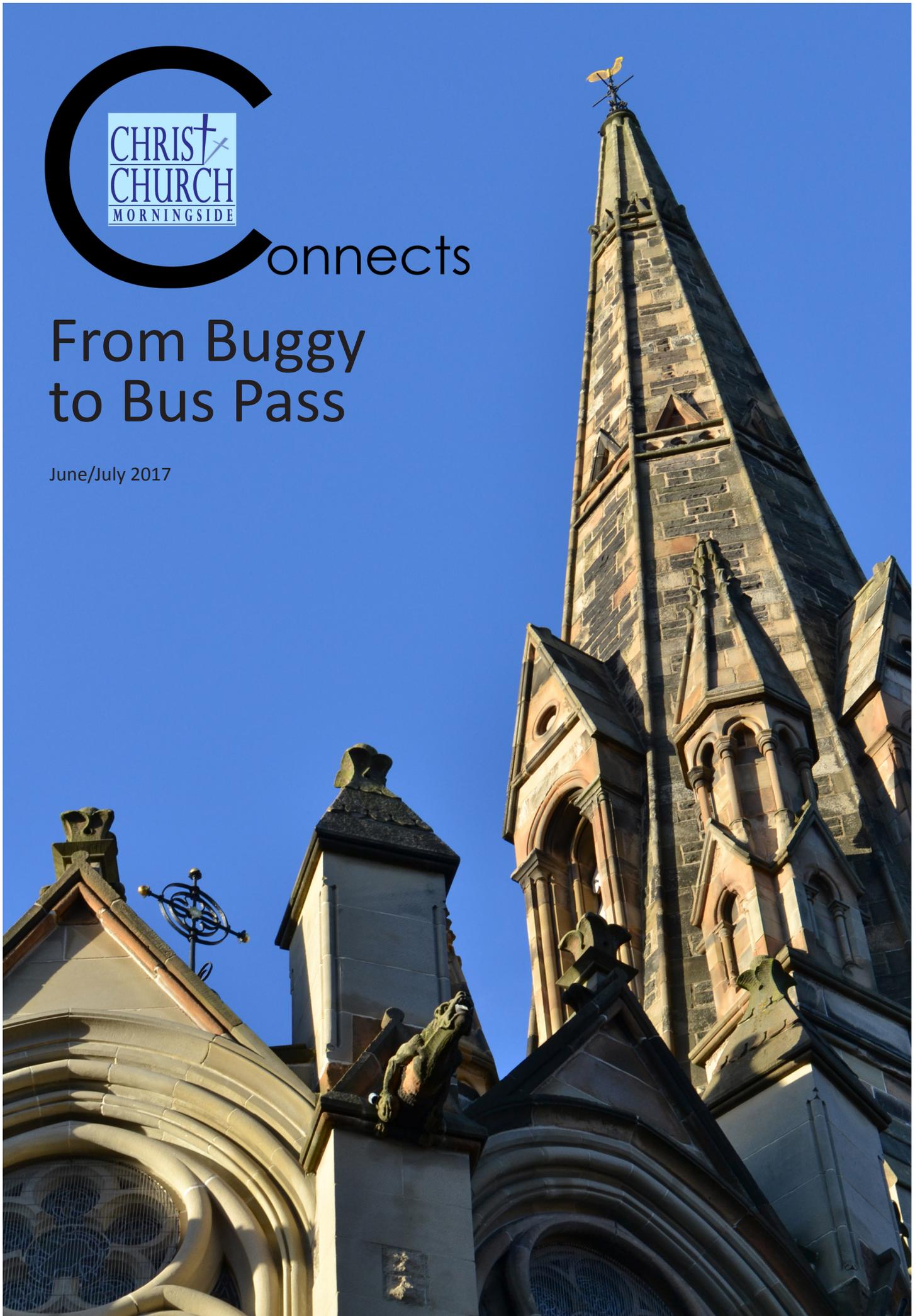




# From Buggy to Bus Pass

June/July 2017



## Welcome from the Rector

Many of us will have grown up in villages, towns or cities with family members of different generations fairly close by, and so intergenerational living was a natural part of our lives. We have seen a great shift since my childhood and younger adult life, with more and more families being scattered not only across the country but around the globe.

I am no exception in being affected by this shift, which of course brings many benefits but also significant losses, for where are we to find the richness of intergenerational relationships that were once taken for granted? One of the few places in our day is a faith community, and Christ Church is blessed to be one such place. With members ranging in age from 0-105 the opportunities for us all to benefit from the vitality of the young, the adventurousness of youth, the experiences of those making their way in their jobs and daily lives in a rapidly changing world, and the wisdom of those of greater years are all around us.

Life in such a congregation strengthens relationships, connections and brings feeling of belonging across the generations, and so enhances our sense of being part of a community that stretches from buggy to bus pass!

Canon Susan Macdonald



*100 year old Eddie Bowen with newborn Gregory Stewart Roper, June 2008*

## From Buggy to Bus Pass

The original subject proposed for this issue was the Third Age. That's a good topic but we felt the real strength of Christ Church lies in links across the generations.



The first image that came to our minds was of Mary Smallwood holding Benedict's hand as they return from the communion rail. Imagine our joy at seeing Dominic back in church with his family and then realising that we could take a photo of Mary and Benedict just in time for the magazine's deadline.

Along with the photo of Gregory and Eddie Bowen and of Robin with Chloe and Saffi, it represents what this edition is about. You can read more about two of these friendships on page 12.



*Robin Morris with Chloe and Saffi Wosu*

## People who have influenced me

As 'Letter to a Young Grandson' shows, it is natural to want to pass on through the generations what has mattered most; there is more than one kind of inheritance. But this section has two pieces looking at the theme from another angle, that of reflection about and memory of people in the wider church family who influenced the writer in childhood and left an imprint that lasted a lifetime.

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### Letter to a young grandson

It is much more exciting being a Christian than you might think. Almost everything that is important about being a Christian you can only learn from the inside. It's a bit like being in a very special Club and one of the great secrets you learn once you are inside the Club is that the serious business of the Club is joy. Someday we'll have a longer chat about what that actually means but here are two thoughts, or suggestions if you like, to be going on with. (Both passed on to your Grandpa long ago).

The first is this: "The secret of joy is a heart free from selfish desire". You are quite old enough to have a good crack at working that out although I am afraid working it out is one thing – achieving it quite another. Well that is a bit solemn, so try this one that goes back several hundred years and is, as you might say, thoroughly road tested. But first a word of explanation. Here the word "world" means things like status, self-importance, chasing after money and believing that the more you get the happier you will be and a lot more rot like that. It does not mean "world" as in "God so loved the world" – meaning simply, us.

So try this for size:

*"Man, please thy Maker, and be merry  
And give not for this world a cherry"*

Enjoy  
Love  
Grandpa

Howard Moody



## Advice to a young adult

Don't worry so much

Spend less money

Play to your strengths

You'll have to do a job for a long time so do something you enjoy

Comparing yourself to others is tiring so stop it

Remember what you love

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## Reasons to feel cheerful about getting older

- The bus pass (come on, it's wonderful). Other senior concessions. The knowledge your children are muttering about "freeloading pensioners".
  - You don't need to worry about how things will turn out
  - Monday morning holds no fears
  - Looks even out over time; the stunningly beautiful when you were young look like everyone else now
  - You are allowed comfortable shoes and easy-going waistbands
  - You've already bought all the "stuff" you need for a lifetime and don't need any more
  - Grandchildren
  - You can permit yourself to reminisce
  - When you have a choice of two temptations, you can pick the one that will get you in to your bed sooner
  - "It's good to grow older because then you can forget your age"
- 

## Message to younger self

Life rarely works out as you think  
But you'll swim rather more than you sink.

Life's full of surprises  
So stop your surmises  
And grab it - it goes in a blink.



## A childhood recollection

We were an Episcopalian family & I remember being fond of our elderly rector. One Sunday he was preaching on one of the well-known parables & paused – I thought he had forgotten the story so jumped up onto the pew & in a loud voice finished it off for him. My mother was embarrassed by her seven year old daughter & distinctly not amused!

The Canon was an ardent recorder of rainfall – sending his weekly findings to a newspaper. I came across his rain gage in the Rectory garden & thought it was just the place to hide marbles.... When playing with one of the grandchildren, at the Rectory, the pair of us came across some white tablets; they didn't taste nice & I recollect being taken home & my mother told to walk me up & down till bedtime as I had swallowed an unknown quantity of aspirin!

Despite all of this we continued our friendship & when he died I was delightedly surprised to find he had left me a couple of books in his will.

Gill Davidson

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## 'Church Aunties'

Did anyone else benefit from 'Church Aunties' as they grew up? I was lucky to have three and they all influenced my childhood in very different ways.

**Auntie Doris** was a retired nanny whose grateful employers had provided her with a small cottage in the village. She was my beloved regular babysitter who became an adopted member of our family. She had a large heart and bosom! She was unfailingly kind and was always calm. She could be relied on to give good advice. She had a deep and simple Christian faith that made an impression on me.

**Auntie Ivy** was another retired nanny but she was a good deal stricter than Auntie Doris. She strongly disapproved of my nail biting habit and tried to stop me by a variety of methods. She would buy honeydew melons (in the 1950s these were considered very exotic) and then encourage me to thread the seeds onto cotton, thus keeping my hands busy! She was also an excellent cook and gave me some early cookery lessons.

A friend of hers was the nanny of Portland Mason, daughter of James Mason, out in Hollywood and occasionally I received hand-me-downs from her. She was almost exactly 1 year older than me and I looked forward to receiving these trans-Atlantic packages! Unfortunately I did not ever inherit any of the fur coats or diamonds that Portland was famous for wearing as a child. I did like the American clothes and looking a bit different! Is anyone surprised? Did this start an early interest in fashion?

**Auntie Moira** was quite different from the other two. They had never married. She had been married and had a daughter but there was no sign of her husband. She was glamorous and loved amateur dramatics. She usually starred in our village pantomimes. She had a gentleman friend who looked suave in his DJ who we called Mac (a Scot?) She was charming and charismatic and occasionally I would be invited round for tea in her elegant drawing room.

So these were my three church aunties, examples of cross generational friendships that each influenced my early years.

Mary Snow

# How well do you know these members of Christ Church?

## A Quiz

Match the following unlikely facts to the names listed underneath.

- a) Her step-brother was Douglas Adams who wrote The Hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxy.
- b) Her mother taught Prince William at university and was presented to the Queen at his graduation, who asked "Did you teach my grandson?" and when she answered "Yes" the Queen retorted "you poor thing!"
- c) She met her husband in Antarctica
- d) The founder of 'Ann Summers'\* attended her Silver wedding anniversary party in Italy
- e) Appeared on 'This is your Life' when a primary school friend was the subject.
- f) She was named after a lavatory
- g) She once sang the part of Casilda in the Gondoliers

- 1) Joy Holmes
- 2) Elizabeth Pearson
- 3) Mary Snow
- 4) Sarah Warren
- 5) Gill Davidson
- 6) Lindsay Graham
- 7) Rosemary Stewart

*\*A company that sells women's lingerie amongst other things!*

*I had no replies back from the Christ Church men so can only assume that the Christ Church women have had much more interesting lives.*

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Answers

a/7 b/6 c/4 d/5 e/3 f/2 g/1

## Charity Chic

Imagine some of the most respected members of the church as you have never seen them before, strutting and posturing, slinky or exuberant, transformed into creatures of glamour on a cruise ship or guests at a Chinese wedding. Imagine too an occasion which brought together models aged 2 to 87 and so demonstrated what this issue of the magazine is all about - bridging the church generations. All age groups were represented. The younger generation mostly had a whale of a time – there were cartwheels and hair-flicks alongside a serious message about recycling and saving the planet, though one tiny tennis player had to be carried off, annihilated by shyness. The older showed that a lifetime of grace and dignity is not incompatible with a sense of fun. There were surprises, such as the dramatic coup when one routine was interrupted by a vibrant performance of ‘Sit down, you’re rocking the boat’ as the singing group, Capital Voices, sprang up from the audience. There were nibbles, Prosecco and a very happy audience (it was a lovely occasion to which to invite friends who are not members of the church), expertly and amusingly guided through by two comperes. And it raised a thousand pounds for Christian Aid. Many, many thanks to Mary Snow and her hard-working teams of helpers for such a wonderful inter-generational experience.



*“The Choir really added so much to the enjoyment of the show” Model*



*“Can we have a fashion show every week?”  
A 5 year old model*



*“What a wonderful atmosphere and what a friendly church”  
A first time visitor to Christ Church*



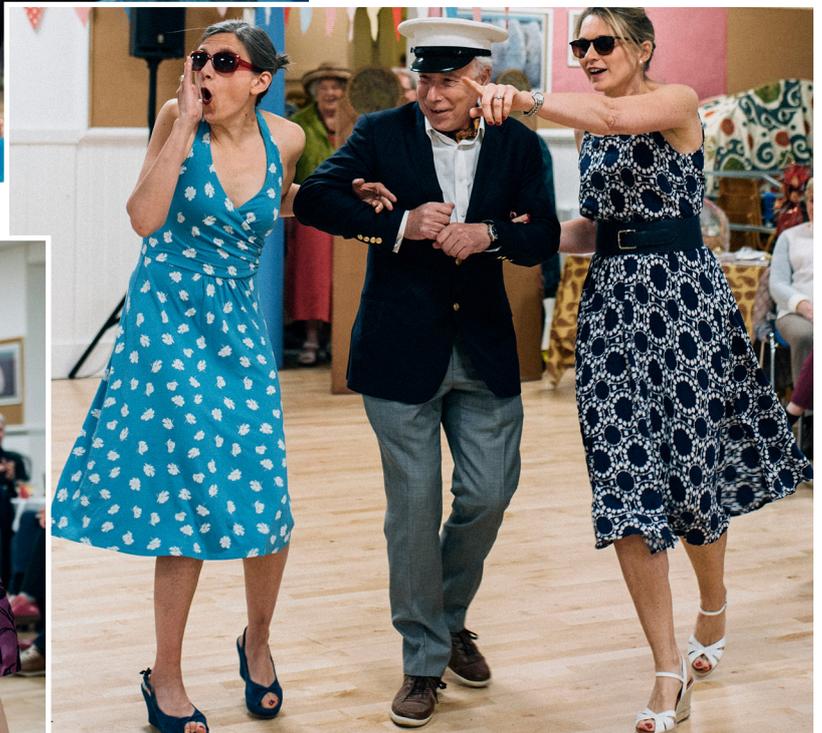


*"Please don't put any photos of me on Facebook!"*  
A Vestry member



*"I have heard people discussing Charity Chic twice on the bus! People were telling others what a great evening they had had"*  
Member of the congregation

*"The food was really first class"*



*"I was still buzzing when I went to bed. I really enjoyed the evening"* Christ Church Regular



Thanks to all the models, some of whom agreed to participate somewhat reluctantly (you know who you are), those behind the scenes and in the kitchen and to the members of Capital Voices who greatly enhanced the evening with their singing. We raised £1638.65 for Christian Aid- Well Done!



## Passing the baton on

There are so many jobs that need doing in church and sometimes it feels as if there aren't enough of us to do them.

Recently we had a 'dusting crisis' when our best laid plans for keeping the church dust free went awry. We ended up with a very dusty church (mainly due to the work on the pulpit) and an apology had to be made. However, some gallant volunteers came forward and the crisis was averted. Some of our younger members have joined the team for which we are very grateful. It is likely that we need more volunteers for January 2018 so please bear this in mind.

We now fear that our 'gardening gang' have their backs to the wall as some of the faithful volunteers have had to retire. Our front garden is very visible to the public and is much appreciated. Like all gardens it just takes persistence, a little and often to keep it ticking over to remain looking attractive so we are appealing for new volunteers to join the group. All volunteers are welcome but of course those with some gardening knowledge would be very welcome! We are hoping that

fresh eyes will inspire a new vision for our garden. The group meet to garden together on Wednesdays but Church members could come at other times at their convenience. Please consider prayerfully if this is an area to which you could make a contribution.

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## Confessions of a Holy Duster (Retired)

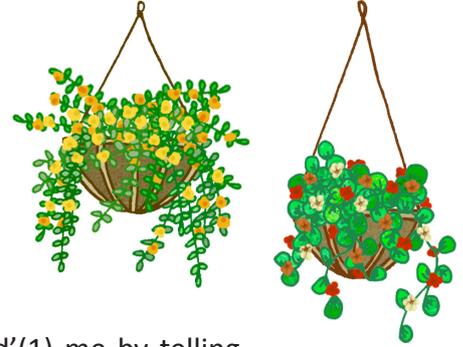
I would like to say that all I know about cleaning I learned at my mother's knee; but it wouldn't be true. My mother's knees were never still long enough as she battled to eradicate every speck of dust and grime. She soon gave up on me. I took after, she informed me, her mother-in-law who was notorious for sitting down doing the crossword or reading novels, while lost socks festered down the side of the sofa and dust bunnies the size of cricket balls wandered around untrammelled under beds. I accepted the role model. When I was an adult and my mother visited my home, she brought with her a cleaning smock and a ferocious glare, and could be heard tutting in the kitchen, "There's enough grain behind these jars to feed the developing world."

So it was a surprise to find myself volunteering to join Holy Dusters. I am so glad I did. I was still under-qualified and my broom never seemed to chivy out the dirt in the way others did; but we had a team who worked, as they all do, methodically through the task. It was cheerful and companionable; usually, job done, we adjourned for coffee and conversation – naturally the best bit of all. I have had to retire from these happy times because of health; but it would be lovely to find there are those to whom the baton could be passed, younger or fitter. Speak to Mary Snow if you are interested; she would also want to thank all retirees from the task and all those who faithfully keep the church clean.

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*Thanks to the following volunteers who have hung up their dusters since 2016... Joy Holmes, Pat Abraham, Naomi Clemson, Elizabeth Chalmers- Watson, Margaret Mitchell and Jenny Gibb who organised the rota efficiently and with good humour for many year. Please let Mary Snow know if you think you could offer to help keep our church dust free in the future.*

## Interview with Ann Engh - a newly retired Christ Church gardener



*How long were you a member of the gardening group?*

**Ann:** Even before I started at Christ Church Jean Holloway 'cliped'(1) me by telling Joan Maudsley that I was coming and that I was a gardener. She passed the message onto Kate Houston and the rest is history. Coincidentally this was in 2007 when Susan and Elizabeth (Pearson) also started at Christ Church. (2)

*What sort of jobs did you do?*

**Ann:** Weeding, deadheading, planting annuals in the spring, clipping back shrubs, raking up leaves in the autumn. Les brings his leaf blower (just like an angel from heaven)



*Do you have to be a gardening expert?*

**Ann:** No, you don't have to be an expert to rake leaves or deadhead but of course people with a knowledge of plants would be especially welcome.

*Do you work all year round?*

**Ann:** No, there is a break from November to March.

*What has changed in the garden since you started?*

**Ann:** We have the new pathway that makes it much easier to get to all the plants and the old flagstones used to get slippery. Lots of people have remarked on the improvement.

*Have people commented on the garden to you?*

**Ann:** Yes, passers-by often compliment us on the garden. People will stop and talk to us as we work in the garden so we have a chance to reach out to the wider community. Some people sit on the seat to eat their sandwiches or just to enjoy a moment's pause.



*What are the benefits of being part of the garden team?*

**Ann:** It is good exercise. I also appreciated the camaraderie and fun. We usually have a coffee, tea and chat when we have finished. It is lovely to see the pleasure that the gardens give to our church members and passers-by.



*Would you recommend joining the group?*

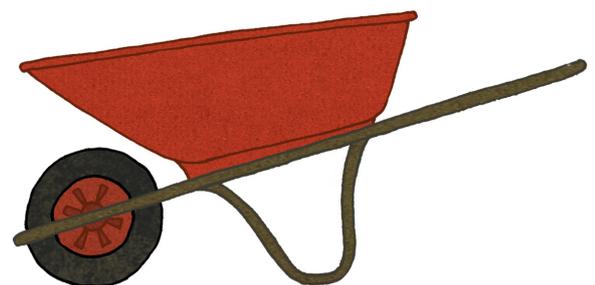
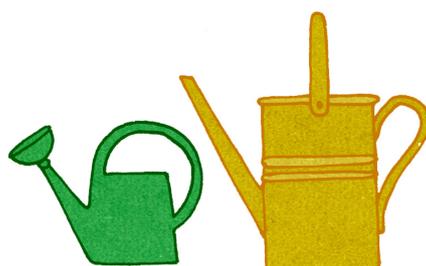
**Ann:** Definitely, I have only given it up because I have had some problems with my back. I am hoping to still meet up with the group for a coffee.

1. Cliped means told tales on

2. What a good year 2007 was for Christ Church!

3. When I type Ann Engh my text predictor changes it to Ann Enthusiastic! What a clever predictor!

**Please sign up on the sheet provided at the back of church if you would like more information about joining our gardening group.**



## Friendships spanning the generations

When I became a Christian in my 20's the first thing I noticed was that my friendship group had suddenly widened. Not so much numerically but I now had friends right across the generations. From the older members of the church I attended I received wisdom, humour and genuine interest in my wellbeing. From them I learned a lot about support and friendship which I could then pass to the younger ones. Looking back I believe the church family is one of the few places I can think of where intergenerational friendships are forged and flourish. Here we introduce you to two such friendships without our own fellowship.

### **Mary Smallwood and Benedict Harris**

Mary Smallwood told me that she met Dominic Harris and his wife Eileadh a few months before Benedict was born. They first met in the church pew and Mary said they "clicked immediately". She was invited to Benedict's christening after he was born and has watched him grow into an active toddler. They have become good friends and Mary says that she enjoys the friendship very much. She never had children herself, but did have nieces she took great interest in as children. Connecting again with a young child and his parents has brought her great pleasure.

As for Benedict, she told me that he steadfastly refused to go to crèche but quickly learned he has to keep quiet during the sermon, when he sits quite still on his father's knee. With great wisdom Mary said that any fidgeting in the pew which can interrupt concentration is worth bearing, knowing this is how a child gets used to going to church and hopefully experiences the love and acceptance of the church family. Recently, on Dominic's return to church after his illness, Benedict toddled up to the altar quite happily holding Mary's hand. It was a joy to see and reminded me of my own introduction to the church family and the wealth of friendships this has brought over the years.

### **Robin Morris and Chloe and Safiya Wosu**

I first brought my grandchild, Chloe, to church when she was about 3 years old. She is now 10 and is accompanied by her sister Safiya (4). Robin, as People's warden, is very good at clocking new faces and he very quickly developed a rapport with Chloe. After every service Chloe would run around looking for Robin to give him a chocolate button from her snack box.

Recently Robin was very delighted to hear that Chloe has joined Edinburgh Athletics as a budding sprinter and long jumper. I didn't know until recently that Robin has had an illustrious career as an athlete, at one time the Scottish hill-running champion (amongst many successes in the field of athletics), and as a Sports journalist for the past 18 years. Robin and Chloe now talk in some kind of code which has great meaning to them but is a mystery to me. This sharing of a mutual interest is great for Chloe, helping to boost her confidence. Robin told me that he had two daughters, now adults and living away from Edinburgh, and seeing two sisters always brings up memories of raising two girls. For me, it is lovely to see their faces light up with a smile whenever they see Robin.

Helen Wosu

## **Putting your best foot forward or, keep putting any foot forward...**

My years as a social worker and social work trainer brought me into the field of brain science over 20 years ago when research brought huge advancements in technology which enabled the brain's responses to be imaged as the brain responded to stimuli. Now hardly a day goes by without some new insight into how the brain works and no doubt in 20 years time we will be amazed at how little we knew in 2017.

When I started studying the findings I gradually began to try to use this in my work. It helped me understand behaviour and also how to try to correct the negative impact on the child's brain caused by poor relationships or trauma.

Now that I am retired, I am particularly interested in brain science and the older generation. I was fascinated to read Norman Doidge's book *The Brain that Changes itself* and remind myself that what I learned about children's brains applies to me in my senior years too. Brains continue to grow and make connections in response to stimuli, the most powerful being the stimulus of relationships, followed by new experiences and challenging the brain to work by learning something new. It will take longer – more repetitions during the learning process- but in most cases the brain can and will continue to make vital brain connections. Not only can it make connections but research now reveals that the brain, when damaged and given the right conditions, has the ability to grow connections where none had been before. For instance the connection to the brain and right arm, if severed, will grow again along a different pathway to connect with the arm and restore some movement if the good arm is immobilised forcing the injured arm to do work it is initially reluctant to do {the book puts it much better}.

What does this teach me now? Not to give up too quickly on tasks I feel are getting beyond me. Brain connections not used will die off and that is nothing to do with age – it is to do with lack of use. Continue to forge those valuable friendships across the generations. Don't be afraid to walk with confidence (looking down at ones feet all the time underutilised the brain's connections to the feet which help guide us safely) and most of all become aware of the world around us and give thanks for what we do have.

Helen Wosu

## Back through the generations

### Two family detective stories

I am not Morningside/Merchiston born and bred so have no neat tale to tell of the passing down of wisdom, wealth and church going habits through the generations. But I am old enough to qualify for a bus pass and have a tale to tell of how I discovered a piece of nineteenth century social history in which grandparents - and the church - played a key role in supporting families.

There are considerable age gaps between the generations in my family. The only grandparent I knew was Robert Pattullo who died at the age of 87 in 1961 when I was 11 years old. A few years ago I took a photograph of his and my grandmother's gravestone in the Eastern Cemetery in Arbroath. I noticed, given my memory of the 1961 event, that the dates on the stone were wrong but by that time I could not ask my mother Jessie. She had died back in 1991 from complications due to multi-infarct senile dementia when she was 78 years old.

The dates ascribed to Robert - or Bob as he was called - should have been 1874 to 1961 and the dates for his wife Margaret, 1873 to 1937. Just how did that error come about?

Some time after my mother's death I had heard from my siblings that my grandmother Margaret Gray had had an illegitimate child before she married my grandfather. I asked for more details but there were slim pickings. My brother had the birth certificate of the child, gleaned from my mother's papers. The child's name was John Gray and he was born in 1888 instantly, through the process of birth registration at the time, being given the stigmatising label of illegitimacy - a label that applied until death when it was entered onto the death certificate. (It was not until 1919 that the term illegitimate was dropped).



My sister - ten years older than me - recalls John visiting our family home in Arbroath and the detail that he had a club foot. What happened to him? He was not brought up along with any of the children Bob and Margaret had together so where did he live? Maybe he was sent off to Dundee, she surmised. To an orphanage or a workhouse? She did not know.

I then wondered how old Margaret was when she gave birth to John. By using the dates on my photograph of the gravestone (and my knowledge of the date swap) and on John's birth certificate I worked it out. She was 15 years old, likely to have been just 14 when she got pregnant. Could the date swap have been merely the result of the stress of bereavement on my mother - or was it a rather futile attempt to cover up the teenage pregnancy?. Had Margaret been born in 1874, as the gravestone inscription stated, she would have been 13 when she got pregnant. Or maybe it was just the result of a degree of innumeracy on my mother's part. She did leave school at the age of 14.

If there is a moral in this tale it is to find out about your family history before it is too late. Then there is no truth to be told.

Academic research has help me fill in the gaps. In summary, young teenage pregnancies were common in the 19th century Scotland. The age of consent in 1888 was just 12 and the rate of illegitimate births ranged from 8 percent of all births in industrial cities and the central belt to 25 percent in rural north east and south east regions. Congenital debility of infants due to the poor health of the mother was also common.

Grandparents often came to the rescue subsuming the illegitimate babies of their children into their family, passing them off as their own children. One study found that in one village - Rothiemay in Banffshire -over 80 percent of households containing grandchildren also contained what were then termed bastards. Of the families without grandchildren 10.8 percent still contained children born out of wedlock.

As Andrew Blaikie of the University of Aberdeen wrote in the Journal of Local Population Studies in 1998 "The grandparents were not the cause of these children being born, but their existence and relative willingness to accept babies into their care, helps account for the survival of infants who might otherwise have been aborted, adopted or become dependent upon the Poor Law. Indeed, collective welfare support, arranged by the parish either to supplement extended household care, or to aid lone unmarried mother was an important prop."

So I feel somewhat reassured that there was a good chance that John Gray was not cast off to an orphanage but was brought up by the parents of his mother Margaret with whom he was able to maintain some contact throughout his life.

Kay Smith

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My mother was a great teller of stories and a favourite was about her beautiful grandmother, Margaret Ramsey, who was a Newhaven fishwife. 'People used to turn in the street to have another look at her' my mother would say.

When I moved up to Edinburgh and went to the National Portrait Gallery I became aware of the photographs of David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson including those of the Newhaven fishwives. I wondered if my great grandmother would be in any of them, after all, she had a reputation for being a beauty!

I studied the photos on show and saw that a Grace Finlay Ramsay was in three. Could this be a relation? I was encouraged by the fact that Margaret's oldest daughter was also called Grace. Was she named after her grandmother? Yet one more clue is that my mother's cousin's Christian names were Margaret Finlay.

I always meant to follow this up and told my sons and granddaughters about our Newhaven ancestors.

Fast forward to May 2017 and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is organising a presentation of their Hill/Adamson collection. My son who works in the marketing department is overheard

*Continued overleaf*

mentioning that he thinks he may be related to one of the fishwives. This coincidence is thought to be a good 'human interest' story with which to whet the public's curiosity but so far we have no proof to back up our hunch!

Neither William, nor myself are experienced in searching records but we take the chance to join a well-known genealogy site for a free trial fortnight and type in the name Grace Finlay Ramsay into the 1861 census and sure enough we discover that she has a 2 month old daughter called Margaret. We then find that this daughter did marry James Couper (my great grandfather) so our hunch was right! We also note that in one photograph, 'The Letter,' Grace is with a Marion Finlay (her sister?) which was also the name of Margaret's older sister, and so we are probably related to both of them!



A sad footnote is that Margaret after starting married life in Leith, moved down to Hackney London with her husband and 4 children where she died just 31 years old. James Couper remarried and another family story tells that the stepmother was very unkind to Margaret's 4 children. The eldest daughter, Grace (aged about 11) escaped by stowing away on a ship from London to Leith Docks and returned to the Ramsays. This branch stayed in Edinburgh and Grace and her future husband ran a newsagents in Toll Cross which, in various guises, stayed in her family until quite recently.

James Couper prospered in London and went on to live in a large mansion in Loughton with a gate house which another family legend claims was lived in by the sculptor Jacob Epstein. Perhaps I need to do some more research!

Mary Snow

*Image Credit*

*Marion Finlay, Mrs Margaret (Dryburgh) Lyall and Mrs Grace (Finlay) Ramsay. Called 'The Letter' photographed by Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill, Scottish National Portrait Gallery*

Please feel free to express your views about this issue of the magazine, be they grumbles or praise, to the editors (arranged alphabetically not hierarchically) Kate Durie, Mary Snow and Helen Wosu.