

THE MAGAZINE

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TINSHILL FREE CHURCH

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Pastoral Letter December 2014 — January 2015

Why We Can't Lose Christmas!

Perhaps you're familiar with the Dr. Seuss children's book "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" It tells the story of a grumpy, bitter creature called the Grinch who lives in a cave above the town of Whoville. Every year he is disturbed and annoyed by the noisy Christmas festivities taking place in the town below, and so decides to stop Christmas from coming by stealing the residents' presents, trees, and food for their Christmas feast. As dawn breaks on Christmas Day, he is on the verge of destroying the presents, and pauses to listen out for the tearful cries of the "Whos" in the town below. However, he is confused to hear joyful Christmas singing instead, and comes to realise that Christmas is more than just presents and feasting. His heart grows, and he returns all the presents and trimmings, and is warmly invited to the Whos' feast, as the honoured guest.

Aww! "How sweet", you may say. Certainly, as Christians, we can echo the sentiment that Christmas is about more than just presents and feasting: in contrast to the message we receive from most sources around us. The author evidently set out to criticise the commercialisation of Christmas: even more rampant now than when it was written, in 1957. Nevertheless, I have a problem with the message that the book presents. However well-meaning Dr. Seuss was, he evidently conceived the "meaning" of Christmas to be about spending time with loved ones, and sharing "Christmas cheer". In other words: it's all about us.

Well, the Grinch might try to steal Christmas: but he can't! And not because Christmas is all about having "holiday spirit" and "Christmas cheer", and other such feeble sentiments! But because even if you take away all the presents, food, Christmas trees and decorations etc. — in fact even if you take away the day on which we celebrate Christmas altogether! — you still can't change the fact that God has already given the greatest gift of all time: His Son Jesus! The gift has already been given: there's no changing that now! So, even if all the "Christmas cheer" or "holiday spirit" has gone; even if you find Christmas a time of sadness and difficulty or a real struggle; even if you are in the worst circumstances imaginable — as some

Christians are today, in prison for following Jesus — or if you have nothing left at all in this world; even if everything else is taken away from you, the fact remains that *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (1 Timothy 1:15). Nothing and no-one can take Him away from you. He is the gift that makes Christmas, and the One who makes life worth living.

So “Christmas”, in its proper sense — God’s Son coming into this world — doesn’t even depend upon our remembering or celebrating it! It isn’t our celebration that makes Christmas, but God’s gift, already given over 2000 years ago, and already received in the hearts of all those who know and trust Jesus. And yet, how can we not celebrate this wonderful gift: *“peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”*? (Romans 5:1). Many years ago the band Wizzard famously sang “I wish it could be Christmas everyday”. Yet there was only one first Christmas, when Christ came, and this is unique and unrepeatable. There cannot be another day like it in all of history, when God became man.

So, let’s remember once more that Christmas isn’t all about us. The meaning of Christmas isn’t caught up with how we act, and whether we feel the “Christmas spirit” this year. I’m sure that we’ll certainly be grateful for the blessings of time with our loved ones, rest from work and so on. But how much more we can celebrate the giving of the Beloved One of the Father, Jesus Christ, who is at the Father’s side, and who has made Him known, (John 1:18). In other words: it’s all about Him. And He can never be taken from us.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
(John 1:14).

Joseph Cresswell

Andrew Lolley Induction

It was a great joy and privilege to be present and take part in the induction service of Andrew Lolley to the pastorate of Craigie Reformed Baptist Church in Perth on Sat. 18th October. My role was to give part of the

background to the “call” and to take a part in the laying on of hands and prayer as Andrew was recognised as Pastor in that part of the service.

A good number of us had travelled up from Leeds and so Tinshill was well represented by both present and past members of the church (Mike & Jean Donoghue, Alan & Liz Kellard, Nic & Jean Archer and Andy Fothergill). I made the journey on the Friday accompanied by Ken Link and Jack Potts — our own version of a “road trip”! I went armed with a handful of CDs of various music to play on the journeys. We had good trips both ways, especially on the return in the dark on the Saturday night, arriving back just before midnight. Perth is a long way North!

The church at Craigie is quite small but homely and would accommodate some 40-50 people. The congregations are much smaller than that and the membership small in number and elderly — we pray Andrew and Jill will be equipped and sustained as they take up the baton of their ministry, and go about making their work known. They live next door to the church and Ken/Jack were given a guided tour. The church is close to the railway station and the centre of Perth. It is clear that there are few Reformed Baptist churches in Scotland — the nearest being in Dundee, Andrew is hoping to resurrect a fraternal with a small number of men which has stopped meeting.

Gary Brady from Child’s Hill led the service. Andrew has assisted there for the past 12 months and gained valuable experience and been able to help in ministry whilst Gary was out of action for some months due to health issues. Robert Strivens, Principal at London Theological Seminary (LTS) is also an elder at Child’s Hill and gave the message to the gathered congregation. He spoke helpfully from 1 Timothy 4 v1-16 setting out 3 principles about pastoral



Robert Strivens with Andrew

ministry and 7 instructions which apply to the Pastor and the church. Paul is writing to Timothy as a young Pastor in Ephesus, Turkey.

The principles are:

1. The centrality of the Word of God for the Pastor's life and ministry (v6-7). Pastors need to be Men of the Word — soaked in it and continually ministered to by it. Psalm 1 gives this picture of meditating and delighting in the Word of God. This is obvious in many ways but less easy to remember when in the busyness of pastoral life where there is a lot to do and read. We must not neglect or cease to meditate on the Word and have to fight for this as the highest priority. Without food we die. It is the fuel to keep us fruitful.
2. The importance of the Pastor's Life (v7-9). Not just meetings but the whole life — outward and inward. The character of the Pastor — what he thinks about, delights in and how he conducts himself in private, all matter. Godliness of life is central to pastoral ministry. The Pastor has to submit himself to The Word first and then be obedient to it.
3. Where does our confidence lie? (v10) We trust in the Living God not in members, young families or mature Christians — we can place confidence in these but they will ultimately disappoint us. Our God is utterly trustworthy and will never fail us — there is no lack of power and He will keep His promises. This should be the confidence of both the Pastor and the church.

The 7 instructions which apply to the Pastor and the church were outlined as follows:-

1. (v11) Things commanded and taught by a Pastor come out of ministering Christ's Word. Must not shrink from what you find and is insisted upon even if unpopular — the church must submit to them. This needs to be done in a loving and not authoritarian way.
2. (v12) Be an example – role models are important and consciously picked up.
3. (v13) Scripture should dominate your church meetings — public

reading of the Word of God. The main thing is to hear the Word of God — keep this at the centre. Other things are secondary.

4. (v14) Exercise God-given gifts to the full. This applies to all of us. It is in exercising our gifts that we grow. (Ephesians 4). Seek to continue to humbly improve through your ministry.

5. (v15) See that you make progress. Give yourselves to serving. Takes time, effort and application and we must expect to see progress. Support your Pastor in this — give time and opportunity for advancement (e.g. study sabbatical)

6. (v16) Don't take your eye off the ball. Examine how you are and your testimony — your relationship with Christ and what you believe — does it matter to you? Are you continuing in these things? — it is tempting to take your foot off the gas. There is always more to learn in our heads, hearts and lives as we apply the Word of God to ourselves. Don't be distracted from the main thing or become lazy.

7. (v16) Don't give up. Persevering in Christian ministry is one of the hardest things to do through disappointments, setbacks and the heartaches of Christian ministry and humdrum activity. If our time is blessed we know fruitfulness.

These are things that matter to the Pastor and the local church. Whether people know of you or whether you are in a big and flourishing church, does that matter?

The service was followed by a time of fellowship and tea at the church building on Glover Street. Do pray for Andrew and Jill as they settle in and start their ministry at Perth — our love and prayers are



with them as they are on our hearts. The Lord has answered their prayers for a ministry and we look forward to seeing what the Lord will do through them in the future.

What about the CDs taken with me for the journey? I didn't play even 1 — there was no time! We talked all the way there and all the way back and all enjoyed each other's company and fellowship. It was quite a weekend!

Martin Sellens

The Innkeeper

“There was no room for them in the inn” Luke 2:7

This fact makes it certain that the Galilean couple arrived in Bethlehem in the late afternoon. The little town was crowded to capacity, and the late arrivals had little chance of accommodation. The last leg of the journey was slow and wearisome for the heavily pregnant mother to be, who was near her time.

Like so many of their family and friends they had come at the decree of the Roman Emperor, so anxiety and concern were much in evidence. The thought of Joseph going from door to door desperate for shelter, for his young wife who was about to give birth, has moved people in every age. Once more the knock is heard on the door of another inn.

Now history castigates the man who turned away the Lord of Glory. In the popular mind he is aligned with Judas Iscariot. The man is portrayed in the worst possible light, and what he did is seen by many to be inexcusable, and by others as a blatant rejection of God's precious Saviour.

Now if he was as hard as nails, thinking only of self aggrandisement, and the building of his own little empire, a man without any tenderness or compassion, then he represents many in our world today. Romans 1 : 28 — *“They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, and He gave them over to a depraved mind”*.

All through the adult life of Jesus, there was hatred, refusal, envy and rejection. And the spirit of the innkeeper — if this was so — is very much

alive in our modern world. No room for Christ. ‘Away with Him’ – it amounts to this. The selfish hearts of men and women know the Saviour calls for submission. He makes claims. He calls us to take up the cross. That is why the world keeps Him in a manger. As a tiny baby He is harmless enough. But the man Christ Jesus, in awesome holiness confronts men in their evil lifestyle, and is the voice of heavenly authority in the command “Follow Me”.

But have we painted the innkeeper in true colours? Was he really such a callous, uncaring insensitive man? I rise to his defence, for the story indicates otherwise. The Saviour was born where He was “Because there was no room for them in the inn”. However sympathetic you are, having a deep concern, if you are full up, you are full up! End of story. He was not to know that in the midst of preparing supper, a woman about to give birth would be on his doorstep. Does it not indicate that with a kindness, a rare virtue in his day, he directed them to cave or outbuilding. One commentator points out that it was a ‘kataluma’ and I quote ‘merely an enclosure, just walls into which travellers might drive their cattle for the night’. There was water, always water, but no food, no host, no entertainment. There was no room even there. I think he did what he could for a mother in need. If I am right, he is an example to us all. When the Lord calls us from the legitimate duties of life to minister to Him, other things have to be set on one side as we obey His voice. He says ‘I have first claim on you, and all you have’. We have to learn to say ‘Not I, but Christ’.

It is not really helpful to speculate on the place of our Lord’s birth. A cave not the Church of the Nativity is a strong contender.

Joseph had to clean this rude shelter, make a bed for the mother-to-be. Husbands did not play the role of midwife, and Israeli women prided themselves on delivering their babies, although physicians and midwives sometimes attended.

So the virgin brought forth her child — *“God sent His Son born of a woman”* Galatians 4:4. What a holy hour for Joseph and the sweet maiden of Nazareth.

Gazing at that extraordinary child, what thoughts were in their mind? Lying among the grains of oats and barley, the breath of animals rising in the dim light. They knew His wondrous name Jesus, and His glorious mission. They knew He was the Son of the Most High, and therefore God. He was ‘born a King’ for ‘He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His Kingdom will never end’. “Born a Saviour” was the angelic message “For He shall save His people from their sins”.

What do you know about this wonderful Lord? As we celebrate His birthday once more, have you a vital relationship with the Christ of God? Many speak of Him as “my Saviour”, can you say the same? No room in the Inn! I pray each reader can say “O Come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for you”. We live in fearful days, when we all need the assurance of faith.

One commentator has said “The early Christians did not say in dismay ‘look what the world has come to’, but in delight, ‘Look WHO has come to the world’.

The most important thing about Christmas is the first six letters — CHRIST.

John Lewin

Fear Not!

This was God’s message to earth’s weary nations
On that first Christmas morn:
“For unto you I give a Saviour;
This day the Christ is born”.
And still the words are ringing down the ages
Above the world’s despair;
“Fear not, for unto you is born a Saviour”,
And here is rest from care.

Annie Johnson Flint

Do we really come from Apes?

Andy McIntosh gave a presentation, at our church, about Creation and Evolution recently. He pointed out, what we all know, that the “theory” of Evolution is peddled as fact in our schools and Universities. It seems the Government is now intent on bringing this to our primary schools too. It was this point that inspired my poem. It is written from the point of view of a child, familiar with the Bible record of Creation, who is now introduced to the so-called truths of the fossil records.

Do we really come from Apes, Mum?
Like the monkeys in the zoo?
Did some great-aunt orang-utan
Get turned into me and you?

Teacher says that everything came
From a primo-dual soup
And everything that lives and breathes
Once swam in a sea of gloop.

Teacher's got a tribliobite,
Like a woodlouse made of stone,
She's also got a ammo-mite
And a broken T-Rex bone.

Teacher says that fossils tell us
How animals used to be
That some things that now walk on land
Once swam around in the sea.

And some things went back in the sea
And their legs turned into fins
Some things changed their scales to feathers
And their arms grew into wings.

But the Bible says God made Earth
And that there was no big bang
And God made all the animals
And He breathed life into Man.

So if we come from monkeys, Mum
Will I still go to Heaven?
Cos, it's all really confusing
When you are only seven.

Angela C Mathers

The Message of the Tablecloth

It was Christmas 1958. In a town in Northern England an evangelical Church the Lord had greatly blessed was preparing for the celebration of the Saviour's birth. They were greatly distressed then when in a great storm a large piece of plaster fell from the church wall, undoing all the hard work expended on the building. The Christians cleaned up the mess and polished the furniture again.

On his way home the Pastor dropped in at an auction, buying a white table cloth with gold embroidery, which would cover the damaged area of the wall. At the bus stop he saw a tearful woman in some distress and invited her into the church. Seeing the cloth she exclaimed "That cloth is mine. My husband gave it to me. These are my initials in the corner". Then she told how they used to live in Vienna. During the war he was put in a concentration camp and his death there had been reported to her. Escaping to England she answered an advertisement for the post of a governess in that town where they were. Finding the post already filled, she was about to return to her home. The Pastor, touched by her story, offered her the cloth, but she declined.

The church was filled for the Christmas service, and when the congregation dispersed a man remained. Approaching the Pastor he said "I gave that cloth to my wife in Vienna. She was sent to a terrible concentration camp where I was told she died. I came to this country and have settled as a clockmaker in this town". The Pastor greatly astonished wanted to contact the man's wife as soon as possible. All he had was the name of the people advertising the post she applied for and they were able to provide her address. That night they went by car to the town where she lived, arriving in the early hours. Husband and wife were united in a happy reunion. Both

were devoted Christians and now worship together at the 'Church of the Tablecloth'.

What an amazing story.

Submitted by John Lewin

MAF News to Share December 2014

Saving lives in South Sudan, Papua & PNG

Every day, MAF's light aircraft and their missionary pilots bring help, hope and healing to remote and isolated people

One of the ways MAF's pastor-pilots serve those facing death or danger is by carrying out medical emergency airlifts.

Axe attack

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), Pilot Martin Koehler flew Christina to Kompian Hospital after her husband grew violent and attacked her with an axe, leaving her badly wounded.

Dr David Mills, who works at the hospital, gives thanks she's recovering, saying, 'The fractured shoulder will take the longest, but the experience must have been traumatic.'

A week later, a health worker found a man bleeding from a massive cut across his loins. He hooked up an IV drip to a coconut and gave the coconut fluid to the patient intravenously until MAF's plane came.

'Although he was a whisker away from being a paraplegic,' says Dr Mills, 'the man is slowly recovering.'

Medevac

In Wamena, Papua, MAF responded to a string of urgent medevac requests that made for an eventful week.

On the Tuesday, MAF Pilot Kees Janse picked up a lady whose foot had become badly infected after being bitten by a pig.

On Thursday, Pilot Kevin Lynne airlifted a father, mother and child who were injured when the man lost control of his motorcycle and crashed into

a ravine.

On Friday morning, Kees picked up a woman who'd delivered her baby four days earlier, but now needed to reach hospital. In the afternoon, he flew a boy to hospital who'd broken his arm.

On Saturday, Kees carried a three-year-old boy whose face and upper body were badly burned.

Finally, on Monday, MAF Pilot Doug Allrich enabled a man who'd fallen off a roof and injured his head to receive medical treatment.

Keeping the clinic open

In South Sudan, when injury or illness strikes, MAF's aircraft help medics and healthcare workers to provide vital assistance.

In Gumuruk, the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (ECSS) manages the only permanent clinic in the district, and regularly runs out of medicines.

Gachora Ngunjiri, ECSS Project Co-ordinator, shares, 'When the nurses run short of essential medicines, like those for malaria, the situation gets really dire. So when MAF agrees to step in, you can imagine how many lives are saved — this being the only clinic in the whole region.'

Because Gumuruk is inaccessible by road for half the year, Gachora says, 'It was such a relief when MAF agreed to fly medicines to Gumuruk.'

Rescue from Renk

Another way MAF has saved lives in South Sudan occurred when the town of Renk exploded in gunfire and shelling.

Responding to the mounting crisis, MAF pilots evacuated 17 Medair workers caught up in the fighting — Pilot Reinier Kwantes helping them onto his plane while two gun-carrying South Sudanese looked on.

A little later, MAF staff in Juba received a message from Medair: 'God created your organisation for a purpose, and you are acting according to that purpose by risking your lives for us. Thank you so much for your faithfulness.'

For MAF’s missionary personnel, carrying out emergency airlifts, delivering essential supplies and providing rescue flights are just some of the ways the pioneering aviation charity assists vulnerable people in dangerous and desperate situations.

To find out more about MAF’s work and the people we server in remote, hard-to-reach or isolated areas, visit our website www.maf-uk.org

Preaching Plan

		Morning	Evening
December	7	Dan Peters	Dan Peters
	14	Joe Cresswell	Joe Cresswell
	21	Martin Sellens	Joe Cresswell (Carol Service)
	28	Joe Cresswell	Joe Cresswell
January	4	John Harris	John Harris
	11	Martin Sellens	Joe Cresswell
	18	Joe Cresswell	Joe Cresswell
	25	Joe Cresswell	Joe Cresswell
February	1	Joe Cresswell	Joe Cresswell

DIARY

December

Mon	8	7.45pm	Elders/Deacons Meeting at 68 Moseley Wood Walk
Wed	10	1.30pm	Tots Club Christmas Party
Thur	11	1pm	Thursday at Two Christmas Special Speaker: Matthew Seymour
Fri	12	9.30am	“What is Christmas all about?” — for local schools
		6pm	Good News Club Nativity
		7.30pm	FYN Christmas Party
Sat	13	6pm	Leeds City Mission Christmas Praise at St Lukes, Leeds 11
Sun	14	2.30pm	Cookridge Court Service

Tue 16 7.45pm Men's Christmas Fellowship
 Wed 17 7.15pm Carol Singing (meet at church)
 Fri 19 7.45pm Missionary Prayer Group at 1 Tinshill Mount
 Thu 25 10.30am Christmas Morning Service Speaker:Martin Sellens
 Wed 31 7.45pm Testimony and prayer meeting
 11.30pm Watchnight Service Speaker: Martin Sellens

January

Mon 5 7.45pm Evangelism Group at 175 Tinshill Lane
 Wed 7 1.30pm Tots Club restarts after Christmas break
 Thu 8 2pm Thursday at Two Speaker: John Almond
 Sat 10 9am Annual Trustees Meeting at 87 Tinshill Road
 10-12am Concert of Prayer for Revival
 Sun 11 2.30pm Cookridge Court Service
 Wed 14 7.45pm Deputation Meeting — Steve and Rachel Peat (Peru)
 Fri 16 6pm Good News Club restarts
 Tue 20 7.45pm Mens' Fellowship
 Thu 22 2pm Thursday at Two Speaker:Chris Haley (Otley)
 Tue 27 7.30pm Making and Thinking for Ladies

Note:

There will be no Prayer Meeting and Bible Study on Weds 24th December (Christmas Eve).

There will be a break in Second Tuesday meetings until after Easter

The deadline for the next edition of the Church Magazine (Feb/March) will be Wed 21st January — all items to Martin Sellens by then please.

ROTAS

Week ending

December 13 Mavis Mathers
 20 Margaret Williams

Cleaning

Angela Mathers Christine Crossley
 Colette Hickman Ann Mountain

	27	Natalie Sellens	Kathryn Hibbard	Deborah Williams
Jan '2015	3	Jenny Leng	Eva Ng	Anne Sellens
	10	Ruth Holder	Rosemary Hilton	Carole Brearley
	17	Mavis Mathers	Angela Mathers	Christine Crossley
	24	Margaret Williams	Colette Hickman	Ann Mountain
	31	Natalie Sellens	Kathryn Hibbard	Deborah Williams
February	7	Jenny Leng	Eva Ng	Anne Sellens

For Sunday

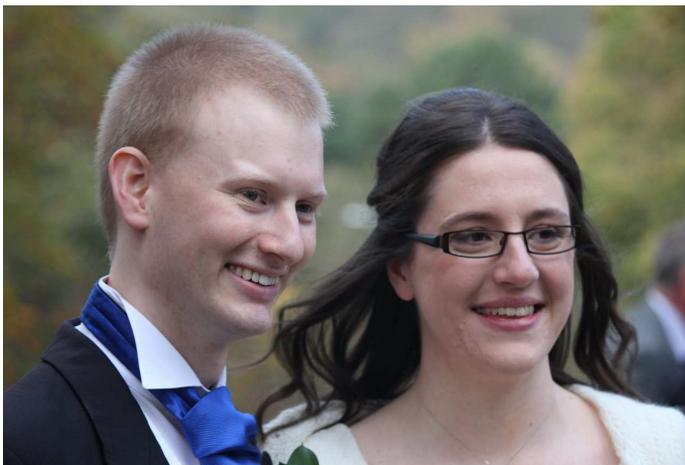
December	14	Mavis Mathers	21	Margaret William	
	28	Mabel Simpson	Jan '2015	4	Eva Ng
	11	Carole Brearley	18	Angela Mathers	
	25	Colette Hickman	February	1	Kathryn Hibbard
	8	Anne Sellens			

Flowers

Sunday

December	14	Christine Crossley	21	Angela Mathers	
	28	Mavis Mathers	January	4	Paul Crossley
	11	Nigel Hibbard	18	Rosemary Hilton	
	25	Christine Crossley	February	1	Angela Mathers

Library



Tim Hilton and Hannah Neal were married on 1st November 2014

All praise and honour to the child,
In gentle arms who lay,
When Simeon took this undefiled,
The Lord whom men did slay.
He gazed upon the little one,
And gladness filled His breast;
His eyes beheld God's only Son,
In whom all men are blest.

We rest in arms eternal, strong,
Secure for evermore;
For we are found, to Him belong;
Our souls He will restore.
The arms of grace encompass firm
With pardon and with love;
Assurance does our hearts confirm,
The gift of God above.

We gaze into the eyes of Him
Who grants us peace of mind;
For we have seen the Saviour win
Salvation for mankind.
We look to Jesus Christ our Lord,
And rest in Him alone;
For we have hearkened to His word,
The Lord who did atone.

The hope and light of all mankind,
Immanuel now displayed;
He fills our eyes and, men to find,
Behold the price He paid!
We worship Him with heart and voice,
And praise His sweetest grace;
Recline our souls as we rejoice
To feel His blest embrace.

W Vernon Higham (Luke 2: 29,30)

Diary of Services and Activities

Sunday	Prayer Meeting	8.00am
	Morning Worship*	10.30am
	Key Club (Children aged 4-11)	10.30am
	Evening Worship	6.30pm
	Holy Communion follows the first morning and the third evening service each month	
	*A fully supervised crèche for young children is run in the church side room during the sermon.	
Tuesday	Second Tuesday (monthly)	10.15am
	Making and Thinking (for ladies — monthly) venue as announced	7.30pm
	Men's Fellowship (3rd Tuesday monthly)	7.45pm
Wednesday	Tots' Club (term-time)	1.30 - 3.00pm
	Prayer Meeting and Bible Study	7.45pm
Thursday	Thursday at Two (senior citizens — fortnightly)	2.00pm
	Followers' Prayer Group (fortnightly) at 68 Moseley Wood Walk	7.30pm
Friday	Good News Club (Children aged 5-11)	6.00pm
	Friday Youth Night (Ages 11-16)	7.30pm
	Missionary Prayer Group (monthly) at 1 Tinshill Mount	7.45pm

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