

# HEATH LIVES

Number 21

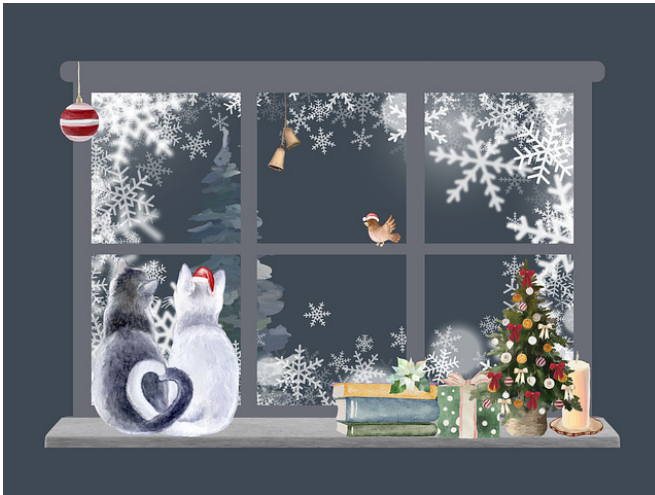
**December 2025/January 2026**



## ***EDITORIAL***

Our beautiful cover photo shows a traditional German candle arch and was supplied by Gunhild Wilcox, a member of our congregation. Thank you, Gunhild.

It is that time of year again—Advent, Christmas and the celebration of the ending of one year and the beginning of a new one. New beginnings bring new opportunities and new challenges. The editorial team wishes all our readers and contributors a very joyful Christmastide and a happy and prosperous new year in 2026.



### ***CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS***

**Services are held on Sundays at 10.30 a.m.** We are always pleased to welcome visitors.

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Dear Friends,

As this Advent season begins, and we begin to light advent candles and open advent calendars, I am led to reflect on our experience of TIME. In my experience, time is a very tricky thing. On the one hand, it is so regular and immovable, and on the other hand it is so slippery and hard to handle! It is highly likely that before Christmas finally arrives, TIME will have caught us out! In one way or another.



In a church where I used to preach from time to time, they had a clock for the preacher (and the congregation!) to keep an eye on. It was a very old clock. It was so antique that it had a rather primitive regulation system. This meant that it took longer for the minute hand to rise from half past to the hour than it took to get from the hour to half past – something to do with the weight of the hand. Which made it tough to time your sermon properly!

Even with the most accurate clock, time can still play the same tricks on us! It can drag and drag, and it can fly by in an instant. Often in a quite unpredictable way.

Time will catch us out in two different kinds of ways.

First, in the more obvious way, we will not end up with as much of it as we at first thought we had. Isn't that our experience of life? As Christmas approaches, we will get into more and more of a flurry as the time disappears faster than the to-do list reduces in length. This, despite the fact that there are more ways than ever to save time. On-line shopping and next-day delivery don't seem to have solved the problem for me. It has just raised my expectations of what I can achieve in the time I have!

It's a bit like the situation I was reflecting on last week, travelling on our rail network. Technology means that those in charge of operating our rail network can know exactly where all their trains are, and exactly how long before they arrive at their next station. Does that mean they can run the trains to time? No, it just means they can give us more accurate information as to how delayed they are!

So: in our preparations through Advent, whether through a delayed incoming service, theft of line-side cables, cracked rails or leaves on the line – what

ever metaphor best fits our circumstances - we will find that time plays tricks on us.

There is a second way in which time can be tricky for us to handle. It is more subtle, but just as real.

I predict that we will struggle with handling our expectations of the season. What time *is* it? What is Christmas for? What is the reason for the season? This is not a question about what time does it say on our watch, but what is the significance of the season, and what does that say about how we should use it?

What should Christmas be? Should it be a time for family – for peace and good will? For fasting or feasting? For sticking to tradition? For doing less, something extra, or something different, or something special?

*And how do we make it 'God's time'; a time that honours the Christ whose birth we are supposedly celebrating?*

And this kind of TIME can be just as tricky.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time, and both of these are used in our bible (which was written in Greek). The first word is Chronos. We will recognize it because it remains in our language in words like chronology – putting things in their time order. Or Chronometer – an accurate time piece. Those words give a good clue to its meaning. Chronos refers to that first sense of time – the ticking of the clock, the hour of the day, the measure of minutes, hours and days. The time that can be counted in numbers.

The second word is Kairos. The opportune or decisive moment. We don't use that word so much. Kairos means not the **quantity** of time, but the **quality** of the time. The kind of time that is not counted, indeed that cannot be counted, in numbers.

Advent asks us to look carefully at the world and take the reality in which we live seriously—in all its brokenness.

Advent also asks us to look carefully at the surprising way in which God works out his salvation story in Jesus.



Advent asks us to hold those two together in our hearts and in so doing, in the fullness of God's time, to capture the 'kairos' moment.

Yours in Christ,  
Jamie Kissack.  
URC Yorkshire Synod Moderator

## ***THE OLD YEAR***

The Old Year's gone away  
    To nothingness and night:  
We cannot find him all the day  
    Nor hear him in the night:  
He left no footstep, mark or place  
    In either shade or sun:  
The last year he'd a neighbour's face,  
    In this he's known by none.

All nothing everywhere:  
    Mists we on mornings see  
Have more of substance when they're here  
    And more of form than he.  
He was a friend by every fire,  
    In every cot and hall—  
A guest to every heart's desire,  
    And now he's nought at all.

Old papers thrown away,  
    Old garments cast aside,  
The talk of yesterday,  
    Are things identified;  
But time once torn away  
    No voices can recall:  
The eve of New Year's Day  
    Left the Old Year lost to all.

*John Clare (1793-1864)*

## SEIZE THE DAY

*Carpe diem* – seize the day. This appeal to not waste a moment is often quoted as people stop and reflect on life, their life. It contains the clear intent of urgency, haste and activity. Often it must galvanise hunches into newly understood purpose and help cut through the fog which could immobilise us and ultimately cause us to reflect, much later, on opportunities missed. However...

I've had cause recently to reflect on my life in a different, gentler way. The duties of caring for my wife stopped on her death from Parkinson's disease. Gradually, I found I had space in my days to notice what *time* I have at my disposal, and that I now have to make decisions alone and for myself. Memories of our life together and her ever present spirit accompany me daily. However, I realise my circumstances are different now and choices will still present themselves.

In theory, it should be easier to make decisions as to what I do each day. There is more space but there are new things pressing to fill it. Lovely friends and family want to care for *me* now, so I have heeded this advice: If anyone invites you for coffee, say "yes". People's company and kindness help to fill the glass that became half empty. But where does my sense of purpose fit in now? Many ideas have been on hold; others sprout up in the vacuum, as if from nowhere. Time left to us is indeed a gift and not to be sneezed at. Yet, apart from dealing with the extras that come with advancing age, how do I choose to spend my time.

The Revd. Neil Thorogood's sketches and reflections in his book "Talking Pictures", which is a colourful diary of the lockdown experience he had, includes a description of time he spent alone in his church as restrictions were lifting. He had just returned from university teaching to grass-roots ministry in a new part of the country and found the context very different. This is how he put the feeling (*italics are mine*):

"This is where my series of lockdown sketches stops, sitting alone in Thornbury United Reformed Church. I was getting to know the place. I knew from many conversations that this was a building regularly used by the community for concerts and coffee, for Fairtrade and worship. But it was silent for many of the months that began my ministry here. I was regularly the only visitor when travelling began to be allowed. Such were the times we lived through.

Looking now at the picture from that day, I am thinking of how moments come when we *pause*. Life unfolds a little more of its depths. We dare to know ourselves a little more honestly. *We dwell in a moment and truth can come.* Maybe thoughts

bring us towards joy. Maybe they flow into tears. I wonder what might lurk in the moments when we slow down enough to notice.”

In this my time of personal loss, a much-shared experience, of course, the reminder to *seize the day* still applies. At the time of writing it is not yet Christmas nor even the start of Advent. November is true to form and dull. The natural world takes a nap till days lengthen again. Now seems a good time to reflect. I'll take time. I'll not hurry it. I'll be thankful for what of *my* truth might emerge. And yours too?

Neil offers a prayer for you and me:

“A moment, dear God,

Give me a moment, I pray.

Somewhere in this day, let a moment grow.

Let it sow a seed of blessing, a hope that I can know.

Come in ways that I can feel.

Give me something real;

Something deep and holy,

A touch, a taste, a word.

How I want to know more of you,

Of the life you can unveil in me,

The truth about myself,

The name you know me by.

Show me something of your way this day.

Help me to receive.

And, in receiving, open my heart and hands to share love with all.

In the name of him who came to save me,

Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Courtesy of the Revd. Neil Thorogood's "*Talking Pictures*")

*John Seagar*

## ***WHO WOULD BE A LOCAL COUNCILLOR?***

I was raised a Catholic. My parents were immigrants (my father, Ukrainian and my mother Italian) who came to the UK just after the Second World War.

Both my parents worked in manual factory jobs in local textiles. When the textile industry all but ceased to exist, they later worked in confectionery and engineering, both manual workers again until retirement.

I was raised to respect the law of the land, the cultural and societal norms for which the UK was rightly admired; courtesy, inherent decency, tolerance. I went to church every week.

On leaving school, after a couple of short-lived jobs, in 1979 I became a Police Officer. I served for 33 years before retiring. A sworn Police Officer is legally prohibited from taking an active part in politics and as such, my sole political act was to vote. I still believe the prohibition on the Police which prevents serving officers being actively involved in politics, is correct.

For the first time in my life, in 2025 I did take an active role in politics. I was asked to stand as a candidate in a local by-election, specifically for Skircoat and Copley Ward. I was the designated Community Constable for this part of the town in the 1980s. It was and is an area for which I hold a great deal of affection and respect.

After weeks of campaigning, shown by the blisters on my feet and those of the many volunteers, on the 8th of May 2025 I was delighted and honoured to be elected Councillor for Skircoat and Copley.

As I was driving home, I must admit to somewhat muted celebrations albeit late into the night.

Later, feelings morphed into ‘what does being a local councillor actually entail?’

The Local Government Association states:

‘Councillors work with local people and partners, such as local businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities.’ Fine words, but what do Councillors *do*?

One thing I learned incredibly early on is that there is nothing glamorous about being a Councillor. I am there to represent the ward and the people who live in it. As well as being an advocate for local residents, I refer or signpost



residents' issues to the right people at the Council. In most cases, I directly contact the appropriate Council officers requesting action or advice.

My 'inbox' is made up of an infinite variety of concerns raised by residents, from waste collection (usually non collection, to be honest), anti-social behaviour, speeding, weeding (usually no weeding), to street cleaning (usually no cleaning).

I was recently asked for help by someone whom I felt was very vulnerable, who feared losing their home due to unsustainable rent increases. As the premises were privately owned I was unsure if I could help, but on asking Council officers for advice, I was able to reassure the vulnerable person and advise on immediate support and assistance. I found this particular instance genuinely rewarding, helping someone with a real fear of eviction.

Full Council meetings are held every two months, usually in public, and can be lively, dependent on the topics for debate. The last one was straightforward and uneventful. The previous one was very lively with a house packed with members of the public.

I have found much of my work comes from contact with and by residents. In truth, I have found that irrespective of party, the councillor should focus on improving the quality of life for ward residents. It is about local issues raised by local people, for local people and taken up by the local Councillor.

One aspect of a councillor's role which is often unseen is the proactive work. With me it has been restoration of public waste bins, issues at Copley Bridge, and pushing the local council to include the mobile camera vans on the 'racetrack' roads alongside the moor. I have direct contacts with the local police to increase and improve the visible and not easily visible policing of the ward.

I reached my retirement age in 2024 (many may wonder how) and could have metaphorically 'sailed off into the travail-free sunset'. Instead, I elected to be a local councillor (pun intended).

I feel I have successfully represented the residents of the ward in several areas. Some issues are more challenging and some are very much long-term projects. Either way, I have committed to do my best. It is far from glamorous, but public service is what I have committed to for most of my working life. It is worth doing.

*Paul Hawkaluk*

## ***THINK ON THESE THINGS...***

Marcus Aurelius, one of the good Roman emperors, said: "Very little is needed to make a happy life; it's all within yourself, in your way of thinking".

He also said: "The soul becomes dyed with the colour of its thoughts."



And: "You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

And St Paul said, in similar vein: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8)

And, attributed to Thomas Edison: "I have not failed 1000 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 1000 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work."

"Why be unhappy about something if it can be remedied? And what is the use of being unhappy if it can't be remedied?"

*Shantideva*

"We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish together as fools."

*Martin Luther King*

John Milton wrote, in *Paradise Lost*: "The mind is its own place and can in itself make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Mother Teresa said: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

"Two men look through the same bars: one sees mud and the other sees stars."

*Anon*

## **SAYING HELLO IS IMPORTANT**

What lessons can Christians learn from a London rail worker who was recently honoured by King Charles for talking 29 people out of taking their own lives? Maybe something about the power of conversation and being willing to 'stop for a chat'.

Rizwan Javed helped to save each life over a period of eight years, by being alert and approaching vulnerable individuals in difficult situations. He was awarded an MBE in the 2024 New Year's Honours. Rizwan was willing to engage people in conversation.

Anglican priest Jemima Prasadham's style of talking with people has been described as 'bus-stop theology.' She puts it into action on the half mile walk from her home to the church in Lozell's, an inner-city area of West Birmingham, with high unemployment and poverty. Her engaging approach is featured in 'Stick with Love', a recent book by Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall near Leeds.

She explained: 'I don't go out looking to talk to people, but I am ready to do it. I don't pass anybody without saying 'Hello' and when I leave, I always say, 'God bless you,' Meetings happen on a daily basis, but often only last as long as it takes for the bus to arrive. People often say they are not religious, but I say we are spiritual beings, and they agree. So, I simply tell them that weak and simple people like me call that God.'

Sadly, we are living in a society where conversations are being closed down. People who might have chatted on the bus or train, are now deeply involved with their mobile phones.

Supermarkets are phasing out staffed check-out points, so that elderly people and others who live alone are deprived of those conversations that can make a difference to their day.

Jesus asked questions as a vital component of His earthly ministry. His deep conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 begins with Him asking for a drink.

Maybe we, as Christians and churches, need to be looking out for more chances to start conversations, to give people the opportunity to open up about their lives. In our busy, rushing-around world, there are many people out there who are just longing for a chat.

*Revd. Peter Crumpter*

# ***A DAY IN THE LIFE OF FATHER CHRISTMAS***

Every December, the world imagines Father Christmas as a jolly figure who magically appears only on Christmas Eve. Yet behind the twinkling eyes, red suit, and sack of gifts lies a daily routine that is both ordinary and extraordinary. A day in his life reveals the dedication, teamwork, and wonder that make Christmas possible.

Father Christmas begins his day long before the sun peeks over the snowy North Pole horizon. His first task is always a hearty breakfast—porridge sweetened with honey and a mug of steaming cocoa. He needs the energy to face his busy schedule, and Mrs. Claus insists that he eats properly before rushing to the workshop. Together, they glance through letters arriving overnight from children across the globe. Requests range from the latest toys to simple wishes for happiness, health, or peace in their families. Each note is carefully read, catalogued, and passed on to the elves.

By mid-morning, Father Christmas visits the workshop, the beating heart of his operations. Here, hundreds of elves work cheerfully, hammering, painting, sewing, and assembling toys of every shape and size. Though much of the workshop now runs with the help of enchanted machinery, Father Christmas still walks through the rows, checking quality and encouraging the elves. He believes that a toy made with care carries a little extra joy, and he never hesitates to join in—his large hands surprisingly nimble when carving a wooden train or stitching a teddy bear's ear.

After lunch, his attention turns to logistics. The world is vast, and ensuring every gift reaches its destination on time requires careful planning. Father Christmas studies maps and weather charts, consulting with his team about reindeer stamina, sleigh capacity, and magical shortcuts. His chief reindeer, Rudolph, often pokes his nose in to remind everyone of the importance of teamwork. Even magic needs good organisation.

In the afternoon, Father Christmas takes time to review the “Nice List” and the “Naughty List.” Contrary to popular belief, children rarely remain permanently on either side. He looks at each case with kindness, understanding that mischief is often a part of growing up. His philosophy



is simple: every child deserves the chance to try again, and Christmas is about forgiveness as much as celebration.

As evening approaches, Father Christmas prepares the sleigh. He checks the harnesses, polishes the bells, and ensures his sack is enchanted to hold countless gifts without tearing. Mrs. Claus always tucks in a basket of mince pies to keep him going during the long journey. Before night falls, Father Christmas enjoys a quiet moment outside, gazing at the stars. He reflects on the joy his work will bring,

and the thought fills him with renewed energy.

A day in the life of Father Christmas may seem packed with endless tasks, but at its heart it is about love and generosity. From the careful reading of a child's wish to the final jingling ride through the night sky, every moment is infused with the spirit of giving. That is what makes Father Christmas not just a figure of myth, but a timeless reminder of kindness in us all.

So there you have it and I hope you have found this interesting.

Oh....by the way, he sends you all his love and best wishes for a wonderful Christmas.....early though this might be, together with the hope that you have a great new year....early though this might be as well!!!!

*Author prefers anonymity*

# **TROUBLES AHEAD—THE LAST LEG**

## **World Cruise Part 5**

Having left Penang, with its 35C heat and high humidity, it was pleasant to wake up the following morning to some fresh air and a light rain shower. As is often the case on cruises, there had been an outbreak of coughs and colds onboard and, sadly, I fell victim to it. However, thanks to regular doses of aspirin I felt better again as we arrived in Mauritius following the 6 day Indian Ocean crossing. Not being a beach person I opted for a walk on my own around the capital Port Louis which lies in a shoreline basin ringed by some towering, heavily forested mountains. It's fairly attractive, not especially large, and very walkable. The Mauritians, who are a mixture of Creoles and indigenous Indians, tend to be friendly and welcoming to foreign visitors, especially if you can speak a few words of French. Perhaps the two most interesting buildings in the city are the Postal Museum which is renowned for housing two of the world's rarest and most valuable postage stamps: the 1847 Mauritius "Post Office" the One Penny Orange-Red and the Two Pence Blue. The other is the Natural History Museum, famous for exhibiting one of the few near-complete dodo skeletons in the world. The dodo, a flightless bird that was endemic to Mauritius, is a global symbol of extinction.

We had heard previously that the volcanic island of La Réunion, our next port, had been very badly affected by a fierce cyclone a fortnight or so before we arrived. It quickly became evident, once we left the cruise terminal on our "highlights" tour, how much damage had been done. Even in the area of the capital, Saint Denis, there were many uprooted trees and damaged houses although it had been the other side of the island that had taken the main brunt of the 220 kph (136 mph) winds. It was fortunate that a brand new road into the capital had been opened not too long before our arrival because the parallel old one had been almost completely destroyed by a combination of overflowing rivers and rock falls. Our guide told us that the bill to repair all the island's damage was around 2 Billion Euros (around £1.7 Billion). Local businesses were very glad to see cruise ships still coming as they were needed now more than ever. Saint Denis is compact and easily recognisable to anyone who has ever visited a French provincial town. We were scheduled to visit the State House with its beautiful gardens but, due to its current condition and safety concerns, it had had to be closed. We ended up instead in the very small Town Museum which quickly became very crowded as a party of around 60 primary school children and their teachers arrived for a tour. Mild chaos ensued resulting in one of our passengers becoming temporarily lost in the

melée causing some callous amusement. Our tour then took in a local market (don't they always?) and a lengthy stop in the town for shopping. We finished up by the shore at a gun battery with its early 19<sup>th</sup> century, never-fired-in-anger, cannons, enjoying the sunshine and the delightfully blue sea. Despite the obvious state of the island it had been an interesting day and we prayed that the island would receive the financial help it so obviously needed.

We experienced quite rough weather en route to the Cape of Good Hope but Arcadia ensured no ill effects resulted. There was a great deal of expectancy onboard, for those who had not visited Cape Town before, to have that first sight of Table Mountain. However, as luck would have it there was a heavy layer of cloud – the infamous tablecloth – hanging over it pretty much all day, much to the disappointment of those who had booked to ascend to the top on the cable car. Luckily, it was a two-day port call so many were able to rebook for the second day which turned out to be beautifully clear and sunny. I had last visited the city en route to a posting to India in 1971, when South Africa was in the depths of the repellent apartheid. I hoped for a great improvement. It has to be said, however, that now crime is the major concern for inhabitants and visitors alike. We were warned not to wander about the city, especially by oneself. As a result, the ship laid on a shuttle bus service to and from the security-patrolled Victoria and Alfred Waterfront complex (Alfred being the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of the Monarch). The V&A combines history, culture, scenic beauty, chic boutiques and restaurants, wonderful views of the coastline and Robben Island as well as containing the terrific “Two Oceans” Aquarium which I visited on the second day. Amongst other exhibits it has the most spectacular floor to ceiling tanks containing some pretty fearsome sharks. I was also lucky enough to come across a street performance by a group of young African gospel singers who were very lively, combining song with some energetic dancing. They attracted a large crowd.

En route to our next country, Namibia, our Captain announced that a “technical issue” to do with one of the engines meant that the ship was having to go more slowly than normal and we would arrive 24 hours later than scheduled in Walvis Bay. We arrived just after dawn and found ourselves immersed in drizzly mist looking at a very grey coastline. However, it didn't worry us and we set off in the coach to view some flamingoes who feed on shellfish at the edge of the lagoon. Although they were some distance away it was clear that there were many hundreds of them – quite a sight! We were headed for the town of Swakopmund, an old German settlement (Namibia having been called German South West Africa 1884 -1915 until it was taken over by the Allies.) The single carriage road to the town was bordered by shacks on one side and the desert on the other. The 20 mile journey was fairly bleak. In Swakopmund it was quickly noticeable how much German influence remains with road signs and business advertisements in both German and

English. The churches also had the globe steeples familiar to anyone who has visited Central Europe. It's not overly touristy, apart from a large open air market, but has a gem of a local museum which contains displays of indigenous plants and animals, an archaeological exhibition, plus a variety of cultural historical objects including a splendid ox cart. Having visited, I sat in the adjoining café enjoying the view over the harbour until we drove back to the ship, stopping en route for what some regarded as "all important selfies" on the dunes of the Namibian desert.

Our engine troubles, now fixed, meant we were expected to keep to the original itinerary. Famous last words! At breakfast, having departed Namibia, a fateful tannoy call from the Captain told us that instead of visiting Cape Verde, as scheduled, we would now be heading for Ghana as there was a serious medical emergency onboard and the person needed to be evacuated to a suitable hospital. Often this can be achieved by a medivac helicopter winching the person off the ship but in places, such as Africa, these facilities are not readily available. Hence our detour. Two days later we arrived off the coast of Ghana and the transfer by launch took place quickly and efficiently. Although we were there only for 2 hours, we were informed that the long detour off our original itinerary had lost us a further port call in Lanzarote. Having spent 6 sea days since leaving Namibia we set sail therefore on the additional 4-day voyage to Tenerife. This would mean, in all, 10 days at sea between Namibia and The Canary Islands which caused a certain amount of vocal resentment, despite there being plenty of fun activities plus copious food and drink to enjoy.

A lovely warm day greeted us on waking up in the beautiful harbour of Santa Cruz on the north-eastern coast of Tenerife. There was a definite uplift in the mood of those at breakfast now we were berthed. The bustling, attractive, capital city is situated diagonally away from the better-known island beach and party areas and its harbour is ringed with mountains. Besides its lovely parks, it has many cafés and restaurants combined with shops familiar to those who know mainland Spain such as El Corte Inglés. It also has an attractive African market area which was very popular. All in all, a very relaxing stay.

Two days later we passed along the wide Tagus river under the 25 de Abril Bridge, designed by the same firm as the Golden Gate Bridge, to berth in sunny Lisbon. Having been here before in 2018 I had "done" the sights including the Belem Tower, a fortified lighthouse, the Jeronimos Monastery, final resting place of Vasco da Gama, and the Monument to the Discoveries, so spent some of the time watching and photographing the historic yellow and black trams. Lisbon is very hilly so regular stops at cafés for coffee and an iconic, custardy, pastel de nata is obligatory to keep one going.

After a placid crossing of the Bay of Biscay we arrived back in Southampton 100 days after that cold January night's departure having had the most wonderful time.

*Stephen Wassell*



## ***HONEY GARLIC GINGER SALMON*** – or Chicken or Haloumi

This recipe is for a side of salmon, but it can be scaled down for salmon fillets.

### **Ingredients:**

- Side of salmon
- 8 tbs olive oil (or melted butter)
- 5/6 tbs of honey (I used maple syrup) and 3/2 tbs syrup from jar of ginger
- 2 balls of crystallised ginger – chopped
- 6 cloves garlic – crushed
- 1 lemon – ½ juiced, ½ thinly sliced
- Salt & pepper
- Large handful fennel (parsley or dill)

### **Method:**

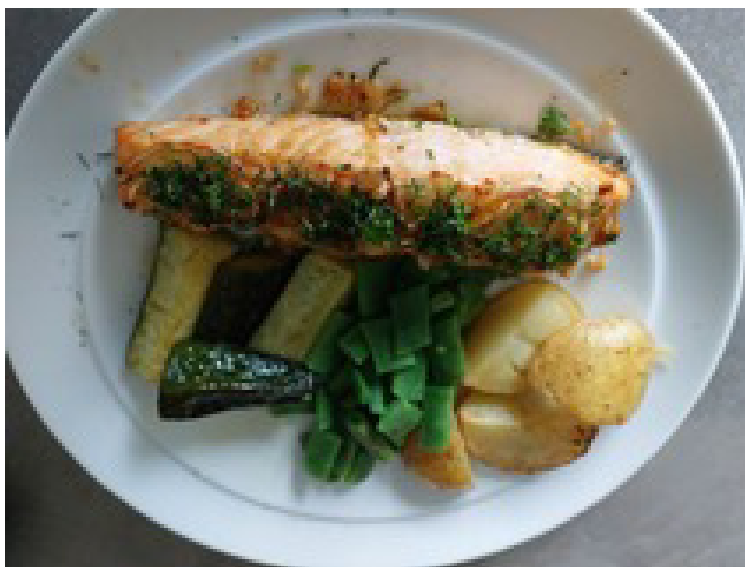
Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan/Gas 5.

Mix together oil or butter, honey, ginger and ginger syrup, garlic, lemon juice and salt & pepper.

Place salmon in a large dish or baking tray and pour the mixture over it.

Arrange the lemon slices on top.

Bake for about 25 mins then scatter the herbs over it before serving.



## ***HOUSE AND HOME***

We have moved house a number of times during our marriage and each time I am irritated afresh by the estate agent's letter thanking us for 'instructing us to sell your home'. Sorry, but all you are selling is the bricks and mortar, the house: what makes it a home is intangible, priceless and unsellable. Le Corbusier, the famous architect, said that 'a house is a machine for living in', but that doesn't make it a home. Perhaps Ralph Waldo Emerson explained it better when he said, "A house is made of walls and beams; a home is built of love and dreams"

There are people for whom 'home is where I hang my hat' or 'home is where I lay my head'. These are the wanderers, the restless ones, the adventurers who are 'at home' wherever they may be, with their rucksack on their back; but most of us are like the birds and the beasts, we need a nest, or lair, or drey; we need somewhere where we feel safe. Even nomadic tribes in the desert have their tents and their belongings which are set up afresh and in detail at every stop.

Robert Frost wrote, 'Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.'. Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, 'Everyone needs a somewhere, a place he can go. There comes a time, you see, inevitably there comes a time you have to have a somewhere you can go.' These suggest that home is a refuge in times of trouble.

For many, 'home is where the heart is': this is usually taken as meaning the presence of certain other people, but it can just as well be a house where you spent a happy childhood, or the first house you own as an adult which is a symbol of your independence. After living in a flat where my rent covered all utilities, I had a positive pleasure in receiving utility bills through the letter box when I bought my first house (in Skipton, for £2,000!!). It was proof of my ownership, of my building a new life for myself. 'Home' was where I paid the bills!

People have their own way of describing their home but it is definitely not something that is for sale. Home is where you have laughed and cried. Home is where, after a difficult day, you can come in, kick your shoes off and collapse onto the sofa. Home is where you do not need to answer the door to anyone if you don't want to. Home is, if you are lucky enough to have a family, where your son took his first steps or your daughter fell downstairs and broke her arm. Home is memories and attachments. You may only be there for six months, you may be there for sixty years: it

makes no difference, it is your home and yours alone.

T.S. Eliot said, 'Home is where you start from', a secure base from which to step out into the world. Some people, often teenagers, can find 'home' a claustrophobic place where someone else makes the rules and too many people are clamouring for attention; but eventually they, too, will feel the urge to create a home of their own – and this time, they are the ones making the rules!

'There's no place like home' say the contented, the weary, those who like a safe place, those returning, like Dorothy, from an adventure.

Even if you buy a house fully-furnished, you have still not bought a home. Not until you have polished the sideboard, till that stain on the armchair is where your son had a nosebleed, till your books are on the shelves and your clothes in the cupboard. Not until you have made your own memories of family and visitors and faced disasters, minor or major, celebrated triumphs, planted a rose bush, buried your cat in the garden. These are the things that make a home and, dear estate agents, that is something you can never sell.

*Gemma Wassell*

We at **HEATH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**  
on Free School Lane

invite you and your  
household to  
join us for one or both  
of our Christmas  
Services:



**Dec 21st: Candlelight Carols at 6 p.m.**  
**Dec 25th: A short celebration at 10.30 a.m.**

**'All are welcome in this place'**

e-mail: [heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com](mailto:heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com)

## **A LOVE OF READING**

From the moment I first learned to read I have always had a great love of books. When I found out how to understand the meaning of those strange hieroglyphics inscribed on paper, life took on a new perspective. Like most children at this stage. I was carried away by my new accomplishment and would read everything in sight, including labels on bottles and similar prosaic things. It was all part of this new development.

It began with school Readers, which included 'The King of the Golden River' and 'South West Wind, Esquire', and continued to books such as Barrie's 'Peter Pan'. I was fortunate in living in a house full of books, many of them being prizes which my brothers had gained at school and at Sunday School. These, of course, included 'King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table' and 'Stories of Robin Hood'. Naturally, there were a number of books by Percy F. Westerman, stories of adventure which were very popular among boys of the 1930s. Many of the books were school stories, a genre which seems to have fallen out of fashion now.

There were two of Richmal Crompton's books about the adventures of William at home, which gave me so much pleasure that I joined the public library in order to read all the others available. This new experience with libraries was to lead to other important sectors of my life and revolutionize it. Incidentally, I have always been far too carried away with my reading and frequently tended to model myself on the hero of the current book – a tendency which is to be deplored.

It was at this time that I read James Fennimore Cooper's books about Hawk Eye and Red Indians. 'The Last of the Mohicans' was a favourite. We also had a number of books about Scott of the Antarctic and his heroic expeditions. This was a time when he and his companions were still idolized by boys. There were many others, too numerous to mention, which occupied much of my time, often when I should have been busy with other things, which all added to my increasing interest in reading and, of course, developed my vocabulary and spelling abilities.

As I grew older, I moved on to other authors and subjects. At Grammar School I encountered P.G. Wodehouse and Jeeves. Parts of these were sometimes read to the class at the end of term by our enthusiastic classics master. Classics naturally introduced me to Greek and Roman authors and the fascination of Homer's 'Iliad' and 'The Odyssey', while the concise

and simple style of Julius Caesar in his 'De Bello Gallico' was a fine example of great prose.

Other authors new to me at the time were Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with 'Sherlock Holmes', which was, I suppose, in the forefront of the range of detective stories which followed, and by G.K.Chesterton's 'Father Brown' stories. Favourites of mine were Sir H. Rider Haggard's books such as 'King Solomon's Mines' and 'Alan Quatermain.' One of my brothers gave me a copy of H.G. Wells' short stories for Christmas and this opened up a new and fascinating scientific and science-fiction genre, although I have never really followed up that trend in modern books.

Later in life, I became interested in reading accounts of the Boer War, including fiction relating to South Africa by authors such as Stuart Cloete. I also read about the Zulu wars and chieftains such as Cetshwayo and Shaka. As time went on I read more accounts of polar explorations by Nansen and Roald Amundsen and the diaries of Scott. After perusing a number of exciting Western novels about fast gunfighters I discovered a number of books by Will James which were much more authentic accounts of the life of a cowboy, including 'All in the Day's Riding', each of them illustrated with dynamic drawings by the author.

Another aspect of American life in the backwoods was presented by Grey Owl with his wonderful accounts of Ojibway Indians and life in the wilds. I read and re-read these and later was somewhat devastated to learn that the author was not an Indian, or a half-breed, but was actually an Englishman named Archie Belaney.

From another continent, I found the writings of Colonel James Corbett, the famous tiger-hunter-turned-conservationist, clearly written and thrilling accounts which breathed of life in Northern India and the people living there. On the subject of big-game hunting, I also studied numerous books of South Africa and Kenya, fascinating books which included work by W.D.Bell (Karamojo Bell').

I could go on and on but a list of books read and authors enjoyed could only be boring. I have not even mentioned the study of English Literature and the innumerable books which I discovered – Chaucer, Shakespeare, Keats, Sassoon, Kipling – the list is endless. It was all part of my enjoyment of reading and of my discovery of new worlds, a life-long fascination.

Sitting by the fireside with a good book, what could be more enjoyable?

## ***PSALM 100***

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his ,  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.



### **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

Please ensure that all contributions for the February/March issue of Heath  
Lives are received by the editor before

**9 a.m. on Friday 9th January**

We welcome all contributions but publication is not guaranteed.

Send to: [garnetnr@outlook.com](mailto:garnetnr@outlook.com)  
or hand to Gemma or to Anne Boyd

Please note that inclusion of an article does not necessarily mean that the  
Editors agree with the sentiments expressed.

## **ACTIVITIES IN HEATH CHURCH**

On the third **Tuesday** of each month at 10.30 a.m., a **Coffee Morning** is held in the Lounge (using the Manor Drive entrance). Everyone welcome.

On the second **Thursday** of each month at 7.30 in the evening, we hold meetings of the **Thursday Club** in the lounge . We welcome new members.

### **Jason Whitaker Boxing Fitness.**

Boxing padwork sessions available for all fitness levels and abilities including group classes, 1-to-1s and 2-to-1s.

FB: Jasonwhitakerboxingfitness

Tel: 07929372498

### **Kim's Dance and Movement**

**Tuesdays 10am** - Adult Beginners' Tap Class. Suitable for complete beginners or those with a little bit of tap experience in the past and needing a basic recap.

**Tuesdays 11am** - Adult Intermediate Tap Class. Anyone from 18-80 with previous knowledge or experience in tap dancing. Fun class.

**Thursdays 11am** - Move & Groove Dance fitness. Over 18's Aerobic-style fitness class. A nice feel-good class with a mixture of songs/routines including salsa and Cha-cha. All abilities as you can take it at your own pace.

Contact Kim on 07747 867706 or Facebook @kimsmoveandgroove

### **\*Move to Improve\* standing and seated exercise classes with Heidi.**

Help Improve your balance and posture, and strengthen muscle & bone plus improve your overall fitness.

Wednesday 2pm Back to Basics Gentle keep fit.

Friday Gentle keep fit 10am & 11.10am.

Please contact Heidi 07791869594

Email [heidimolle@googlemail.com](mailto:heidimolle@googlemail.com)



## Regular bookings at Heath United Reformed Church Autumn 2025

All activities and hire times are subject to change.

TT = Term time S = Seasonal V = Variable O = Occasional

Day	User	Time	Location
Monday	Coccinelle French Class	11.30-3 TT ellie.fitzgerald1@outlookcom	Lounge
	Janet's Eazi Dance	2-3 janetfletcher5@yahoo.com	Hall
	Steph's Sing for Fun	2-3 no need to book	Upstairs
	Beavers	6-7 Beavers @49thhalifax.org.uk	Lounge & Hall
	Cubs	6.30-8 Cubs@49thhalifax.org.uk	Hall
	Halifax Symphony Orchestra	7-9.30 S roybiggs@halifaxorchestra.org	Upstairs
Tuesday	Community Coffee Club	10.30-12 (3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday) heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge
	AGK3 meditation	10.00 – 12.00 <a href="mailto:hello@agk3.uk">hello@agk3.uk</a>	Lounge
	Yvonne's Tai Chi	1.30-3.30	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4.15-8.15 pm TT	Upstairs
	Kim's dance class	6.15-7.15 07747 867706	Hall
	Scout District Meetings	7.30 – 9.30 V	Lounge
Wednesday	Northern Lights House Group	10.30-12.30 fortnightly 07929 372498	Lounge
	WoW! Worship on Wednesday	2.30-3.30 (1st & 3rd Wednesdays) 07748988161	Lounge
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	2-3 07791 869594	Hall
Thursday	Heath Study Group	10.30-12 V 01422 431424 heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge
	WAM choir	10-12	Upstairs
	Kim's dance class	11-12 07747 867706	Hall
	Halifax Young Singers	6-9 TT halifaxyoungsingers2@gmail.com	Upstairs
	Laura Morrell Singing	8-9 TT 07425 893945 (in hall on 2nd Thursdays)	Lounge
	Thursday Club	7.30-9 (2nd Thurs) heathchurchhalifax@gmail.com	Lounge/visit
Friday	Private dog training	7-8 am	Hall
	Heidi's cardiac rehab	10-12 07791869594	Hall
	Kim's music lessons	4.15-6.15 pm TT	Upstairs
	Scouts & Explorer Scouts	7.30-9 Scouts@49thhalifax.org.uk	Hall & Lounge
	Kim's music lessons	9-11 TT	Upstairs
Saturday	Kim's music lessons	8.15-11.15 TT	Upstairs
	Calderdale Chess League	2.00 -7.00 07504 598590 O	Hall
Sunday	Heath's Worship	10-12 Service 10:30-11:30 07748988161	Upstairs
	Northern Lights	2.30-6 07970 256243 (Independent church, not linked to Heath)	Hall/Lounge