

## WEY VALLEY – WEEKLY CIRCUIT LETTER – 17 April 2024

Barrie Tabraham

### *'Garden Play!'*

Spring is here again, and so too, is gardening! Not all people like gardening, however, and there are times when it can be maddeningly frustrating. Who hasn't successfully tidied a border, only to find the next day that there are still weeds, smiling defiantly at us? Who hasn't fought to maintain a neat and presentable lawn, only for ants and unrepentant worms to renew their guerrilla warfare against us?



However, balancing the physical labour and frustration of creating and maintaining a garden, there are huge compensations, whether you are a beginner, an expert or an 'enthusiastic potterer'. And we can even bring a little theology to bear upon our musings, but I won't write about 'the best way to garden, like praying, is on your knees'!

Firstly, the enormous range of trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetables that we can plant, can all speak to us of the extraordinary richness and variety of God's creation. Many of us as children in Sunday School were taught those rather sugary 19<sup>th</sup> century hymns which gave a somewhat naïve picture of nature and ignored its less attractive features. Along with roses come thorns and suckers, black spot and greenfly! Perhaps, therefore, the weeds and brambles and garden 'pests' remind us that the world God gave us is no Eden (with Adam as a 'gentleman gardener') but a vale for soul-making, where we were meant to struggle against adversity, and – by God's grace and with his strength – triumph.



Secondly, whilst no one would suggest that gardening should be the basis for natural (as opposed to revealed) theology, we might nonetheless ask, 'How does the process of planting, tending, nurturing and pruning speak to us of the way in which we use our God-given gifts generally?' It comes as no surprise, for example, that Paul's letters are littered with gardening metaphors to get his points across: e.g. to the Romans (Ch. 11 vs. 17f.); to the people of Corinth (I Cor. 3 vs. 6f. and again in II Cor. 9 vs. 10f.). And you won't need me to remind you of Jesus' own illustration of the vine and the branches in John 15.

Even if there's only room for window boxes and patio pots a tiny garden can still offer many challenges and opportunities. When we are older, it's very easy to become disheartened if we feel that the contribution we can make has diminished. But there are always possibilities for fulfilment, even in old age.

Finally, to see plants grow is a perpetual source of wonder. I once asked my mother-in-law (who could get almost anything to grow), “What’s the difference between a plant and a weed?” She answered, with a smile, “If it lives, it’s a weed; if it dies, it’s a plant.” Some would say that a weed is simply a plant in the wrong place. Now, there’s an interesting line of thought, if we apply it to the whole of the natural world!



However, despite our best efforts, it’s as well to remind ourselves that we can actually create NOTHING. We are simply co-operating with God to try to bring order, interest and beauty to fruition, as it were. Psychologists tell us that it is all too easy to bury the ‘child’ within each of us as we grow older, and that we should never lose a sense of either wonder or curiosity. To put it another way – if you are as incompetent a gardener as I can be, then to see tomatoes or runner beans or dahlias or sweet peas emerge can be a paradigm of our attitude to life in general, and simply reaffirms our sense of dependence upon the grace of God for all that we are or seek to be.

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**A Prayer:** Loving God, we thank you for the simplicity of a single rose in a vase, and the infinite complexity of the natural world that surrounds us, and which we enjoy. Help us to value, preserve and cherish the natural gifts you shower upon us, and always to retain a sense of child-like wonder at the marvels of your creation. Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

*Barrie Tabraham*

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## **Resources/Good News**

### **Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Event**

If you live in or around Guildford, this event tomorrow may be of interest to you:

The Environment Agency, Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council are working together to develop a scheme to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in Guildford town centre. The scheme will also improve the natural environment and build better connections between Guildford town centre and the River Wey.

We want to hear the views of the local community and will be holding a drop-in event where you can find out more and provide feedback. Several members of the Environment Agency project team will be there to answer your questions.

(see flyer on next page)

**Guildford has a long history of flooding. We are working in partnership to develop a scheme that will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in Guildford town centre.**





Photo by Dan Hammingford

**Come and meet the Environment Agency team at our public information event**  
 Thursday 18 April 2024, 2pm to 7pm  
 Circle Bar, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre  
 Millbrook, Guildford GU1 3UX

**Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme**

**Big Garden Birdwatch**

If you had an interest or took part in The Big Garden Birdwatch advertised in the Circuit Letter back in January, the results are now in. View them [HERE](#)

**UPCOMING CIRCUIT EVENTS:**

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
20 April	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Clothes4U	Knaphill
20 April	4.00pm to 6.00pm	Neighbourhood Party	Trinity, Woking
20 April	7.00pm	Songs of Praise	West Horsley
25 April	10.30 to 12 noon	Coffee and Cake	St. Mary's Guildford
27 April	10am to 12 noon	Coffee Morning	Knaphill
11 May	10am to 12 noon	Plant Sale	Trinity, Woking

# Neighbourhood Party



**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**4:00 – 6:00pm**

**TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, BREWERY ROAD, WOKING**

You are warmly invited to our **Neighbourhood Tea Party.**

Transport can be arranged.

**There will be a high tea, entertainment, and a fun quiz.**



**Please join us for a jolly good time, meeting friends old and new.**

Contact us via phone, post or email to be added to our official invite list.

Please invite anyone who would enjoy a sociable afternoon out.



**PHONE**

07749 094064 (Marian)  
07729 301713 (Pauline)



**POST**

Trinity Methodist Church,  
Brewery Road, Woking, GU214LH



**E-MAIL**

trinitywoking@btinternet.com



# Songs of Praise



**Saturday April 20th**  
**Horsley**  
**Methodist Church**

(next to W.H. Village Hall)

**7.00p.m.** Come and sing a selection of  
favourite hymns. Phone 01483 282474 for  
more details or to make requests.



# Coffee & Cake

**St. Mary's Quarry St,  
Guildford GU1 3UP**

**Thursday 25 April**

**Thursday 23 May**

**10.30 – 12 noon**

*~ each morning features  
a different charity*

*Everyone welcome*





# Plant Sale

11 May • 10am to 12 noon

**Trinity Methodist Church**  
Brewery Road, Woking

A range of quality plants include  
annual and perennial flowers,  
indoor and conservatory plants,  
vegetables and more!

There will be volunteers to help with advice if needed.

Coffee, tea and home-made cake will also be available.

Cash and card payments are accepted.