



## Christ Church Newsletter

25-02-2021

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# A message this lockdown

by Johnny Carruthers

In this second Covid lockdown I am snuggling up at home, wearing jumpers and coats to keep warm until the central heating comes on - the snow has slowly disappeared, but it is still cold and wet outside. It was all so different in the first lockdown as all we had to wear was a facemask and the sun shone down from blue cloudless skies (no photos available!!)

Still, we are surviving and grateful for all the help that is available, with home delivery and WhatsApp etc. The phone and computer are real lifelines and keep us in touch with family and friends with none of the effort of travelling.

I do see one special family twice a week or so, delivering and receiving home cooked food as the excuse, but human contact is the real reason. It is a sort of bubble effect without contact which tends to burst the bubble and is anyway not allowed.

Have you noticed how people need to talk? Listening is a gift and I do try to wait for my turn to speak! All over Brentwood I see people walking and talking (safely distanced of course) but always remember being able to listen is a plus, as so many have the need to share their problem and their thoughts. So perhaps try phoning someone you know but have missed over this last ten months.

This virus has a lot to answer for, but it has brought out the best in so many people who share and care in so many communities with love and kindness for their neighbours and their fellow beings. Especially I thank Stuart and Suzanne and the team for their wonderful efforts every Sunday. Their warmth and love shines through the ether straight into our lives as they keep the spirit of God's love alive and kicking in the family of Christchurch.

Keep smiling and love to all.



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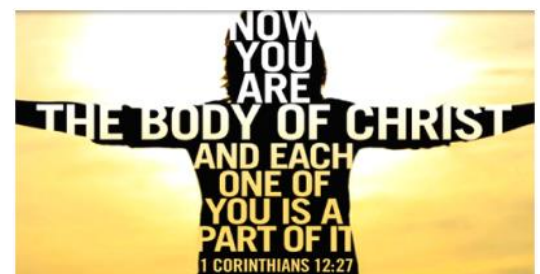
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## Girl Guiding update

by Sylvia Partridge

2020 was supposed to be a memorable year for the Guides, and it was, but for all the wrong reasons!

We had planned lots of activities and events to mark our 100th birthday but sadly most had to be cancelled including the trip to Disneyland Paris, camp and visit to the Guide World Centre in London. We did manage to hold our Centenary Concert in February before the lockdown and this was enjoyed by all who came.

The actual centenary on 26th September should have been a big party day with lots of guests and Guides from over the years. We did celebrate but on a much smaller scale with only 15 girls and Leaders – all we were allowed at the time and outdoors on a chilly and windy afternoon. The girls took part in a couple of games and went home with a goody bag and a party Balloon.

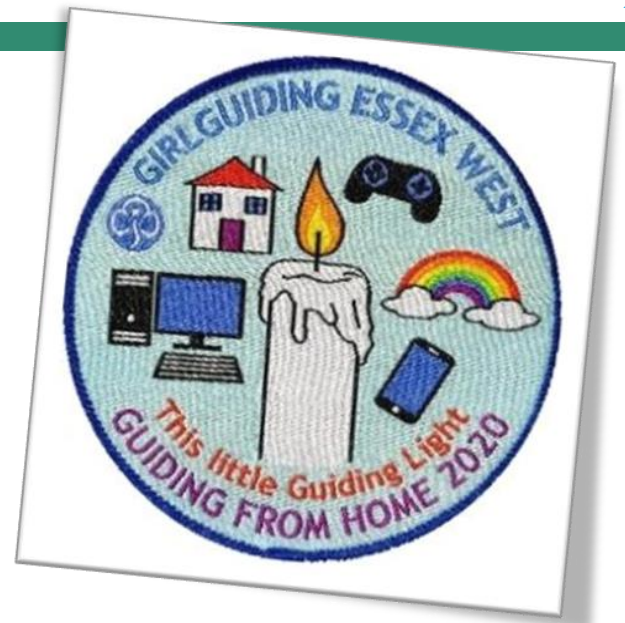
Back in March 2020 we could never have imagined that nearly a year on we would still not be able to meet 'normally'. We have kept in touch with the girls by home delivering Easter Eggs, Activity packs and Christmas gifts.

The wonder of technology and zoom has meant we can meet virtually to keep them engaged and hopefully maintain their Guiding membership. It has been encouraging how many girls wanted to have these meetings and we have even increased our numbers with three girls joining from Brownies, even though we haven't met them in person.

We try to keep the meetings fun and not too 'school like' as the girls are having to spend so much of their time on-line. We have a time to chat, play a few games and activities. Last week we took a virtual flight to India and visited the Guide World Centre called SANGAM. Afterwards the girls decorated paper hands with henna designs. All part of our International theme and badge work.

Obviously, we don't know when restrictions will be lifted and how we will be able to meet in the coming months but will continue to meet and strive to keep our Guiding light bright!

Over the years it has been a privilege to see Church family members join Guides, often as a



shy ten-year-old, and for them to grow into mature, accomplished young ladies. I am pleased to still be in touch with many of them.

### A bit about me

*I have been a Leader with 1st Warley Guides since 1972. I got involved by helping for one night and never left! Although at the time I was a member of a church nearer to home, I have worshipped at Christ Church on a regular basis through monthly Church Parade Services, special other Services and supported events and fund-raising. I became a more involved member in 2008, following my cancer diagnoses and treatment. The support given to me by Clergy and Church members was fantastic, so I felt 'called' to Christ Church as my home.*

Sylvia



# Poem: Tough Times

by Daphne Baker

## A bit about me

*Robin and I were married at Christ Church in September 1979 and have been attending this church ever since. Robin has been going to Christ Church a lot longer than me, in fact he was baptised there as a baby as it was the church his parents, Lucy and Bill, attended. We have three grown-up sons, all of whom were also baptised at Christ Church. Matthew now lives in Lincolnshire, Andrew in Suffolk and Tim, our youngest, still lives in Brentwood. I quite enjoy writing the occasional poem and the following is one I've written very recently – hope you like it:*

These are tough times we are living through of that there is no doubt,  
A year ago we'd never have imagined how things have turned out,

From wearing masks, social distancing, lockdowns and tiers,  
To shops and businesses closing along with future fears.

Although times are hard, positive we must all remain,  
By counting our blessings and trying hard not to complain.

There's been much to discover and things to be thankful for too  
And in the words of this poem I'd like to share some with you.

Robin and I have regularly walked as part of our exercise routine,  
To both the familiar and the new,  
lots of places we have been –

We've walked through the woods at Hartswood on many a day,  
The bluebells were particularly spectacular last May.

We've been on several trips to nearby Thames Chase,  
And frequently enjoyed walking around Warley Place.

It's been good to spot the snowdrops and daffodils coming through,  
Despite Storm Darcy the flowers will bloom as they always do.



Playing golf in lockdown is something that's not permitted at all

So we've walked round the course with no risk of being hit by a ball!  
People we've never met say hello and we exchange a cheery smile,  
And sometimes, whilst social distancing, we may even chat for a while.

It's been hard not being able to be with friends and family,  
But we're grateful these days for the advance of modern technology,

We can telephone, text, email and make a video call,  
For there's numerous ways to keep in touch that are now available.

When allowed, it was good to attend Christ Church on a Sunday

With covid checks put in place we could worship together safely,  
Although church is now closed, services, thankfully, still resume  
But by recorded video, DVD or watched live via Zoom.

We're thankful for friends at Christ Church for being there for us all,  
It's comforting to know if we need anything we can just give them a call.

Our faith has kept us strong throughout whatever situation arose,  
And the fact that what we're going through, our Heavenly Father knows!

People rallying round to help each other is heart-warming to hear,  
They've tirelessly given their all, it's abundantly clear,

The NHS, Carers, Teachers and many others who we are all grateful for,  
And of course we cannot forget heroic Captain Tom Moore.

The vaccination rollout in our Country so far, has been a job well done,  
And it won't be too long before a vaccine has been offered to everyone.

Let us, with faith, pray that soon we'll be practically Covid-free at last,  
And these tough times we are living through will be a thing of the past.



# Teaching Remotely: So Much for So Little

by Jane Montaigu

I have lived most of my adult life in France after growing up in Leeds, Scotland then Leicester. I studied French and Russian at Durham and later English Literature at the Sorbonne. For many years I was a bilingual HR Manager in a law firm, then in an international school in Paris. I have two grown-up bilingual children, one in Paris, one in Birmingham. When I moved here in 2014, I became a student again to train as a primary teacher,

something I had always wanted to do. Now I'm a Year 4 teacher

and subject leader for Languages.

Last March when the announcement of the first lockdown meant that the majority of children would be learning from home, a couple of kind mums gave me "end of year" type gifts and were in tears. I was a little surprised at their emotion but of course very touched by their generosity. It turns out that somehow they knew this would be the last day we would see each other. Being an optimist, I expected us to be back in school in a few weeks' time, never imagining that I would not actually teach my class again! Indeed, apart from those few pupils whom we continued to teach in school, I would only catch a brief glimpse of my pupils at an outdoor assembly in July when we waved goodbye from across the playground. It was very sad.

So, like teachers across the country and the world, last spring we started to adapt our plans for the first time ever to remote teaching and learning which was highly challenging. How do you teach practical primary school subjects like hockey, computing and Design & Technology online? How do you teach from a lengthy novel of which they don't have a copy? How do you help them to better understand a maths method when you can only correspond by email which is hard for some to read? How do you cater for all the differing levels of support children might receive at home, not to mention varying access to technology and other resources?

Teaching online has also turned out to be far more labour intensive than people imagine, yet at the same time infinitely less satisfying. Not only do we miss being with the children, the buzz you get from all the unpredictable events (both good and bad!) of a day in school, but also, probably most of us chose to go into teaching for the pleasure of seeing children enjoy learning new skills and knowledge and we have felt cut off from that, almost blindfolded. All day was spent in front of a computer screen. Marking work took far longer than it would in class. It had become an administrative job (in fact the very sort of job I had chosen to leave!). When I was bemoaning all this, one

of my colleagues accurately commented in Churchillian style "Yes, it's all so much for so little".

So of course, as we entered 2021, after just one term with my new class, I was dismayed that we were having to go back into lockdown. It can be rather lonely compared to life in a busy school. My favourite days of the week are definitely those when I am in class with our key worker cohort.

However, this time my school is using a more modern learning platform which now enables us to record videos of ourselves teaching and to offer live lessons on Google Classrooms. These make a huge difference as pupils now feel a little less isolated in their learning. Even

so, the situation is not ideal for anyone and we are hugely grateful to the families/carers for supporting the

children, despite their own challenges which may include juggling time, quiet space and the family's online access with working from home or caring for younger siblings.

Needless to say, I can't wait to have my class back as soon as it is safe. And it would be lovely to be able to chat with colleagues in person again rather than just see faces on a screen via Zoom.

Just like we are all looking forward to being back in church together again!

