



THE WORD

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

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. 259

JULY 2024

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

God Centred, Relationship Driven and Life Transforming



A NEW BEGINNING

On Wednesday 26th June Rev. Jennie Hardy was licensed by the Bishop of Liverpool as the Vicar of St John's Church, Birkdale. After more than three years in an Interregnum and nearly six years without a vicar in active service in our parish it is time for a new beginning for our church and for us all. (see page 9)

We have been very fortunate to have had a team of six preachers (Rev. Roy Doran, Reader Christine Baker, Wardens Clive Morris and Tim Wright, and Sally and Lucy Wright) who have led our worship in new

ways which have enabled us not only to provide services for our local congregation but also to enable others in many parts of the country to join us as we pray and offer our thanks to God.

Our Sunday congregations have grown in recent years. This may not have been visible every week, but over the last four years there has been a slow, steady and consistent increase in the number of those who enjoy our modern style of worship at St John's, and we have introduced a midweek communion service (once per month) which has been welcomed by those who like to use the poetry and language of the Book of Common Prayer in worship.

What will the future hold? As we embark on a new beginning in the life of our church we must place our expectations in our Lord Jesus Christ and trust in Him to work in our lives and in our church in His own time and in His own way.

Let us pray that Jennie's ministry here will be successful, rewarding and enjoyable for her and for us all, and that her leadership in our church will help to spread the Good News of the Gospel in Birkdale.

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

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JOHN'S

Vicar:	Rev. Jennie Hardy (07872 400718)
Priest (retired):	Rev. Roy Doran (572387)
Reader:	Mrs. Christine Baker (560518)
Churchwardens:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977)
Wardens' Assistant::	Miss Lucy Wright (553977)
PCC Treasurer:	Mrs. Sylvia Kent (564071)
PCC Secretary:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
Parish Hall Secretary:	Mrs. Jean Morris (564206)
Electoral Roll Officer:	Stuart Harris (563789)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Clive Morris (564206) Tim Wright (553977) Stuart Baker (560518)
Safeguarding Officer:	Mrs. Abbie Holden (07961003359)

Safeguarding Assistant 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)
Notice boards, I.T, Website developer, Publicity designer:	Mrs. Sally Wright (553977)
Buildings Inspector:	David Halsall (07790 822343)

The £10 Challenge

St John's people rose to the recent challenge and found many ways to use their talents to multiply the £10 note which they received.

Amongst the imaginative ideas were the production of greetings cards, the knitting of woolly hats, the making of wooden stands for golf club bags and a plinth for a sporting trophy, selling chocolates, donating a pot of loose change, raffling a hamper, making marmalade and abstaining from eating crisps when going out for a coffee!

This has raised (to date) **over £600**, which is a great achievement. Everyone who took part in the challenge gave back the £10 and the amount by which they had enhanced it.

To all who took part: **WELL DONE!**



We record the death of Malcolm Bishop's wife, Sheila, who passed away after a long illness on 4th June. We offer condolences to Malcom and his family at this sad time.

Thursday Evening Prayers on **4th and 18th July on zoom.**

The meetings start at 7.30pm and last half an hour. If there is anything which readers would like to be included in the prayers please contact Jennie Hardy, Roy Doran, Christine Baker, Clive Morris, or Sally, Tim or Lucy Wright.



The number of those joining these prayer meetings has gradually increased. Do join us if you can. See page 29 for details about logging in on zoom by computer or by telephone.

St John's Church Birkdale

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

2nd & 4th
Wednesdays
2-4pm
St John's small hall

Growth Groups

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7.30pm
@ 32 Hartley Crescent

*Finding out more
together*



WE'D LOVE YOU TO JOIN US

*We believe in
the power of
prayer*

PRAYER TIME @ ST JOHN'S

Led by the leadership team

**1st and 3rd Thursdays
7.30pm**

SEE WEBSITE FOR ZOOM DETAILS



FRIDAY

Coffee, Cake & Chat

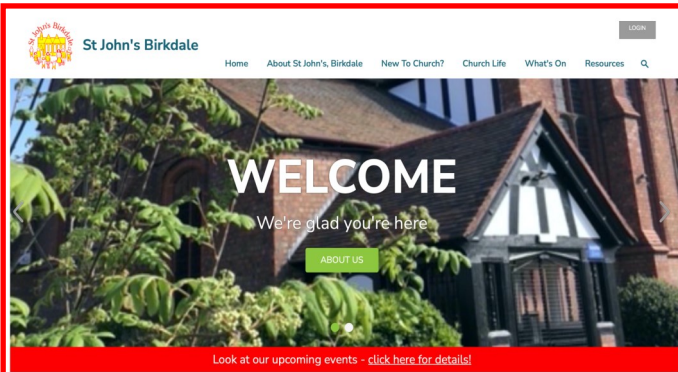
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S RD, BIRKDALE PR8 4JP

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

**NEXT MEETING:
12TH JULY**



WHAT'S ON AT ST. JOHN'S



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**

St John's Presents

FILM NIGHTS

Come and join us as we enjoy great films and refreshments @ 6.30pm
film begins at 7pm

- 21 June
- 26 July
- 13 September
- 4 October
- 8 November
- 20 December

The film titles will be displayed on the church noticeboards.

If you wish to come, please sign the list in church or contact Christine on 01704-560518

£5 to include tea, coffee and homemade cakes

ST JOHN'S INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR

SOCIAL EVENTS 2024

Please contact Christine 07821 982477 or Sally 07800 550097



Friday 26 January @ 7pm	Burns Night Supper
Friday 23 February @ 7pm	Late, Late Pancake Party
Friday 22 March @ 7pm	Andy Dean's Quiz Night
Friday 19 April @ 7pm	Italian Food Night
Friday 17 May @ 6.30pm	Car Treasure Hunt
Saturday 15 June @ 11-2pm	Summer Fair & Afternoon Tea
Saturday 20 July @ 2pm	Strawberry Tea
Friday 20 September @ 7pm	Harvest Supper
Friday 18 October @ 7pm	Music 'in the' Hall
Saturday 16 November @ 7pm	Barn Dance and Bangers
Friday 6 December 6-9pm	Christmas Tree Festival and
Saturday 7 December 10-3pm	Christmas Fair

YOUNG ADULT SOCIALS

2024

Saturday 29th June

Walk @ Rivington

Saturday 13th July

Pizza Making @ Lucy's

Friday 13th September

Bowling

Sunday 6th October

Pumpkin Picking

Saturday 16th November

Barn Dance

Saturday 7th December

Christmas fair followed by food

St John's Church, Birkdale

Worship on the
Sixth Sunday after
Trinity

**SUNDAY 7th JULY
HOLY COMMUNION**

**10.30am service IN CHURCH and via
zoom & phone**

**Worshippers in church are invited to remain in
church after the first part of the service has
concluded and receive Communion.**

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:**

**God's way:
a new and living way**

The Text: Hebrews ch.10 vv.19-22

19. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
20. by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
21. and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22. let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

ONLINE SERVICES

THINGS THAT CAN GO TERRIBLY WRONG

By Dave Walker.



PROBLEMS WITH
THE SOUND



ACCIDENTAL
SCREEN-SHARING OF
PASTORALLY-SENSITIVE
INFORMATION



INTERNET BREAKS
AT CRUCIAL
MOMENT

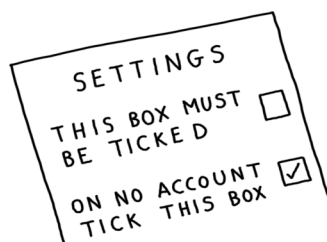


LINDA!
HAVE
YOU
SEEN
MY
SPECTACLES?

FAILING TO
MUTE THE
CONGREGATION



ANIMALS
RUNNING
AMOK



THE APP
HASN'T BEEN
CONFIGURED



THAT'S ONE
WORSHIP VIDEO
TOO MANY, SON

LIVE ARREST OWING
TO IGNORING
COPYRIGHT



INVASION BY
ROWDY GROUP
OF METHODISTS

Worship on the
Seventh Sunday
after Trinity

SUNDAY 14th JULY
10.30am service IN CHURCH and
via zoom & phone

Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
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:**

**His church:
a place of new beginning**

The Text: Isaiah ch.43 vv.18-19

18. "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.
19. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

God Wants to Do Something New

ISAIAH 43:18-19

Miscellaneous musings on life.

- ~ Cricket is the game which the English, not being a spiritual people, have invented to give themselves some concept of eternity. – Lord Mancroft
- ~ You can learn more about human nature by reading the Bible than by living in New York. – William Lyon Phelps
- ~ I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.
- ~ If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
- ~ A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.
- ~ To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- ~ Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
- ~ In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify ..." I answered, "a doctor."
- ~ Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright – until you hear them speak.

Worship on the Eighth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 21st JULY

**10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone**

Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; 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
Lucy's talk:**

**Our lives:
a new creation**

The Text: 2 Corinthians ch.5 v.17

17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Midweek Book of
Common Prayer Holy
Communion



**WEDNESDAY
17th JULY
10.30am service
IN CHURCH**

Helping our friend Rev. Alex Galbraith

Our congregation will remember, with much gratitude, the help which Rev. Alex Galbraith gave to us in the early stages of us being without a Vicar in active service before the covid pandemic. Our leadership team prepared and conducted our Sunday morning services at 10.30am but we relied upon Rev. Alex to lead our communion services which were held at 9.00am. Week after week Alex came to us and led us in prayer and delivered inspirational sermons before returning to his own parish at St Francis of Assisi at Kew to conduct their morning services there.



We were all saddened when we learned that Alex has been stricken by a form of cancer which will be terminal. He has shown great courage and fortitude in carrying on with his ministry at St Francis when he knows that he will not be with them for very much longer.

As a mark of his courage in facing his future he has submitted himself to an endurance test by reading, in braille, all four Gospels and the Acts of The Apostles in sixteen hours on 22nd June (with only two short breaks of 15 minutes) and he has invited all who know him to make financial donations to his church so as to assist them to carry on when he is no longer with them.

It is not too late to support his effort. A donation can be made via <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/StFrancisKew> or readers could make a donation in a sealed envelope and give it to Stuart Baker who will make sure that Alex receives it.

Our readers are invited to remember how kind and helpful Alex has been to us. He still contacts us and asks how we have been coping in our interregnum.

Worship on the Ninth
Sunday after Trinity

SUNDAY 28th JULY
10.30am service IN CHURCH
and via zoom & phone

Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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
Clive's talk:**

**New beginnings:
Zacchaeus**

The Reading: Luke ch.19 vv.1-10

1. He entered Jericho and was passing through.
2. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.
3. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.
4. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.
5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."
6. So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.
7. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."
8. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."
9. And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.
10. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Overuse of social media makes people "trigger happy" in attacking others online and "in danger of becoming stupid" the Church of England has said.

When posting online, people are "insufficiently rigorous" in checking that the information they share is accurate or reliable, which leaves people unsure who they can trust, a church report has warned.

People are also growing "increasingly trigger happy" in passing judgment on public figures and leaders on social media without "questioning the source" of negative information, it noted.

"We delude ourselves into thinking we are more informed because of the ease of access to volumes of information," the report stated. "However, through our indiscriminate use of social media we are in danger of becoming stupid in our judgment of where to place our trust."

People should imagine that all their tweets were printed out in a single document and they were "asked to sit down with Christ and read it", according to one suggestion in the report, entitled Trust and Trustworthiness in the Church of England. The report was commissioned specifically to look at "how we repair and preserve trust in the Church's organisations and structures".

The review was begun in 2022 by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Right Rev Martin Seeley. The report will be presented to General Synod in July.

Source: The Times newspaper, 26.6.2024



A NEW BEGINNING

THE LICENSING OF REV. JENNIE HARDY

On Wednesday 26th June a service was held at St John's in which Rev. Jennie Hardy was licensed by the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt. Rev. Dr. John Perumbalath, to serve as the Vicar of this parish. The service was attended by more than 200 people which included our own parishioners, members of Jennie's family and friends, and many from other parishes.

Archdeacon Pete Spiers informed the congregation that this day had been a long time coming and he paid tribute to our church people and its leadership team for the steadfastness during the vacancy. He told us a little about Jennie: her unique gift for getting people to volunteer to do things; her ability to get people to work together; her willingness to join in with activities, particularly with children; her love of telling people about Jesus; and her liking for chocolate, sweets, proper coffee and karaoke!



The Bishop used as a text for his sermon John chapter 15 in which Jesus said that He is the true vine. The Bishop said that Jennie has a clear conviction that God has called her to this ministry and he reminded us that the ministry of the church is given and maintained by God and that God has called all of us to be witnesses in this world.

The primary role of a disciple is to live in Christ, in God's love. Like the branches of a vine we are all intertwined and it is our duty to work and live together and to care for one another in the love of Christ, to look out for one another and not live in isolation. But this does not mean looking out for only our church members. We are to look outside our own congregation into the wider world: "Church is the only club that exists for its non members." Like the vine which bears fruit we will bear fruit if we follow our calling to serve others. He concluded by asking God to bless Jennie and everyone in this parish.

During the service Jennie was welcomed and congratulated by Rev. Rebecca Clarke, Bob Ball (Lay Chairman of the North Meols Deanery Synod), Patrick Evans (minister at Liverpool Road Methodist Church), Tim Wright (on behalf of our wardens), Jennie Sefton and Adrian Antell (Headteachers at Farnborough Road Infant and Junior Schools) and Clare Horton (Family Wellbeing Centre).

Rev. Jennie thanked all at St John's and led us in prayer.

The hymns were accompanied on the organ played by Julie Ann Bevan and a musical group who had come to support Jennie.

Following the service the congregation were invited to take refreshments in the church hall.

This day marked the start of a new chapter in the life of our parish. We have a new leader. With Jennie there is much work to be done by all of us to bring the Good News of Jesus to the people in our parish. We wish Jennie well.

Our work starts today!

ST JOHN'S BIRKDALE

Strawberry Cream Tea



Saturday 20 July 2 - 4 pm

In the garden @ 34 Oxford Road

Tickets: Adults £5 Under 16s £1

Call 560518 or 07800550097

Let us know of any allergies when booking

PLEASE NOTE:

1. We shall hope for summer sunshine, but if the weather is bad on the day of this event we may have to move the venue at short notice to the church hall and it is essential that we have a contact number or email address for you if you have bought a ticket.
2. We need to know in advance how many people will be coming so that we can cater for everybody. We hope to see many of our readers, and if you wish to come PLEASE buy a ticket in advance and do not arrive without us knowing that you will be coming.



This was held on **Saturday 15th June** and was well attended despite the almost Biblical rainfall which occurred at about 11.00am when the car washing team were plying for business! We include (below) pictures of some of the stallholders and others who helped.

Sylvia Kent writes:

Although we weren't blessed with the finest of weather at the start of the day, the rain gods turned off the water just in time for people to still come along and enjoy spending time together and buying some of the many gifts that were available, as well as having a tasty lunch with delicious cakes, and I am pleased to say that the event raised nearly £1,200. Not only was that a very good result, but the day had a wonderful atmosphere.

As always I would like to thank everyone who helped in any way, and not forgetting especially the Fair Committee Team, who as always work so hard with the preparations beforehand and turn up on the day making sure everyone has a good time. Thank you very much.

Needless to say, my thanks also go to all those who came to support us on the day and making it such a success. Without you, we couldn't have made it!





There was much to enjoy at the Summer Social. Chris and Zak set about car cleaning with great gusto after the rain stopped, although David had downed his sponges when he discovered that his waterproofs were no match for the monsoon-like dousing which he received. Clive could not be separated from his hat: was it raining in over his and Jean's bookstall? The café was kept busy but there was just enough time for a photo opportunity for Mandy and Cath. Books, plants, DVDs, candles and lots more were on sale and the 50/50 raffle proved popular. When St John's people decide to do something it is done with enthusiasm and gives a lot of pleasure to many people.

In Preparation for a New Beginning

In the week leading up to the Licensing Service our church was cleaned and tidied and the grounds were mowed and neatened by a group of volunteers from our congregation. Many hands made light work and the workers were sustained by refreshments and bacon sandwiches which were served by Judith Foster and Sylvia Musgrove.



THANK YOU: to all who took part in many different ways. We have a church and grounds to be proud of and they look so much better because of what you have done.

Local History

We are very grateful to **Henry James** for permitting us to publish an article which he wrote for the June issue of "Birkdale Buzz" concerning an iconic Birkdale landmark.

Around Birkdale... The Royal Birkdale Golf Clubhouse

In the last edition of the Birkdale Buzz we looked at the history of the Garrick Theatre on Lord Street. The architect of the building, George Tonge, is known for another iconic art deco structure in Southport - the clubhouse at the Royal Birkdale Golf Club.

At the start of the 1930s the area of Hillside was undergoing rapid change with the construction of new housing, often in the Tudor style. The golf club had decided that their old clubhouse, situated by what is now the 4th green, should be pulled down and a new clubhouse constructed. Eight architects were invited to submit plans for this prestigious new building.

Seven of the entries were plans for traditional pitched roofs and styles that matched other buildings in Hillside. With only days to go before the final submission date, sketches were received from George Tonge. The building would be in the Modernist style, flat-roofed and rendered in plaster, completely different from the other entries, although very traditional in its internal structure. The committee chose Tonge's design and building started in the summer of 1934, to be completed in one year.



Tonge was born on December 8, 1876 in Westhoughton. He went to Bolton High School then Manchester School of Art. After being articled to a Bolton architect and qualifying, Tonge came to Southport in 1900 and eventually started his own company with offices on Lord Street. The golf club has a quotation from him on their website where he speaks about his vision for the clubhouse: "I visualized the kind of clubhouse that I thought ought to intrude itself onto this lovely course. I imagined the lines of a liner at sea; the perfect balance of the ship at whatever angle and from whatever side it was seen."

The building, comfortably situated behind the 18th hole of the course and considered one of the most recognisable clubhouses in world golf, cost £10,000 to erect. It was built as a two-storey structure with spacious lounges, an upstairs dining room, and an outdoor terrace. The first floor of the building, with its enormous bay windows and cantilevered 'decks' offered panoramic views over the course, and remains a perfect place to see the evening sunset.

It was first opened on the evening of Saturday, July 6, 1935 when the club captain, Alfred Marland, used a golden key (presented by the contractors and Tonge) to unlock the door to the clubhouse.

Tony Johnson, a past captain of the club, wrote a book in 1988 entitled "The History of The Royal Birkdale Golf Club." The book includes details about the opening of the clubhouse, an event that was well-documented in many local and national newspapers. The Mayor of Southport, club members, visiting captains from kindred golf clubs and George Tonge, all attended the grand opening event.



At the dinner that followed, the guests enjoyed: Cantaloupe melon; Salmon Mayonnaise - Lobster Mayonnaise; Lamb Cutlets, Green Peas, New Potatoes; Strawberries and Cream, Dessert and Coffee. Afterwards, the Mayor, speaking in rhyme, gave a speech listing the achievements of the club.

George Tonge spoke about how proud he was of the building, hoping members were pleased too. They replied that they were. Following the speeches, there was entertainment from the radio star Stainless Stephen* which went down well with those attending.

Since its opening in 1935 the clubhouse has had many features added and changed to reflect modern demands, but it remains an architectural gem. George Tonge retired in 1948 and died on March 12, 1956 in Liverpool. He left behind a wonderful legacy and a real landmark for the Birkdale coastline.

The 154th Open Golf championship will be played at Royal Birkdale from 12th-19th July 2026.

[*Stainless Stephen was Arthur Clifford Baynes, a comedian from Sheffield, who appeared on stage dressed in a smart tuxedo, a bowler hat with a steel band around it, a rotating bow tie, and a stainless steel vest, made in his home city. Ed.]

REVIVE INTERNATIONAL

RESTORING LIVES, RENEWING HOPE

We have received the May/June newsletter from our Mission Partners in Olinda, Brazil. It is about 4,500 miles from Birkdale and life in Olinda is very different from life in our parish. But children are abused and neglected in every corner of the world, and Revive International work tirelessly to protect and nurture damaged children in Olinda.

Sometimes, because they are so far away, we may not appreciate how valuable their work is. We publish in this issue of **THE WORD** a recent story from their newsletter which reminds us of the importance of what they do and why we support them:

“T.V., a 13-year-old teenager, arrived at Reaviva, escaping from an environment of abuse and neglect. Her school initially raised the alarm, noting her consistently arriving dirty and hungry. It was soon discovered that the physical abuse from her parents, who are drug and alcohol users, was severe. T.V. endured harsh punishments for minor mistakes, including deprivation of basic food, which led to low self-esteem and frequent tears.

Since arriving at Reaviva, we have embarked on an intensive support journey with our dedicated technical team and educators. Today, T.V. demonstrates renewed sociability and enjoys a healthy diet, although she sometimes shows selectivity. She is in therapy and has shown significant improvements, even as she faces challenges in reading and writing. We

are proud of her gradual progress, with her school maintaining regular communication with us, providing updates on her development.

Despite the challenges, T.V. maintains limited contact with her parents, both struggling with substance abuse. Visits are infrequent, and the possibility of returning home is non-existent due to complex circumstances. We await updates on the process of terminating parental rights, paving the way for T.V. to find a new family through adoption or sponsorship.

This is the transformative power of the dedicated care and support at Reaviva. With your help, we continue to make a difference in the lives of young people like T.V., providing a safe and nurturing environment for them to thrive. Join us on this journey of hope and renewal!

We are grateful as we have started the 6th training course for new foster families. We will conclude on June 12th with two families showing great potential for fostering. Currently, there are 4 registered families and 2 under evaluation.

We ask for prayers for M.R. (7 years old) and A.S. (4 years old). The sisters were in the process of bonding with a couple interested in



adoption. However, this connection did not succeed. We pray that justice guides them to a new family who is open to adopting the sisters.”

Pray

Pray incessantly
Pray as if your life depends on it
Pray in love
Pray in thanksgiving
Pray when things are going right
Pray when things are going wrong

Pray for the little things
Pray for the big things
Pray the Our Father into every situation
Pray in all things and give glory to God
Pray

By Penny Candlin



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

On The Perils of "Standing In" For Another Vicar

The Rectory,
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren,

You should not complain about doing duty in other churches when their clergy are on holiday. It is only in other churches that you will be appreciated. Beatification only comes from your own church on the day you leave – which is a way of firing a shot across the bows of your successor.

I remember being greeted by a churchwarden on my first day here at St James the Least of All with the encouraging words: 'I've seen six Rectors of this parish; each one was worse than the last.' As the years have gone by, I am sure I will have entirely fulfilled his expectations.

No; when you visit another church, you will be told all the many defects of their own vicar, and whatever you do will be praised. Store up these memories for the day you return to your own patch – when you will then be told how outstanding your own temporary replacement has been and how congregations thrived in your absence.

Naturally, this gives you the right to make similar remarks about your own congregation in the churches you visit. Unfavourable comparisons with the bell ringers, vergers and congregational singing in your home patch to the superb standards in the church you're temporarily serving will be much appreciated. Just make sure that the church you are staffing is sufficiently far from your own that word will not get back to your home team.

It is a mistake I made only once. After filling in for a colleague, I happened to compliment the choir on the singing of the anthem. Unknown to me, a tenor was the second cousin of my organist, who received a rather embellished story that I had compared my own choir back home unfavourably with theirs. On my return the following Sunday, all the hymns were played fortissimo and at double speed and the choir in rotation dropped hymn books throughout my sermon.

Inevitably, when you staff another church, you will be told: 'It's the normal Service.' It will be *nothing of the sort*. Hymns will appear in unexpected places, Sunday schools will enter and leave (and enter again) apparently at random, objects will be brought to you to be read from, placed on the altar or blessed – just as you were about to try and find the pulpit. In any case, wherever you are standing, you will find you should have been standing somewhere else. But not to worry – most mistakes will be forgiven – provided your sermon is short.

So – enjoy your visits to other churches. And above all, make sure that your temporary replacement is so spectacularly incompetent that your own people will welcome you back with open arms on your return.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

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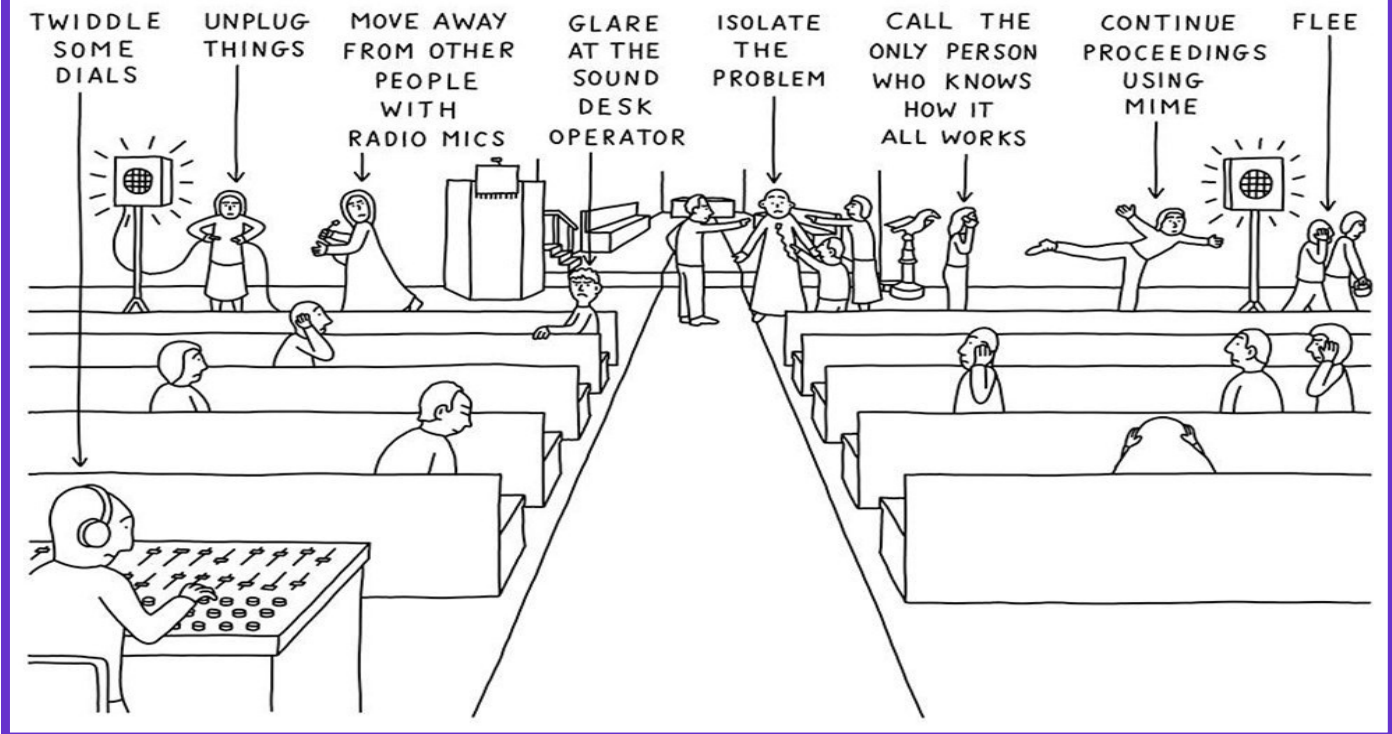


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THE SOUND SYSTEM

By Dave Walker.

HOW TO STOP THAT TERRIBLE FEEDBACK SOUND



WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 23

14th July brings us Sea Sunday.

This is the day when Christian churches remember, pray and give thanks for the more than 1.5 million merchant seafarers worldwide. If seafarers seem irrelevant to your daily life, think again: 90 per cent of everything you buy in the shops comes to you by sea. Merchant seafarers quite literally keep our global economy afloat. Yet it is a tough life, far from loved ones. Merchant ships are harsh working environments, never mind the threat of piracy or even shipwreck.

To help the seafarers, a worldwide network of port chaplains has sprung up. They offer hospitality and friendship, as well as practical, emotional and spiritual support, providing almost a 'home from home' in hundreds of ports, in more than 50 countries. You might wish to support the well-known society The Mission to Seafarers.



JULY
SEA
SUNDAY
REMEMBER
PRAY

GIVE
THANKS
MERCHANT
SEAFARERS
DAILY

SHOPS
ECONOMY
AFLOAT
HARSH
WORKING

ENVIRONMENTS
PIRACY
SHIPWRECK
HUNDREDS
GLOBAL

PORT
CHAPLAINS
HOSPITALITY
FRIENDSHIP
PRACTICAL

During the week after this issue of **THE WORD** is published the nation will decide in a General Election who shall govern us for the next four or five years. Some may have found the campaign by the political parties to be informative or enlivening. Others may have found it to be a total turn-off because of the obviously empty promises made by politicians or their wilful failure to give straight answers to straight question.

Whatever we may think about Nigel Farage being drenched in a milkshake (European straight banana flavour?) this was a mild form of political heckling compared to what we find in history. In the first election campaigns in the early 18th century serious violence was not uncommon. For example, in 1705 in Coventry there was a pitched battle between armed factions each over a hundred strong, armed with halberds (two-handed pole axes) and little clubs, and in Queensborough, Kent a Scotsman was beaten to death for criticising the local MP. Mass brawls often left hundreds injured.

Even by the early 19th century low-level violence was a frequent occurrence. If Mr Farage had been campaigning in Bristol in 1818 he may have found himself pelted with stinking fish and dead rodents; or in Sussex in 1820 he may have faced rotten eggs and dead cats.

A swift riposte to such conduct is not always a political advantage. In June 1970 when Prime Minister Harold Wilson was campaigning for Labour a Tory supporter threw an egg which hit Wilson in the face. The unruffled Wilson claimed that it proved how cheap eggs were under Labour. His party lost the general election that month. When his Conservative rival, Ted Heath, was informed that Wilson's schedule had been kept a closely guarded secret, he drily observed that the only possible conclusion was that there were men and women walking the streets with eggs in their pockets on the off-chance of seeing the Prime Minister.

For those of us who might not know the origin of some election terminology we provide this lexicon compiled by David Pickup:

The General Election



Parliament - This comes from French meaning a conference or assembly. Dates from around 1300.

Vote - Comes from Latin votum "a vow, wish, promise to a god, solemn pledge, dedication."

Poll - Again from about 1300, originally meaning a single head, then counting heads, from about 1620s.

Going to the country - A phrase from end of 18th Century, meaning to call for a General Election and test the mood in the country.

Canvass - This originally meant to sift things in a sheet, and then to examine items carefully, then "solicit votes or test support before an election" (1550s).

Hustings - From about 1720, it means a temporary platform from which, previous to the Ballot Act of 1872, the nomination of candidates for Parliament was made, and on which these stood while addressing the electors.

Ballot - From late 16th Century, meaning a box in which balls or pebbles are put to indicate votes.

Mondeo man - After the Ford Mondeo, a family car, popularised by a phrase used at a party conference in 1996, though the vehicle mentioned was actually a Ford Sierra. It means the average voter who wants to better themselves and their families.

Swingometer - Do you remember when television graphics were simple? This was a device consisting of a dial with a movable pointer, used to demonstrate (on television) how a likely or observable 'swing' should influence the outcome of an election. It was introduced to our television screens in 1965 by David Butler and Robert McKenzie.

An Introduction to the Book of The Bible: 1 & 2 Samuel

by Canon Paul Hardingham

1 & 2 Samuel was originally a single work, which focuses on Samuel, Saul and David, around 1,000 BC, mid-way between Abraham and Jesus. It was Samuel who established the monarchy in Israel after the period of the judges. He was commanded by God to give the people a king, although their request is seen as a rejection of God's rule over Israel (8:7). The people simply wanted to be like other nations, however their king was still subject to God's law and the word of the prophet. Although Samuel anointed Saul, he soon showed an unwillingness to submit to these requirements, leading to his rejection as king (15:23). God chose David as Saul's successor, and 1 Samuel depicts David's years of waiting until the right time arrived to claim the throne.

2 Samuel depicts David's rule, in which the nation prospers and its enemies are defeated. The promise of the perfect king is fulfilled in Jesus Himself, as David's descendant. The second half of the book depicts the darker side of David's reign, describing his weaknesses and failures, including his adultery with Bathsheba and the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Nevertheless, David remained a man after God's own heart: *'The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'* (1 Samuel 16:7). The characters in this book are not always great examples of faith, however, *'They do not show us how we should live but how in fact we do live, authenticating the reality of our daily experience as the stuff that God uses to work his purposes of salvation in us and in the world.'* (Eugene Peterson).

MARRIAGE LINES

Marriage rates in England and Wales in 2022 returned to pre-pandemic levels, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has found. Its latest statistics, released recently, include data for 2021 and 2022; comparisons with the 2019 information are also made.

In 2022, there were 246,897 marriages in England and Wales: an increase of 12.3 per cent from 219,850 in 2019. Of those, the number of same-sex marriages was 15.9 per cent higher (7800, up from 6728 in 2019). Opposite-sex marriages in 2022 numbered 239,097: 12.2 per cent more than 2019 (213,122).

"These increases may be a result of delayed marriages because of the pandemic," the ONS has noted, given that the overall number of marriage rates per 1000 has continued to decline over the past five decades.

In 2022, 17 per cent of marriages (41,915) were religious ceremonies, and 83 per cent were civil ceremonies, the latter increasing steadily over time; half of marriages (50.4 per cent) in 1992 were civil ceremonies. The statistics do not differentiate between Christian weddings and those of other faiths; nor do they indicate where a marriage ceremony may be followed by

any form of a Christian service, such as a blessing, thanksgiving, or dedication.

The 2023 report suggests that somewhere "in the region of 10,000-15,000 weddings did not take place in churches because of the pandemic".

The average age at which people get married has increased once again. The median age was 32.7 years for men and 31.2 years for women entering into an opposite-sex marriage (and first legal partnership), both the highest ages on record. For a same-sex marriage (and first legal partnership), the ages for men and women were also higher, at 36.2 years and 32.6 years respectively.

Saturday remains the most popular day to get married: 43.6 per cent of all weddings in 2022 took place on that day. In recent years, the last Saturday in July or the first Saturday in September has been the most popular day. The most popular day in 2022 was Saturday 30 July, with a total of 3608 weddings. By contrast, Christmas Day saw three weddings, making it the least popular day to get married.

(This is an extract from a longer article which was published recently in The Church Times)

From Our Ilkley Correspondent, Doris Brookfield.

After watching the celebrations of D-Day on the television these last few days it brought back memories of June 1944 when I was 11 years old. I had returned to Southport with my Mother and Father in March, after living in Braintree in Essex for 3 years. I was so pleased to return as I missed my best friend Jean during the years I had been away. Southport had escaped a lot of bombing during the Blitz but we had witnessed the destruction each night of Liverpool by looking at the sky glowing with all the fires. What a dreadful time they had.



Jean wrote to me often telling me about the things that were happening back home, and I told her about the bombing raids we had in Braintree. The Americans had set up their Air Force bases in many parts of Essex and lots of runways had been made to fit their huge Flying Fortresses. The nearest to us was Great Dunmow, which is now Stansted Airport. In early 1944 my father was very poorly and we returned home to Southport.

I returned to my old school, Birkdale Infant School, better known as Bury Road. I was glad to be back with my old classmates, and especially Jean. Everyone knew at that time the war was still raging, but we had an idea that something would have to be done to stop the Germans. So when we turned the radio on on the 6th of June and heard we had invaded France, we all jumped for joy. Could this be the end? we thought.

We had no idea how big the scale of the invasion was at that time, only by reading the newspaper each day could we see how many countries were involved.

Our teacher Miss Ware had a clever idea to map daily the advances the forces had made, so we kept a daily report on the walls of our classroom 3A. I was 11 years old and we listened to the radio and if we went to the cinema we could see the newsreels showing how far the forces together had advanced. The pictures were frightening showing soldiers being killed and planes shot down.

It seemed a long period and by 1945 I attended Meols Cop Modern Secondary School, but again we had daily bulletins how the advances were progressing. Day by day they got closer to Germany, with allied forces approaching on different fronts.

Then on May 7th 1945 the Germans surrendered. What joy we all shared together, we hugged and kissed each other and all the neighbours came out to celebrate. Jean and I jumped for joy, and Mrs Roddan brought out a bottle of sherry she had kept. We went to my Aunt and Uncle's and we cried with joy, unfortunately my lovely mother fell in the nettles nearby as the sherry had gone to her head. But we pulled her up and we laughed all the way home.

We thanked God for the sacrifices all those young men had made for us. So many lives given in the belief we could end that dreadful war, and they succeeded.

I watched with pride this morning as I viewed the D-Day ceremony in Normandy celebrating all those lives lost on May 6th, 80 years ago. I'm now 91 by the time you read this. I lived throughout the war. I was just 6 when it started. I just pray that all aggression will end, but unfortunately some world leaders who are full of their own ego do not agree. That is why we as Christians believe love is better than hate.

GOD in the Arts

The Revd Michael Burgess begins a year-long series looking at great works of Christian music.

'Glorious the song when God's the theme': J S Bach's joy and dance

In 1956 a small novel by a German writer, Johannes Rüber, appeared in an English translation. It was called 'Bach and the Heavenly Choir' and tells of Pope Gregory XIX's desire to elevate Bach to the ranks of the saints. To bring together the Lutheran bishop and his own cardinals, he organises a great Bach festival in Rome. At the festival he announces his plan and the reasoning behind it: that in J S Bach 'faith has become music.'

In that realisation lies the grace and glory of Bach's achievement, and why we treasure his works today. The irony is that the bulk of his music was never published in his lifetime. The six Brandenburg Concerti, beautifully copied out and offered, were never performed and the music put in a cupboard. His music in all probability would have been lost for ever had it not been for a young Mendelssohn, who just happened to find a manuscript of the St Matthew Passion in his music teacher's house. He recognised it for its brilliancy and beauty and ordered a massive search to unearth the decaying manuscripts.

So much of Bach's music was inspired by his joy in believing. Just consider one of the six motets, 'Jesu, meine Freude' (Jesus, my joy). It was probably written for a memorial service in July 1723. In his other works, freude, or 'joy', releases new movement. In this motet, the word is kept within the constraints of the chorale melody that acts as a framework for the motet. The word that brings a joyous release is Geist, Spirit – when it appears, then each voice joins in the chase as notes spill over the page and into our ears, proclaiming the inspiration of God's Spirit in human life.

This spirit of joy helps us realise that what makes Bach's music so vital and rewarding is that total sense of movement and dance. Wilfred Mellers wrote a book 'Bach and the Dance of God,' showing how so much of Bach's music is dance-inspired from lively gavottes to more stately sarabandes that can be heard in both the instrumental and choral music. Widor, like Bach a great organist, wrote that 'For me Bach is the greatest of preachers.'

And what does he preach? That in the end, all is dance and life in the power of God's Spirit. In 'Jesu, meine Freude' as in all his music we hear and relish the movement and pulse of his compositions that open up for us a world where all is joy and dance. That is how Dante ended his vision of Paradise, where everything is movement and dance, and what moves the sun and the other stars is love.

Dr Peter Brierley reflects on **Britain's Prime Ministers**

Britain had its first Prime Minister (PM) in 1721 when Sir Robert Walpole took the job; he was a Whig. In total thus far we have had 81 Prime Ministers; this excludes First Ministers and doesn't count separately an existing PM who wins the election and continues in office. If s/he loses but subsequently wins another term, each term is counted separately. We have had 56 different people as Prime Ministers. The longest serving one was Sir Robert Walpole, who was PM for 21 years. In length he was followed by the Tory William Pitt the Younger in 1783, then by Robert Jenkinson, the Earl of Liverpool in 1812, also a Tory. These are the first three of PMs who have served over 7 years.

There were 16 PMs in the 18th century, 33 in the 19th, 25 in the 20th and so far seven in the 21st century. Labour and the early Tories had slightly more time in office than the number of Prime Ministers *pro rata*. Rishi Sunak is the first British Asian Prime Minister.

W CROSS R D

Solution below

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

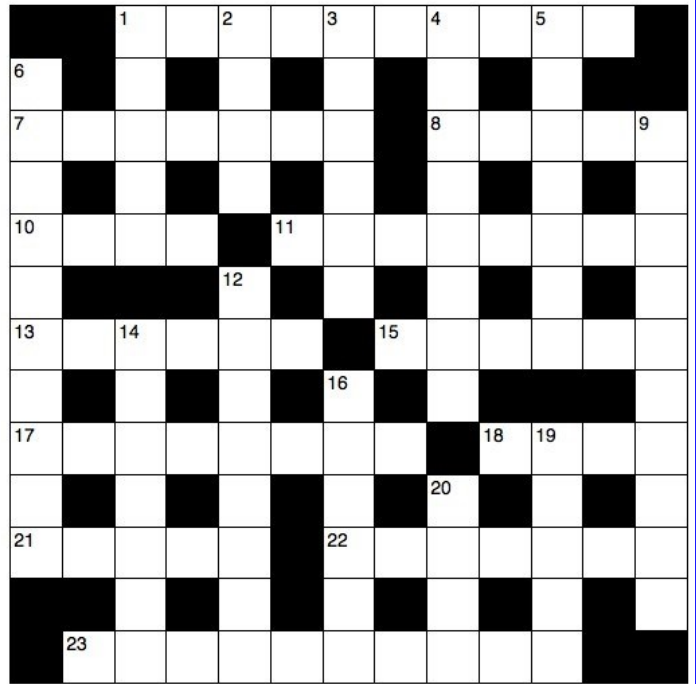
Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in Three Down, Nine Across, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).

Across

- 1 Relating to the Jewish day of rest (10)
- 7 Point of view (Matthew 22:17) (7)
- 8 20th-century Brethren philanthropist whose construction company became one of the UK's biggest, Sir John — (5)
- 10 Girl's name (4)
- 11 Peter was accused of being one in the courtyard of the high priest's house (Luke 22:59) (8)
- 13 The fifth of the 'seven churches' (Revelation 3:1-6) (6)
- 15 'Now the famine was — in Samaria' (1 Kings 18:2) (6)
- 17 Banned by the seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14) (8)
- 18 Insect most closely associated with itching (1 Samuel 24:14) (4)
- 21 Bantu tribe which gives its name to tiny landlocked country in southern Africa (5)
- 22 Familiar material in churches that use an overhead projector (7)
- 23 Last book of the Bible (10)

Down

- 1 The young David's favourite weapon (1 Samuel 17:40) (5)
- 2 'Your vats will — over with new wine' (Proverbs 3:10) (4)



- 3 Once yearly (Exodus 30:10) (6)
- 4 Milled it (anag.) (3-5)
- 5 Region north of Damascus of which Lysanias was tetrarch (Luke 3:1) (7)
- 6 Comes between Philippians and 1 Thessalonians (10)
- 9 Lake where the first disciples were called (Luke 5:1-11) (10)
- 12 Abusive outburst (8)
- 14 Are loud (anag.) (7)
- 16 Printing errors (6)
- 19 'Take my yoke upon you and — from me' (Matthew 11:29) (5)
- 20 Jacob's third son (Genesis 29:34) (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

- 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 (01704 560518)

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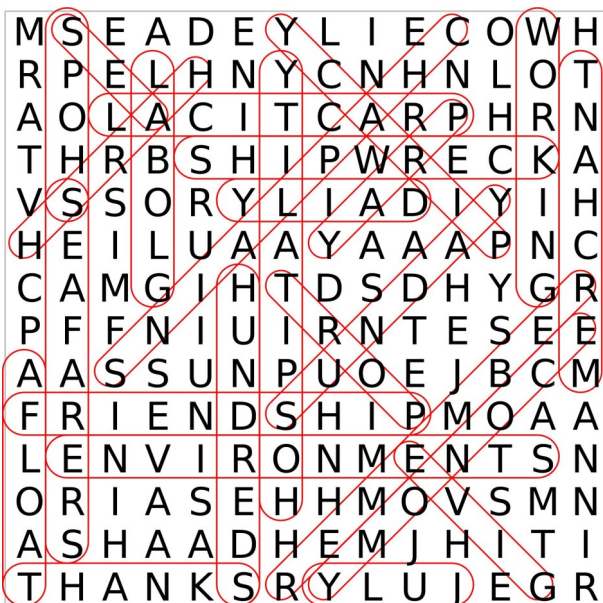


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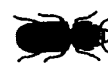
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WHAT IF...?

By Dennis Davis

Dennis continues his research into the religious wars, terror, persecution, murder, rebellion and turmoil after the Reformation. It is his aim to show what was done in the past for the religious freedom we have today. What if this had never happened? Our world would be a different place today.

Alexander of Parma

Alexander became the 5th governor of the Netherlands. He was the son of the first governor, Margaret of Parma and the nephew of Don John. He had received his education in the company of the Infante Carlos under Don John. He excelled in martial arts and manly pursuits and married Maria of Portugal but he pined for action. He would go out at night disguised and challenge any military-looking person. On one occasion he met Count Torelli and crossed swords in a fierce combat, but the count recognised him as they came under a light at which he dropped his sword because if he was to win he would be hated for beating the next monarch. He had taken part in the battle of Lepanto. He gained notoriety by leading the attack on a Turkish treasure ship when he sprang aboard with a two-handed sword and scythed his way through the crew. Philip sent him to his mother in the Netherlands but in Dec 1577 he joined Don John at the battle of Gembloux where he led the charge that gained the victory. When he became Governor the position was more favourable for him to put down this chronic rebellion.

In Antwerp religious peace had been declared but had not found any favour as the fires of religious discord were opened and internecine feuds were caused by banished reformers swarming back and being exposed to persecution in the Walloon provinces. Persecution beget persecution. Mercenaries were still roaming in the southern provinces, robbing and pillaging as the State's army had been dissolved. The States were overrun by hoards of unpaid soldiers of all nations and creeds; those who had come to attack and those who had come to defend. Hatred grew daily between the Walloons and the people of Ghent.

Attempts to re-establish peace were not acceptable to the Ghenters and Queen Elizabeth was drawn into it when she warned the Ghenters that their conduct would compel her to abandon their cause.

An unfrocked priest called Peter Dathenus who hated the Prince had inflamed the populace to rise up and vent their wrath on the Catholics by destroying images and church pictures. One chronicler said the riots were so furious as if the inhabitants had gone mad; the tumult did not cease until they had achieved complete destruction. The Prince was indignant and questioned in his mind that it might be better to turn his back on the country as he was being bitterly wronged by friend and foe alike.

Outrage and pillage continued as John Casimir brought an army of mercenaries to support the Prince. They demanded the best food and champagne by the bucket full. The Prince, ever the peacemaker by his usual skill, succeeded at last to get consent of all for religious peace; this was published on 27th Dec 1578. Exercise of both religions was established, and mutual insults and any irritations were prohibited under severe penalties. Catholics now re-entered their churches. The Walloons and other malcontents expressed dissatisfaction; nothing would satisfy them other than the suppression of the reformed religion.

Casimir, for his part, left for Germany after the States had asked the Queen of England to procure his departure. Casimir put the blame for his conduct on the States' General. When he appeared before Queen Elizabeth he was feasted and given the Order of the Garter while his 35,000 deserted mercenaries were being hectorated by the enemy and had little stomach to fight for no pay and accepted passports to leave. Casimir landed in Flushing on his way back to Germany. He was escorted by Lords and Ladies chosen by Queen Elizabeth. By order of the Prince he was to be received with distinguished hospitality. On 14th Feb 1579 he passed through Utrecht.

To be continued

God in the Sciences

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

Exploring the Big Questions: Scientists and Theologians share their views

It's important to have debates about science and Christian faith and to dig into the hot topics, but we can't exist solely on a diet of controversy. I find it helpful, at times, to simply enjoy the wonders revealed by science and the big questions they raise about meaning and purpose.

What's the universe for? What do you do with your feelings of awe and wonder? Where do we get our sense of the value of the living world from?

I had the privilege of meeting a group of Christian scientists and theologians who shared thoughts about these big questions, and will share some of their thoughts here.

The Oxford-based theologian Alister McGrath shared that "science is wonderful at asking questions. Some of those questions can be answered, but very often when you do answer them, they simply open up yet more questions. But of course, there are some more fundamental questions I think science simply cannot answer... questions like, 'Why am I here?'"

Rhoda Hawkins, a physicist at Sheffield University, has had a similar experience. "I never cease to be amazed at quite how impressive the world is, and how impressive the mechanisms are for how things work...It really is beautiful in many ways, and it leads me to think about God. I'm not saying that I have any proof, but I'm saying that by looking at the world around me it tells me more about God and it leads me to worship Him."

Another scientist who appreciates beauty is Jeff Hardin, who explained that "studying the wonders of the living world is an exercise in art appreciation. For me, God is the creator of everything... so the joy of discovery is also the joy of appreciating the world that God has made...and leads me to thank God for the amazing world that we have to enjoy and to explore."

I will close with some words from Jeff Schloss, who – like the others quoted above – finds that Christian faith makes science more satisfying for him. "Once I became a Christian...I had the sense that I was studying the marvels of the natural world, which are marvellous in their own right but become more profoundly engaging and enticing when one thinks that you're studying the works of God."

Perhaps if we can spend more time listening to people like this, our discussions about science and faith will also be richer and deeper.

1984 - The Burning of York Minster.

By Tim Lenton

Forty years ago, on 9th July 1984, York Minster was struck by lightning, which set fire to the roof and destroyed the south transept.

It was the most recent of five fires that have occurred there over the years: the causes have ranged from workmen burning coals (1753) through arson using torn-up hymnbooks (1829) to an unattended candle (1840) and a tarpaulin catching fire (1971). Although night lightning was the official explanation in 1984, some suggested that God might have been reacting to the very recent appointment as Bishop of Durham of the Rt Revd David Jenkins, a famously controversial cleric whose comments had seemed to cast doubt on the virgin birth and the Resurrection. He had been consecrated at York Minster three days earlier.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Habgood, described that idea as "ridiculous", though some – including a few members of the fire service – felt that arson by objectors could not be ruled out. As many as 114 firefighters from over North Yorkshire were involved in tackling the blaze. Insurance cover on the Minster had just been increased by its treasury department: the damage to the south transept, with its wooden vaulted roof, amounted to £2.25 million.

York Minster is a huge landmark and tourist attraction in the city: many consider it to be one of Europe's most impressive Gothic buildings. The glass in its famous 16th century Rose Window, which had recently been renovated, cracked into 40,000 pieces, but the new lead edges held it all together.

Queen Elizabeth II attended the rededication ceremony in October 1988.

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Southport Flower Show: 15th-18th August [celebrating 100 years of the Flower Show]

Southport Classic and Speed Show and Parade: 15th September (in Victoria Park: classic cars and speed event, especially for petrolheads!)

British Musical Fireworks Championship: 20th-21st September

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MYSTERY PLAYS

by John M. Shakespeare

They were presented as a form of dramatic entertainment, based on sacred subjects and Christian historical events. Medieval Mystery Plays were based around a representative body of Biblical stories and were presented by actors, often accompanied by a series of liturgical style songs taken from period chants which formed part of the services of that time.

Topics which the plays covered were mainly well known events from the Bible stories and Christianity. They covered major events in the vast historical diary of the church e.g. subjects from the Book of Genesis, the Creation and the stories of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, of Noah's Ark, ending with the Trial and Crucifixion of Christ as found in the Book of Matthew Chapter 27.

The reason for the Mystery Plays may be found in the past when only the nobility and clergy were able to read, so it is suggested that the message of the Bible's teachings were perhaps best expressed in the content of plays.

Christian teachings about individual responsibilities and the chances of redemption were lessons to be taken from the plays' performances. The writers and directors of the earliest plays could well have been Monks, since religious drama spread out from the Monasteries around the ninth to the sixteenth centuries.

In 1210, suspicious of the growing popularity of Mystery Plays, Pope Innocent III issued a papal edict that banned clergy from acting in the plays. By the end of the fifteenth century the plays were being enacted on various Church Feast Days throughout Europe.

I believe that the following Biblical quotation from Ecclesiastes (Ch5 verses 1-4), evokes the theme of the Mystery plays: "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is

planted. A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance".

The historic cities of York and Chester are well known for their presentation of cycles of Mystery Plays over hundreds of years. It is thought that there are probably four near complete English biblical collections of Mystery Plays still in existence. Referred to as play cycles, it may be speculated that they owe much to Elizabethan reconstructions of original Medieval traditions.

Also still existing are two pageants from the New Testament Cycle acted at Coventry, and one pageant each from Norwich and Newcastle upon Tyne.



But who actually performed these plays? It appears to have been a mixture of regular performing actors and church-following amateurs. In Elizabethan times there was a great demand amongst the public for performances to be at both outdoor and indoor venues. Many of Shakespeare's plays were performed by groups of travelling players. As can be imagined, the actual sets used for performances, varied from village greens to landed estates and early playhouses. Actual performances also had variety in both style and verbal expression. Things are what they are in this world of ours. Appearances can be deceptive, as the saying goes, "In a flat country a hillock is a mountain".

And I conclude with a final saying to ponder on: "Looks are nothing - behaviour is all".

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IF YOU NEED ANY HELP: Please contact Clive (564206) or Sally (553977) or Lucy (553977) for any further details you require.

Hearing the Word by telephone

If you would like to hear a recording of the Sunday morning talks telephone 0151-329-2184 at any hour of the day or night.

The calls are **free**. Each talk lasts about 15 minutes and is available for a week. Each recording becomes available during the afternoon of the Sunday on which it is given.

Was it really that long ago?...

75 years ago, on 29th July 1949, the BBC began broadcasting regular weather forecasts on TV.

70 years ago, on 5th July 1954, the BBC launched the first daily television news programme in the UK.

Also 70 years ago, on 21st July 1954, the first part of J R R Tolkien's epic fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings* was published.

65 years ago, on 25th July 1959, the first hovercraft crossed the English Channel. The SRN-1 had been designed by British inventor Christopher Cockerell.

60 years ago, on 28th July 1964, NASA launched its Ranger 7 space probe on a mission to the Moon. On 31st July it sent back the first close-up images of the lunar surface.

50 years ago, on 24th July 1974, the US Supreme Court ordered President Richard Nixon to surrender the White House tape recordings that had been subpoenaed by the House Judiciary Committee in April. The White House released the tapes on 5th August, and Nixon resigned on 9th August, before he could be impeached.

40 years ago, on 9th July 1984, York Minster in England was struck by lightning, which set fire to the roof and destroyed the south transept.

30 years ago, on 21st July 1994, Tony Blair was elected leader of Britain's Labour Party. He became Prime Minister in 1997.

Church Hall Users (Note: with the exception of the Friday Film Nights the activities listed below are NOT run by St John's Church. They are run by independent groups who use our hall). Contact details are provided in case readers wish to enquire about or join these groups.

Monday

7.00pm to 8.00pm **Zumba@Fitness**

A fun and friendly class and a great workout.

No dance experience needed. All ages and all fitness levels welcome

Contact: Kay Bennett on 07716312909

Tuesday

4.30pm – 5.30pm **Kiwi Sports Coaching**

Tag Rugby class for boys and girls aged 5-7

School holiday classes sometimes available

Contact: shanehuttonnz@gmail.com

7.30pm – 9.00pm **Connected Voices Choir**

We are a non-audition choir for adults, singing a range of uplifting music – from pop and rock to soul and funk. We are open to anyone who loves singing, whether they think they can sing or not!

Contact: info@connectedvoices.co.uk or for more information visit the website

www.connectedvoices.co.uk

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

Friday

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.

Prayer for July 2024

As we remember Sea Sunday this month

Men of the Sea

Your first disciples, Lord, were men of the sea:

Hardy fishermen from the shores of Galilee.

They knew from experience the perils of the deep...

They also knew Your presence with them in their darkest hours.

We pray for those who face like hazards today...

Lord of the sea, be near to guard them in every danger...

And let them hear Your voice above the tempest,

'It is I, be not afraid'

So bring them to their haven in peace.

From a prayer by Frank Colquhoun

£130 for our church: Home Insurance offer from Ecclesiastical Insurance Company

Take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical – one of the UK's most trusted home insurance providers and a Which? "Best Buy" – and Ecclesiastical will donate £130 to our church.



This offer will expire at the end of 2024.

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

The crochet workers have been busy creating more decorations for the pillar boxes in the Southport area. Here are some of their works in commemoration of the D-Day landings:



Don't go far!

A minister went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"

Hole for one

A golfing priest, after having been beaten by an elderly parishioner, returned to the clubhouse somewhat depressed. "Cheer up," said the layman. Remember, you'll eventually be burying me some day." "Yes," said the priest. "But even then, it will be your hole!"

Those memorable school reports *(from letters to the Daily Telegraph)*

- ~ After my first grammar school year: 'A happy soul and quite unconcerned at his ignorance.' I never did improve. – J Swindell, Cheshire
- ~ He has a small red box, which he drops. – R Harrison, East Sussex
- ~ For religious studies, my report in 1973 read: 'Not very interested'. – Revd Roger Hagon Surrey
- ~ I have kept none of my school reports. My mother's maternity records judged me best: 'Feeble at birth with considerable moulding.' – T Duffy, Middlesex

Careless Mums

(For the group of ladies called 'Mums Who Care' and pray for the children in school). When their meeting was cancelled one week: "There will be no Mums who care this week."



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