



THE WORD

Editor: Stuart Baker: stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com



**THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, BIRKDALE. PR8 4JP
Charity Number 1128171
Vicar: Rev. Jennie Hardy**

St. John, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 14:

***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."***

ISSUE No. 271

JULY 2025

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



Where does the time go? We have already passed the longest day of the year and although the evenings are not yet perceptibly shorter we shall soon be looking at the church's calendar of services and events for the autumn. Spare a thought for Judith Foster and Sylvia Kent who will be thinking about our Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Market. And our readers will probably be able to look for Advent calendars and chocolate Santas in the shops before July is out!

At the end of this month (29th July) there will be another reason to reflect on the passage of time. It will be the anniversary of the horrific attack upon children at the Taylor Swift dancing class last July in which three little girls were murdered, several other children and adults were injured, and the town was left in a state of profound shock that such a thing could happen here (or anywhere). For the

families of the three murdered girls life will never be the same. They, and the injured survivors, will continue to be remembered in our prayers at St John's.

On 29th July our church doors will be open from 9am to 4pm to give an opportunity for the lighting of candles and for private prayer. And at 7pm there will be a service of evening prayer for "Faith, Hope and Love". Everyone, including those who are not regular church attenders or members of our weekly congregations will be welcome to attend.

In view of the above there will not be a SPACE session in the church hall on 29th July.

St John's enjoyed an excellent Summer Fair on 14th June. The highlight, which attracted children and their parents, was the presence of two donkeys, Seamus and Arnold, on which young children were able to have rides. Just like the old days! Ian Bennett has written a review of the Fair and has illustrated it with some pictures. We thank Ian for this and for setting it out so attractively (see page 14).

And the summer would not be complete without a Strawberry Tea which will be served in the garden at 34 Oxford Road on Saturday 12th July between 3pm and 5pm. We hope to be entertained by Colin Jackson and his ukulele band. Let us hope and pray for a sunny afternoon. All will be welcome, but please let us know in advance if you will be coming.

Stuart Baker

**FOR ALL ENQUIRIES TO OR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT US
BY EMAIL info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk OR PHONE THE VICAR: 07872 400718**

Hello **THE WORD** readers!

I wonder, can you sing a rainbow?

At a recent baptism preparation session we were challenged to think about songs about rainbows! We came up with a few, how many can you think of?



You may be able to guess that we reflect upon the rainbow in this context as we think about the promises of God. Ultimately, we reflect on the promise of God in Genesis 9: 12-17 “As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living beings, I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings. When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth. That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings.”

We have been blessed with some beautiful sunny weather recently so we may not have seen many rainbows recently but many people hold special memories of seeing a rainbow at a significant moment which has brought them closer to God or brought them comfort and peace. I believe this is because rainbows are special, you can see God in them because God created them specifically to speak to people.

In baptism we reflect on the promises we will make to God and the importance of keeping promises.

God, here in Genesis, refers to the promise as a covenant, a special and sacred agreement that the language of ‘promise’ struggles to capture.

God promises an everlasting covenant of life. At this point it seems that it is in relation to the flood only. But as we now have the privilege to see, God honours this promise so much more by sending His Son, the Way, the Truth and The Life in order to accomplish His great plan of salvation.

In Jesus, God’s sacred promise to the world was fulfilled. It’s like the rainbow was the foretelling that is visible to all and Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s merciful plan to redeem all

people to Himself who is to be made known to the world, through our obedience as Christ’s followers to the great commission: to go into all the world and make and baptize disciples.

The rainbow brings us comfort in physically seeing God in His creation in the world. Personally, I have found real comfort in seeing rainbows at significant moments when I may have been praying to know God is at work in a situation. Many of us in Southport may remember in January this year, the rainbow that appeared over our town as the sentencing of Axel Rudakubana was taking place. In the midst of a dark and painful day a sign of God’s presence appeared in the sky which was appreciated by many I spoke to.

Rainbows often appear after or during a dark period and signify a more immediately hopeful future. Just as Jesus offers this to those who turn to Him, walk with Him and put their hope in Him, we have the privilege of looking forward to an eternity with God in a place where there is no more tears, pain or suffering.

I’m sure we will all remember Rainbows sweeping over the world during the Covid global pandemic. Children began to put their drawings of rainbows up in their windows and they quickly spread over social media and news channels. Soon, they became a welcome symbol of the NHS in the UK as the rainbow was acknowledged by all people as being a symbol of hope.

Rainbows are a synonym of better times, of hope and an encouragement to have faith. So, as you think of those songs that speak of rainbows I encourage you to look to Jesus, the fulfilment of God’s promises and to stand steadfast in that Living Hope that God has provided.

And the next time you see a rainbow, take a moment to look, reflect and perhaps spend a moment in prayer, giving thanks and committing to remain faithful in hope in whatever situation you may find yourself in.

As God is faithful to His promises, may we, in all obedience, remain faithful to Him.

Love, Jennie (& Faith – my new dog!) xx



WHO'S WHAT AT ST. JOHN'S

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Churchwarden:	Clive Morris (564206)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Amanda Potts (07530 950100)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Gift Aid Secretary:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Stuart Baker (560518)
Lead Safeguarding Officer & Recruiter	Stuart Baker (560518)

Transport Officer:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Church of England Children's Society:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
Mothers' Union:	Mrs. Linda Caton (564737)
Girl Guides	Mrs. Janette Law (565951)
St. John's Brownies:	Mrs. Helen Jones and
Brownie Guiders:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
St. John's Rainbows:	Mrs. Lesley Scott
Church Flowers:	Mrs. Cath Whiteside (07732 993025)
Magazine Editor:	Stuart Baker (560518)
Magazine Printer:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)
Eco Champions:	Mrs. Elizabeth Rothwell and Duncan Rothwell (564192)


St John's Birkdale

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[Resources](#)



WELCOME
We're glad you're here

[ABOUT US](#)

[Look at our upcoming events - click here for details!](#)

Visit our website

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

- Find out about what's going on at St John's
- Check out the calendar for upcoming events
- Listen to the weekly talks
- Find out about booking the hall
- Free on-line bible
- Show it to your friends and family

**God centred, Relationship driven,
Life transforming**



Making Donations to our church through online banking

The church's bank details are:

Account name:

Parochial Church Council of St John's Parish (Birkdale)

Sort Code: 60-20-11

Account Number: 86882120

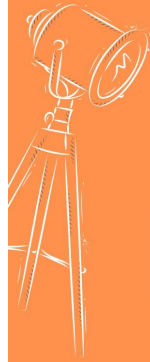
WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



Pray Together

**Thursday @ 7.30pm
on Zoom
Meeting ID: 83550743780
Passcode:
7ehHEK**

The prayer meetings are on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays** each month and last half an hour. This month they will be on **3rd and 17th July**. If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker or Clive Morris. Do join us if you can. See page **31** for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.



FILM NIGHTS

January 10th
February 14th
March 14th
April 18th - Good Friday special with Fish Supper
£15 please book
May 9th
June 20th
July 4th



Contact Christine: 01704 560518
Start: 6.30pm with hot drinks & Cake
For which we charge £5

St John's Hall, PR8 4JP

Our copyright licence does not permit us to advertise the titles of the films outside our church or by publications. A list of films will be displayed on the noticeboards in the church, and details can be requested from Christine.

STJOHNSBIRKDALE.CO.UK

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

14 JUNE SUMMER FAIR 10AM - 3PM	12 JULY STRAWBERRY TEA 3PM - 5PM	19 SEPTEMBER COUNTRY & WESTERN NIGHT 7PM	26 OCTOBER HARVEST CELEBRATION 12PM	15 NOVEMBER COLOUR PARTY 7PM
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**5 - 6
DECEMBER**
CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL & FAIR

FRIDAY
Coffee, Cake & Chat

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIRKDALE
MONTHLY
2ND FRIDAYS
10.30AM**

**NEXT MEETING:
11th JULY**

WHAT MORE IS ON AT ST. JOHN'S

POTTERY PAINTING

open to adults and children accompanied by an adult

A Space to potter, paint & talk

Drop in and Connect with others

Tuesdays 3pm - 5pm

Paint a pot & take it home

St John's Church Hall
St John's Road, PR8 4JP

Refreshments available.
Donations welcome

COME AND JOIN US!

For More Information

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

Free for a limited time dependent on funding
suggested donation £2

GODSPEED

INDOOR CYCLING CLASSES

TUESDAY 7.30PM
THURSDAY 6PM
FRIDAY 9.30AM



Scan to book!

St John's
Birkdale

Jolly Tots

Every Friday from 9th May
1pm - 2.30pm

For tots, babies & bumps

St John's Hall, St John's Road, PR8 4JP

Connect with other parents
and bring your little one for
nursery rhymes, dancing, play,
stories and more.



CONTACT

info@stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

stjohnsbirkdale.co.uk

07872 400718

St John's
Birkdale

Monday 21st July
at 7.30pm



Growth

HOME
GROUP

The Bible Course

Explore the BIG story

@ 34 Oxford Road PR8 2EQ

christinebaker178@outlook.com

WHAT'S ON WEDNESDAYS

AT ST JOHN'S

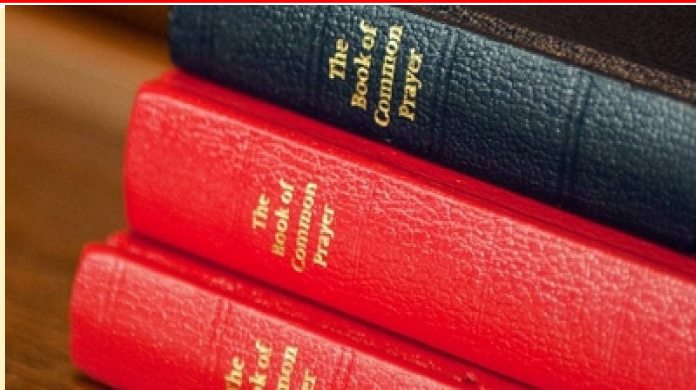
WEDNESDAYS 2nd & 16th JULY

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a Midweek traditional Communion service at 10.30am in church on [Wednesdays 2nd and 16th July](#).

On 2nd July the service will be followed by Brunch: do stay and enjoy fellowship and a bite to eat.

On 16th July the service will be followed by tea, coffee and biscuits.



WEDNESDAYS 9th & 23rd JULY



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
2pm

God's
Word

STUDY
GROUP

@ the small hall, St John's
Church PR8 4JP

revroydoran@btinternet.com



2nd & 4th Wednesdays
7.30pm

Growth

HOME
GROUP

@ the vicarage - 17 Kirkstall
Road PR8 4RA

food. fellowship. fun.

revjenniferhardy@gmail.com

Worry is like a rocking
chair; it will give you
something to do, but it
won't get you anywhere. –
Anon



Thoughts on aging:

Age: the only thing that comes to us without
effort. – Anon

If you will be cherished when you are old, be
courteous while you are young. – John Lyly

St John's
Birkdale

DRIVEN BY IES

JOIN US FOR

STRAWBERRY TEA IN THE GARDEN



SATURDAY

JULY

12

2025

3 O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

34 Oxford Road

contact Christine on 07821982477

ADULTS £6

UNDER 16 £2

Note: so that we shall know how many we are to cater for this is a ticketed event. We will be delighted if you will join us but please obtain a ticket in advance.

MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE

Brunch will be served after
the service



WEDNESDAY
2nd JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH

*Worship on the Third Sunday
after Trinity*

SUNDAY 6th JULY
HOLY COMMUNION
10.30am service IN CHURCH and via
zoom & phone

Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**The subject of Jennie's
talk:**

**Fruits of the Spirit
JOY**

The Text: Hebrews 12: 1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,
2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Worship on the Fourth
Sunday after Trinity*

SUNDAY 13th JULY
10.30am service IN CHURCH and via
zoom & phone

Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The subject of Christine's Talk:

**Fruits of the Spirit
PATIENCE**

The Text: Hebrews 6: 10-12

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.
11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized.
12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Church Notice: Churchyard maintenance is becoming increasingly difficult, so it will be appreciated if parishioners cut the grass around their own graves.

Open wide A lady was very nervous about her appointment at the dentist. She sought courage from her Bible. The verse her finger landed on was Psalm 81:10: 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.'

**MIDWEEK TRADITIONAL
COMMUNION SERVICE**
Tea, coffee and biscuits will be
served after the service



**WEDNESDAY
16th JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH**

**Worship on the Fifth Sunday
after Trinity with Holy Baptisms**

**SUNDAY 20th JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH and by zoom and phone**

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**The subject of
Jennie's talk:**

**Fruits of the Spirit
PEACE**

The Text: John 14: 23-27

23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.
24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.
25 All this I have spoken while still with you.
26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.
27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

**Worship on the Sixth Sunday
after Trinity**

**SUNDAY 27th JULY
10.30am
IN CHURCH and via zoom & phone**

**In this service there will be three minutes of
silence remembering those killed and injured
last 29th July**

Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**The subject of
Roy's talk:**

**Fruits of the Spirit
KINDNESS**

The Text: Luke 7: 36-50

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.
37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.
38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Continued on the next page

The Text: Luke 7: 36–50 *continued*

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.

46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.

47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

TUESDAY 29th JULY

9.00am—4.00pm

The Church will be open for prayer, reflection and lighting candles in remembrance of the tragic events of 29th July 2024.

7.00pm

There will be a service of Evening Prayer in Church
"Faith, Love and Hope".

St John's Prayers for those in need

We believe in the power of prayer and we are eager to include as many people who currently need prayer in our twice monthly prayer

meetings and on the screen on a Sunday. We aim to keep the prayer list current and to receive regular updates on people who need longer term prayer so that we can pray meaningfully at the zoom prayer meeting.

Names will be on the list for a month at a time, so the lists will be refreshed at the beginning of each calendar month.

If you would like to be on the list for August **please let Rev. Jennie know** with a current update of why you would like prayer so that we can use that information on a Thursday.

If you would like to add someone else to the list, provided you have asked their permission, then pass their name, and any other information on why they would like prayer, to Jennie.



In 2020, there were 591 ordinands, dropping to 370 in 2024; in the summer of that year, the General Synod was told that numbers had dropped by 38 per cent since 2020. Parishes advertising a vacancy frequently get no replies, while the number of interregnums grows daily. Countless churches depend for regular ministry on non-stipendiary or retired clergy. The ordination of women in 1994 was welcome for many reasons, but we must also not forget that it delivered the Church from an even greater clergy crisis.



Sharing Good News

by Rev. Roy Doran

Isn't it lovely to hear Good News? In the world at this time everything seems to be chaotic. Last week I received a magazine from "Good News for Everyone," and this is a

magazine from people who spend a lot of time and effort in sharing "Good News" in a very real and practical way. They distribute Bibles or New Testaments both locally and world-wide. The Southport, Formby & West Lancs Branch attended the Edge Hill University and gave out His Precious Word to many students. What a lovely thing to do.

Well, we have some Good News, because here at St. John's we are longing to encourage not only church members, but also those people outside of the church family to consider the Good News of Jesus in a greater way than perhaps they have before.

How are we doing this? Well, I'm sure you know: through our Bible Study Groups that are held on various days, times and locations throughout the month. You will see all the information in this month's **WORD** so please do have a look and consider how you can deepen your relationship with the Saviour of the World, Jesus Christ.

When I was Vicar in St. Helens there was a church called St. Mark's Haydock and this church had well in excess of 1000 members who met weekly in private houses to look at God's Holy Word together. The groups were known as "Cell Groups" and the purpose of these groups was to deepen the knowledge of

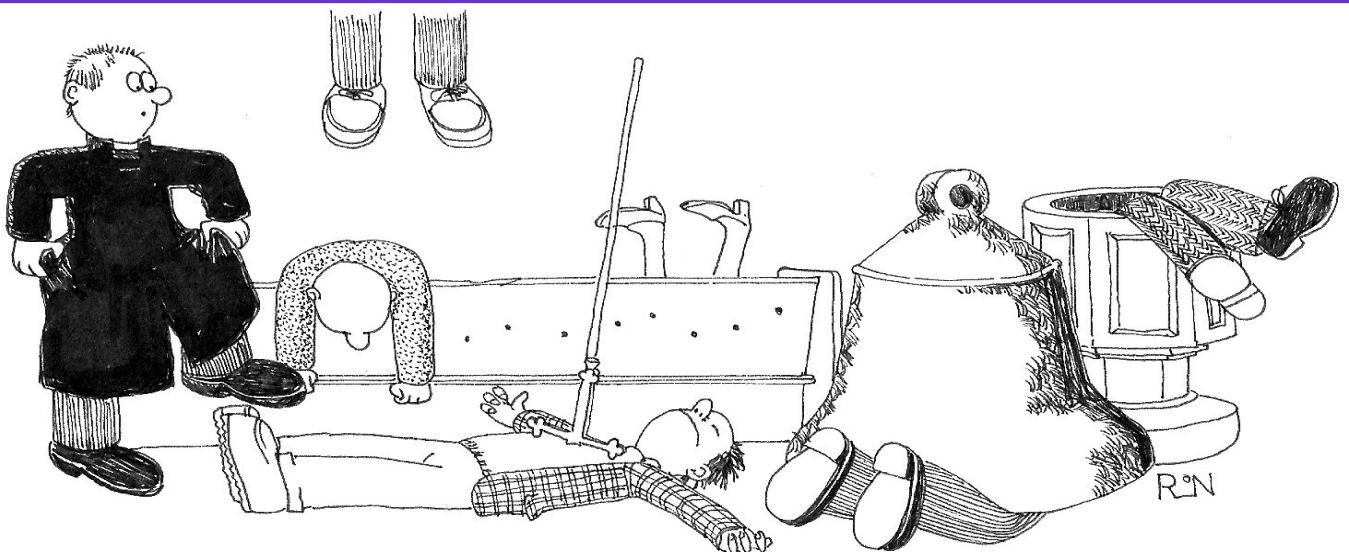
those who attended the Lord Jesus and to encourage and develop potential people who had leadership qualities to leave the group and start another one elsewhere. They started with one small group and this grew both in fellowship and in the understanding of the importance of growing and sharing this Good News with those who never darkened the doorstep of the church unless it was for a wedding, baptism or funeral. Because the Holy Spirit was at work within the lives of the group members, the Cells developed and multiplied into the church it became.

Now why am I sharing this with you? For one reason and it is this. Such growth can only happen when people of faith attend such groups and are willing to share their experiences with those outside of the church family. We have a potential to grow the church here at St. John's because of the groups which are now in place, but it can only happen when the rest of the church family attend and support the work being done here and now.

Remember, that the Lord's command was for all faithful people to share the Good News around the globe.

Will you join us in this vital mission and share the Good News here within Birkdale. I know the recent vision day where the PCC met and discussed how they hoped to reach out and see the church grow was something which everyone agreed with, so what I have shared with you I believe is from the Lord and I have no doubts whatsoever that the Lord will grow the church, and we will see people's lives enriched with the Good News.

Love in the Lord – Roy Doran.



It was a normal Sunday Morning in Midsomer Parish Church

A true jewel in Liverpool's crown has had its listed status upgraded to recognise the building's architectural brilliance.

The Metropolitan Cathedral, affectionately known as a "wigwam" due to its unique shape, has been awarded Grade I-listed status by the government.

Sir Frederick Gibberd's design was considered revolutionary when the cathedral was built in the 1960s and "transformed" Catholic worship spaces, Historic England (HE) said.

Liverpool's Catholic cathedral, built between 1962 and 1967, sits at the opposite end of Hope Street to its Anglican counterpart.

Archbishop of Liverpool John Sherrington welcomed the landmark building's upgrade from Grade II*-listed. He said the cathedral had been described as "the soul of the city", adding that it brought hope to thousands of visitors each year.

HE spokeswoman Sarah Charlesworth said the cathedral "transformed British cathedral design with its revolutionary centralised plan, representing a radical departure from traditional designs".

Liverpool Riverside MP Kim Johnson said the Metropolitan Cathedral was an "instantly recognisable symbol" of the city. She added the recognition "rightly honours its architectural significance and the prominent place it holds in our skyline – a true jewel in Liverpool's crown". Liverpool City Region mayor Steve Rotherham said: "Liverpool is a city with a proud architectural and cultural heritage, and the Metropolitan Cathedral is one of its most iconic landmarks. The bold, modern design broke new ground and has become a beacon of faith, hope and innovation, not just for our region but across the world."

During the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852) the Catholic population of Liverpool increased dramatically. About half a million Irish, who were predominantly Catholic, fled to England to escape the famine; many embarked from Liverpool to travel to North America while others remained in the city. Because of the increase in the Catholic population, the Bishop of Liverpool, Alexander Goss, saw the need for a cathedral. The location he chose was the grounds of St. Edward's College on St. Domingo Road, Everton. In 1853 Goss awarded the commission for the building of the new cathedral to Edward Pugin. By 1856 the Lady chapel of the new cathedral had been

completed. Due to financial resources being diverted to the education of Catholic children, work on the building ceased at this point.

Following the purchase of the 9-acre former Brownlow Hill workhouse site in 1930 Sir Edwin Lutyens was commissioned to provide a design which would be an appropriate response to the Neo-gothic Anglican cathedral designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (see **THE WORD**, March 2025). Lutyens' design was intended to create a massive structure that would have become the second-largest church in the world. Building work based on Lutyens' design began on Whit Monday, 5 June 1933, being paid for mostly by the contributions of working class Catholics of the burgeoning industrial port. In 1941, the restrictions of World War II wartime and a rising cost forced construction to stop. In 1956, work recommenced on the crypt, which was finished in 1958. Thereafter, Lutyens' design for the cathedral was considered too costly and was abandoned with only the crypt complete.

A competition to design the cathedral was held in 1959. The requirement was first, seating for a congregation of 3,000 (later reduced to 2,000) all with direct line of sight to the altar, so they could be more involved in the celebration of the Mass; and, second, for the existing Lutyens crypt to be incorporated in the structure. The competition was won by Sir Frederick Gibberd who achieved these requirements by designing a circular building with the altar at its centre, and by transforming the roof of the crypt into an elevated platform, with the cathedral standing at one end.

Construction began in October 1962 and less than five years later, on the Feast of Pentecost 14 May 1967, the completed cathedral was consecrated. The cathedral is built in concrete with a Portland stone cladding and an aluminium covering (later replaced with stainless steel) to the roof. Its plan is circular, with 13 chapels around its perimeter. The shape of the cathedral is conical, and it is surmounted by a tower in the shape of a truncated cone. Rising from the upper ring beam is a lantern tower, containing windows of stained glass, and at its peak is a crown of pinnacles.





The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'

On Why People Complain to the Vicar—and How to Ignore Them

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, you have received your first letter of complaint. I am not wholly unsympathetic with your complainant, as attempting to marry the bride to the best man would have created havoc with the seating arrangements at the reception. However, you must learn that receiving letters of complaint is an integral part of the ordained ministry. After 50 years of parish life, the number of such letters I have received are now held in bound volumes.

The anonymous ones you will receive, invariably written in green ink on lined notepaper, can be safely consigned to your wastepaper basket, along with all mail, from whatever source, labelled 'Urgent'. You will receive letters complaining that you did not pray for someone who was in hospital, regardless of the fact that you knew nothing of it. Probably by the next post, you will receive a letter complaining that you did pray for someone in hospital – when they had wanted to keep their cosmetic surgery secret.

Those who regard themselves as guardians of doctrinal purity will write complaining of the heresies contained in the previous Sunday's sermon. These can be filed with those letters that complain that your sermons are too short, along with those who complain that they are too long.

The hourly striking of the church clock is a perennial favourite for complaints. I usually reply by saying that we are currently exploring the possibility of getting it to strike the quarters too.

Letters of complaint will arrive in November, complaining that the church is too cold, so making prayer impossible. Others will drop on the doormat in April saying that it is too hot, so making prayer impossible. In Spring, some will write that the churchyard should be mown more often, while others will complain that it is mown too often and ruins it as a habitat for wildlife. The annual Summer 'Procession of Witness' generates complaints that the brass band ruined the slumbers of parishioners having a Sunday lie-in. Then comes Harvest, there will be the letters complaining that they did not receive a Harvest gift, which was particularly unforgivable, as their grandmother had once sung in the choir. Thus, the annual round is accompanied by reams of notepaper.

The only letter of complaint I have really treasured came from the bishop, rebuking me for never having attended any meeting when he was present. I have had it framed and hung on the study wall.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

A Big Thank You

from **Denise Davey** for all the items donated by the kind people of St John's which enabled her to put together a number of hampers for the Summer Fair which was lovely to be able to do.

(Denise: I hope that's big enough! Ed)

Hee-haw Means Summer Fair in donkey speak



Donkeys on the lawn, pottery painting, afternoon tea. No matter whether active or not, old, young or just young at heart, the Summer Fair certainly hit its target with something for everyone and plenty to buy.

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited feature was the arrival of Seamus and Arnold, two donkeys from a donkey farm at Scarisbrick, Seamus previously pulled a milk float in Ireland and Arnold spent most of his time with the ladies. Say no more! Surprisingly, as many women of a certain age with no intentions of riding a donkey were awaiting their arrival as were children, the ladies there to pet the animals, with one well prepared and feeding them with carrots.

A buzz of chatter across the hall created a healthy atmosphere with visitors obviously enjoying the stalls offering everything from books, greeting cards and trinkets to plants, other stalls and an all-day cafe. It was all so well laid out that at no time did I see large queues although after the fair had concluded I overheard three ladies comparing their purchases, all having spent more than intended and one only having three pence left in her purse! Little wonder then that overall the fair returned more than £1000 for needy church coffers.

Until Seamus and Arnold arrived, pottery painting seemed to be a big draw with the little ones and while I would have expected some enthusiastic paint spatter requiring apron protection, the reality was much more careful application by very young children. One three year old little girl put more concentration into painting a pottery aeroplane than any of the workers at the Airbus factory ever do on the real thing. Then once painted, good old sunshine cooperated to dry the pottery outside in quick sticks.

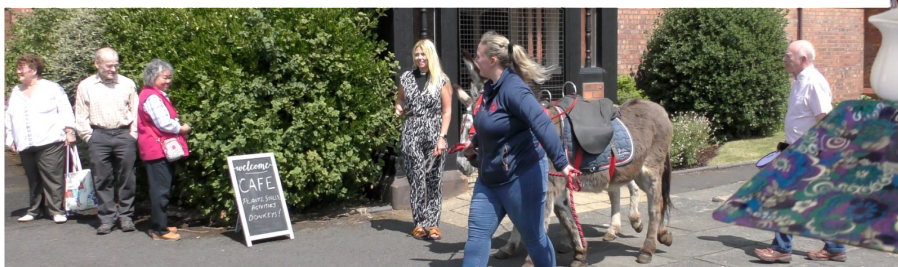
At the other end of the age scale, afternoon tea with plenty of options and everything daintily presented on individual plates was a good seller, while for smaller appetites an all-event cafe catered for everyone.

Elsewhere, SSAFA, the armed forces charity, occupied their now traditional location in the hall displaying a range of plants for sale. SSAFA have become so familiar at St John's events that we tend to take them for granted but the display at the fair would have done justice to the Chelsea (or Southport) flower show.

With its notice claiming Books £1 each, one careful owner, the book stall attracted my wife, the stall holder offering her recommendations but that notice made me wonder just how many not so careful owners there had been. It didn't matter for the book she selected then kept her attention all week.

Looking back, the fair clearly raised much needed finances and gave a lot of pleasure to a lot of people. Let's not forget though that an event of this type would not, could not exist at all if it were not for the unseen volunteers working tirelessly for hours on end, before, during and after the event.

A big thank-you to all involved in any way.



COLOURFUL CLERGYMEN

Daniel in the Lions' Den

Every profession and vocation has eccentrics. In recent issues of **THE WORD** we have looked at a few clergymen whose behaviour was, to say the least, odd. This month Stuart Baker takes a look at one of the strangest of all, the **Reverend Harold Davidson**.



Almost 100 years ago Harold Davidson became perhaps the most famous clergyman in Britain and beyond although he is largely unheard of now. He was the Rector of the parish of Stiffkey, a village in Norfolk which is an unlikely place from which to achieve celebrity status, but he did.

He was born in 1875, the son of a vicar, and from an early age he fancied himself as a budding comic actor. He once played a role in Brandon Thomas's hilarious farce "Charley's Aunt." But in his early twenties he succumbed to his father's wish that he should study for holy orders and enter the priesthood. Thus far, he had done nothing to achieve celebrity status. But things started to change when, walking in London one foggy evening, he came across a 16-year-old homeless girl preparing to throw herself into the Thames. From that moment, he said, "I kept my eyes open for opportunities to help that type of girl, namely, the country girl stranded on the alluring streets of London".

And so he did. Even after becoming rector of Stiffkey in 1906 he spent his weekdays in London, trudging the streets in search of adolescents. Some were prostitutes, others simply waitresses in tearooms (from some of which he was barred), who were baffled by his insistence on redeeming them. He was appointed as a chaplain to various theatres and he judged chorus girls and struggling actresses to be most in need of pastoral attention. As his most entertaining biographer, the late Ronald Blythe, later remarked: "His downfall ... was girls. Not a girl, not five or six girls even, not a hundred, but the entire tremulous universe of girlhood. Shingled heads, clear cheeky eyes, nifty legs, warm, blunt-fingered workaday hands, ... and, most importantly, good strong healthy teeth, besotted him." It is not known whether his motives were entirely noble or not. He was, at least, naïve. He proudly acquired the nickname of "the Prostitutes' Padre." The Bishop of Norwich was not impressed by this and when Davidson was criticised he insisted that it was the "proudest title that a true priest of Christ can hold". He added "I believe with all my soul that if [Christ] were born again in London in the present day he would be found constantly walking in Piccadilly".

Sadly, for Davidson, some of his parishioners did not agree and after a long campaign by his churchwarden and a complaint by a 17 year old girl he was summoned before a Consistory Court in 1932. This became a real news story. How the newspapers love a scandal, especially if it involves a clergyman and actresses! Large crowds attended the hearing which lasted three months and created a sensation displacing

the rise of Hitler and the Japanese attack on Shanghai from the headlines. Showgirls and actresses were called as witnesses against him but only one of them alleged any serious misconduct. There was a deliciously ludicrous moment when Davidson claimed not to know what a "buttock" was, despite the fact that he had persuaded a young girl to lance a boil on one of his own.

The most damning evidence was a photograph of the befuddled vicar with a naked 15-year-old girl, half-wrapped in a shawl. Davidson claimed that he had been set up, since he had assumed she was wearing a bathing suit. But the court was unimpressed. He was convicted of offences of immorality under the Clergy Discipline Act and that autumn he was formally defrocked. The Church of England was a serious institution in those days!

That is not the end of this story. Davidson, who had been made bankrupt in the late 1920s after being defrauded by an American conman, tried to raise money by reading sermons whilst sitting in a barrel on Blackpool's seafront charging curious onlookers 2d. to see him, alongside the "Dog-Faced Man", the "Bearded Lady", "The World's Fattest Man", "Mariana the Gorilla Girl", and the "Three-Legged Boy of Italy." Sometimes, as a special treat for the public, he locked himself in a glass-fronted oven while a mechanical devil poked him with a pitchfork, and at other times he froze himself in a glass fronted refrigerated unit.

When his Blackpool audiences waned he moved to Skegness where he performed as "Daniel in the Lion's Den" with two circus lions, Freddie and Toto, in Captain Fred Rye's animal show. But here his luck, like his



money, ran out. On the evening of July 28, 1937 he was cracking his whip when Freddie lost patience and charged at him. And so, as Blythe mordantly puts it, "the little clergyman from Norfolk and the lion acted out the classical Christian martyrdom to the full". His obituaries claimed that on his deathbed he briefly recovered consciousness and asked if the story would make the front page. This may be apocryphal but as a showman it is fitting that he would be interested in his reviews even if he would not be there to read them.

As a footnote: the Church of England later considered that it had been harsh upon Davidson and decided to pay a pension to his widow. And some friends and parishioners paid for his funeral.

The writer-historian A. N. Wilson summarised Davidson as a "Tragic buffoon cum Christian Martyr". In his history of Britain in the inter-war years, A. J. P. Taylor wrote that "Davidson offered a parable of the age. He attracted more attention than, say, Cosmo Gordon Lang, archbishop of Canterbury. Which man deserves a greater place in the history books?"

Source material:

Fergus Butler-Gallie "A Field Guide to the English Clergy"

Jonathan Tucker "The Troublesome Priest"

Dominic Sandbrook "The Times" newspaper 6.6.2025

James Morton "The Times" newspaper 21.3.2024

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; Wikipedia

SUMMER SOCIAL

When we arranged to hold the Summer Social on Saturday 14th June, I was very sceptical knowing that in previous years we haven't always been blessed with the best of weather in June, but at that meeting Rev Jennie said we should "have faith".

However, when I woke up that morning to rain and thunder, I admit that my "faith" in the weather was rocked! But to my surprise, by the time we were opening the Fair, the rain had stopped and we were actually blessed with sunshine for the rest of the day! My, oh my! Amazing! The people started to arrive and a wonderful day was enjoyed by all who came, including the children who were surprised by the addition of having donkey rides.

A first for St John's!

As always, I must express my thanks to Rev. Jennie and the Fair Committee for all their hard work in making our event a success; to everyone who helped in any way, and especially to you all who supported it by attending on the day. Without you it would not have been possible.

I am pleased to be able to report that we made just over £1,000, which was a wonderful result.

My thanks to you all.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer, with hopefully, more of God's sunshine.

Sylvia Kent



The Canterbury Tales

Stuart Baker revisits some of these stories in search of their moral lessons. This month we look at

The Reeve's Tale

Last month we searched, with some difficulty, for a moral in The Miller's Tale in which the miller poked fun at a carpenter. The only pilgrim who disliked The Miller's Tale was Oswald, the Reeve, who took the story as a personal affront because he was once a carpenter. He told the Miller that he would pay him back for such a story, and so he did.

This was his tale:

A dishonest miller named Symkyn lived at Trumpington, close to Cambridge. He had a round face, a pug nose and a bald head, was a bully and played the bagpipes. He regularly stole corn and meal brought to his mill for grinding. One day, the manciple (or steward) of the college was too ill to go to the mill to watch the miller grind his corn, and, in his absence, the miller robbed him outrageously. Two students at the college, John and Alan, were enraged at the news of the theft and volunteered to take a sack of corn to the mill. When they arrived they announced that they would watch the milling. The miller, sensing that the students wanted to prevent him from stealing, untethered the students' horse. When John and Alan found the horse to be missing they chased it until dark before catching it.

Meanwhile, the miller emptied half the flour from the sack and refilled it with bran.

Because it was now dark the students asked the miller to put them up for the night. The miller, who had a haughty wife, a twenty-year old daughter, and an infant son, agreed. Because the house was small, they all slept in the same room but in separate beds: John and Alan in one bed, the Miller and his wife in another with the cradle beside, and the daughter in the third.

While the miller and his family slept, John and Alan thought of ways to get revenge.

We shall not dwell upon the indelicate parts of the original tale. Suffice it to say that by subterfuge John enjoyed a night of passion with the miller's willing wife and Alan did likewise with the miller's willing daughter.

At dawn Alan said goodbye to the daughter who told him where to find his stolen flour. When Alan went to wake John he got into the miller's bed by mistake and, thinking that he was talking to John, told the miller about his night with the daughter. The miller rose from his bed in a fury. The miller's wife, thinking that the swearing was coming from one of the students, grabbed a club and, mistaking her husband for one of the clerks, struck him down. Alan and John gathered their ground wheat and flour and fled the premises. Thus, the miller who prided himself on his cleverness ended up being the butt of the joke which was heartily enjoyed by the Cook, Roger, who told the next tale.

The moral of The Reeve's Tale:

One who does evil should not expect good. Those who cheat others will eventually be cheated themselves.

Actually, that is not very moral at all! We can hope that those who cheat others will eventually receive their just comeuppance, in this world or the next, but as Christians we resist the temptation to resort to cheating to exact revenge. But this miller deserved some form of retributive justice.. for playing the bagpipes if for nothing else!

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What Have You Done

A poem by Penny Candlin

What have you done
Caught up in your own thoughts and feelings
Caught up in the euphoria of the moment
What have you done
Caught up with the day to day chores of living
Caught up with the mundane and unimportant
What have you done
Caught up looking in, too scared to look out
Caught up in the familiarity afraid of change
What have you done
Change will come are you ready to fight your ground
Already the enemy draws up his plans for battle and
gathers his troops
Already there is a sinister undercurrent of apathy it
doesn't concern me
What have you done
But idly stood by while others suffer
But turned your back and hope it goes away or
someone else will sort it out
What have you done
What sacrifices have you made to bring about
God's kingdom
What plans have you made to survive what is to
come
What have you done
God will stand by our side and give us the strength
Banish the fear of not being good enough
Banish the fear of the unknown
Banish the fear
For those who truly rely on God there is no fear.

Bananas could be lost to climate change, Christian Aid warns

Bananas are in danger. Almost half of the world's banana-growing regions may be lost to climate change in the next 50 years, a new report has warned.

Bananas are the world's fourth most important food crop globally — but rising temperatures, droughts, and fungal infections are threatening where most of the world's crops grow, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A recent study by Christian Aid found that 80 per cent of global banana exports come from this region, but that 60 per cent of the land currently used for the crop will be unsuitable, due to climate change, by 2080.

The director of policy and campaigns at Christian Aid, Osai Ojigbo, said: "Bananas are not just the world's favourite fruit, but they are also an essential food for millions of people. We need to wake up to the danger posed by climate change to this vital crop."

UK consumers eat more bananas than any other European country, eating on average about 85 bananas a year each.

We are probably all direct descendants of Charlemagne or William the Conqueror

We may not be entitled to dine with royalty or lay claim to what remains of the Holy Roman Empire but it is an overwhelming statistical likelihood that most if not all of us could trace our ancestry back to William the Conqueror and Charlemagne.

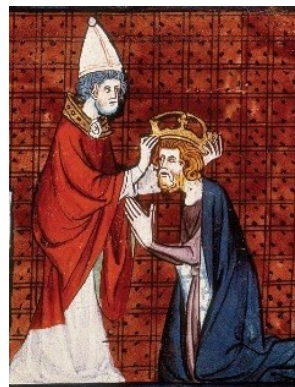
Consider the facts: someone of English ancestry living today will have had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc. Spin this back ten centuries and their number of ancestors hits about eight billion, many times the total number of humans alive on earth at the time when those two historical figures were alive, let alone in England and Normandy.

So, a person living now must be descended from a person living then by many, many different routes, not just one. That makes the chances of any given person with any English ancestry at all not descending from William or Charlemagne by at least one of those routes so vanishingly small as to be, in practical terms, impossible.

If any of our readers have traced their ancestry and found any interesting characters please share this with us and write to the Editor.



William the Conqueror



Charlemagne being crowned by the Pope

Social Events Coming Soon at St Peter's Birkdale (St Peter's Road)

23rd July: Bingo
31st August: Family Fun Day
27th September: Barn Dance
13th December: Alistair Lee (professional singer)

For more details about these events please contact stpetersbirkdale@hotmail.com



An Introduction to Books in the New Testament: Romans

By Canon Paul Hardingham

'Paul's letter to Rome is the high peak of Scripture...all roads in the Bible led to Romans, and all views afforded by the Bible are seen most clearly from Romans' (J I Packer)

Paul probably wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome around AD 57 at Corinth, on his third missionary journey. The original recipients of the letter were predominantly Gentile, although Jews would have constituted a substantial minority of the congregation.

Paul set out to explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's plan of salvation, as the Jewish Christians were being rejected by the larger Gentile group in the church. Paul begins by showing that both Jews and Gentiles are sinners in need of salvation. He shows how the life, death and resurrection of Jesus eternally affects both world history and every person.

This salvation, secured by Jesus, must be received *by faith*, as the example of Abraham shows. As salvation is not just about starting the Christian journey, Paul goes on to show how believers are freed from sin, law and death. This is made possible both through their union with Christ in His death and resurrection and by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

The theme of the book centres on the Gospel of Christ, which brings us into a right standing with God through faith: *'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*' (Rom. 1:16,17).



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W CROSS WORD

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV. Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

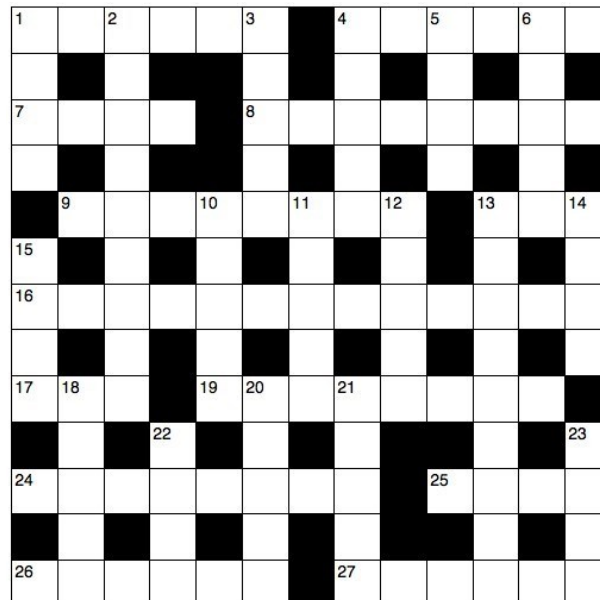
Solution below

Across

- 1 'I pray that out of his glorious — he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being' (Ephesians 3:16) (6)
4 'Saul's father Kish and — father Ner were sons of Abiel' (1 Samuel 14:51) (6)
7 'Praise the Lord, O my — ' (Psalm 103:1) (4)
8 See 5 Down
9 Laws (1 Kings 11:33) (8)
13 'Who of you by worrying can — a single hour to his life?' (Luke 12:25) (3)
16 Artistry (Exodus 31:5) (13)
17 'Your young men will see visions, your — men will dream dreams' (Acts 2:17) (3)
19 How David described his Lord (Psalm 19:14) (8)
24 'If this city is built and its — — restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates' (Ezra 4:16) (5,3)
25 'The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you — for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15) (4)
26 Intended destination of arrows (Lamentations 3:12) (6)
27 Eve hit (anag.) (6)

Down

- 1 'For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find — for your souls' (Matthew 11:29) (4)
2 Where Peter was when he denied Christ three times (Luke 22:55) (9)
3 Remarkable early 20th-century Indian evangelist, a convert from Hinduism, — Sundar Singh (5)
4 'Now the king had put the officer on whose — — leaned in charge of the gate' (2 Kings 7:17) (3,2)



- 5 and 8 Across The Lover describes this facial feature of the Beloved thus: 'Your — is like the tower of Lebanon looking towards — ' (Song of Songs 7:4) (4,8)
6 'Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled — your waist' (Ephesians 6:14) (5)
10 Trout (anag.) (5)
11 Easily frightened (1 Thessalonians 5:14) (5)
12 The ability to perceive (Ecclesiastes 10:3) (5)
13 One of the clans descended from Benjamin (Numbers 26:38) (9)
14 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who — bread into the bowl with me" (Mark 14:20) (4)
15 Resound (Zephaniah 2:14) (4)
18 Traditional seat of the Dalai Lama (5)
20 Precise (John 4:53) (5)
21 Build (Ezekiel 4:2) (5)
22 Beat harshly (Acts 22:25) (4)
23 Darius, who succeeded Belshazzar as king of the Babylonians, was one (Daniel 5:31) (4)

In our Book of Remembrance In July

- 1st David Smith, 2005
5th Selena Clare, 1965
7th Denis Haslam, 1983
9th Leslie Holme, 1974
Tom Ball, 1994
10th Sarah Shaw, 1969
11th George Close, 1978
15th Alan Burton, 1999
16th Colin Johnson, 1979
James Turner, 1986

- 19th Geoffrey Sanders, 1994
20th Frank Pacey, 1969
Patricia Gregson, 2024
23rd Evelyn Moore, 2004
24th John Moss, 1987
27th Thelma Karran, 2010
28th John Kent, 1995
30th Robert Hind, 1960
Jimmy Beaumont, 2001
31st Rosemary Quinton, 1998

If any of our readers wish to have the name of a deceased relative inscribed in the Book of Remembrance please contact Stuart Baker

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS:

1, Riches. 4, Abner's. 7, Soul. 8, Damascus. 9, Statues. 13, Add. 16, Craftsmanship. 17, Old. 19, Redeemer. 24, Walls are. 25, Wise. 26, Target. 27, Thieve.

DOWN:

1, Rest. 2, Courtyard. 3, Sadhu. 4, Arm he. 5, Nose. 6, Round. 10, Tutor. 11, Timid. 12, Sense. 13, Ashbelite. 14, Dips. 15, Echo. 18, Lhasa. 20, Exact. 21, Erect. 22, Flog. 23, Mede.

God in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess surveys great works of art, based on various saints of the church.

'He gave us eyes to see them': John Martin's 'Manfred on the Jungfrau'

In July we start looking with eager longing to holidays, a chance to get away from it all - to rest and recharge the batteries of life. Holidays are also a time to explore and visit new places. It might be the wild splendour of the Northumberland coast or the serenity of the Italian lakes, the vastness of the Grand Canyon or the magnificence of the Lake District.

This month's artist had a gift for creating paintings that expressed this epic quality of landscapes. John Martin was born in 1789, and as an artist was drawn to religious and historical scenes on the grand scale. He illustrated the Bible and Milton, and his final works were on the theme of the Last Judgement. These are in the Tate Gallery in London, but for this July we visit the Art Gallery in Birmingham with its amazing collection of over half a million items, including many Pre-Raphaelite treasures. The entrance to this Victorian building is beneath the clock tower known as Old Brum.

The Art Gallery is home to John Martin's watercolour of 1837, 'Manfred on the Jungfrau.' It is a large work, almost 5 feet by 3 feet, capturing the rugged, imposing glory of the Jungfrau.

Now a railway takes tourists to the summit in the Bernese Alps in Switzerland. In the 19th century climbers had to navigate glaciers, high passes and steep precipices. John Martin captures the grandeur of all this in his painting of snow and sky, crags and torrents, mountains and pine trees. Against that immensity we see two characters: Manfred, tortured by guilt and about to throw himself off



the edge, and the mysterious hunter who leads him to safety.

Byron's poem 'Manfred' inspired the music of Tchaikovsky and Schumann, as it inspired John Martin. They were each attracted by the romanticism of man and nature in the poem. Like Manfred and the hunter in the watercolour, we look at this grace and nobility and feel humble and insignificant. Byron wrote:

'How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!'

Manfred seeks redemption, but, sadly, finds only the solace of death. As we look at this painting, we see reflections of the landscapes we shall visit on our holidays. Such beauty, such glory, evoke for us those feelings of wonder and awe that inspired John Martin.

Manfred sees life in its true perspective as he gazes on the majestic scenery of the Bernese Alps. Holidays help us to put life into perspective. Away from the pressure of responsibility and duty, we often realise what is essential in our lives and with those around. We behold the majesty and glory of creation; we see this world as the handiwork of God; and we ask ourselves how we might make our way through it and be always alert to its mystery and its beauty.

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON LAW

Reflections of Lord Denning, one of the foremost English Judges of the twentieth century.

“LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR”

Let us now turn from Truth to Justice. No one reading this doubts, I hope, that it is his duty to be just and fair in all his dealings. But our conception of justice is only the Christian teaching of love. Such at least was the view of William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century. "It is axiomatic," he said, "that love should be the predominant Christian impulse and that the primary form of love in social organisation is Justice." The Christian standpoint is summed up in the Gospel when a certain lawyer asked our Lord "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said unto him "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" And he answering said Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." And he said unto him "Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live."

This precept-love towards God and love towards

your neighbour-is a precept of religion, but nevertheless in many affairs of life, love can only find expression through justice.

William Temple gave this illustration: "Imagine a Trade Union Committee negotiating with an Employer's Federation in an industrial crisis on the verge of a strike. This Committee is to be actuated by love. Oh yes, by all means, but towards whom? Are they to love the workers or the employers? Of course-both. But then that will not help them much to determine what terms ought to be either proposed or accepted. Love in fact finds its primary expression through justice which, in the field of industrial disputes, means in practice that each side should state its case as strongly as it can before the most impartial tribunal available, with determination to accept the award of that tribunal. At least that puts the two parties on a level, and it is to that extent in accordance with the command 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

Copyright in Lord Denning's book is owned by the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship whom we thank for their kind permission in allowing us to publish extracts from it.



Lord Denning,
drawn by Sallon

Why you should drink tea

There is a popular greeting card which says: 'All things are possible with a cup of tea'. And for many of us, that is almost always true.

Tea comes from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, which is often blended with other plants for different flavours, such as Earl Grey or chai. Tea is the UK's favourite hot beverage, which besides from cheering us up, has cancer-fighting properties and can improve our heart and gut health.

So here's what's good about tea:

Tea is rich in polyphenols, which have antioxidant effects on the body, and can reduce inflammation. Milk does not hurt their absorption, so add milk if you like!

Tea has flavanols, which helps your blood to flow and lowers your blood pressure. One study at Harvard found that drinking three to four cups a day means you are less likely to have a heart attack.

Tea is prebiotic, which means it promotes healthier kinds of bacteria in your gut, which helps with your digestion, your respiratory system, and your immune system.

Tea lowers blood sugar, and even the risk of Type 2 diabetes, due to the polyphenols.

Tea may reduce your risk of cancer. Again, the polyphenols are your friends here, as they may be slowing the development of certain types of cancer.

Tea helps you concentrate. Coffee may speed you up, but it can also give you the jitters. Tea contains around 40-50 mg of caffeine, which is only half the amount found in coffee. But tea also has an amino acid called 'L-theanine', which helps produce a feeling of 'calm concentration', by lowering stress and improving mental focus.

Tea improves sleep – due to the polyphenols, L-theanine, theaflavins, thearubigins, and gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which help lower stress and create calm.

Finally, black tea or green tea? Without going into some complicated science, it seems that they are equally healthy to drink. Black tea has more caffeine, which may help if you need more energy!

When life gets you down make a cup of tea— it's the answer to everything!



WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 28

If you ever struggle with doubt, take heart: so did one of the apostles, whose Feast Day is this month. St Thomas just could NOT believe that the Jesus he had seen crucified and dead on the cross could ever come back to life. But Thomas was an honest sceptic, because he really wanted to know the truth. Jesus could help such a man. And so He appeared to him and the other disciples. Instead of scolding him, Jesus simply showed him the wounds. Thomas's response was immediate: "My Lord and my God" (John 20.26ff). Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3rd July, 72 AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England are dedicated to him.



THOMAS
DOUBT
APOSTLE
CROSS
DEAD

TRUTH
SCEPTIC
WOUNDS
LORD
GOD

APPEARED
INDIA
PATRON
MARTYRED
SPEAR

MYLAPORE
MISSIONARY
SHOWED
SAINT
MADRAS

The story behind "Eternal Father, strong to save."

The author of these words, William Whiting, was an Anglican clergyman in Winchester, which is hardly a seaside town. Yet Whiting had not only grown up by the sea, but had nearly died in it. As a young man he had been on a ship that got caught in a violent storm, and afterwards he felt certain it was only God who had saved the ship from sinking that night.

Some years later, as headmaster of the Winchester College Choristers' School, Whiting was approached by a student in distress. The student was due to sail to the USA and was simply terrified at the thought of 3,000 miles of ocean. To try and reassure the student, Whiting decided to share his experience. And so, he wrote this poem, basing the description of the power and fury of the sea on Psalm 107.

It is not known if it helped the nervous student or not, but within a year the poem had become a hymn, and soon sailed into the influential first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* of 1861.

Another Anglican clergyman, John B Dykes, wrote the music for it. He was already a successful

composer, with 300 hymns to his name. Dykes named this tune 'Melita', after an old name for Malta, where St Paul was once shipwrecked. Whiting released two more versions of the lyrics, in 1869 and in 1874.

During the rest of the 19th century the hymn became a favourite with the Royal Navy and the United States Navy. Other Services adapted it, including the Royal Marines, the Royal Air Force, the British Army, and the United States Coast Guard. Above all, it became known as the Royal Navy Hymn.

Well into the 20th century, it was the favourite hymn of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had served as Secretary of the Navy during the Second World War. In 1963 *Eternal Father* was played by the Navy Band, as President John F. Kennedy's body was carried up the steps of the U.S. Capitol to lie in state. (Kennedy had been a PT boat commander in World War II.)

More recently, *Eternal Father* made a 'guest appearance' in the Hollywood blockbuster *Titanic*, and is also often chosen by ship's chaplains for use in civilian services at sea. The hymn is perhaps best known for the lines "Oh, hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea."

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

Wonder and Worship: Reflections in a Scottish Rainforest

It can be easier to notice things away from home, when we are relaxed and surrounded by unfamiliar sights in an exotic location. But sometimes the same wonders are there in our own back yard. GK Chesterton was a great advocate of intensive observation, and he invited his readers to take a fresh look at things that might be taken for granted. The rewards for this mental adjustment are great, and can feed into our worship in new ways.

I first learned to appreciate old growth forests on the West coast of Canada: the centuries-old tangle of logs and underbrush, and thick layers of moss and lichen, that provide rich resources for countless organisms. Several years later, in Scotland, I stumbled over a few acres of birch and hazel, lush with moss and ferns, and humming with insect and bird life. Fallen logs lay everywhere, vegetation grew up the trees, creepers hung down, and sunlight slanted through clearings.

I later discovered that this patch of woodland is one of the few remaining areas of old growth Atlantic rainforest, so I visited one sunny morning when I had more time to linger. The wood is home to 140 species of lichen and 100



of moss, so I found myself looking very closely at tree trunks and boulders. Each lichen is a unique relationship between a fungus and a particular collection of single-celled algae – an example of the collaboration that is so essential to every ecosystem.

Places like this are worth preserving, respecting, and appreciating as much as a work of art or a historic city. I'm so grateful to the community that chose to preserve it, and the Creator who used such intricate and patient processes to create it. As the animals and plants around me did what comes to them naturally, I did what I was made for - thanking God for everything I saw. I found myself praising God alongside all those species of lichen, moss and trees. "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150).

There is a growing call to take both our personal devotions and our church services outside from time to time, and there are a growing number of resources to help us do this. As you go through your week, can you find one new way to appreciate your surroundings, and praise God alongside the rest of Creation?

The Revd Dr Jo White considers **Reflecting Faith: Saying 'Hello'**

Last month we considered how, when we are invited by the priest to come and receive Holy Communion, our immediate response is one of being overwhelmed with the enormity of what we are being offered. We recognise how unworthy we are, to even be in God's presence, never mind taking Him in our hands and making Him part of ourselves.

Now, for the next few months, let's consider some other key moments in our church services. Let's start at the very beginning.... Just saying hello!

How do you say 'hello' to the people you meet? We don't use the same words, gestures and tone to each person, nor on each occasion.

When we meet a very senior person in our workplace; we tend to be deferential and formal. By the time we have worked together for some months, we will still hold them in high regard and

with respect, but we are probably more relaxed in their presence.

As for members of our close family, there's a time for huge hugs and explosions of laughter, such as at the arrivals desk of the airport, but such a greeting is probably not so appropriate when we meet them in a formal restaurant for lunch.

So it is on a Sunday morning, when we meet with the members of our church in the setting of a church service. By meeting together for worship, we have come deliberately into a consciousness of God's presence. It's not that He hasn't been with us on the way there, but this is a specific and intentional thing.

So, when the person leading the service says 'hello' at the start of the service, they are not just welcoming you as an individual but rather acknowledging that we are meeting together in the presence of God, to worship Him. This is special. This is amazing. This is huge.

the elderberries gardening club

The group meet from 10.30am-noon on the **second Wednesday of every month** at **St. John's Church** on St. John's Road in Birkdale.



The club offers talks from guest speakers, trips to historical houses and gardens, and social events.

To find out more, email elderberriesgardening@gmail.com or call Shelley Lewis-Lavender on [01704 560690](tel:01704560690).



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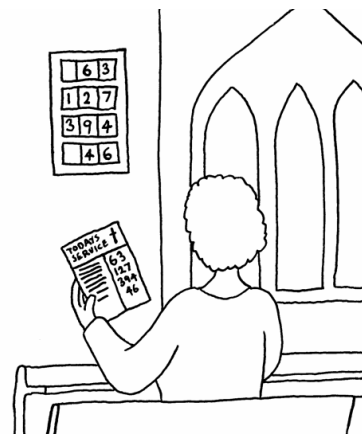
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"Well, at least they're honest about it."



"Prayer is no longer allowed in churches because it discriminates against non-believers."



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH

THE GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS OF ENGLAND

By Dennis Davis

Dennis continues his research into our Kings and this month he looks at King Billy and the Glorious Revolution

The 12th of July (1st July (Old calendar), is the 335th anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne when the Williamite army defeated the Jacobite/ Irish army. I thought it would be appropriate to select William of Orange as my next King.

William was born in the Hague in November 1650, the only child of William the 2nd, Prince of Orange, Statholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelders and Overijssel, and Mary, the Princess Royal, daughter of King Charles the 1st. His father died a few days before his birth so he was born into the titles of the Prince of Orange. He was to marry his 1st cousin, eldest daughter of his uncle the Duke of York who became King James the 2nd. William was asthmatic and had a large hooked nose and a crooked back; he did not speak good English. James was unpopular with the Protestants who opposed Catholic emancipation. This led to a plot by a group of nobles to invite William to take the English Throne, which became known as the Glorious Revolution, thought by many to have been bloodless but this was not entirely correct. William landed at Tor Bay and began his march to London, collecting lots of supporters on the way, but was obstructed by the Jacobites and some of James' Irish troops. One cavalry regiment blocked the road but when faced with William's Blue Guards they gave way and joined William; another Irish regiment opened fire and a skirmish ensued in which about 250 were killed.

William came to the throne in 1689 and ruled jointly with his wife Mary who died of smallpox age 37 in 1694 and William reigned until 1702 when he fell from a horse in Hyde Park. He did not fully recover and died of pneumonia.

One of his first acts was to pardon the surviving rebels from the Monmouth rebellion who had been sent to the West Indies; but he was not a popular King and faced continuing friction and infighting between Whigs and Tories who were trying to undermine him. The Whigs were his main supporters and many of the Tories obstructed and undermined William, leaning towards the Jacobite supporters who were spreading untrue propaganda and rumours of an Irish uprising in England. Several battles took place in Scotland which were put down ruthlessly; when it was over William offered a pardon to those who had taken part. One clan failed to meet the deadline date given for all the rebels who had taken part to sign the oath of

allegiance to William. Many refused. This resulted in the so called Glencoe massacre when a group of Campbells, who had been given hospitality by the MacDonalDs, rose up in the early morning and treacherously massacred up to 30 men. The blame was put on William who had countersigned the order. There was a claim that this Macdonald village did not get the notice in time!

William was a staunch Calvinist. He gave the Church of England dominance but allowed Protestant dissenters to worship outside of C of E, but this did not extend to Roman Catholics, Unitarians and Quakers whom he described as being lewd when a group had stripped off naked as a form of protest.

Much of William's reign was taken up in war with the French which caused a lot of complaints about the taxes to pay for this. When William was absent managing his war with France Mary ran the country until he returned. In Ireland the Irish and Jacobite supporters rose up and besieged Derry for 105 days in 1689. The town was saved by a group of apprentices from London who had closed the gates to prevent the castle from being taken when the chief Magistrate, named Lundy, had tried to hand the town over to the rebels. He was regarded as a traitor; his effigy is still burnt today in memory of this. A ship was sent to break the boom across the river and so the town was relieved and was renamed Londonderry to commemorate the apprentices. King William became the figurehead of the "Orange Order" and they still celebrate this event each year. William dispatched an army of 16,000 to put down the rebels; it was a mixed army, men from Cheshire and the North plus the Blue Guards and local volunteers. The first battle was the siege of Carrickfergus castle. The Cheshires, who later became the 22nd Regiment of Foot, landed at Ballyholme bay and marched to Carrick. They suffered heavy losses when they were allowed into the outer walls and a portcullis was dropped trapping them inside and they were all slain. In the 1970s when the road was being widened at the graveyard near the castle a mass grave was uncovered, thought to be the remains of these troops.

12th July is traditionally Orangemen's Day in Southport when members of the Orange Lodge Order march and have what they consider to be a good time. Usually it is good for the licenced victuallers of the town. It's often a good day for most residents to stay at home! Ed.



*King William III,
painted by John Riley in
1691*



WHY INDIVIDUALISM?

by John M. Shakespeare



The idea of living a life as an Individual can be seen as an anathema to some, when nowadays the mantra quoted is "teamwork" as the answer to everything.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), developed a system of methodological individualism. This embraced the study of social phenomena by approaches through the actions and intensities of individuals. The individual is the primary possessor of rights, with the state in the position of being the protector of these rights.

Politically individualism is associated with the right wing. Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister is famously quoted as saying, "There is no such thing as society, only individuals."

Scientific invention is often attributed to individuals such as Pasteur, Jenner, Edison, etc., but their dedication is rightly supplemented by a team of helpers. Inspiration can be driven by individuals and from the original starting point, the follow up being an inherent part of development, is seen as important.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), had a pessimistic view of individuals, seeing them as instinctively selfish and ruthless, and attempts to give them moral values was, he considered a waste of time. For Individuals to survive he proposed they needed to make at least a social contract between

themselves to ensure a productive way of life. As a form of reinforcement to individuals to demonstrate co-operation with each other, Hobbes favoured a Government form of control, which would police the contract, and be able to punish the contract breakers.

In Art in all its various forms, we see the talents of various individuals at play, whether it be a painting, a sculpture or a piece of written work. Inspirational artists in their creations bring pleasure to us all. However, tensions also exist in terms of the relationships of the artist and audience, fluctuating between criticism and appreciation. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), a classic exponent of liberalism, recommended that tolerance should be the driving force in society. Nobody should have their freedom of behaviour limited by others, unless it infringed on their liberties or on other peoples.

He was an early exponent of homosexuality between consenting adults, thinking that it should not be seen as a criminal offence. An opposite view of the legal establishment was that change should follow public opinion, not seek to change it. Mill is purported to have said "That so few dare to be eccentric today marks the dread danger of the time".

Some Protestant churches historically have emphasised that the relationship of God and the individual is personal, and should not be confused with the organisation of the Church itself. In our society justice is seen to be done when oppressed or marginalised groups, be they religious or political, have certain freedoms granted to them.

John (Ch 8- verses 33-36): They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, you will be made free." Jesus answered them, "Very truly I tell you everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household, the son has a place there forever, so if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

In deference to the Individual, G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), said the following, "A dead thing can go with the stream, only a living thing can go against it."

Vote carried

The vicar was ill in hospital and so the churchwarden went to visit. Trying to cheer him up, the churchwarden said: "We missed you at PCC last night. We even put forward a resolution to wish you a speedy recovery. It was passed by 14 votes to 12."

Vatican

Once asked how many people worked in the Vatican, Pope John XXIII replied: "Oh, about half."

No worries

A 102-year-old lady was asked if she had any worries about the future. She replied: "Not since I got my eldest son into an old people's home."

Joining the Sunday morning services and Thursday evening prayers by zoom or by telephone

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services** by **ZOOM**:

The Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823

To join the **weekly Sunday morning services** by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Sunday will be: 812 3403 0688

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Sunday will be: 201823.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **ZOOM**:

The Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780

The Password every Thursday will be: 7ehHEK

To join the **twice-monthly Thursday evening prayers** at 7.30pm by **TELEPHONE**:

The telephone number you must ring is: 0203 481 5240

The Meeting Identification Number every Thursday will be: 835 5074 3780.

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

The Password every Thursday will be 7ehHEK. **SUBJECT TO BEING CHANGED.**

When prompted to do so, enter that number and then press HASH (#)

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IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive (564206) or Rev. Jennie for any further details you require.

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 11th July 1950 the first episode of the BBC children's TV show *Andy Pandy* was broadcast in the UK.

Also 75 years ago, on 24th July 1950 the first rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida. It reached a height of 25 miles.

70 years ago, on 16th July 1955 Stirling Moss became the first British driver to win the British Grand Prix.

Also 70 years ago, on 23rd July 1955 racing driver Donald Campbell broke the world water speed record and became the first person to break the 200-mph barrier at Ullswater in Cumbria.

65 years ago, on 9th July 1960 US President Dwight D Eisenhower and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev traded threats over the future of Cuba.

60 years ago, on 8th July 1965 Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs escaped from Wandsworth Prison in London. He lived in Brazil until 2001, when he returned to London and was re-imprisoned. Released in 2009, he died in 2013.

40 years ago, on 13th July 1985 the two Live Aid concerts were held simultaneously in London and Philadelphia, as well as at other venues such as Sydney and Moscow. They raised millions of pounds for famine relief in Africa.

30 years ago, from 11th to 22nd July 1995 the Srebrenica Massacre took place. The Bosnian Serb army seized control of Srebrenica and massacred 8,000 men and boys. Srebrenica had been a supposedly UN 'safe area'.

Also 30 years ago, on 16th July 1995 Amazon.com first opened its website to the public.

25 years ago, on 11th July 2000 Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury (1980 – 1991) died.

Also 25 years ago, on 23rd July 2000 American golfer Tiger Woods, then 24, became the youngest player to win the Grand Slam.

Also 25 years ago, on 25th July 2000 an Air France Concorde crashed outside of Paris, shortly after taking off for New York. It killed all 109 people on board, along with four people on the ground.

20 years ago, that the 7th July 2005 London bombings took place. The coordinated series of four suicide bomb attacks on London's transport system during the morning rush hour killed 56 people and injured more than 700. It was the worst-ever terrorist attack on Britain, and the country's first attack by suicide bombers.

Church Hall Users

Tuesday

3.00pm – 5.30pm *SPACE Pottery Painting (for details see page 7)*

7.30pm *Godspeed*

Wednesday

10.30 – 12 noon

2nd Wednesday of the month only. *Elderberries Gardening Club*

A social gardening club, where speakers are invited to talk on various topics, and visits and social events throughout the year.

Contact: Shelley Lewis Lavender on 01704 560690 or via email:

elderberriesgardening@gmail.com

Thursday

1.00pm to 2.00pm: *Balance Classes for the Elderly.*

Contact: ageingwellmerseyside@outlook.com.

6.00–9.00pm: *St John's Rainbows (6.00–7.00pm) St John's Brownies (6.00–7.15pm) and Girl Guides (7.15–9.00pm).*

Contact: Janette Law 01704 565951

6.00pm *Godspeed*

Friday

9.30am *Godspeed*

1.00pm–2.30pm *Jolly Tots for tots, babies and bumps (see page 7 for details)*

6.30–9.30pm Once per month *St John's Film Nights*

A chance to see some great modern films. Tea, coffee and homemade cake available.

Contact: Christine Baker 01704 560518.

Peace be with you

(Jn 20:24-31, 14:5,11:16)

Through absence,
Through doubt,
Through questions
And fears,
Through locked doors
And longing
Jesus comes.

His risen presence
Bringing blessing,
Hope and healing,
Restoration
And His precious,
Faith-affirming
Gift of peace.

By Daphne Kitching

It's that Wimbledon time of the year

The 'pop' of a ball on a racket
The voice of the Umpire so clear
There is nothing in quite the same bracket
As that Wimbledon time of the year!

'Fault!' cries the line judge, eyes beady,
The ball boys and girls on their toes;
For more of these matches we're greedy:
The bug for this game grows and grows!

The weather may shine, or be raining
The temperature warm, mild or chill;
Our appetites won't be restraining
For strawberries on Henman Hill.

The queues may be long, but endure them
You'll get to the court – have no fear
Just settle and watch, and be sure then –
It's that Wimbledon time of the year!

By Nigel Beeton

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To:

Stuart Harris on 2nd July
Deborah Whittaker on 10th July
Sylvia Musgrove on 29th July

If there are any birthdays, anniversaries or other reasons to celebrate which our readers would like to share with others **DURING AUGUST** please let the Editor know by email to stjohnbirkdaletheword@gmail.com

The Last Laughs

Mispronunciations

The Times newspaper has recently featured correspondence from readers who have submitted their favourite mispronunciations. Here are some of them:

Sir, My favourite mispronunciation remains catameringue for the sailing craft.

Sir, No matter how many times we corrected my mother when she referred to kiwi fruit, which she loved, she without fail called them QE fruit.

Sir, Being a stickler for correct pronunciation I was surprised to find myself enchanted by a young friend's wish to see all the sights of Paris, including the "catatombs". I must admit it works better than the original.

Sir, In our household we have for many years not used the words malarkey or palaver. Instead we substitute moussaka and pavlova; their usage always brings a smile to my face.

Sir, Memories of mispronunciations by a late friend still bring a smile. She would enjoy "hang sangwiches" and playing "badmington", and would visit Spain to see "flamingo" dancing. I never corrected her.

Sir, My very elderly aunt always complained about her "very close veins" as a reason for her not walking.

One which grates with me is "mispronunciation" Ed.

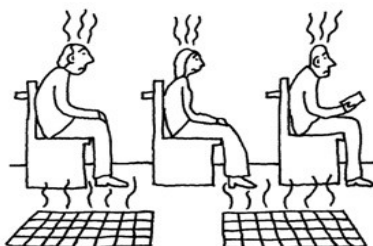
Foot in Mouth

You never know who you are going to bump into in Parliament, and small talk must be approached with caution. Lord Lee of Trafford had an awkward moment recently when he met someone who was dressed brightly, with stockings, baggy trousers, bodice and a fancy hat. The wine from dinner gave him the courage to ask, "Are you a Morris dancer?" This is a bold question when uncertain of the reply, and so it proved when this chap took it badly. "No," he replied. "This is the national dress of Norway."

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