

More than an Autumn flower show

On a wonderfully warm and sunny afternoon we had 248 visitors, a record number for the autumn show. The Free Church Hall garden was packed with people of all ages, drawn once again by the superb Grimsdyke Brass Band.

Despite the difficult weather, there were many exhibits to enjoy: 262 adult entries from 39 exhibitors and 9 entries from 6 children. Barbara Perry and her team served dozens of teas and only just had enough delicious, home-made cakes.

'Best in Show Certificates' were duly awarded to Judy Blendis (Cookery), Jean Arnot (Preserving), Diane Berger (Cut Flowers), Michael Franklin (Pot Plants), Gill Read (Fruit) and Ken Murrell (Vegetables and Best Horticulture Exhibit).

YVONNE OLIVER



Never mind the flowers – the tea's the thing...



Prize winner Joe Coury Reid



Cream of teas from, among others, Caroline Broome and Rosy Daniels



...if you don't just come for the Grimsdyke Brass Band

Visit from Tokyo

Some while ago the Free Church was told that a group of 26 Japanese boys would be coming to England to learn English and, as part of their itinerary, they wanted to visit the Church and attend morning service. Accordingly, on Sunday 19th August the boys were welcomed to the church.

To mark the occasion, some of the service was conducted in two languages, the readings being done first in Japanese and then in English. Appropriately

both the readings and the sermon dealt with the themes of travel broadening the mind (Paul's shipwreck on Malta) and understanding other cultures (the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon). Hopefully the boys had developed their English sufficiently to follow some of what was said.

Some joined members of the choir and treated the congregation to a beautiful rendering of the Japanese song 'Akatombo' – 'Red Dragonfly' –

which the choir did their best to join in with.

Their teacher, who was accompanying them during their visit, Mr Satoshi Nakamura, told the congregation about the Rikkyo Niiza High School in Tokyo which the boys attended – a leading Christian foundation from which most of the boys would progress to Tokyo University.

After the service the boys laid on entertainment of Japanese games and activities. After a brief introduction to the Japanese culture the congregation found themselves attempting

fiendish catching games, playing card games, having their names written in Japanese (Kanji) script or learning how to make origami figures. Patience was always required.

Yoshimi Gregory who helped arrange the visit wishes to thank all the church members who accommodated and entertained the boys in their homes for two nights. We hope the boys and their teacher enjoyed the fellowship as much as we did, and returned to Japan with fond memories of the Free Church.

JOHN DITCHFIELD



Members of the congregation have their names written in Japanese

A year of droughts and floods

In 2012 surely the number of words written or voiced about rainfall must be the largest ever. There have been record highs; there have been droughts; there have been floods. The Diamond Jubilee was only not a washout because the British do rain so wonderfully well. During the Olympics the rain largely held off but by then, that was, of course, a phenomenon to be greeted with much surprise and justification for our favourite subject of conversation.

So, what has been happening on the Suburb during the last three months? Really, a repeat of what went before. In July, the 4.7inches of rain was not only a record since these records started in 1980, but it was almost an inch higher than the previous record in 1992 and more than double the average for the

month. In August, by contrast, there was only 1.3 inches which is little more than half the norm. After a dry August, in September there was a very dry period until the last week when nearly two of the 2.4inches total fell.

This regime of extremes was all very difficult for planners of outdoor events or for gardeners. Plants seem to have re-acted by loving or loathing it. There was either tremendous growth and exceptional displays of flowers from some plant-life or completely giving up and dying in other cases. As for the year as a whole so far there have been nearly 25 inches of rain which is the fourth highest in these records. Perhaps we might hope that we do not get too many extremes for a while or at least till next year?

DIANA IWI

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