

# Focus



Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit: Issue 88

## Autumn 2021

### Andy's Letter

Dear friends

Last Christmas, as part of our Christmas presence at Hove Methodist Church, the words 'Love' and 'Hope' shone brightly, lit up by strings of Christmas lights. Really they should have come down with the rest of our Christmas decorations early in January, but we decided to leave them up. We decided that with our buildings not being open for worship or the many activities that were taking place pre pandemic we still wanted our Gospel message to be seen and known.



Across the Circuit as restrictions have lifted and we have begun to slowly open up our buildings, we have wanted to keep as Covid secure as we can. As we heard from our District Chair, David Hinchliffe, at our Circuit Meeting last week the picture across the District is very varied. Some buildings are still not opening their doors whilst others open with no restrictions at all, some worshipping online while others singing with gusto with no restrictions such as social distancing. Each church is different even when following the same guidelines or lack thereof.

Opening up safely and with care has always been our aim in all of this. We have to learn to appreciate the thoughts and views of others who think differently from ourselves and find that way of balancing the variety of hopes and fears.

And that brings me back to the 'Love' and 'Hope' signs at Hove. Surely now we have started this new Connexional year, now we are opening our buildings, albeit at different speeds, surely those signs can come down now because people can come in and experience them for themselves? Well as we know some are and some aren't, as they are not yet ready to mix in the way they did before. So the message stays up in a time when we all need to feel love and hope.



The relationship between love and hope is a multi-layered one. For some love brings hope, when we feel we are loved then that gives us some hope, it tells us we are not on our own, that we are worthy, that we are wanted, and all that despite what we know about ourselves. And when we love others that can give them hope too.

Hope is also a motive to love, to carry on loving. As we hope for a better world we can find that it is love that drives us on, gives us the strength to persevere.

In the first letter to the Church at Corinth Paul writes 'Faith, hope and love abide...'



For me my faith means I live in hope, not of my place in some kind of after death experience but in the hope of building a better world here and now, and better lives for all, here and now.

To do that my faith asks and inspires me to live a life of love in the place where I am now and in ways that will impact others, not only in my community but throughout the world.

That is of course a big ask, and there are many different things that need doing and many different ways in

which those things might be done and the whole task looks as if it is totally beyond me, and indeed it is. But my faith asks me to continue to hope and I am comforted and inspired by the many people in all our communities who are similarly driven.

**Andy**

## **Circuit News**

Two items of news from our Circuit Meeting:

Firstly the decision has been made to extend the length of both mine and Deborah's appointment in the Circuit.

Deborah is staying for an extra year which takes her to August 2023 and I have been offered an extension for an extra 4 years which takes me to August 2026.

We are both pleased to accept these extensions and want to thank everyone involved in the process by giving feedback or by being on the Invitations Committee. Special thanks to Steve Preston for facilitating the whole process and making it go so smoothly.

Secondly, to announce that following a lengthy discussion and all the guidelines laid down by the Methodist Church, the Circuit Meeting have appointed Steve Preston as our part-time Circuit Operations Manager. We are pleased that he has accepted the position and he begins work in that role on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September. More details of how he will work and the times and places he can be contacted will come out shortly. I would just like to say thank you to Stella for all her hard work in making this appointment happen.



**Andy**

## **Daily Devotions**

**Andy Lowe**

*I receive daily devotional/reflective material from a number of different sources including Fr Richard Rohr, Simon Cross and Rev Cameron Trimble. I have found this one from Cameron has stayed in my mind and so with her permission I share it with you:*

## A Word for the Day

It seems like we've lived five years in the last seven days. Between the trauma and heartbreak we are witnessing in Afghanistan and the fear and foreboding we have lived through with hurricanes, droughts, fires, and floods, we are staring starkly into the face of the world from our nightmares.

Lately, I've been reading and meditating on "dark night of the soul" experiences. Today, when most of us use that phrase, we casually refer to a challenging moment or a season of sadness. The term "dark night of the soul" comes from the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross (1541-1597). He writes about the experience as one of profound spiritual transformation marked by a time of purification and clarification of one's senses and then learning to live with radical faith and trust. When you experience a dark night of the soul, you are never the same.

I do have the sense that we are all living through a collective "dark night" experience. By this, I mean that we are living in unsettling days that offer no obvious way "out." We face challenges that do not have easy solutions, leaving us to push past the edge of what is reliable and familiar. These days demand a new imagination from us, one that questions how life works (and doesn't work). Dark nights call for a spiritual response, not a therapeutic or purely political one.

Author and psychotherapist Thomas Moore explains in his book [Dark Nights of the Soul: A Guide to Finding Your Way Through Life's Ordeals](#), *"The dark night of the soul provides a rest from the hyperactivity of the good times and the strenuous attempts to understand yourself and to get it all right. During the dark night there is no choice but to surrender control, give into unknowing, and stop and listen to whatever signals of wisdom might come along. It is a time of enforced retreat and perhaps unwilling withdrawal. The dark night is more than a learning experience; it's a profound initiation into a realm that nothing in the culture, so preoccupied with external concerns and material success, prepares you for."*

From this space, the basic question is not "why has this happened" but once tragedy occurs, "who are we now because of it?"

It is there that I think God dwells. It's a fair question to ask, "where is God" in this mess of a world we have created. Who are we now? My answer is grounded in two theological understandings. First, I believe that God does not cause bad things to happen. God is not a punitive parent who makes us suffer to teach us lessons. We live in a world of free will, and a

condition for that freedom includes suffering.

Secondly, I understand that God is with us through it all. When we grieve, God grieves all while hoping for our healing and wholeness. **In our “dark nights,” I trust God to be bringing resurrection from the crucifying experiences of life. Most often, that transformation comes through the deep, caring love we show one another.**

If dark night seasons are in service to profound transformation, then I pray we are seeing the transformation of a world lost to violence, power and greed to one shaped more by compassion and love.

During such times I am reminded again of how much we need each other. Life is not a “do it yourself” project. I am glad that God has created us not for isolation, but for community. When we care about one another and reach out to one another, then we can make it through.

We are in this together, **Rev. Cameron Trimble**  
Author of [Piloting Church: Helping Your Congregation Take Flight](#)  
**Andy Lowe**

## President of Conference

The Revd Sonia Hicks has been elected and inducted as President of the Methodist Conference. The induction took place on Saturday 26 June at the National Conference Centre, Birmingham, during the Methodist Conference which is taking place in hybrid form this year.

Sonia Hicks, comes from a long line of Methodists as far back as her great-grandfather who was a Local Preacher in Warsop, Jamaica. Her Great-Aunt Lize was one of the first members of her family to come to Britain, and was turned away from her local Methodist church despite her Methodist membership card. The minister told her that ‘Your sort go to the other church’.

Understandably she is passionate about inclusion and diversity. In her Presidential address she said “In a world where people are excluded because of their ethnic background, their sexual



orientation, their gender or simply because, like me, they were brought up on a council estate, I believe that we are called to show God's love for all people. It is a calling that Christian people have always struggled with, but we can and should be better at making God's love a reality in the British Methodist Church, overcoming the systemic discrimination that exists."

"As Christians we are to mirror the grace and the mercy of God. We are to find ways of issuing God's invitation of acceptance to those we meet on a daily basis. No ifs, no buts.

"I believe that there is a place for all in the presence of God, at God's Table. But, as we acknowledge that everyone has a place, we also must acknowledge that we will therefore live with the tension of not all thinking the same. We will also have to recognise that living with such tension is never the easy option."

In the latest issue of *Connexion*, she urges us to be bold, not fearful, writing:

"...as we emerge out of the lockdown, how can we leave behind our fearfulness? How can we rediscover the boldness needed by God's servants in the world?... As Christians, we need to wait on God as we try to discern the next part of the journey. Waiting, not knowing how God will act, demands a boldness of a different sort."

Rev Sonia has served as a Circuit Superintendent in three connexions: Britain, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas and the Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI). She is currently Superintendent Minister in Wembley, north London.

**Circuit Office**

## **God In Love Unites Us**

**Andy Lowe**

The Methodist Church has become the largest religious denomination in Britain to permit same-sex marriages.

A vote to change the definition of marriage at the Methodist Conference on Wednesday overwhelmingly passed by 254 in favour with 46 against. Church officials hope the first same-sex weddings in Methodist chapels will take place in the autumn.

Rev Geoffrey Farrar who preached recently at Dorset Gardens, and used to be a member at Hove before becoming a Minister spoke at the conference. Afterwards tweeted to say that he was very pleased at the result, but that he and his partner Steve would not be getting married immediately due to lack of funds.

The President of the Methodist Conference, Rev Sonia Hicks, acknowledged that there are strongly differing opinions , and said in her letter, 'We live with them and we do not allow them to impair our communion with each other. We respect each other's consciences, we exercise judgment in when to speak and when to be silent, and we hold one another in prayer. We do all this not for our own sake but for the sake of Christ and the sake of the world which urgently needs to know the power of Christ's reconciling love. Our prayer for you, beloved siblings, is that in joy or sorrow, in pain or excitement, we might continue to live within that reconciling love.

**Andy Lowe**

## **People and Groups in New Testament times:**

**Mick Hickman**

This series of articles looks at a number of matters relating to peoples and groups in the Mediterranean world in the period c. 150 B.C. to 96 A.D.

### **6: Rome in Syria and Palestine III**

This article continues by describing what happened from 36 A.D. Pilate, who had been prefect from 26 had become increasingly arbitrary in his use of violence, including massacres of Samaritans and of Galilean Jewish pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem (Luke 13 v 1). Some administrators in the Roman empire were of high quality. Syria was on the border of the Parthian empire and the governors of Syria who had overall charge as far south as the border with Egypt, were usually very able Senators. Amongst these was Vitellius. He was appointed the governor of Syria in 35. In 36, in response to complaints from both Jewish and Samaritan leaders, he dismissed Pilate and sent him to Rome to answer charges of misgovernment. He also dismissed Caiaphas, and returned the custody of the High Priest's ceremonial robes from the Roman prefect to the Temple authorities.

Caligula became Roman emperor in 37 and soon showed signs of megalomania. He wanted an image of himself as a god set up in the Temple in Jerusalem. In 39 he ordered the new governor of Syria, Petronius, to use two of





his four legions to enforce this. Petronius was a man of both courage and sense and tried to delay implementing this policy. In urging delay Petronius was supported by Agrippa and at first Caligula accepted. By 41 Caligula had changed his mind and sent an order to Petronius to commit suicide for his disobedience. Because of bad weather this letter arrived almost four weeks after the news of Caligula's assassination, and so Petronius' life was spared.

Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, had been educated at Rome and had made invaluable friends amongst whom were the future emperors Caligula and Claudius. When he became emperor Caligula gave Agrippa, known as Agrippa I, the province that has been ruled by his uncle Philip, with the title of king, and in 40 added Galilee and Peraea which had been ruled by another uncle, Antipas. When Claudius became emperor in 41 he added both Judea and Samaria to Agrippa's rule. As a result from 41 to his death in 44 Agrippa I reigned over a country as large as that of Herod the Great. The portrayal of Agrippa I in the Gospels is negative (e.g. Acts 12) but elsewhere, e.g. in Josephus, he is regarded favourably, although Rome became increasingly concerned by his growing regional power and influence and Claudius stopped him building a defensive wall around Jerusalem. When Agrippa I died in 44 his son, the future Agrippa II, was only 17 years old and in Rome. The Roman government did not want another potential power-base and so Agrippa II was only given a small principality in 50. This was added to by both Claudius and



Destruction of the  
Temple 70 CE

Nero. It is Agrippa II who appears in Acts 25-26. Both Agrippa I and II followed Jewish observance.

Agrippa II and often discussed Torah matters with religious teachers and his portrayal in Acts 25-26 in discussing with Paul reflects this.

Whilst the governors of Syria were usually of high quality the same cannot be said of the prefects who had control of Galilee or Judea when a Herodian was not present. They were both corrupt and incompetent. These problems were exacerbated by people we



would now call terrorists. Eventually this led to the outbreak of the Roman-Jewish war in 66, which in turn led to the destruction of the Temple itself in 70. In order to understand the reactions of the various groupings to that war and its aftermath we need to look at their origins and ideas and it is to that that we shall turn next time.

**Mick Hickman**

## **Brighton & Hove Day of Compassion**

The Mayor of Brighton & Hove has set aside a day – Sunday October 17th when the people of the City can come together to honour the lives of those lost and those that have sacrificed so much for our City during the time of the pandemic. A variety of organisations have generously volunteered their facilities, services and skills to make The Day possible, including The Brighton Dome, The Friends' Meeting House, The Unitarian Church, the Fabrica Art Gallery and the Jubilee Library. All these organisations will be offering their space for a variety of inspirational activities in support of The Day of Compassion. There will be workshops, stalls, music, exhibitions, meditation and quiet space for contemplation available at these various locations.

**The Service of Compassion:** Held in The Brighton Dome, at 4pm on October 17th, the Service of Compassion will feature words, music and films, with a focus on the losses experienced by our City during the pandemic.

Our local MPs, the Mayor and the people will share recollections and music both reflective and uplifting with some of the City's most special people – the carers, essential workers and voluntary supporters. Losses of all kinds will be honoured during this beautiful secular service. Tickets are available now from The

Brighton Dome at [https://brightondome.org/event/28603/a\\_service\\_of\\_compassion/](https://brightondome.org/event/28603/a_service_of_compassion/). This is a free event.



**Charlotte Gravestock**

# Using Hymns for Pastoral Care

**Deeptima  
Massey**

Throughout the pandemic I have been listening to several old hymns and learnt and sung many contemporary songs. While we use hymns as part of worship, as prayer, to prompt prayers, or find meaning in God's promises: I have also been using hymns to extend pastoral care to friends and family in the UK and overseas. As the world responded to a time of uncertainty and isolation, I realised that the vocabulary offered in hymns and songs could be reassuring, comforting and uplifting. Hence, I started to share either the verses or a video of an appropriate hymn with those I knew were feeling fearful, anxious, bereaved, isolated, downcast or receiving palliative care.

The hymns/songs I shared the most are as follows:

- Great is Thy faithfulness (Thomas Chisholm)
- What a friend we have in Jesus (Joseph Scriven)
- Be still, my soul (Katharina von Schlegel)
- God will make a way, where there seems to be no way (Don Moen)
- He never sleeps (Don Moen)
- He leadeth me (Joseph H. Gilmore)
- In Christ alone (Stuart Townend)

I hope and pray that hymns (old and new) continue to speak to us, offer us hope, strength and comfort during the turbulent times and affirm our faith in God's everlasting presence and care. Do share them with others who you think might benefit from the words and/or the tune.

**Deeptima Massey**

**I never thought  
I'd be the kind of  
person who'd  
wake up early in  
the morning to  
exercise ...**

**And I was right.**

**We all know  
mirrors don't lie...**

**I'm just grateful  
that they don't  
laugh.**

## News from Circuit Churches

The period up to August has seen the transition from a full national lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic to one of caution and end of most mandated restrictions. This is reflected in most of our churches; we have seen a phased return of many of our usual activities and gradual resumption of fellowship and worship in our buildings. These accounts are taken from the stewards' reports to Circuit.

### Dorset Gardens

Although we were not able to celebrate Easter in the church, we enjoyed the daily online reflections during Holy Week led by Revds Deborah Cornish & Andy Lowe. Our church re-opened on 9 May for the first onsite service, and in June we welcomed Revd Geoffrey Farrar, now Superintendent Minister of the Richmond & Hounslow Circuit, who returned to lead our anniversary service.

Thursday's onsite Prayer and reflection resumed from July and Selwyn Veater handed over our prayer co-ordinator reins to Karen Knight after many years of faithful service.

During the first week of May Deeptima Massey undertook a sponsored Spring Walk for Action for Children which supports families and young people through extremely difficult situations. She walked over thirty-two miles and raised over £1300, which exceeded her expectations. Thanks for the generosity of so many people across the circuit. Before this Deeptima celebrated the news that her mother Kushma Massey had been given UK residency – a relief and wonderful Easter blessing.

Children's worker Liz Neale has continued to maintain contact with her Tearaway Tots community including online events such as the Shrove Tuesday pop-up and Easter Club where thirty children took part in the Easter Garden biscuit recipe challenge.

On 1 July our long awaited Openhouse@DorsetGardens finally launched. This neighbourhood outreach initiative is open to absolutely everyone and provides an opportunity to renew old friendships or make new friends, much needed after this period of confinement. This is accompanied by tea, cakes, games, crafts



and plenty of chat. Revd Cynthia Park, Graham Wall and Shirley Veater lead the hosting team every Thursday afternoon.

From 31 July to 2 August Deborah and John Cornish braved the elements and opened their garden for their annual Cornish Cream Teas in aid of Action for Children, raising £605.

Dorset Gardens has received the consent of the Methodist Church Assistant Connexional Ecumenical Officer for The Village Metropolitan Community Church (VMCC) to use our premises for worship. A pilot onsite Sunday evening service was held on 8 August 2021 with the likelihood of holding at least one onsite service on the first Sunday of each month. We look forward to developing the relationship with VMCC and sure there will be opportunities for partnership going forward

Finally, we express our thanks to our minister Revd Deborah Cornish for keeping us all connected and for her ongoing care and leadership, whilst balancing multiple responsibilities.

**Steve Preston, Church Steward**

## Hove

As we begin to gradually open our building there was always the question of whether the buzz of life that was evident pre lockdown would still be there. We need not have worried. Our building comes alive when our groups and community are present and that has never been so obvious as it was in August.

Some groups had already begun to restart slowly, like our Thursday Communion service which seems to be developing into an open Housegroup-with-Communion and the Friday morning Chatty Café drop-in.

School holidays see us involved with Chomp which provides activities and food for families on low income. We ran two sessions in August which were greatly appreciated. With the involvement of Nam Yang Martial Arts group the activities have taken a new turn and the children (and their parents/carers) burn off some of their boundless energy as well as taking food parcels home with them.



Chomp session  
with Nam Yang



Members of our Monday Guild have been meeting sometimes as a group in church and sometimes at local cafes for companionship and chat and worship is on Sundays is also happening on a more regular basis providing much needed contact as well as spiritual nourishment.

We held our first major event since the first lockdown some 18 months ago when we celebrated our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the laying of the Foundation stones by holding a Cream Tea afternoon. Delayed from the end of June we were eager to hold the event as soon as we felt it safer and although August might not be the best time for such an event we were staggered by the number of people who came and enjoyed themselves. Friends new and old listened to music from Debbie on guitar and singing accompanied by Paula on the flute. Some people just dropped in as they saw something was happening and members of our community were able to celebrate albeit with some restrictions in consideration of those who might have been anxious at attending.

All in all August has not been as quiet as we anticipated and if it is a sign of what is to come then this period from now till Christmas promises to be very busy as we seek to consolidate and build on the work that has been happening here for the last 125 years.

As part of that we are especially looking forward to another celebration in September when we have a street party on Saturday 25 September with music and dance acts from a variety of groups that are part of our community including

Nam Yang Dragon dancing, Streetfunk dance team, the Martlets Choir, DJ Chris Love and others it looks to be a great event and a celebration of our community based here in Hove.

**Maggie Symes & Rachel Richards, Church Steward & Community Worker**

## **Patcham**

The church bookings seem to be back to what they were before the lockdown plus a few extra.

We have had two weddings and a christening in recent weeks, and a christening and a wedding also booked,

The stewards and Revd Dan Woodhouse are meeting monthly and already have Christmas services in mind, and a memorial service for our losses. **John Chinchin, Senior Church Steward**

## **Stanford Ave**

Greetings from Stanford Avenue. Here at Stanford Avenue, we are looking towards the future. New and different ways for us to operate, in very challenging times.

Sadly a number of members have moved away during the past few months, or are no longer mobile. Martyn and Lis Coblenz have moved to the Lancing area, both Martyn and Lis do however continue to be stalwart workers in the church.

After many years Margaret Tregenza has decided to hang up her Action for Children (AFC) hat. I believe it may well be 30 years. And of course her annual garden party has been one of the highlights of the circuit year. So we profoundly thank her for all the great work she has done on behalf of AFC. Gaynor Paul has agreed to take on the AFC role on behalf of Stanford Avenue.

Like everyone else the pandemic has caused and still causes financial challenges, with loss of income from activities and giving. However, it is good to see the premises starting to be used by both our own organisations such as the Scouts and Girls' Brigade, but also external hirings beginning to take place.

This has also had an effect on jobs within the church. Currently we are without anyone able to work the overhead for services, so we have had to go back to using the Singing the Faith books. We are also currently minus anyone to do weekly notices and cleaning. We are hoping to drum up interest in the next few weeks, so watch this space!

Craft and chat still meet on-line although it is hoped that it will not be too long before it can meet in person. Fem Focus continue to meet monthly for coffee and a chat at the Preston Park



rotunda, and that contact is very much appreciated by all. Music and meditation has begun again on every third Wednesday of the month

As a church we are looking to the future, whether it be the God in Love proposals, or looking at how we can do things in a world that has changed quite profoundly.

**Robert Patching, Senior Church Steward**

## **Woodingdean**

During the last quarter we have, like all Churches, slowly come out of lockdown. We have opened the Church with covid precautions in place. We have employed a new cleaner and the fabric of the Church is in good order.

The Stewards and the Church Council voted to take opening up Sunday worship slowly by only having two services in August which was a contentious point but that is what happened, we are now looking forward to September when the Church will open fully each week. The two Services we had were well attended and it was nice to see everyone in person. We also had our Church Anniversary Service in July with worship led by Revd Peter Shilling, it was a wonderful inspiring Service giving hope for the future.

At our last Stewards meeting we have had changes Jenny Page, our communion Steward, has been replaced by Marian Hammond. I have resigned as a Senior Steward, so the position of Senior Steward is now vacant, and we also are trying to recruit new stewards. The remaining stewards are Ernie and Kathleen Jones, Andy and Margaret Rutherford, Beryl Brown and Ann Crisfield. Our Treasurer Ernie Jones has also stepped down and Richard Fletcher has taken his place from September 2021.

The only regular group meeting each week is coffee shop which meets on a Thursday morning, this has also attracted more people as the need to get out and meet face to face after so long is what people are looking for. During August Men's club has also started meeting more regularly. Some of the other groups are starting in September: Cameo, Monday Club. These are Church Groups and some of our lettings are also meeting each week: Zumba, Tai Chi, The Brighton & Hove City Band and Choir. Sadly, due to reduction in numbers the Brownies have amalgamated their groups and have left us to meet in another hall.

**Penny Goulding, Senior Church Steward**

## A Serious Poem

by **Peter The Poet**

Composed for Hove Luncheon Club on the occasion of the Euro 2020 cup final

We sang the song 'Three Lions'  
We sang 'Sweet Caroline'  
We thought that we would win it  
And things would turn out fine

But then it came to penalties  
To fill our hearts with dread  
In fact I was so frightened  
I went and hid under the bed

The tension was enormous  
But things weren't meant to be  
And we got beat by the other lot  
The team from Italy

O WOE THE DAY!  
YES, ALL IS LOST!  
O WHAT A TERRIBLE NIGHT!  
The time it is now three a.m.  
And still this poem I write.

But never mind, we'll carry on  
And we will not forget  
Our glorious England football team  
Who gave blood, toil, tears and sweat.

**Peter the Patriotic Poet MMXX1**

## Hove Monday Guild: From Japan to Hove

**Q&A** with Mariko

Beasley-Murray

I grew up in a fishing village that lay between the cliffs and the sea; a distance of a hundred metres.

There are four villages that span about a mile along the coast. A

total of two thousand people who were broadly all related to

each other. My grandfather had owned all four villages until after



the war when the Americans put an end to the feudal system.

My mother and grandmother were primary school teachers and my mother was my piano teacher from when I was five. To this day they have taught most of the people in the villages. My mother would give me a one hour lesson every day after school. When I was eight my father bought me a piano and I was required to practice 3 hours a day. At that time, I started taking lessons from music professors who were from a nearby university. This was on Sunday mornings; a journey that took 2 hours each way by bus that I did until I was fifteen. At fifteen I attended a school attached to a music academy in Tokyo where I stayed until I was 21. The Kunitachi music institute is well known throughout Japan.

1. What were your first impressions when you came to Hove?

Hove is very different to Ayukawa. Typically Japanese houses are made of wood with curved roofs. Office blocks and flats are made of concrete and aren't attractive.

However, houses in Hove seemed pretty... you could see the flowers in their gardens. In Japan the flowers are in the gardens at the back or arranged on the pavement in the street near the front door.

Cars are parked everywhere in England. In Japan on-street parking is not allowed. We have parking towers and some parking areas away from the road that are allocated for office bosses. Shops will have a parking area in front of the shop. People tend to ride bicycles or scooters or use public transport. People can have a car if they have a driveway or garage. Often the living room is turned into a garage.

2. Do Japanese people look different from English people?

Here in Hove in 1992 people seemed to be more plump. Japanese people are nearly always slim. We didn't eat so much fatty food. All factories and offices stop for exercise each day in the morning. Retired people exercise in groups about 6 o'clock in the morning. All Japanese people's hair is straight and black.

3. How are clothes different in Japan?

In Hove the women were wearing bright colours. However, older Japanese women wear earth colours. Kimonos are very colourful and are worn very often in the evening, also by men. Women often wear white powder on their faces and look very ghostly compared to English women. You can see women putting white on their face when they are at work in the office.

4. What were your impressions of inside your mother-in-law's house?

I liked Ruth's house very much. The chairs and bed were comfortable. My own mother's house like most houses had no lock. There was no key to our house; no lock. It was open day and night to anyone who wanted to enter. Japanese houses don't have doorbells. A visitor just pulls the door open and announces that they are there.

Japanese people are not afraid of being robbed. We have had one robbery in my village in more than a hundred years.

In Japan we eat and sleep on the tatami floor which is made of straw. There is typically no furniture in a Japanese house other than a low table where you can keep your legs warm while you sit on the floor. Also in Japan walls made of paper are common in houses.

6. What was your impression of the bathroom?

I discovered that in England you were meant to wash in the bath. In Japan we wash before getting in the bath. That way the bath water stays clean. In Ruth's house there was running hot water. In Japan we heat the cold water in the bath with a gas heater under the bath. Ruth's toilet was unlike ours. Our toilet was just a hole in the floor. You had to be careful not to fall in. We didn't need to change into toilet slippers before going in the bathroom. In Japan we wear toilet slippers before going in the bathroom or toilet.

7. What was your impression of the kitchen?

My mother-in-law had an oven the same as we had but we didn't have a grill. Most homes in Japan don't have ovens; just a hob plus a rice cooker. Japanese cooking doesn't require an oven. For washing up Ruth had running hot water. Most Japanese people use cold water to wash up in. Nor do we ever use hot water for washing our faces.

8. How about eating in Japan?

Most of our cups and plates in Japan are handmade. Cups are especially sacred for the tea ceremony. Many people will use wooden bowls for their breakfast when they add raw egg to rice.

9 What other differences were there between Ruth's and your mother's homes?

There was no Buddhist altar in Ruth's house. Most people have a Shinto or Buddhist altar. My mother would every day put a small amount of freshly cooked rice in a gold dish; a food offering for

dead relatives. My mother brought rice to put it next to my father's picture after he died. He died when I was 20 and he was 53.

Before my mother retired she studied flower arranging and tea ceremony so as to train others in these arts. Flower arranging is primarily for decorating the Buddhist altar and other spaces reserved for this in the house as secondary altars.

Tea ceremony is also a Buddhist ritual that normally takes place on Sunday morning. Women wear beautiful kimonos for this purpose. The men also may wear a kimono or wear a black suit.

White and yellow Chrysanthemums are only bought for funerals. A florist won't sell you those flowers except for that purpose.

10 How do flats in Japan differ from flats in England?

They have a toilet but no bathroom. If they have a balcony they will wash their clothes in a small cold water washing machine on the balcony that has water running into it that will then drain away down a drain pipe. It rains a lot in Japan so there is plenty of water. People hang their clothes on the balcony on long poles where it is sheltered from the rain.

11. Where do people have a bath who live in flats?

They go to public bath houses in the evening – not the morning. Men and women go in separate sections and everyone is naked. They wash first and then go into the large baths. There are nearly always hot and cold tubs.

### **Mariko Beasley-Murray & HMC Monday Guild**



## Cats...

And finally, some lockdown pictures of cats...



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