

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

August-September 2024

Our Mission in this Parish is to bring the saving love of Christ to all whom we meet, and by our example to encourage them to follow Him.

Our people and their stories - Dorothy writes



Last year I was contemplating a trip back to England, probably my last, but I had no-one to go with, and I wasn't happy to be going alone. Then along came Rev Shirley, talking about going to Scotland to seek Ancestry clues. Shirley asked if I would consider going with her. Coincidence? Maybe.

Thank you Lord!

Shirley started planning!!

It's now a couple of weeks since we arrived back after 7 weeks of adventure. Hardly enough time to assimilate all that we saw and did. It was full on – but I will share some of what we did, and Shirley will share her reflections and hopefully, some photos at a later date.

On June 4th we flew through Dubai – a long 17-hour flight. We survived, got our connection and landed safely in Manchester, to be met by my niece Janette, and Jerry. This was Shirley's first-ever view of England.

The route home is mostly scenic, and very familiar to me, but for Shirley it was all new. We stayed in Hednesford with my sister-in-law Maureen, aged 93 and full of energy, who welcomed us with open arms.

We arrived on the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings, and the town was festooned with poppies of all descriptions. Shirley said being in England made the war suddenly very real. I took Shirley across the road to the nearest part of Cannock Chase, an extensive area of heathland and trees where I grew up. Shirley had an agenda to see squirrels and owls, and while we assured her that 'squirrels are everywhere' we didn't see one. We also paid a visit to the local cathedral in Lichfield, dating back to 669 AD. It was Shirley's first UK cathedral, one of many that she

would see. We followed a tour guide – Shirley wanted ALL the historical facts!

It was lovely for me to be able to take her there, and also to the (very) old pub with a suit of armour in the corner. Three days later Shirley headed off to Scotland to follow Ancestry clues – through the busy Birmingham train station – one she won't forget in a hurry.

There was a northerly blast blowing through Britain – not what we had expected in June! I stayed a couple of weeks with Maureen, and enjoyed all the comforts of home, while Shirley braved the northerly winds in the wilds of Scotland. I was forced to the local charity shops to buy warm clothes as the cold weather didn't let up.

Friends came to Maureen's home when the word got around that I was there. It is always such a blessing to reunite with my Church and family. My father was a lay preacher for 70 years. A plaque on the wall behind the pulpit at Chadsmoor Methodist commemorates my Dad, Wilf Smith. I was asked to preach at the evening service. My theme – 'We are family'. Of course, there are fewer and fewer 'oldies' still there, but enough of them to make a fuss of me!

I also met a 'new' cousin (?) Lesley found him on Ancestry. Another John Smith. Our grandfathers were brothers. We had always lived 10 miles apart but I'd never met him. John is a bird-watcher and knows the Chase very well. He said he would 'take me to see the deer', which I seriously doubted as they are very shy creatures. But sure enough we saw deer and squirrels! I thought of Shirley. John also took me for a pub lunch at *The Barley Mow*. It was the first pub I had ever entered, when I first met Derek, age 17. I drank a Baby Cham, and I felt SO guilty – afraid that my Dad would find out ...a lot has changed since then!

On June 24th Shirley and I both took trains to meet up in York. From then on Shirley was our tour manager extraordinaire, with all our itinerary and accommodation sorted – wonderful! The weather was finally getting a bit warmer. We had a great time around York, visiting the Minster and the Shambles, walking round the old city walls, and taking in the Yorvik Viking Museum, with all its sights and smells, excavated beneath the city. We then stayed with my cousins in Coventry. Both are historians, and deep-thinking theologians. Shirley had a wonderful time in discussion with the two of them, and they took her to their hearts. They also promised us squirrels in their garden – but there were none.

Together we visited the bombed-out shell of the old Coventry Cathedral, now a powerful symbol of peace and forgiveness. It never fails to move me. Those ruins now lead into the new building with its beautiful Peace Chapel and glorious windows. We all attended a Sunday service at an ancient church in Kenilworth, before their guided tour of Kenilworth Castle. We hired a car (manual!) from Coventry and from then on Shirley very ably drove us around Wales and the South of England – a thousand miles plus! We stayed with my cousin Selwyn, until recently a tour guide in the old Abbey (founded 689 AD) at Pershore, in Worcestershire. Like many others, the monastery was destroyed in the Dissolution but part of the Abbey is still an active worship centre. Selwyn is a very knowledgeable historian on the Abbey and also on the Wesley family and Methodist history. From there we called in at Stratford-on Avon, to visit Shakespeare's birthplace, on the way to Ross-on-Wye, near the Welsh border, where Shirley had some family clues to follow up. Ross is a quaint old town with steep streets and narrow alley-ways. Getting there we encountered some of the infamous English country lanes, *almost* wide enough for one car – a feature we would come to enjoy - eventually. Coming down from Symonds Yat, with its famously spectacular view down the Wye Valley, we met a string of oncoming traffic and nowhere to go. Shirley kept cool, and the traffic inched past us with barely a centimetre to spare. But we saw squirrels there.

Hay-on Wye, with one foot in England and one in Wales, is the 'Book Town Capital of Britain', and we had to go there! Every shop is a book shop. Shirley would have liked to stay for days. In Wales we visited Tintern Abbey, a beautifully evocative ruin dating back to 1131. It was also destroyed in the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Next came the Roman city of Bath. Pub meals just across the road from our hotel, with Dorothy's favourite – stuffed baked potatoes. Shirley booked our tickets into the Roman ruins where the baths are still fed by the warm mineral streams. The Roman life-style was brilliantly portrayed and we spent a fascinating couple of hours there, before exploring the elegant limestone city, the Royal Crescent, and the Jane Austin museum.



Next, on our way down to Cornwall, we stopped off at Glastonbury, that touristy, mind-boggling mixture of magic, mysticism, crystals, fairies and mostly-wacky-Christianity. By this time the weather had turned dull and drizzly, so we only got half-way to the top of the famous Tor.

Our BnB was on the edge of Bodmin Moor – spookily misty, with more than a few narrow lanes to negotiate. However, the local pub was a gastronomic delight, and the central heating was on in the house.

Next day, warm and sunny, we drove to Penzance and St Michael's Mount in the extreme south west. It was good to see the sea. We both realised we had been missing it. The next BnB was on the edge of the New Forest in Cornwall. On the way we spent time at Lyme Regis, famous for fossils dug out of the cliffs. It was a windy day, but the staunch Brits were all there on the sand, in front of the bathing sheds, with their deckchairs, blankets and windbreaks. The BnB was the home of two small dogs who barked for biscuits every day. (Biscuits were provided for dogs but not for people!) The New Forest is mostly heath land, with the famous ponies roaming free everywhere. We walked on the heath, and took an open-top bus to a couple of villages, sometimes held up by ponies on the road. We were surprised at so much war history in that tranquil part of England.

The next road trip was the worst of any. We (and the trusty GPS I think) got confused around the multiple traffic islands on the outskirts of Southampton. We were very stressed by the time we found the right exit. But a very warm welcome awaited us at my Cousin Evelyn's home at Lancing, near Brighton. Evie and I are best mates. And behold, there were squirrels galore! Evelyn feeds them, along with 'all God's creatures', birds, the neighbour's cat, and a tame seagull. It was a delight to witness their antics at 6:30 every morning. With Evie we walked the length of Brighton Pier (in the rain) and visited the amazingly extravagant Brighton Pavilion, built in 1811 by mad King George 1V.

On July 17th we made our way back to the Coventry cousins for two more nights, from where Shirley did a side-trip to Oxford. It was hard to leave them, but back at Hednesford we had Maureen's 93rd Birthday party to attend. Around 20 of my Smith relatives gathered, a warm day at last, making a perfect ending for me, and I think, for Shirley. The love I felt certainly overflowed to her, and she felt it too. The next day we were able to attend my home church, the last time before we left England.

Cousin John Smith came back to take us to a famous German war cemetery

on the Chase, before finding some more deer (for Shirley), and having lunch at *The Horns* pub, which holds fond memories in the village where Derek and I first lived before coming to New Zealand in 1966.

The Goodbyes are always hard, but I thank God for the opportunity to see my family, and for Shirley, my most able tour manager, who by now knows far too much about me!

Samaritan's Purse Christmas Boxes Appeal

The time is coming fast for us to be collecting items to pack in the Christmas boxes for children in the Pacific Islands.

The boxes and brochures are now at church, with all the advice as to what to pack. Each box needs \$12.50 enclosed for shipping.

If you don't want to pack a box, you might like to donate some items, or some money to pay for the shipping. The last day for collection will be Sunday 27th October, when we pack all the loose items at the 'packing party' at St Andrew's.



A New Bible Study Group.

Julie is now running a Bible Study Group for men and women, on Friday afternoons, 1:30 at the church.

Couples and singles, young and old are invited to improve their Bible knowledge in a friendly group together. You don't have to have any Bible knowledge to attend! Come and give it a try!



Church and Parish Donations: Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish
BNZ Whitianga: **02 0496 0062562 00**

Monday Meals Donations: Mercury Bay Community Support Trust
Westpac Whitianga: **03 1578 0108901 00**

Parish Council News

Many of you have now met Debbie Gordon, our very able new Church Administrator. Just before Dorothy left for England Debbie was appointed to the job and quickly got her head around it.

Welcome to the team Debbie!

The Annual Congregational Meeting

will be held after the service on

Sunday 8th September.

Please do your best to attend.

Property maintenance is always an issue. We are currently faced with an urgent plumbing job, to install a grease trap in the wastewater outlet. Earlier this month the sewer was blocked by fat from the kitchen.

We have accepted the quote - \$2,875.

Many months ago severe borer damage was found in a window frame in the church. It has taken a long time to find a timber tradesman who will tackle the job, but thankfully Mitch Pascoe, Boatbuilder has agreed to do the job. It will mean the whole window has to come out, and that will be a costly job... and we know this will not be the last of it. Borer bombs have been let off in the church and this will continue at regular intervals.

The Opshop committee requested a defibrillator, to be fixed to the outside wall between the Opshop and the Hall. Parish Council agreed and this will soon be in place. Once fixed, St John will set up a meeting to explain the use of the defibrillator. We would like as many as possible to attend that session. Date to be advised.

Parish Register

Funeral

June 13th at St Andrew's – Judith Denise McGrath

Jo Martin officiating.

We pray for all those who grieve - May they know the love of the Lord holding them close.



Worship at St Andrew's, 9:30 every Sunday

Aug	18th	Ross McCook
	25th	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby
Sept	1st	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	8th	Julie & Team <u>Church Annual Meeting</u>
	15th	Deacon Margaret Birtles
	22nd	Bill & Robyn Woodward
	29th	Rev John Twemlow

.....

Our 'Made By Hand' Craft Exhibition

A belated, but very BIG 'Thankyou' to Annie and all the team who organised this year's Made By Hand Craft Exhibition. Around 25 creative individuals and four community groups put their work on display in the hall. The wide range of skills represented everything from blacksmith ironwork to soap making. The church was festooned with quilts, blankets and wall hangings. The event attracted many visitors and prompted extensive coverage in *The Informer*. Many thanks also to all those who lent their work for display. This annual event brings colour and joyful enthusiasm to the winter season.



Parish and Community Information

- Monday** **Upright & Active** 9am weekly exercise for active seniors
Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113
Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen community meals
takeaway only, every Monday 3:30-5pm.
Contact Maureen 027 246 6164
- Tuesday** **Exercise for the less active** 9am weekly
Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113
Stitch n' Chat fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton
Room. Contact Julie 021 169 1637
Enliven (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) currently in
recess until new staff appointed
- Wednesday** **Ladies' Bible Study** 10am weekly
Contact Julie 021 169 1637
Inter-Church Women's Fellowship Monthly.
Contact Annie 866 3711
Scrapbags quilting group 10am weekly.
Contact Robin 866 5029
Parkinsons Support 6-weekly.
For dates and times contact Keith 027 459 8683
- Thursday** **Enliven** (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) currently in
recess until new staff appointed
- Friday** **Cancer Support Coffee Morning**
First Friday of each month. Contact Ruth 021 363 840

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga | PO Box 368, WHITIANGA

www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz | standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Facebook: St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

Parish Council Chairman: Kevin Pringle

Parish Secretary: Dorothy Preece 022 132 2061

Newsletter Editor: Charlotte Christensen