Art.in Portugal

The picture on the left “Holding and being held by the Olive” is by Nisreen Al-Azzeh who lives in Tel Rumeida, Hebron, where Arwa lived. The charcoal picture in the middle is of her daughter and husband. He had a heart condition and had a heart attack in a tear gas attack. Ambulances not being allowed near their home he was rushed on a stretcher to the checkpoint, but was not let through to the waiting ambulance for a fatal 10mins. He lost consciousness and died in hospital. She was taunted by a settler and threatened by soldiers when she returned home after his wake. The area is now a closed military zone and Nisreen uses painting as a means of finding freedom while being confined. She is jubilant that the trees cut down by settlers when she was away one day are regrowing from the roots!

### Some ways to take action in solidarity with Palestinians

1. The latest news from EAPPI ( Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) is of the threat from the far right wing of the new Israeli Govt to demolish and forcibly remove the residents of Khan AlAhmar.

This would sever the link between Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank. Former refugees from the Negev, the residents have already been displaced once, and they ask the international community to support them to ensure it doesn't happen again. Until now Netanyahu has suspended mass evictions concerned at international opposition. Please show solidarity with #Khan AlAhmar and show that the world is still watching.

(Play stations gifted to the school there have been confiscated – the military say that they would be an undue temptation to install electricity, for which there is no permission. Daily drone flights monitor any developments and demolitions are swift.) Read more and take action at [www.eyewitnessblogs.com/](http://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/)

At a recent Palestinian feast in Durham (cooked by Syrian refugees) we heard distressing news from John Howard (a retired Methodist Minister, formerly at UTU), just returned from visiting the sheep farming community of Umm Al Kheir in the South Hebron Hills. But he was sure that villagers were sustained through their suffering by the knowledge that they were not alone, and that people internationally cared. The money raised from the supper is funding olive tree planting - the olive being a symbol of solidarity.

2. Barclays owns £1 billion shares in and provides £3 billion loans to companies whose weapons and technology are being used in Israel's armed violence against Palestinians.

If you have an account with Barclays please consider taking action at [www.palestinecampaign.org/campaigns/stop-arming-israel-3](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/campaigns/stop-arming-israel-3).

3. In the first three months of this year seventeen children have been killed as a result of Israeli military and settler presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This figure doesn't include those killed during hostilities and is the highest figure since 2009. Find out more and how you can take action at [www.dci-palestine.org/campaigns](http://www.dci-palestine.org/campaigns).

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The biggest polluters are responsible for the **loss and damage** caused by the climate crisis. In southern Malawi storms, floods and droughts are destroying farmers' crops, they're losing vital income. It's time to make polluters pay.

The people who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are dealing with damage to harvests and homes, right now. They are losing their lives, land and culture, right now.

'History is made by those who show up', as the saying goes, and the church has often been at the forefront of social justice movements. It's time for churches across the UK to rise up. Let's make **loss and damage** the social justice issue of our times.

The creation of an international **Loss and Damage fund** was agreed at the United Nations Conference COP 27 in November 2022 to support vulnerable communities on the frontline of the climate crisis. The UK has a key role to play in generating the money needed to compensate communities for this Fund – by mobilising finance from wealthy nations and high emitters and using its diplomatic influence to encourage other countries to act.

The need is urgent and the government needs to see that the people they represent (us) care about this issue. Start now, by getting your church involved in the campaign. Use the updated church activity pack at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/rise-pay-church-action-activity-pack>

to engage your church, community and local politicians on this vital issue.

*Pat Hamilton and Christian Aid*



### Malawian rice and the Ukraine war – where Fairtrade and capitalism collide

Just Trading Scotland (JTS) has been importing Kilombero rice from N. Malawi since 2009. In 2013 It developed the 90Kg Rice Challenge to help promote sales, as a farmer who can sell 90Kg rice at a Fairtrade price can afford to send a child to secondary school for a year. (Few children in Malawi went beyond primary school and missed a vital route out of poverty) The Challenge has been taken up by hundreds of schools and faith groups over the years, and farmers lives have been transformed - with more productive seed, tarpaulins for drying the rice, ox carts to take it to market, ploughs, and irrigation. Communities have built more schools and children have gone on to higher education and returned with skills to their communities.

In February last year JTS began negotiating to buy more rice. but the dollar/ sterling exchange rate made the price too high, so despite knowing they would run out of 1kg brown rice, they decided to wait for the new harvest rice.

Unfortunately by summer 2022 the war in Ukraine had caused the rice price to rocket, with increased costs in Malawi, worldwide concerns about the increasing cost-of-living and the ongoing challenges of the exchange rate. JTS had to pay a higher price than they had ever done before, but they agreed a contract for four full containers of rice the most they had ever imported. A key part of any price negotiation for a Fair Trade business is ensuring that the producers (in this case the Kilombero rice farmers) are being paid fairly and for JTS that meant accepting the higher price and then working through the implications for the UK market.

However the rapid oil price rise caused by the

war shut down supplies of fuel for power stations and transport in Malawi, as the country could no longer afford to buy oil. The rice trucks travelling the 700km to the capital got stuck at the side of the road and when the rice eventually reached Lilongwe, the final milling took much longer because of electricity black-outs. Due at JTS in October the rice finally reached Felixstowe just before Christmas. After processing to ensure the product met UK food safety standards, the rice reached the JTS warehouse in February 2023.

As part of JTS's Fairtrade commitment, the producers were paid 50% when the order was placed and 50% when the rice arrived at its warehouse. The delays caused by the fuel shortages meant that JTS's capital was tied up for much longer than normal, which was both expensive and reduced their ability to buy from other producers. But if farmers were to be made to wait for nine months post-harvest they would have gone hungry.

With increased costs in both Malawi and the UK JTS has decided to align itself with other premium rices by using smaller 500g packs, and to use the opportunity to move into recyclable packaging. This wonderful rice ( winner of the Ethical Consumer's Best Buy award in 2019, and Great Taste awards) which is changing the lives of Kilombero rice farmers, will finally be back on the shelves in mid May!

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### Grace's Amazing Briquettes



This briquette project run by women for women, was the idea of Grace, a Kilombero rice farmer, It turns the rice stalks left after harvest into fuel briquettes, saving women hours of arduous work collecting firewood, protects hillsides from deforestation and enables the women to learn finance and accounting skills, raising their standing in society.

The women built the brick sheds to house the machinery, but then had a long wait to get mains electricity connected. They remained undeterred even when they found that the machines had been supplied with incorrect motors. The machines are now finally working, and Grace's group are thrilled to be producing their first batches of briquettes.



Despite the delays the project has become a focus for the women in the community, who are often heads of households, to come together and to pursue other projects. Grace continues to inspire the women around her with her commitment, determination and vision of a women's cooperative.

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### Statement from Transform Trade

*(formerly Traidcraft Exchange, Traidcraft's campaigning and development charity, which separated from Traidcraft in 2018)*

Transform Trade has been formally recognised as sole custodian of the Traidcraft name, brand and mission in the future. The Traidcraft Foundation\* has granted Transform Trade sole use of the Traidcraft brand.

Transform Trade will continue to build on Traidcraft's pioneering vision - to support producers around the world and to advocate for a fairer trading system for everyone.

Transform Trade is a registered charity, and our focus will be on using the Traidcraft brand to support producers and ethical businesses.

We Are Fair Trade Ltd (a for profit, limited company set up in 2023) have purchased old Traidcraft stock, including last year's Christmas cards, which they will be reselling. Neither the Traidcraft Foundation, nor Transform Trade, has any relationship whatsoever with We Are Fair Trade Ltd.

We will be launching our own range of Christmas cards this year – and 100% of the profits will support Transform Trade's work. These will be available directly from Transform Trade later on this summer.

As always, our focus is on the people who matter most – the producers and artisans fighting for a fair deal. We promise that every decision we make has producers, not profit, at its heart. We won't allow the Traidcraft brand to become associated with anything less than highest ethical standards.

We have exciting plans for the future of the Traidcraft brand and are partnering with a number of ethical businesses which sell fair trade products and go above and beyond in their relationships and support to fair trade producers.

\* Traidcraft Foundation is the founder member of Transform Trade, and appoints the trustees of Transform Trade. It also holds the Guardian Share in Traidcraft plc, to enable it to protect the vision and mission of that organisation.

So everybody benefits.

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In Feb 2023 Transform Trade launched its Producer Fund to support the producers most affected by Traidcraft's closure. They have raised £190,000 of the £250,000 target.

One of the groups they want to work with is Kazi Yetu - a women-led social enterprise in Tanzania who produce tea, spices and herbs. Unlike other companies who ship the raw materials to Europe for processing, Kazi Yetu keep everything in Tanzania, meaning they can pay farmers more for their produce and ensuring fully transparent and traceable products.

They want to help producers like Kazi Yetu to invest in environmentally friendly techniques, reach more marginalised artisans, switch to sustainable production, and improve their marketing so they can expand their sales.

By providing Kazi Yetu and producers like them with training, equipment, product development and access to new markets they will be helping to change lives and show the world that there's a bright future for ethical trade.

Jenny Medhurst  
12

## Thoughts from Cerys on Food

31/12/22 Jenny, I thought the link [www.foodrevolution.org/blog/milk-substitutes](http://www.foodrevolution.org/blog/milk-substitutes) would go well in an article for the May newsletter. I've also looked at a Youtube online lecture on diet and disease. Indigenous peoples were very healthy and largely disease free until Western influences altered all that. Flour and sugar were the biggest wreckers of health, enabling many of the diseases of western civilisation. Fibre, protein and good fats like those in olive oil and tree nuts like almonds and hazelnuts, plus seeds, seem to reduce disease and illness. Couscous for example is a refined product, mostly carbs with much smaller proportions of fats and protein in it. That is a potentially disease making food product.

Carrots are quite starchy but also are fibrous, so controlling consumption. It is refined foods that cause runaway eating and runaway disease processes. Apples and onions contain about 7-8% sugars and carbs which is quite sufficient. Chickpeas contain quite a lot of iron, though to absorb it, eating a few berries like blueberries would deliver the vitamin C to pick up the iron. An attachment with an illustration of chickpeas on it

([www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321081#diet-tips](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321081#diet-tips))

I have included extracts from an article on the way Western interference in the indigenous peoples healthy diet has grotesquely wrecked peoples health, causing severe suffering and premature death see [www.foodrevolution.org/blog/indigenous-foods-systems-food-sovereignty/](http://www.foodrevolution.org/blog/indigenous-foods-systems-food-sovereignty/) for both 'Food Insecurity and Coloniser Foods' and 'Chronic Lifestyle'

I try to include a few items about food, when I can. Winter greetings from Cerys.

10/1/23 I was looking at free internet content on the ethics of coffee, ([www.ethicalconsumer.org/food-drink/shopping-guide/coffee-shops](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/food-drink/shopping-guide/coffee-shops)) when I came across the bold words about how detrimental to the climate cows milk in coffee is, especially the popular latte. I drink peppermint or mint tea, no milk and no sugar in coffee shops, which are more climate friendly. I attend a centre for older people once a week, and take my own herbal tea bags for the morning teatime and lunchtime.

Friends in Aberdeen buy coffee in Greggs when

out which not only is lower in cost than many other places but offers plant liquid substitutes free instead of cow's milk as do Wetherspoons pubs for their refillable coffee, now. I am hoping readers can reform their drink buying tendencies towards more climate friendly options. Clipper Organic, Traidcraft, Coop, coffees are all Fairtrade. Dried pieces of sage leaves from herb areas in shops, make a refreshing herbal tea. Oat liquid substitutes for cow's milk have the advantage that oats grow well in Scotland, Sweden and other Northern European nations, so are more locally sourced.

*(Great to read this Cerys- all Greggs drinks are Fairtrade which not many people know – so your friends are getting affordable and ethical coffee! And with coffee farmers shouldering all the risk and hard work and only earning 3% of the cost of a coffee shop coffee that REALLY matters! Jenny)*

30/1/23 I am buying Clipper Fairtrade coffee from the independent health food shop in Inverness. I also buy 85% chocolate Fairtrade bars from this shop. I hope a way forward can be found for Traidcraft. Sandra has informed me about the situation. The trading situation is very difficult at present as people's disposable incomes are squeezed by soaring electricity costs and rising food costs.

Some better news up here in the far northern Highlands of Scotland. Farmers are reducing their cattle herds a little and adding a few more sheep to reduce their costs, but it also reduces methane emissions a little. They are growing more of the feed for their animals on their own land, since bought in feed is now too expensive. They are also producing their own fertiliser including nitrogen fixing plants like clover, because gas produced chemical fertilisers are now excessively expensive. All these adaptations seem to be very beneficial.

*(Great news-Jenny)*

Do let me know any updates about Traidcraft. Radio 4 is doing abridged extracts from the book, "The Meat Paradox", 15mins each morning this week, *( Really thought provoking – it's made me re-think what I eat-Jenny)*

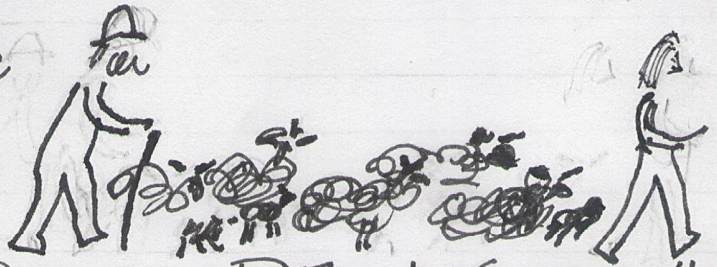
It is important that debates about food continue. Greetings from Cerys.

# THE LAND

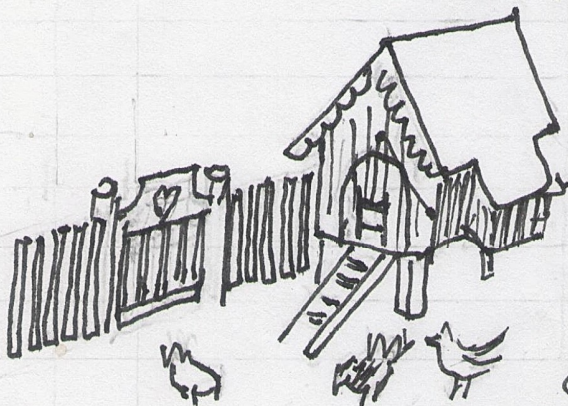
Jacquie & I subscribe to a magazine 'the Land' (thelandmagazine.org.uk). Their manifesto runs: 'the more people are dependent on the market the more securely they can be roped into the fiscal & political hierarchy. But anyone who has access to land, already has access to energy, water, nourishment, shelter, healing, wisdom, ancestors & a grave. Access to land... is a threat to the religion of unlimited economic growth & the power structure that depends on it...'

We are incredibly lucky having 2 acres with a small birchwood, ponds, vegetable garden, fruit trees, greenhouse, & occasionally mushrooms & a well that might run dry at the end of the summer. We also have a small flock of Que Haut black sheep.

With the passing of the years I now wobble about the place on a stick, Jacquie sometimes falls, breaking first, pelvis then shoulder. Our ram, Robert, (now exiled) did her knee in. But we are fortunate to have younger friends:



Matthias is improving the insulation of the room in the barn with lime & hemp. Matthiere & Fred are putting up a paling fence to keep the hens out of the veggies. Matthias has built a hen coop. Clement & Emilia have cleared brambles. Charlotte weeded the veg patch immaculately & amazingly has a still & is learning the ropes of the old profession of 'bouilleur ambulante' from Michel, the old distiller who turns our

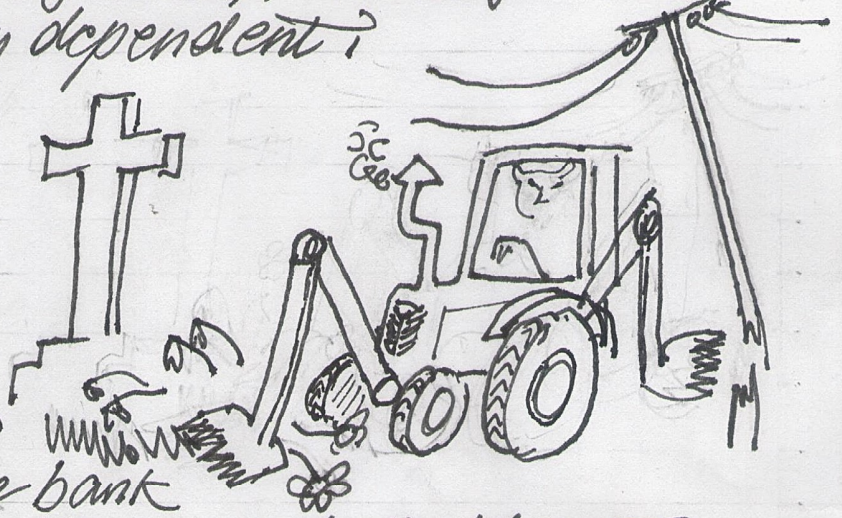




fermented fruit juices into can de vie each spring  
Greta makes juice from an orchard of trad-  
itional varieties of apple. Julie & Philippe have a  
mobile grocery with local organic produce. There are  
a number of organic market gardening initiatives  
locally, some on cooperatively owned land.

This might sound snug & fairy-tale utopian.  
But what is the alternative to the industrial-  
isation of agriculture? In France 50% of farmers  
will retire in the next 10 years without a suc-  
cessor. By default they will be bought by big  
business. There will be big industrial scale farms,  
'connected' farms, robotic farms, vertical farms,  
all energy & technology dependent.

Within memory of  
some older people here,  
the laneside verges were  
neatly scythed by hand.  
Now it needs a jugg-  
ernaut of a tractor. We  
have a cross on the corner  
of our lane, where on the bank  
we have planted spring flowers & daffodils. The  
juggernaut gouges swathes of turf out of the bank  
decapitates the flowers



Jesus said (Mt 6, 19) "Lay not up treasures on earth  
where moth & rust doth corrupt". I wonder whether this  
applies not only to material treasures but to the products  
of our imagination & inventiveness. Broken consumer goods  
pollute the beaches of Ghana but enormous rockets designed  
to take us to Mars heat up the atmosphere & corrupt  
the planet. Immaterial inventions of interconnectibility  
& artificial intelligence pile on the technology. We are  
distancing ourselves from the earth.

Further on Jesus says "Consider the lilies of the  
field..." Perhaps we should. And get back to the  
land. But how?

## A taste of my own medicine

When times are tough, it's really important that we feel part of a team. And an excellent way of doing this is going out and having fun together. I was gutted that I couldn't make the strictly come dancing event last weekend. I've been a (very poor) ballroom dancer for some years and so it would've been great fun to attend. The obstetric consultants didn't go either as they couldn't get a table so arranged an alternative pre-Christmas night out in town. Both were an excellent way of coming together outside of work and getting to know our colleagues a bit better.

Sadly, I couldn't make either of them. Instead, I was at the new Royal getting a taste of my own medicine

After several episodes of pain from my gallstones, I was due to have them removed in early April 2020. However, it was cancelled at short notice when COVID hit and I've been on the waiting list ever since. But my turn finally came last Friday, and I'm writing this during my convalescence as I nurse the four small keyhole surgery scars across my abdomen. Thankfully, I was in and out the same day and it all went well. I don't think it's just because I was a member of staff, but my care was excellent. And this, despite giving them a mid-operative fright. Apparently, my blood pressure suddenly dropped to 30 mmHg systolic (presumably accompanied with an anaesthetist tachycardia...), only for them to find that it was problem with the bp cuff rather than anything seriously wrong.

It's a very odd experience being on the other side. However, it does give you the opportunity to reflect on what is important about the care that we give. As a patient, it was clearly critical to me that the operation was successful. I have come out without any complications (so far!) and in truth I would have accepted any kind of inconvenience, rudeness, or poor facilities to achieve that.

And yet, if in the UK the risk of significant complications is maybe 2.5% and the best care in the world can halve that risk, then having the illusive *perfect intra-operative care* would only make a difference to 1 in 80 people going through surgery. I may have been that hypothetical one, and if so I am very grateful. But for the other 79, the skill of the surgeon or anaesthetist isn't the key factor that makes their care a success or not - it's the kindness of the carers and the organisational aspects. So, they become really important for the effect they have on the health of the patient in the widest sense both before and after the operation.

This episode taught me a lot about what mattered to me on a personal level. In truth, I wanted to believe that the staff were going to do their very best for me and look after me as they would do for one of their own family. And they did. They explained everything that was happening in an accessible way and talked me through all the potential complications. We chatted afterwards about the football and about the state of the health service and about their impressions of the new hospital. And I was out the same night, somewhat high on analgesia, but pleased to be home.

Although I should have known better, my main anxiety before the operation was that the initial entry through my belly button would fatally damage my aorta. Of course, I knew it wasn't likely. Indeed, I don't think I've ever heard of it happening. But I had a dream about it in the nights leading up to my operation and I just couldn't get it out of my head. But when I mentioned it to the surgeon, he was kind enough not to laugh out loud, but to gently explain that they now always use blunt entry to start the operation. If only I'd known that a few weeks before! But then I didn't know that my mind was going to come up with such strange and awful images.

So, what do I take home with me from this episode 'on the other side' (given that I didn't get the traditional small pot of gallstones)?

First, I think it's probably always helpful for healthcare staff to get a taste of their own medicine. It's only then that you realise the sense of vulnerability that patients have and how important seemingly minor issues such as kindness and feeling safe are. As Atticus famously says in 'To kill a Mockingbird', "it's only when you step inside someone else's skin that you really understand". And although it was a strange and uncomfortable experience, I'm glad that it gave me a glimpse of patient experience. I hope that as I continue working in the NHS, I don't ever forget that feeling of helplessness and vulnerability – I think that I'll be all the better a doctor for it.

Second, skilled surgery and anaesthetics are important - but they are not the 'be all and end all' of health care. The whole package of care affects patients' mental health both before and after surgery, and speed of recovery. And everyone plays their role in that. It's those who organise the signs in the hospital directing you the right way. It's the initial welcome you get at reception, the staff conversations you overhear from your bed as you wait. All can escalate your anxiety and fear, or reassure and console you. And for the 79, this is important to provide as excellent hospital experience.

And finally, I'm relieved that I had the good fortune to have access to the NHS. I didn't have to take out huge loans or use my family savings to get good care as families would have to in so many parts of the world. And although I quote a surgical complication risk of 2.5% - that is not the case in all hospitals - in many parts of the world the rates are very much higher. For all its problems, the NHS is precious and we need to do whatever we can to protect and nourish it. And as I sign off for 2022, that's not a bad new year's resolution for us all. Have a very happy Christmas!

Andrew Weeks  
Consultant Obstetrician  
4 December 2022

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### **Carbon Saving with a Twist !**

Ian and I are spending 10 days on holiday at a campsite near Bologna in Italy. We were determined not to fly! We spent hours trying to find a way of getting there by train but all routes were sadly too expensive!

So we booked a return coach trip from London to Bologna, which was more reasonable at £325 total for the two of us. And we are travelling from Stockport to London by train.

*But the main focus of our holiday is the F1 Grand Prix at Imola!!*

*Pat Hamilton*

## **“Words Spoken Before All Others,” the Ohenten Kariwatekwen or Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address**

*When Native Americans are asked if their families celebrate Thanksgiving, a person from the Crow Agency in Montana spoke for many Native people when she said, "My Dad used to say, "We give thanks everyday. . . ." The Ohenten Kariwatekwen is often called the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, but translated directly the name refers to "words spoken before all others." The Haudenosaunee nations—the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora—traditionally open and close every important gathering with a version of these thanks.*

Today we have gathered. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people. Now our minds are one

**We are all thankful to our mother, the earth,** for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

**We give thanks to all the waters of the world** for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms—waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of water. Now our minds are one.

**We turn our minds to the all the fish in the water.** They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So we turn now to the fish and send them our greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

**Now we turn toward the vast fields of plant life.** As far as the eye can see, the plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together we give thanks and look forward to seeing plant life for many generations to come. Now our minds are one.

**With one mind we turn to honor and thank all the food plants** we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time the grains, vegetables, beans, and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things too draw strength from them. We gather all the plant foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks. Now our minds are one.

**Now we turn to all the medicine herbs of the world.** From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. We are happy there are still among us those who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to the medicines and to the keepers of the medicines. Now our minds are one.

**We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the animals in the world.** They have many things to teach us as people. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here, and we hope that it will always be so. Now our minds are one.

**We now turn our thoughts to the trees.** The earth has many families of trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty, and other useful things. Many people of the world use a tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind we greet and thank the tree life. Now our minds are one.

**We put our minds together as one and thank all the birds who fly about over our heads.** The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the birds, from the smallest to the largest, we send our joyful greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

**We are all thankful to the powers we know as the four winds.** We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind we send our greetings and thanks to the four winds. Now our minds are one.

**Now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the thunder beings, live.** With lightning and thundering

voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful that they keep evil underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our grandfathers, the thunderers. Now our minds are one

**We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest brother, the sun.** Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to our brother, the sun. Now our minds are one.

**We put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest grandmother, the moon,** who lights the night sky. She is the leader of women all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the moon who watches over the arrival of children on earth. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to our grandmother, the moon. Now our minds are one.

**We give thanks to the stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry.** We see them in the night, helping the moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one we send greetings and thanks to the stars. Now our minds are one.

**We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened teachers** who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers. Now our minds are one.

**Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of creation.** Everything we need to live a good life is here on earth. For all the love around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our best words of greetings and thanks to the Creator. Now our minds are one.

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.

*This text is based on a translation published In 1993 by the [Six Nations Indian Museum](#) and the [Tracking Project](#), and is used here through their courtesy. All rights reserved. English: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan, Mohawk). Mohawk: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan, Mohawk). Original inspiration: [Tekaronianekon](#) (Jake Swamp, 1940–2010, Wolf Clan, Mohawk).*



*Friendship and Happiness- with sunflowers and daffodils*

## Loving Earth project – healing through creativity

I was delighted to see an exhibition of work by local refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan at Richmond station on a recent visit.

The women had worked with members of a local support group and a textile artist to make the panels and there had been space for reflection, and opportunities for conversation and to develop their skills.

(Enlarge the piece on the left to read the words on the leaves.) A walk across the dale to the heather topped hills is illustrated on the right and

was made using Yorkshire and Afghan 'buttons' for flowers. The Afghan women also learned dressmaking skills, re-purposing clothes from charity shops.

Alongside their work a selection of challenging panels from the national archive of the loving earth project ([www.lovingearth-project.uk](http://www.lovingearth-project.uk)) were displayed – see page (i)

*Jenny Medhurst*



*Making Connections*

## Disposing of Ashram's money

The theme at the October 2022 Ashram weekend was 'Ashram Reincarnated'. The Aim of the Saturday session, was 'to consider the current state of the Ashram Community and to collect a range of ideas for where Ashram could be in 5 years'.

A brain storming session took place with the idea of having some 'clear thinking on 3 areas: the legacy of Ashram; where Ashram is in 5 years and how to use any financial resources within 5 years'.

In the 'brain storming session' the following suggestions relating to finance were suggested: set up a Scholarship Fund e.g. with UTU; give grants to organisations – international or UK – where Ashram has had links or members have links; use assets to go back to people in housing need as Ashram has made a profit on selling its properties. In a group session additional ideas emerged:

- Retain structure until all assets are disposed
- Decide general principles e.g. organisations we have already supported, innovative projects, use Day's Pay as model
- Invite nominations from community members and whole community to decide e.g. at weekends
- Eventually wider publicity might be necessary

Target: At the end of five years all assets disposed of and Ashram continues as a non-charity community

From a zoom meeting held for those not able to be at the weekend this additional idea was added:

- continuing John's vision of Radical Christianity, possibly by setting up a scholarship with the University of Sheffield

The list below gives some idea of the projects Ashram has supported over the last ten years.

### **Projects/Organisations supported by Ashram over the last ten years**

Ashram's grant giving has been through the Community Projects Fund, Day's Income and for those who contribute, the Wider Service Fund and the Interfaith fund. The amounts given have ranged from a few hundred pounds to one thousand pounds. Over the last 10 years nearly £24,000 was donated through Community Project (£6525), Days Income (£8585), Wider Service Fund, (£6562) and Interfaith (£2669) to support many projects.

#### **Community Projects (£6525): projects where members are involved:**

- £2775.00 to Ashram houses projects
- £1000 for a scholarship to UTU
- Larger gifts: £1000 Kerala floods), Mary Thompson Fund: Sanctuary support (£750)
- Smaller gifts totalling £1000 to 10 projects members involved in – seaside trip, refugees, meal for children, community centre, food bank room

#### **Days Income (£8585): usually overseas, where about £1000 would make a big difference to a project:**

- Supporting children in the Ukraine

- Muslim/Christian dialogue in the Philippines
- Bhopal Medical Appeal
- Joliba Trust (£2876) – Mali work
- Palestine Hebron, children's activities
- Monze, Zambia – solar lights for students
- Smalls for All
- Fairtrade Rice Farming Student
- DRC Conflict Minerals Campaign

**Wider Service Fund (£6562): Projects/organisations nominated by contributors to the fund**

- Topping up Days Income: £1162
- Larger gifts: £1900 Joliba Trust; Spelthorne rentstart £500
- Smaller gifts totalling £3000 to London Catholic Worker, Zimbabwean refugee support, Nazareth Trust, S. African research institute, Nepal hospital, Chorlton Central Church-showers for night shelter, Friends of Zion Graveyard,

**Interfaith money (£2669)**

Interfaith homeless project, Leicester (£500); Interfaith Project Lincoln (£2169)

As you can tell from the above list of donations, Ashram is used to giving small amounts of money away. You could add to that list Assist, who used the accommodation at Burngreave for Asylum seekers and which was subsidised by the commercial lets at the Burngreave.

**Criteria for disposing of Ashram's assets**

When the selling of the properties is completed, there could be three hundred thousand pounds to disperse! Not something we are used to. So we need to get it right in how we disperse of our funds.

*At the February 2023 General Meeting it was agreed: For a short while Ashram would need to continue as a charity to manage and dispose of its remaining properties. The funds raised from the property sales should be disposed of by way of grants and donations in accordance with our charitable objects to organisations we had supported in the past, or which were suggested by members. The decisions will be made at a general meeting.*

Some of the projects listed above may be continuing, but the Ashram member who nominated it at that time, may no longer be a member or have anything to do with the project now. So we need to get the detail of the 'general principle' right and we probably need to start work on it sooner, rather than later as the community will need to agree the criteria (even if a group works on the issue) as well as being involved in the grant making decisions.

So, an exciting time ahead as we decide how to get rid of our money.

*Margaret Mackley*

# REFLECTING ON FAILURE

*"To live without integrity, our thoughts constantly contradicting our actions, is to rob ourselves of vital energy. A disjunct that leads to loss of mental health and a loss of power: we are at odds with ourselves, carrying the baggage of centuries of failure. As if we actively chose it." thealternative.org.uk*

The Tuesday Zoom Gathering has been exploring the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book, Failure. Emma Ineson SPCK Books 2022. Individuals have introduced a chapter each.

And interesting discussions were generated. Here are some suggestions from

## **Chapter 2 which is titled "What is failure"**

- Think of an example of failure that you love and another that you hate. What was the difference between them?
- How does fear of failure affect your ability to learn from your mistakes
- What kinds of failure are you most aware of at the moment, in your own life and that of others?
- In what ways does society's judgement of failure influence you?
- What does Jesus say about failure?

## **Chapter 4 titled "the Failing Church" asked these questions**

- How do you honestly feel about the Church?
- How central to your understanding of the gospel is the concept of the spiritual unity of the body of Christ?
- What is your personal response to the sins Paul lists in Galatians 5 in the context of church life? Where do you see room for hope.

## **Chapter 5. "The Greatest Failure of All" makes these statements**

At the heart of the good news of Jesus Christ stands a symbol of foolishness and utter incompetence: the cross. We often miss what a shameful failure the cross appeared to be. We have cast it now in the warm glow of the success of the resurrection, and perhaps are inclined to skip over what a sign of ignominy the crucifixion of Christ really was at that time.

EVEN though Jesus was the perfect human being who could never sin and could not fail in the eyes of God, he certainly seemed to be a failure in the eyes of the world. Right at the heart of the Christian faith stands a symbol of shame and disgrace. It was widely held that execution by crucifixion was not only cruel but also humiliating. Yet it is through the cross, a powerful icon of failure, that God chose to shame the apparent wisdom of this world:

"Much of the power of Christianity derives from the wisdom of the cross regarding suffering, failure, and death. It is a realistic preparation for the inevitable experience of personal and social failure: 'You will be hated by all men on account of my name'" (Matthew 10.22). Church Times Feb 2023

She invites us to and invites us to answer these questions

- Which of the Gospel passages displaying Jesus' teaching about and attitude to failure speaks to you most and why?
- In what ways do you see the cross as failure, and in what ways do you view it as the end to failure?
- How does the idea of living in 'Holy Saturday' times speak to you? How is it related to Jesus' directive to take up your cross and follow him?

When I was reading this chapter, I was doing my usual thing of 2 things at once by reading in the adverts whilst watching a documentary on Sky News. Alex Crawford, The War in Afghanistan, this was focusing on the fate of



## REFLECTING ON FAILURE

women in this country now the Taliban were the rulers. How they have no voice, identity, education, jobs, money, food, child and health care. She stated that it was as if the religious leaders, The Taliban, in the name of religion, Islam, wanted to wipe them off the face of the earth.

This made me very angry, and reading *Failure* futile and pointless, as Religion is often being used with the military to control people in differing cultures throughout the world, to legitimise the use of power and give leaders God-like status.

I began reflecting on how many countries were in a state of turmoil where religious beliefs are being used to control women especially. Examples of this are seen in practices in Middle Eastern countries, the Christian right in USA in relation to women's reproductive rights. In this country the dilemmas are represented by the creeping Anti-abortion movement. Then there is persecution of Christians in China and some far eastern countries.

Where has religion been a success? Who wants it to be? Is Ineson just dressing up the unpalatable truth and blaming failure on Christians when Jesus was put to death by a belief system he was fighting against. A futile activity when the more powerful Roman dictatorship was pulling the strings. He was seen as a terrorist who had to be made an example of to restore law and order. Where have I heard of that today, oh yes Russia.

Is any belief system a success or not a failure, or have all been corrupted by the need for power and control? Perhaps a debate to be had next year?

[https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/17-february/features/features/failure-why-are-people-so-scared-of-it#.ZD\\_yC4AH4PY.gmail](https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/17-february/features/features/failure-why-are-people-so-scared-of-it#.ZD_yC4AH4PY.gmail)

If anyone would like to borrow this book email me and I will arrange for you to have a copy from someone, [pippah52@gmail.com](mailto:pippah52@gmail.com)

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### A Book on Failure – review

Emma Ineson advises us to fail widely and to learn from our mistakes. Mottos are:

- Know your besetting sins
- Allow others to fail
- Know how to lose an argument
- Feel the “fear” and do it anyway
- Play the fool
- Remember that failure is never final

The author is Chaplain to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, who fortunately do not take her advice. Many biblical figures acted these ways and get their stories told. Modern people especially have to deal with the anxiety and uncertainty that contemporary culture causes.

This is a rich book on many levels, with much material for study and discussion.

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*John Vincent*

## In memory of Paul Hamilton, member of the London Ashram Group

On 12 April, Paul Sutherland-Waite and I attended a memorial service in Leatherhead for Paul Hamilton, who died in February this year. Paul had been a member of the London Ashram group from 2002 until 2016. He travelled each month from Leatherhead with his companion Joy. Paul left the group when his Parkinson's meant he was no longer able to drive to the meeting in London. His final years he spent nearer his family in Leicester.

When Paul joined the group, he was retired and volunteering for a number of organisations. The main two he talked about were Pitstop, a centre for the homeless, and his role as secretary or chair of Churches Together in Leatherhead. Attending his memorial service, we learnt more about him as a family man and meteorologist for the Central Electricity Research Laboratory where he was researching wind power. Apparently flying kites figured large in his life and for his children because they were part of the wind measuring kit.

Paul's link with Ashram was mentioned by his family as he valued coming to the meetings and I had shared some of his contributions with his family. This I was able to do because we have scrapbooks in which we write a sentence, or two, when we meet. In his memory I now share some with you.

### 2002

**March:** An enriching experience that took me a little further in my engagement with Jesus.

**August:** I like Ken's suggestion that the Good News is that "God loves us" – but I will have to work on unpicking it!

**October:** "FORGIVENESS" – discussion led by Linda & Liz – partly inspired by Richard Holloway: "On Forgiveness". A difficult subject – is forgiveness different from love?

### 2003

**March:** Topic for discussion was - The Bible: Is it the word of God?

Paul's comment: I feel that Evangelicals miss a great deal by thinking of the Bible as merely the Creator's "Handbook" – there is surely much more than any of us will ever understand "beyond the words".

### 2006

**March:** Topic for discussion was – Scientific Truth, Historical Truth, Religious Truth. How they differ. Do they relate?

Paul's comment: We all "adopt" truths that meet our emotional needs at a deep level – religious truths try to answer the why-questions rather than the how-questions.

### 2007

**March:** Topic for discussion was Chapter 1 of "The Cost of Certainty" by Jeremy Young.

Paul's comment: It's all very confusing – is God's love unconditional or conditional – (John 3:16-18)? It seems to me that John is trying to express a 'gnostic' view- i.e.it is both at the same time.

**April:** Our discussion started with Jeremy Young – "The Cost of Certainty" Chapter 2: "The

Closing of the Christian Mind". An excellent analysis of the dilemma facing the institutional church—churches must have rules (“ideological closure”) – but these become divisive and may preclude “love”.

**September:** Discussion on a paper by another Ashram member on the four major problems facing the world.

Paul’s comment: A good discussion based on Frank’s paper though it seems unlikely that any particular “plan” will rescue the planet – perhaps we should simply try to change ourselves and hope these small individual changes will constitute the seeds of the new Kingdom.

## 2010

**August:** Topic was looking at the liturgy we use in the meeting.

Paul’s comment: A good discussion – but I found it very difficult to identify with “Jesus – the prisoner, the wounded one, the sick, the thirsty...anyone who needs our help.” Jesus for me is the supreme example of a person who lived a totally fulfilled life.

## 2014

**March:** Good to meet up again and exchange news- also to be reminded of the intractable Palestinian situation.

**July:** Topic was discussion on a talk by the Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church on the situation in Syria.

Paul’s comment: Sadly the Middle East’s dire situation seems so intractable.

## 2015

**October:** Topic listening to a recording of John Dominic Crossman on ‘Historical Paul’.

Paul’s comment: Yet another ingredient in the hotchpotch of the many others that have contributed to our inheritance as “Christians” – what to make of it all.

## 2016

**January:** Theme was worship.

Paul’s comment: For me, worship is measured by the extent to which it inspires the participants.

**February:** Discussion on the Ashram commitment.

Paul’s comment: Several illuminating thoughts emerged during our discussion – e.g. the idea of “neighbour” has been greatly extended in our global village as realised by the internet.

**March:** Although the notion of Sabbath appears to have originated within Religion it clearly has consequences for Society at large -maybe even beneficial ones.

**May:** A wide-ranging discussion inspired by the “Ashram Commitment”. ‘To hold to the truth as is it in Jesus...’. The key is ‘community’ – we all belong to different communities – including the ‘twittersphere’ (for good or otherwise).

*Liz Urben*

## 'HOLY WEEK' THOUGHTS 2023

### **Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup>**

I was invited to share my thinking around Holy week observance to a Quaker group. I was not clear whether this was an expectation of some traditional thinking and did not feel inspired to do that. However in a way I felt nudged to make some written thoughts each day during Holy week whether simply for my own observance or at some point for sharing.

Observance of Holy week over several years did mean it at one time had a significance for me, not felt so greatly now. However it was a spiritual practice with which I really engaged. The observance covered the whole week. And that is significant as a lot more is recorded in the gospels than is usually marked in the traditional church services. Maybe this links to the criticism of the Christian creeds which seem to imply that the only events in Jesus' life of significance are those around his birth and death. There is thus an emphasis on the miraculous and the meanings attached to those events rather than his ministry. So my thinking as I begin this exercise starts with the stories in the synoptics, especially Mark's gospel. of what happened immediately before the entry into Jerusalem. There seems to be a mix in Matthew and Mark of stories about the healing of blind people, and arguments about which of his disciples were the 'greatest'. Maybe the link is the continuing 'blindness' of the disciples even at this point about the deepest purposes of Jesus' ministry. This may also represent the start of a clear difference between the good news proclaimed in word and deed by Jesus and the early church developing more doctrinal statements concerning the good news about Jesus.

### **'PALM SUNDAY'**

There seem to be a number of different themes and for me some questions.

- The significance of the donkey or even 2. Understood traditionally as about humility compared with riding a horse with its link to military power.
- Was it triumphalist? Headings inserted in translations often 'triumphal entry into Jerusalem'.
- Who was in the crowd? Locals? Visitors? The cries of hosanna often implied to come from the same people who shouted 'crucify' later but were they?
- For me there is the sense this is about taking a public stand in the clear knowledge this contained elements of confrontation with powerful people.
- There is lot somehow too about wondering what Jesus' feelings were. In Luke the entry is followed immediately by Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.
- He was clearly very aware there was a lot of misunderstanding of his ministry.

### **Monday**

The main story in the synoptics is of the 'cleansing' of the temple though there is also in Mark and Matthew what might be seen as a rather petulant destruction of a fig tree for not producing any figs. This might be seen as symbolic of continuing frustration at the inability of disciples and others to grasp the nature of his ministry. The turning over of the money lenders' tables in the temple also has a symbolism but also downright anger at the exploitation of poorer people within the religious system as they needed to change their money to buy a sacrificial animal. It is not in my view to be trivialised as has often been done in church circles by suggesting the use of the temple (or any place of worship) should be confined to prayer not financial transactions. Mark gives it a much wider interpretation, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations but you have made it a den of robbers'. The additional phrase 'for all nations' gives a different emphasis of inclusivity not only religious observance.

So there is a mix in these two stories of Jesus having strong feelings of anger and frustration and actions

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which are clearly very confrontational. It feels a very human unleashing of strong feeling, maybe the stronger for being pent up for so long.

### **Tuesday**

The confrontation with the 'scribes and pharisees' is now very marked in all three synoptic gospels. Jesus spends a lot of time in the temple. He answers questions and tells parables quite overtly critical of the religious leaders. They are mostly clearly intending to trap him with their questions. The questions vary a bit in each gospel but there are questions about the paying of taxes and authority and which commandments are most important. The parables concern people left in charge of land but failing in their responsibilities. In Mark there is then a story about Jesus observing the generosity of a poor widow in her giving from her meagre wealth. He again draws the contrast between her actions and those of the scribes and pharisees. This was extremely confrontational on Jesus' part and leads to mounting opposition from the various 'religious' officials.

### **Wednesday**

There is a lengthy prediction about the destruction of the temple, wars, 'nations against nations', other disasters, family conflict and horrors and sufferings of various kinds. Jesus speaks of being brought before courts and being 'given' the words to say, predictions of persecutions and also people falsely calling themselves Messiah. Was this inserted at a later date as a prediction of what had by then happened? Jesus does say no-one knows when this will happen.

In Matthew's gospel there are some parables about the need to be alert. There is also a clear description about the last judgement, of nations, and on the basis of the treatment of the poor, hungry, thirsty and those in prison.

### **2 days before Passover**

Time seems to speed up and there is a sense of much happening and crisis ahead.

- Chief priests and scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus and kill him.
- Anointing by Jesus at Bethany using precious ointment. Criticism that that money could have been used for the 'poor.'
- Judas goes to chief priests.
- Instructions by Jesus for disciples to find room for Passover meal.
- Breaking of bread and offering of wine by Jesus. Jesus predicts betrayal and denial.
- Jesus prays in Gethsemane but Peter, James and John keep falling asleep. Jesus says 'can you not watch with me one hour'. Jesus' prayer 'Your will not mine' gives a sense of Jesus agonising about what is about to happen.
- Arrest and betrayal by Judas with a kiss. Judas hangs himself.

The events around the arrest and trial.

These carry a sense of darkness and fear.

- Once arrested Jesus is taken to High Priest, priests, elders and scribes. Peter follows to courtyard.
- The priests are perplexed as to what charges to bring. Jesus is initially silent but then says., 'You will see son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven'.

This is interpreted as blasphemy. Jesus is condemned and mocked by spitting and hitting.

Peter denies knowing Jesus and when the cock crows remembers Jesus words and weeps. (in some gospels 'weeps bitterly').

Jesus responds 'you say so' regarding Pilate's question about his claiming kingship but then speaks no more.

Pilate offers crowd choice of Jesus or Barabbas for release. The crowd shout for Barabbas. Pilate asks 'but what evil has he done?' Crowd shouts 'crucify him'.

Jesus is handed over to be crucified. The phrase 'handed over' has been commented on, illustrating Jesus' powerlessness. He is clothed in purple robe and wears crown of thorns, mocked and beaten before being given his own clothes back

### **Good Friday (Mostly Mark's version)**

- Jesus carries cross to Golgotha but then Simon of Cyrene is co-opted into carrying it for him.
- Jesus at Golgotha offered wine mixed with myrrh but refuses it.
- As he is crucified soldiers cast lots for his clothing.
- Inscription charge is 'King of Jews'. 2 bandits crucified either side of him.
- More mocking. 'save yourself and come down from the cross', 'he saved others, he cannot save himself'.

- Darkness from 12 -3pm.
- Jesus cries out 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me'. (Other gospels do record other words from the cross.)
- Someone fills sponge with sour wine to offer him.
- Some in crowd think Elijah will rescue him.
- Curtain of temple rent in twain.
- Centurion says 'truly this was the son of God'.
- There were several women there.
- Joseph of Arithamea asks Pilate for the body. Jesus is wrapped in linen cloths and laid in tomb. A stone is rolled in front.

## Easter Sunday

In Mark very short relating of events with 3 different endings

Mark relates how early in the morning several women go with spices to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. They wonder how they will move the stone but find it has already been moved and a young man dressed in white tells them Jesus has been raised from the dead and they are to go and tell the disciples 'he is going ahead of you to Galilee'. The other endings (explicitly called longer and shorter endings) include what might be additional stories from other gospels'. The women according to Mark flee in terror and amazement.

There are final paragraphs about the ascension and commissioning of the disciples. 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole of creation'.

## Final reflection

I was glad to have engaged with the events in this way and so marked the whole week in a more in depth way than for some years.

One of the valuable things about marking the week each year is that different parts of the story do speak in different ways each time. This year for me the crucifixion itself seemed really significant and in particular the way the soldiers rather callously cast dice for the clothing of Jesus at the foot of the cross. This is true of us all when faced with the immense pain of others we often find ways of switching off. We also as a global community are switching off from what we are doing to the planet. This contrasts with Jesus own refusal of drugged wine offered no doubt to dull the pain. He refuses to blunt or ignore pain and that is an act of solidarity with all who experience physical pain from acts of brutality, and injustice and misunderstanding. For me this solidarity extends to God's solidarity with humankind. That is my understanding of the doctrine of 'atonement', certainly not about substitution for the punishment for our sins.

During the week this year the practice of marking the stations of the gospel was significant. I watched a Columban film. made in the 1980s about the destruction of the rainforest in the Philippines and related in terms of stations of the cross. I also attended a local catholic service on the stations of the cross, using CAFOD material about the impacts of climate change on people in Bangladesh. Again this was about solidarity with all who feel overwhelmed and are carrying heavy burdens and extending that beyond the human sphere.



*Resurrection by an Asian artist  
<http://kingofpeace.blogspot.com/2005/03/other-ways-of-seeing-jesus.html> via Nirmal*

Because I had followed the story mostly from St Mark's gospel the individual resurrection appearances did not feature as most of those are in John's and Luke's gospels. The stories about Mary visiting the tomb early in the morning, Thomas walking around the block with his questions and doubts, Peter keeping busy fishing, the two on the road to Emmaus, or the disciples huddling together all seem to be very truthful descriptions of the way different people experience and handle grief and their sense of encounter with the risen Jesus is part of their healing and unique to each of them.

However this year by focussing on Mark's gospel the ending seemed to be of uncertainty, fear even terror yet also sense Jesus had gone ahead and was inviting us to follow in faith and trust. That for me at present is enough.

*Sandra Dutson*

## Books that the Zoom Gathering found interesting

**Tiny Sunbirds Far Away.** *Christine Watson: 2011*  
The story is told through the eyes of 12 year old Blessing. Mother, brother and Blessing had to move from their home in Lagos when their father abandoned them, to go and live in their grandfather's compound in the troubled Niger Delta.

**Remarkable Guide to British Birds** (*pocket version*). *Bill Bailey 2017*  
Written and illustrated by Bill Bailey, he chooses 51 of his favourite British Birds. Sketches and photos of each bird are found alongside 'Bonus Facts.- did you know, that the name 'Starling' comes from the plumage of juvenile birds which is black and speckled with dots and 'stars'.

**Jesus and Jellied Eels – Making sense of my life.** *Bishop Laurie Green: 2022*  
Laurie was born and lived in the East End of London and became an inner city parish priest and eventually the Bishop of Bradwell. With a strong commitment to urban ministry and housing estates, Laurie did his 'Doctor of Ministry' at the Urban Theology Unit and was for some time a staff member.

**Stories we tell Ourselves** by *Richard Holloway. 2020*  
People may already know of it as it's a few years old. Richard looks at the Big Questions about our place in the universe and the stories we tell ourselves to help us make sense of it all.

**The Day the World Stops Shopping** by *J.B. Mackinnon 2021*  
The book looks at what the world would be like if we gave up consumerism.

**The Extra Mile - a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pilgrimage** by *Pete Staniford. 2010*  
Writer, journalist & broadcaster Pete Staniford visits 8 places of pilgrimage in the UK, he looks at the history and why they became places of pilgrimage and meets with modern-day visitors to find out why they go today. It includes the obvious ones Stonehenge, Lindisfarne and (of course) Iona but also some lesser-known ones.

**The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth** : *Ben Rawlence 2022* *Jonathan Cape.* Charting the inexorable impact of climate change through six types of tree that form the Arctic treeline, Rawlence's lyrical yet urgent

volume is a masterful combination of nature writing, reportage and popular science. - Waterstones

**Moneyland : Why Thieves & Crooks Now Rule the World & How to Take it Back** by *Oliver Bullough. Profile Books 2018*  
Investigative writer in the Guardian. He reveals the dark side of global finance, oligarchs and gangsters power and lack of accountability."Thanks to Offshore, for the first time thieves could dream big"

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### The fascinating history of the Burngreave Ashram building

Accurate descriptions for the various parts of the Burngreave premises for National-Non-Domestic Rates bills are currently being sorted out. The current description for one part of the property is 'Surgery and Premises'. David Dale did some digging and found the following from the Burngreave Messenger – the Community News magazine for the Burngreave area.

The wood panels referred to in the second paragraph can still be seen in the bedroom of one of the flats.

The Autumn 2021 edition (Issue 150, page 22) of 'Burngreave Messenger' says:  
'The building on the corner of Spital Hill and Hallcar Street the Ashram now occupies, part of the ground floor is full of history: this was once a pharmacy and in 1878 Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, worked here as an assistant for a short while. However, he did not get on with his boss, Dr Richardson. He later wrote that people in Sheffield 'would rather be poisoned by a man with a beard than saved by a man without one'.

The upper floor of the building was featured in 'The Guardian' in the 1990s. It housed the Margaret Ardern School of Dancing. It was like stepping back into the past. The wood panelled interiors had not been changed since at least the 1930s. Miss Ardern herself taught dancing there for many decades. Her brother's building firm, Ardern Construction, was in the same premises'

[Autumn 2021 Issue 150 online - Burngreave Messenger](#)

*David Dale / Margaret Mackley*



## Members and Associates

We invite anyone interested to request details about becoming a Member or Associate from the membership secretary, Sandra Dutson: [smdutson@btinternet.com](mailto:smdutson@btinternet.com)  
Members and Associates are listed in the 7-day cycle Community Prayers

## Projects and Commitments associated with the Community

Ashram Press – Radical Christianity, Gospel Study, Discipleship, Community Study and Research- projects on Community and related issues  
Homeless and Asylum Seekers - Residence and Community for people in need  
Multi-faith - mutual activities and projects open to all faiths

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## DATES

### 2023

Sat. 8 July Provisionally this will be 10 -12 on Zoom  
13-15 October at Foxhill House, Frodsham, Cheshire

## COMMUNITY

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See Website [www.ashram.org.uk](http://www.ashram.org.uk) for publications

Ashram Community Trust is a Registered Charity  
Registered Charity No: 1099164  
Charitable Company No: 4779914

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

Act Together editor: Jenny Medhurst  
[medhurst@phonecoop.coop](mailto:medhurst@phonecoop.coop)

Articles for the Autumn 2023 edition needed by Sep 15th  
Contributions from members / associates who do not attend national Community events are especially welcome!

## HOUSES AND PROJECTS

For current information about Houses and Projects in Sheffield please contact

John Vincent  
T: 0114 243 6688  
E: [ashramcommunity@hotmail.com](mailto:ashramcommunity@hotmail.com)

## MEETINGS/ZOOM GROUPS

Please contact the convenors if you would like to know more about meeting or events. They are the local contact points for the Community.

### Convenors

**London** – Linda Marshall –01784 456 474  
Saturday Meetings – Monthly on Zoom or in person

**North-West** – Sandra Dutson  
[smdutson@btinternet.com](mailto:smdutson@btinternet.com)  
Meetings bi-monthly on Zoom or in person

**Community** Zoom meetings fortnightly – Pippa Thompson – 07918 757068.