



Peace
on
Earth



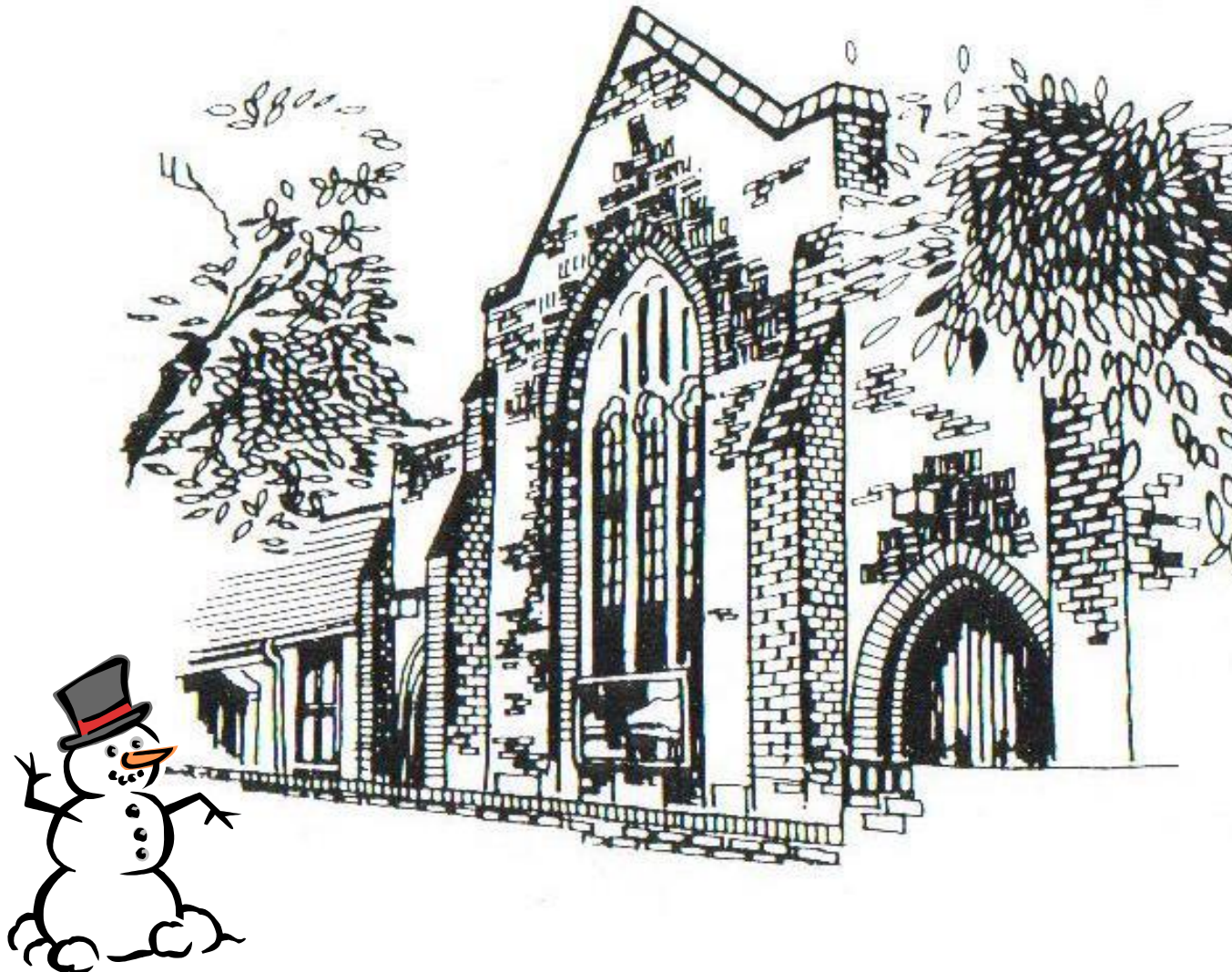
Peace
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Earth

THE MAGAZINE

OF

HIGHAMS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Cavendish Road, E.4.



December 2024 / January 2025



Christmas Greetings



CHURCH PROGRAMME

At the time of writing

Current Covid Safety Arrangements

These have been removed at this time. If you have any concerns, please contact the Duty Deacon

Details of Services are given in the Church Diary at the back of the magazine.



The Zoom Home Group is held on most Tuesday Evenings. Please see Cherie for details and how to join.

There is a box just inside the main church door collecting food contributions for The Hub. If you are able, please put an extra item or two in your shopping to add to this for those who are struggling in the current financial climate.

The deadline for items for the next edition is Sunday January 19th 2025
Editor : Dave Lyus. Email : magazine@hpbc.co.uk





Christmas Greetings



Cavendish Road, London E4 9NG
December 2024 / January 2025

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Advent Reflections: Silence and Expectation

Dear Friends,

As we enter the season of Advent, a time marked by anticipation and preparation, I rediscovered the words of the old hymn, *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*. Its haunting melody and rich lyrics speak deeply to the heart of this holy season and really made me think.

Advent is a time of waiting—not the impatient kind of waiting we often experience, like standing in line or enduring a delay, but a sacred, expectant waiting. It's the waiting of a world poised on the edge of glory, longing for the fulfilment of God's promise in the birth of Jesus Christ. This season invites us to step away from the noise of the world and into the quiet spaces of our hearts where God speaks most clearly.

The hymn begins with a call to silence that seems countercultural in our world today. Silence is rare. Our lives are filled with constant chatter from television or radio, digital distractions, and the endless hum of busyness. Yet, these words remind us that encountering God requires a pause, a moment of stillness to prepare our hearts.

When we pause, this silence is not empty, or lonely. It is brimming with reverence, awe, and expectation. In these quiet moments, if we can find them, we are reminded that something extraordinary is about to happen. God is drawing near—not in a grand display of earthly power but in the humility and vulnerability of a child.



Christmas Greetings



Advent is also a season of tension. (And I don't mean family tension with relatives, or over presents and wrapping and preparation, or whether to have turkey again (or a different meat that we'd all prefer if we were honest!) It is the tension around the coming of the kingdom: we celebrate Christ's first coming, but we also wait for His return. In this "already, but not yet" time, we carry a dual hope: the joy of knowing that God has come to us in Jesus and the longing for the day when all things will be made new when Jesus returns again. The hymn beautifully captures this sense of expectation, encouraging us to prepare our hearts for the King of Kings, whose reign will bring peace and justice to the world.

The Advent wreath with its candles will be out in church from the 1st of December, and as we light a new candle each service, we will reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Let us greet Advent as an opportunity embrace moments of sacred silence, turning down the volume of the world to hear the still, small voice of God. In that silence, may we encounter the wonder of Emmanuel—God with us—and may we be filled with the joy of His presence.

There will be opportunity to do that in our joint Highams Park Churches Bereavement Service, as we light a candle and remember loved ones we have lost. Another opportunity for quiet reflection will be at our joint service with Hainault Baptist – a reflective Advent evensong with some space for thoughtful reflection. I hope you might be able to come along.

With every blessing for a hope-filled Advent, and wishing you a Happy Christmas,

Cherie

The words are ancient – dating back to a few hundred years after Jesus; they were part of the divine liturgy of St James and included in a Jerusalem chant book of the fifth century. The composer Vaughn Williams set the words of an English translation (from the Greek) to a French folk song, which is the popular version sang today.



Christmas Greetings



Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded,
for, with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.*

*King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
in the body and the blood.
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.*

*Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish
as the darkness clears away.*

*At His feet the six-winged seraph,
cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the Presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, Lord Most High!"*





Christmas Greetings



C V E N D S H C R C U L A R



Well here we are at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. This means that the first quarter century is nearly over – where did all the time go? It does not seem that long ago that we went up to The Highams Park and watched the fireworks on the horizon welcoming in the New Year and the New Century – not something that everybody gets the opportunity to do. We have said goodbye to loved ones and welcomed new friends and family. Similarly, we have said goodbye to ministers and welcomed others – but the church goes on and we hope that this lasts for many years to come.

As we look forward to the year to come, we hope that it will bring comfort, strength and recovery to those with health problems and promise that, if they are unable to come to church for whatever reason, they will stay in our thoughts and prayers.

We welcome Hazel Ansell and Sarah Raymond to the Diaconate and know that they will work hard to support Cherie and ensure that the church functions as we would wish.

We are grateful to Dave, Di, Tony, Althea and Jason for obtaining, and decorating the Christmas tree that, together with the other decorations, will provide that visual reminder that Christmas is here. (See picture)

Please note that on Sunday 22nd of December we are holding our Carols by Candlelight Service **and there will be no Morning Service**. However, you are welcome to meet at the Costa Coffee Shop in Tesco's at around 11 am for a rime of fellowship.

Hazel's Homespun Humour

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs,
you have probably not fully understood the situation.



Christmas Greetings



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The Christmas Post Box is back again - Dianne and David Kendrick are donning their postie costumes once more - we are very grateful to them. These are the delivery and collection dates:

Sunday, 8th December - EARLY BIRD DELIVERY
(no collection available)

Sunday, 15th December - DELIVERY. COLLECTION
after Service only.

Sunday, 22nd December - LAST SUNDAY FOR DELIVERY
Collection available after Service only

Wednesday 25th December - LAST MINUTE COLLECTION ONLY. Please DO NOT deliver cards to Church on this day as there will not be time to sort them for collection.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

PRINT names with Surnames clearly and put your cards in **alphabetical Surname order**. This helps the organisers to sort the cards quickly and easily, whilst also enabling them to get to some of the Morning Service.

Please note that this service is for the exchange of cards that are for personal collection or that can be collected on behalf of somebody - it is not for cards that need posting on as normal mail. Cards that are not collected will not be sent on.

Remember also that the money saved on postage by using this system can go to the Christmas offering!



Christmas Greetings



Leslie Durant 24/12/1929 – 26/ 6/2024

One of the couples that formed the backbone of HPBC in times gone by were Jean and Leslie Durant. Jean died some years ago and Leslie died recently. We are indebted to Alison, his elder daughter for details of his life. He will especially be remembered for his excellent playing of our organ on many occasions.



Leslie Arthur Francis Durant was born in the East End of London on Christmas Eve 1929. It was a very working-class family with very little in the way of possessions and life was a struggle. However, he did have lots of love and care from his very hard-working parents, Winifred and Francis. He was an only child.

His education was disrupted due to the war, and he had very little schooling as he wasn't evacuated during this time. He did have a tutor for an hour a week, but he spent a lot of time at the library and was largely self-taught.

He took piano lessons at the age of 10 and, later through encouragement by his parents, friends and involvement in the church, became proficient at the organ becoming an Associate at the Royal College of Music. He was involved in St Andrews Church Thornhill Square. He used to play the organ for the last hymn as the organist would leave the church early to go to the pub.

Started work at 14 at an electrical engineering office in W1 and was the brass polisher and errand boy. After a year he moved to an optical company where he made frames. His father and uncle both worked here.

1948 National Service in Suffolk with the RAF where he would play music for the dances and films. He was also the projectionist for the films.

He changed jobs just before he got married in 1954 as he decided that the City sounded more relaxing, he could get the 9.10 train from Chingford and return on the 5.15 from Liverpool Street. He started working for Corrie MacColl & Son as a shipping clerk and worked his way up to Company Director retiring in 1987 as a commodities dealer in rubber.



In 1950 he met Jean Chambers at the London Endeavour Choir (both being members of Christian Endeavour – a church-based society for those growing in the faith). They married in 1954 at HPBC and had their honeymoon in Sidmouth.

They lived in North Chingford and the family grew with the births of two daughters - Alison Jane born in May 1959 followed in 1962 by Elizabeth Anne.



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Alison tells that they both had a very happy childhoods with the highlight being the annual family holiday to Sidmouth. She also adds that she has very fond memories of HPBC as I was dedicated there in 1959 and worshipped there until I got married.

Alison married in 1982 to Gareth Watkins and Elizabeth married in 1986 to Christopher Barratt. Leslie was blessed, not only with grandchildren but also great grandchildren - the grandchildren are David and Helen, Andrew and Esther and the great grandchildren are named Edie, Noah, Jack, Amelia & Ada

Leslie's main passion was his music, he was an organist at various churches before ending up as organist and choir master at All Saints, Woodford Wells between the years of 1956 – 1978. He set up the Cappella Singers in the late 1970's which continued until 2000 singing choral evensong at a number of cathedrals. He also played the organ at HPBC. Jean was a member of the church along with her parents Fred and Janet Chambers. When he retired in 1987, he also played the organ for many funerals, weddings and services when required to do so.

Jean and Leslie moved to Sidmouth in 2000 where they had a very happy retirement. Jean died in 2013. They would go to Exeter Cathedral twice a week for evensong and other special services as well as being involved in the parish church. Leslie loved seeing his family and taking an interest in whatever they were doing or being involved with. One of the main highlights over the years was for all the family to meet to watch the Red Arrows from Leslie's balcony.



He was very proud of all the diverse achievements of his family

Leslie sadly passed away on the 26th of June 2024. He had been in a nursing home since January following a serious fall. He was 94.5. Alison says that she knew that her mother Jean was a member of the church as were her grandparents Fred and Janet Chambers. Jean will long be remembered as being an integral part of the playgroup held at the church.



Christmas Greetings



Harvest

Our Harvest Festival took place on October 6th. Mandy had made a display of flowers in and around the altar - which was like sunshine as you entered the church and brightened the day.

We began the service by singing "We plough the fields and scatter" followed by "Great is thy faithfulness"



The Harvest donations were taken by the congregation to make a display on the altar steps.

We were an All Age service on that day but were sadly deplete of youngsters but this didn't detract from the enjoyment of this celebration of giving thanks to farmers for their commitment in often difficult weather and situations to feeding us with their produce.

There was a fun activity which asked for volunteers to be blindfolded and to taste a food then describe it so that the rest of the congregation had to guess what it was.



We learned more about Genesis who we were introduced to last Harvest. He works for BMS. He was born in West Uganda and trained as an agriculturalist. He is supported through BMS which sends out people like him to train others in order for them to be able to support their families through farming their land.



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Genesis, we learned, had trained a man called David who grew Jackfruit and Pawpaw to sell. David was also helped to plant trees on his land as a symbol of hope for the future.

Genesis is linked to our church through the support that we give, along with other churches in England, and sends letters and prayers to all people who help him in his mission.

He is an active member of the church in Uganda. He is coming to England this year to give talks and will continue to update us on his progress through his missionary work. We prayed for him.

During a song called "Harvest Samba" the collection was taken. We attempted to sing along from the words on the screen.

The Parable of the Sower was read and was used as an illustration as to how it is the seeds which fall on the good soil flourish the best. Faith needs a good, solid foundation.

Members of the congregation were given prayers to read out followed by the final hymn "What a faithful God am I"

The Harvest food donation was taken to the Food Hub at All Saints Church.

Thanks to Dave and Di Kendrick for the article and pictures

I was unable to be at the HPBC Harvest Festival but did not miss out completely. My grandchildren, Raif and Thea, go to a village school in a place called North Muskham (Near Newark) and they, with their classmates, walked a short distance to the village church, St. Wilfred's, to hold their Harvest celebration. Parents (and grandparents) were invited. Unfortunately, the weather was not the best - in fact there was a real downpour so we were all rather damp. But this did not matter as the service was very well presented with poems and hymns. Many of the people around the village are farmers so the children understand the real meaning of Harvest.





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They, of course, understand the need for rain but it rained so hard during the service that it was sometimes hard to hear what was going on! But it stopped by the time we left the church. As with most churches there was a small memorial to those who had lost their lives in the two World Wars. Fortunately (and similar to HPBC) there were only a small number of names. Which leads us to thinking of Remembrance...

Remembrance

I usually try to attend church on Remembrance Sunday to join with the others in the congregation in remembering the vast number of those both in the armed forces and civilians who have suffered death or injury due to conflicts around the world. This year however, I watched the ceremony on television as it unfolded. Of course, it had started some time before with the selling of British Legion poppies and then on a Saturday evening in November, we were able to watch a Festival of Remembrance which is a moderately upbeat programme celebrating the Nations gratitude to our armed forces. There are tales of bravery and how people have managed to overcome injuries both physical and mental. It always finishes with a drumhead service and the release of a million tissue poppy leaves.

On the following Sunday Another short service is an integral part of the ceremony held at The Cenotaph in Whitehall. Before 11.00 am the massed bands play sombre music. It was interesting to note how when one tune was finished there was a noticeable gap until the next one started. This was explained as being necessary to ensure that all the stages of the ceremony followed the exact set times. Then the various dignitaries take their places prior to the laying of wreaths. These include the top politicians of the current government and opposition, past Prime Ministers (quite a large number this year!) and the representatives of the various countries in the Commonwealth and overseas territories.



At just before 11.00 am the Royal party emerge and take their places. At exactly 11.00 am the chimes of Big Ben together with the firing of a field gun marks the start of the two-minute silence. Then comes the laying of wreaths – that for the Nation being laid by the King followed by the others in the Royal party, then comes those laid by representatives of the armed forces. There is also a wreath laid on behalf of Transport for London. This because London Transport Old Comrades were given the right to march by King George V who granted this honour to the London General Omnibus Company in 1920 in recognition of the services rendered by the men who drove buses to the front line in France 1915.

The wreath laying always seems to go without a hitch with everybody knowing where to go.



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For the first time, this year, I noticed that chalk marks are placed on the base of The Cenotaph showing where feet are to be placed as well as the outlines of the wreaths with numbers to ensure that everything lines up correctly. After the official wreath laying there follows a short service. Once this is over the dignitaries leave and after some little time the marchpast of the many groups and associations begins. It was estimated that there were some ten thousand taking part this year. In many ways this is the most heartwarming part of the ceremony. That all these people travel from all over country and the rest of the world to remember those who were injured or gave their lives for us in all conflicts since the First World War is inspiring. In an interview one man who had been badly injured in Afghanistan was asked if he felt obliged to march. He replied that he did not go as a matter of obligation but because he wanted to go to remember his comrades especially those who had not returned.

The number of Second World War veterans is decreasing with the passing of every year. There were but eleven in the march past this year. They ranged in age from those in their nineties to one gentleman of one hundred and one who was outdone by a lady of one hundred and four. In brief interviews they both proved that their faculties were there in full...The marchpast is one of the few places where you see a large number of bowler hats being worn by men holding firmly rolled umbrellas walking alongside even more people wearing berets or other headwear in a rainbow of hues representing the wearers affiliation with a particular unit of the armed forces. These included the army dental association, set up during the First World War to combat the very poor state of the teeth of those joining up. Then there was the army vets' group who looked after the dogs and other animals in theatres of war. There were Gurkhas and Poles, Canadians and Indians all marching with pride.

A little throwaway line at the end of the commentary highlighted the scale of the number of people who had died serving our country – 'if all the people who had died in conflicts and who we are remembering today were lined up a file three wide they would stretch from The Cenotaph to Edinburgh' – and that is a very long way.

The last part of the march past was given over to young people's groups – the Scouts, cadets of the police and forces both boys and girls, Boy's Brigade. Girl's Brigade etc. It was good to see because it means that :





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Margaret's 90th Birthday



On the 27th of October we were able to celebrate our oldest church member's 90th birthday. Margaret has been an inspiration to all of us in the church. Throughout her life she has shown us what faith in our Lord means. She has been there to listen and to share her wise words and has attended church each Sunday with her families support even though at times she has been experiencing pain. She has amazed us all, as even in the hardest of times, when her illness has put constraints on her regarding attendance. She, as soon as is possible, is back in the congregation again.

One thing that has always shone out from Margaret is her love, kindness and understanding of others.

Our service on the 27th of October was attended by both her close and wider family which, Cherie pointed out, doubled the congregation! After the service, during coffee time in Fellowship Hall, we sang Happy Birthday and she was presented with flowers and a card which had been signed by all of us. She had a cake provided by her family to share - which we all appreciated!! We were also able to catch up with family members and wish Margaret personal birthday wishes too. Later in the day she had a birthday lunch at home with the family, which was a very happy event. Margaret's actual birthday was on the 28th of October but by then she had had a such a special time which had left her happily exhausted!!!!



Di Kendrick



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2024 / 2025 Programme

December 14 th	Film and Christmas Lunch – ‘The Amazing Mr Blunden’ Lunch 1pm. Film 2pm
January 18 th	Film – ‘One Day’ - For the National Holocaust Memorial Day – 2pm
February 8 th	HPS Quiz Night at All Saints Church – 7pm for 7.30pm
15 th	Film and Lunch Special – ‘Now and Forever’ Lunch 1pm/ Film 2.30pm
March 22 nd	Film ‘Sister Act’ – a tribute to the late Maggie Smith – 2pm
April 26 th	Film ‘Cinema Paradiso’ – classic Italian film (subtitled) 2pm
27 th	St. George’s Day Parade
May 17 th	‘Picadilly Incident’ – 2pm
June 21 st	‘A Street Cat Named Bob’ – 2pm
August 2 nd	Film and Afternoon Tea – ‘Kings Rhapsody’ – 2pm

Film Club Lunches and Afternoon Tea are £12 for members and £15 for others.

There will be two walks announced during the year – free for members and £5 for others.



The Society also looks after the Highams Park Station Garden and welcomes help on Tuesday mornings from 10am till midday. The dates for 2025 are:

**March 11th – April
15th – May 20th –
June 10th**



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It's a Big Issue...



Again, we Thank Peter Burke for an article about somebody he has met. In this case a Big Issue seller. We see them all around without necessarily understanding why they are there...

There are mixed feeling around giving to the poor. Will the small change I continually give make much difference?

Do TfL's announcements that they want to discourage begging sound too harsh? What are the real stories behind the people who bombard our train journeys with

something like; 'excuse everybody, I'm looking for £18 to find somewhere to sleep tonight'.

It is important to give where we can. Naturally, none of us want to waste our money on those who can work. Last year, I began to think a little more about this and had done some research on the Big Issue magazine.

The creator John Bird was often homeless in the 1960's due to a difficult upbringing in a London Irish family. During the 70s, John found a productive plan away from the petty crimes he was involved with by getting some temporary work while developing his interest in writing about social issues such as life in prison and homelessness. By the 80's he had developed enough awareness of social issues to start a Magazine that would serve as a way for people in or on the brink of homelessness to make money legitimately and develop self-respect. All he needed was the funds to begin production.

A similar New York idea was starting to succeed by the early 90s which helped Bird to sell his idea to businesses who might be able to help. He was successful when the founder of the Body Shop, Anita Roddick who was very interested in the project and committed to providing the money needed to start production.



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Homeless people would be given a pitch, an identity badge and a bunch of magazines to start off with in London. Once they had started, the seller would pay a fee for the magazine upfront and be able to make a 50% profit. By the start of the 2000's, the Big Issue was on sale in every major UK city.

Today, at Highams Park, the Big Issue's success is evident as I had to chance to buy a copy at Tesco. The pitch is operated by Mirela. A migrant from Eastern Europe who has spent the last few years getting by, whilst supporting a family including an extremely autistic child.

I ask her what we as a church can pray for. - She would like prayer to help her raise her kids. Mirela believes God has been looking after her when I ask.

The fight to remain in the UK, gain regular financial support now for her family and maintain her job has been supported by the Big Issue and I find it was tremendously encouraging that a newspaper which started over 30 years ago, still has an impact today.

As Peter says, the idea for The Big Issue came from a similar idea that was started in New York :



Street News was a street newspaper sold by homeless people in New York City. Established in 1989, it was founded and launched by Hutchinson Persons and Wendy Oxenhorn. This was the starting of the American street newspaper movement and provided a way of self-sufficiency to the many homeless and unemployed people in New York. The starting price was \$1 with 25 cents being used to maintain the business and 75 cents as profit for the vendors. It has now, sadly, ceased.



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Memories of Christmas past



Not quite back to Dickensian times but looking back for a good few years what memories are kindled of Christmastime at HPBC?

Unlike the more commercial world HPBC Christmas tended to start in December. The first sign was, probably, the appearance of the Post Box ready to receive all those cards for people in the church. This has continued with a short break for Covid! With the cost of a stamp reaching astronomic proportions, it is still a wonderful way of greeting others. Of course, the times I am looking back to are BI (Before Internet) and you can now send personalised cards to many people with little more than the press of a button.

I cannot remember when the tradition of The Church Christmas Meal started but it was not there in my memories of times past, but it has now proved to be an ideal way of getting into that, oh so important, Christmas Spirit.

One tradition that has undergone a change is that of pushing a piano around the local streets lit by a candle in a lantern and singing Christmas carols followed by hot soup in Helwys Court. This stopped when Aldriche Way had double glazing fitted to their windows. This was so effective that nobody could hear the joyous sounds.

There was the placing of the Christmas Tree and the decorating of the church including the Nativity scene knitted by the ladies of the congregation.

Nearer to Christmas Day there was always a Nativity Service. These were the days when we had a good number of young people willing to be dressed as Angels, Kings, Shepherds and sheep (always lots of sheep!). Out would come the costumes and they would be fitted to the most appropriately sized volunteer. This has continued with great success – with sometimes less people than ideal but always telling the Christmas story with enthusiasm.

Just before The Day itself was the Midnight Communion Service. When our children were either old enough to come or babysitters had been arranged, Jacquie and I would drive down the darkened streets to HPBC. As we got out of the car our ears were assailed by the sound of Christmas music being played from the parish church (Where Helwys Court is now). Unfortunately, the record was not exactly perfect and there was the sound of a crack in the rendition. But that did not matter. We always found that service to be special. The lights were dimmed and there was a real feeling of peace. It was just carols and readings and it finished just after midnight.



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There was no sermon (although later ministers did sometimes include one which for us rather spoiled the ambience of the service).

After the service we would go home and have a cup of tea and so to bed – although on more than one occasion it was home, drink get the children to bed and then start wrapping the presents... (I am not sure why we left it so late!). Of course, there was no Amazon (other companies are available) so the presents had actually been bought by going to the shops and paying real cash for your choice.

On Christmas morning which had probably started at some unfeasibly early hour there was always a rush to find a present to take to church to show to the minister. We have deep memories of this ceremony – we have it firmly in the memory cells that one of the best ministers to show deep interest in the children and their presents was Alan Smith. He and his wife Marion had no children but he found a real rapport with those (sometimes noisy) children and talked to them in an adult way (not down to them).

And then it was home to lunch, the Queen's Speech and later the very few television channels would keep us happy with the likes of Morecambe and Wise or the Two Ronnies – whatever happened to comedy shows which were actually funny? You would have bought the Christmas edition of The Radio Times and pored over the programming marking the important ones in some way to ensure that they were not missed. Once video recorders came on the scene you would not have to choose between two channels both showing an unmissable programme at the same time!

Just a few memories that may have jogged something in your Christmas Past - but for this Christmas, from the magazine, may we be : -



DL



Christmas Greetings



Musings - *A few random thoughts about...* Level Crossings

In the series of 'Musings' I normally try to tie them in with an element of church related facts. In this case the best I can do is to say that I have been held up many times at the level crossing whilst on my way to church!

'Our' level crossing has been in existence since the railway from Liverpool Street made its way to Chingford and is said by some people to add to the 'village' atmosphere. It does indeed form a centrepiece to the area and, in

fact the last remaining level crossing on the 'Weaver Line – Chingford Branch).



There used to be another crossing sited at Chingford Hatch. It installed in 1873 and lasted until 1971 when due to the weight of traffic an underpass together with a pedestrian walkway was constructed. Some readers may well remember that this was not a mechanically

operated crossing – it relied upon a gatekeeper to manually move the gates closed to traffic in good time as a train was approaching - a thankless task in bad weather! In fact, until 1824 the gates were closed to traffic and only moved when a vehicle wanted to cross.

The Highams Park level crossing cannot be viewed in isolation but for many years was controlled by the signal box alongside it. The box was constructed in 1925 and, at that time controlled not only the crossing but also the points which guided trains into the sidings built behind the Chingford platform. These gates were operated by mechanical means



to some extent. If you looked up at the box some years ago you would have seen the signman busily winding a very large wheel which was interconnected with the gates – he literally had to wind them open and closed. He also had to judge when he could close the gates – there were no flashing red lights to stop the traffic. The gates were of course different to those now used.



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When open for traffic flow they were swung back to cut off the railway line. There was also a separate gate on the left-hand side (looking from Hale End Road towards the Broadway) which allowed pedestrians to cross without getting in the way of traffic. This was locked shut when the gates were closed. There was, of course, the subway which let people cross when the gates were closed and gave access to the station yard as well.

In 2002 the new lifting barriers were installed. These were accompanied by flashing lights and a siren before they descended across the road. This means that there is no longer any obstruction between the crossing and the rest of the track as there was with the swing type gates. The operation of the gates is now controlled directly from Liverpool Street which seems to have led to the gates being down for far longer than appears necessary which in turns leads to tailbacks. This centralised operation meant that the signal box was redundant and was to be removed. However, a last-minute reprieve was made and it still stands proudly (if somewhat in need of paint) above Highams Park.

The concept of the level crossing was introduced by the Government in 1839 as a safety measure. Where rail and public roads crossed, the railway companies had to provide gates that were kept closed across the road and operated by 'good and proper persons' to let road users pass – there was obviously not so much road traffic in those days! The idea of gates being closed meant that animals (and people) could not wander on to the railway tracks. This continued when the gates were later swung back thus opening the way to road traffic.

Many readers will be aware that I spend a good deal of my time in Newark in Nottinghamshire. This too has a level crossing that is even better at holding up traffic. It was only converted to central operation in the last few years. The road on which it is sited was originally part of the main A1 Road which if it was still the case today would be totally impractical. Fortunately, the A1 was rerouted around the town. However, it is still a busy road, and tailbacks can lead to horrendous delays by blocking roundabouts at either end. This is not helped by the time the occasional train consisting of slow-moving tank wagons takes to cross. Plans are being considered to ease the situation in the future.

There are still some 6,000 level crossings operational in Britain – there could be a lot of people late for church! DL





Christmas Greetings



Another View of Christmas...

As I wrote the article 'Memories of Christmas Past' I thought of all the Christmas related news and strange facts that we have included in the year end magazine for what seems like a fairly large number of years. What I do not remember, until fairly recently, was mention of hardship for some people who live in our midst. There was no food bank or mention of people living rough on the streets. People who seem to fall through any safety nets which themselves seem overwhelmed. As I have mentioned we always tried to find less obvious information about Christmas in the magazine. To help Jacquie and I in this task we managed to collect a number of books which held these facts. In a book entitled 'Fill My Stocking – A Christmas Anthology' Alan Titchmarsh includes a piece by Pam Brown called 'Remember Them'. In part it reads: -

We open our presents, laugh together, sit down to eat. But beyond the window – out there in the darkness – are those for whom Christmas brings no respite. For them it is another day of loneliness, fear, imprisonment, hunger, sickness, homelessness, weariness and war.

To many, even a shabby bedsitter would be a splendid place – dry, warm, safe and large enough to house a family. To many our full larders, our clean water, our health, our peace of mind, our united families are things of which they can only dream. Some knew our world once – and have lost it, or been exiled from it, or had it taken away from them. Some have never known anything but fear and poverty and loss. It is right to show our love for one another at Christmas – to share a meal, to exchange gifts, to be happy.

But I wish that we privileged few could hear the voices of all those beyond our windows.

If only now, at Christmas, we could bring them in, share our thoughts and hear their individual stories. For they are not only statistics, international problems, drain on our resources.

They are individuals, each complex and unique – Valuable – As we are.

I found this very moving - I am certainly not trying to depress you at Christmas but it is important that we remember these many men, women and children who live, and sometimes die, in our world, in our God's world often through no fault of their own.



We are grateful that organisations such as the Salvation Army, Crisis at Christmas and our own local Food Hub are there to bring a little comfort to as many people as possible. Do please keep supporting them – there is the box for donations of food etc for the Food Hub in the box just inside the Church front door.

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CHURCH DIARY December

Note: - all Services led by Rev. Cherie Rogers unless shown

Sunday 1st	10 am	Morning Service
	3 pm	Bereavement Service
Monday 2nd	10.30	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 3rd	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom
Sunday 8th	10 am	Morning Service
	4 pm	Advent Evensong (with Hainault BC)
Monday 9th	10.30	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 10th		Church Christmas Dinner
Sunday 15th	10 am	All Age Service (including a Nativity – of sorts!)
Monday 16th	10.30 am	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 17th	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom
Sunday 22nd	4 pm	Carols by Candlelight
Tuesday 24th	4 pm	Joint Nativity Service with The Methodist Church at Winchester Road Church
	11.30 pm	Midnight Communion Service
Wednesday 25th	10 am	Christmas Day Service
Sunday 29th	10 am	Morning Service Led by Dr Paul Davis





Christmas Greetings



January

Sunday 5th	10 am	All Age Service
Monday 6th	10.30 am	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 7th	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom
Thursday 9th		Church Council meeting
Friday 10th	7 pm	Youth Evening
Sunday 12th	10 am	Morning Service with Communion and Sunday School
Monday 13th	10.30 am	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 14th	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom
Sunday 19th	10 am	Morning Service
Monday 20th	10.30 am	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 21st	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom
Saturday 25th	3 pm	Sunday School Bowling Trip
Sunday 26th	10 am	Morning Service with Communion and Sunday School
Monday 26th	10.30 am	Coffee morning till 12 pm
Tuesday 27th	7.45 pm	Home group via Zoom