

‘Reaching for the stars’

I grew up in the 1950’s and early 60’s, when in the euphoria of post-war Britain everything seemed to be reaching upwards and outwards. These were the early years of space exploration, when hardly a week went by when we weren’t hearing about spacecraft called ‘Mercury’, ‘Vostok’, ‘Gemini’, ‘Voskhod’ and so on. With many of my friends, I soared the heavens with space pilot of the future, Dan Dare, in *The Eagle* comic, as he fought the Mekon and the evil Treens from Venus. When I was about ten years old, a visit to the London Planetarium spurred a lifelong interest in astronomy, and my favourite hymn for the next few months was John Chadwick’s:

*Eternal ruler of the ceaseless round
of circling planets singing on their way* (MHB 892)

And in 1962 we were soon to be dancing to the futuristic number *Telstar* by the Tornados!



There are also very hazy memories (probably dating from when I was five or six) of seeing the mighty Bristol Brabazon at Farnborough – the largest airliner in the world at the time but deeply flawed, because it was too slow and about to be rendered obsolete by the new jets that were shortly to appear. Like humanity as a whole, in a way – a noble failure. I

suppose humanity has *always* been ‘reaching for the stars’, as it were, though there have been times in history when that has seemed more obvious.

The flowering of the arts in the period we now call the Renaissance, is an example. When Joan and I were in Paris some years ago, we stood transfixed before the sculpture of Auguste Rodin’s *the Kiss* in the Musée Rodin. So one has to ask, how can we be capable of creating things of such beauty and machines of such ingenuity, and yet be equally capable of creating such suffering and destruction? The recent horrific pictures of the wasteland that is now Gaza, are just one instance of the latter.



We are creatures of contradiction, aren’t we? I’ve just finished reading Jonathan Glancey’s wonderful book *Spitfire*. How paradoxical was it that such an efficient killing-machine, could also be one of the most beautiful aeroplanes that ever flew the skies! Or to give another example (knowing my lifelong



interest in modern naval history) – H.M.S. Hood was perhaps the most



aesthetically pleasing of any warship in the last century, yet intended to wreak terrible destruction with her 15” guns. And, ironically, far from being scrapped or placed in a maritime museum, she met her end violently, with just three survivors out of a complement of over 1400 souls.

Forgive the ‘travelogue’, but there is a sculpture which – for me – encapsulates this paradox of the human condition. Joan and I were walking around Prague in 2005, and quite by chance came across the *Memorial to the Victims of Communism* by Czech sculptors Olbram Zoubek, Jan Kerel and Zdeněk Holzel (see below). It’s in Újezd Street, if you are ever there.



Leaving political considerations aside for the moment, the extraordinary thing about these figures is that they can be viewed in two completely different ways. Are the sculptors intending us to see the figures being pulled back up the slope, slowly disintegrating as their suffering wears them away to nothing? Or are we meant to see the figures gradually staggering forwards, and becoming more whole as the passage of time heals them?

How can we be capable of creating such beauty and yet such ugliness in our world? Or to put it another way, how can we have such uplifting visions, yet such horrible nightmares?

John Wesley’s writing can be a huge help in this respect. When he talked about humanity’s fallen state, he did so in a way that gives us immense grounds for hope. We are created in the image of God, and though the image has become distorted by our self-will and sin, it is not been shattered beyond repair. In Christ, we are shown the way to ‘pardon, and holiness, and heaven’, to quote his younger brother’s words. Yes, we may stumble, but our Saviour extends his hand to help us, and we need not fear.

Looking at those pictures of the Czech sculpture above, which interpretation do you prefer? I know that I’m an incurable optimist, but it is based on a hope backed up by solid theology, and I think the figures are marching *forward*. Yes – by God’s grace, we *can* reach for the stars!



A Prayer:

Loving God, forgive us for the ugliness and suffering we cause and create in our world. Help us always to follow faithfully in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was humanity as it is meant to be – and in so doing, may we create beauty, harmony and peace in our living. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

Barrie Tabraham

Resources/Good News

Mental Health First Aiders Day, 12 November

Mental Health First Aid helps to build the confidence to talk about mental health, as well as providing the knowledge to offer support during a crisis. Mental Health First Aid training is offered across the Methodist Church.

The link below is to an article on the Methodist Church website, which includes stories of two members who have completed courses, as well as information on who to contact, should you be interested in taking part.

The article also discusses issues around mental health and suicide. Support is at the bottom of the page.

[You saved my life on that bench - The Methodist Church](#)



The Nativity Journey at Wintershall

Experience the Christmas story and discover the true meaning of Christmas with an unforgettable event for all the family. It's a Nativity like no other, placing you in the middle of an immersive theatre experience.

18, 20 and 21 December

To book tickets, visit [The Nativity Journey - Wintershall](#)





Saturday 15 November

6 – 8 pm

Trinity Methodist Church

Brewery Road

Woking GU21 4LH

**Bring a dish of food to share (savoury or sweet),
and your plate, cutlery and a mug/tumbler.**

All are welcome! We will sort teams out on the night.

FUNDRAISING FOR TEARFUND

tearfund.org/quiz

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom

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tearfund



Woking People of Faith

Diverse Beliefs: United Action

Interfaith Walking Pilgrimage (Knaphill)

Join us for a journey of friendship and faith through
Knaphill!

Saturday 15th November, 10 am till 2 pm

Start: Knaphill Methodist Church, Broadway, GU21 2DR

Stops include: Dhammakaya Buddhist Temple and local churches

Finish: St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Church (GU21 2AA) – with other
faiths represented

P Free parking at Englefield Road Car Park



 Refreshments along the way

 Dress for the weather

 Just turn up – all welcome!

 Donations appreciated



70 years at
MERROW METHODIST CHURCH

COME TO THE

MERROW CHURCH CONCERT

SATURDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 7PM

*MERROW
METHODIST
SINGERS*

Sketches

Piano

Poetry

Surprises!

There is no charge but donations will be invited on the night to be
made to
The Matrix Trust.

SAVE THE DATES

Join us for this year's series of

Advent Reflections

followed by a bread & soup lunch

Thursdays

27 November
4 & 11 December

Carols at Lunchtime

18 December

12.15 for 12.30



St. Mary's Quarry St Guildford GU1 3UY

COFFEE AND CAKE

AT ST. MARY'S

QUARRY ST. GUILDFORD GU1 3UP

**SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER
2025**



Thursday 25 September

Thursday 23 October

Thursday 27 November

(first Advent Reflection)

10.30 – 12.00

- each month features a different charity

Everyone welcome

A joyful start to Christmas

Carols for All



Saturday Nov 29th

7.00 - 9.00pm

**Horsley Methodist
Church**

(next to W. Horsley Village Hall)

**Come and sing your favourite
carols with a break for
refreshments and mince pies.**

Phone requests to

01483 282474

Saturday 15 November 2025 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Knaphill Methodist Church, The Broadway, Knaphill GU21 2DR

(between Boots & the old Lloyds Bank)

Clothes4U

a clothes bank supporting the local community

To claim your FREE clothes, collect a voucher from 30+ places in Surrey.

Email us to find out where they are: clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk

Donations - we are looking for donations again. We are requesting winter clothing in good condition for men, women, teenagers, children and babies.

Please bring donations between 1pm and 2pm on 15 November.



STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)

COFFEE CORNER

Tuesdays from 10 am – 12 noon



7th October

14th October

21th October

28th October

4th November

11th November

18th November

25th November



Enjoy Coffee & a Chat, Coffee & a Game, or Coffee & a Book

The choice is yours!

Everyone welcome – bring a friend!



MEMORY LANE AND FRIENDS
INVITE YOU JOIN THEM IN.

Looking Forward to Christmas

*an accessible celebration in words,
music and pictures*

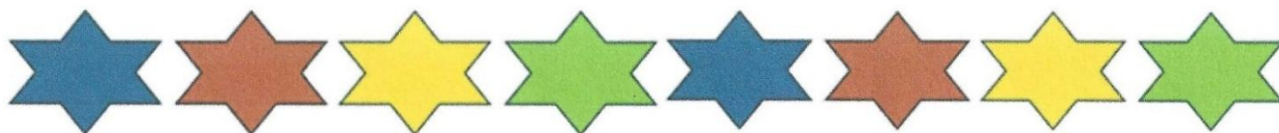
3pm-3.45pm

MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

Mince Pies, Cakes and Tea

St Nicolas Church
Church Lane, Cranleigh, GU6 8AR

To accept invitation:
01483 274398 / mamwild@aol.com



**Saturday morning events at the
Addlestone Methodist Church Café on
Station Road**



***Come along between 10am and
12 to enjoy tea/coffee and cake
and join in with activities***

EVERY MONTH

1st Saturday – Fun Bingo

*Donations to Sam Beare Hospice or
Open Doors Charity*



**2nd Saturday – A time to sing – favourite
hymns & songs**

3rd Saturday – give popular games a go



**4th Saturday – Hymns, songs
and time for prayer**

Check notice board for any changes

Carers' Information Fair

Saturday 22nd November 2025

10am - 2pm

The HIVE, Park Barn Drive, Guildford, GU2 8EN

**Practical & financial advice from
Surrey charities & organisations**

Action for Carers - Admiral Nurses - The Hunter
Centre - Energy Manage - Surrey Sports Park -
BRAAIN - Family Information Service - plus others

73%

**of people who are providing or have provided
unpaid care do not identify themselves as a carer**



Community
Wellbeing

The Weybridge Male Voice Choir



Invite you to a celebration of

Registered Charity
No: 1038624

CHRISTMAS

Around the World

Conducted by Jonathan Kilhams

Accompanied by Thomas Kelsey

Including a Selection of
The Weybridge Male Voice Choir's
Standard Repertoire



Featuring special guest choirs from local schools.

Friday 12th Dec 2025 at 7.30pm

St James' Church, Weybridge KT13 8DN

Adults £15

Under 12's Free

Retiring collection in aid of



Refreshments will be served
After the Concert



Tickets available from Choir Members, or at
www.ticketsource.co.uk/weybridgemvc