

# ***NEWS & VIEWS***

## ***The Free Church Hampstead Garden Suburb***



***NOVEMBER 2023***

**PLEASE TAKE ONE**

# **HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB FREE CHURCH**

**(United Reformed and Baptist)**  
**Central Square, London, NW11 7AG**  
**[www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.hgsfreechurch.org.uk)**

<b>Sunday Services:</b>	<i>11 a.m. (and 6.30 p.m. when announced)</i> <i>Holy Communion is celebrated at Morning</i> <i>Worship on the first Sunday of every month.</i> <i>The Junior Church meets at 11am every</i> <i>Sunday</i>
<b>Minister:</b>	Minister: Revd Aled Jones 020 4531 2055 <a href="mailto:Minister@hgsfreechurch.org.uk">Minister@hgsfreechurch.org.uk</a>
<b>Pastoral Emergencies Contact</b>	Derek Lindfield 07803 953483 or Penny Trafford 020 8959 3405
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<b>Lettings Officer</b>	Eddie Hayden <a href="mailto:lettings@hgsfreechurch.org.uk">lettings@hgsfreechurch.org.uk</a>
<b>Interim Finance Officer</b>	Eddie Hayden <a href="mailto:finance@hgsfreechurch.org.uk">finance@hgsfreechurch.org.uk</a>

## **Safeguarding Statement**

Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church believes that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all those who are vulnerable (children, young people and vulnerable adults). We expect all of our leaders, volunteers and those who use our premises to share this commitment and value the support of those who worship here in achieving this.

***The Elders (Trustees), Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church***  
***January 2016***

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# NEWS & VIEWS

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB  
FREE CHURCH  
Central Square,  
London NW11 7AG



NO 792

NOVEMBER 2023

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## Dear Friends

The Manse, November 2023

November is a month of remembering those who have walked life's journey before us. It opens with All Saints' tide, when we thank God for all the faithful women and men who have proclaimed Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and have now received their reward in him. Our Christian hope is reflected in the picture which John the Divine paints for us in his vision on Patmos. Exiled during the persecution of Domitian at the end of the First Century, in his vision John tells us (Revelation 7: 9, 10, 15–17),

After this I looked, and there before me was a  
great multitude that no one could count, from  
every nation, tribe, people and language, standing  
before the throne and before the Lamb. They  
were wearing white robes and were holding palm  
branches in their hands.

And they cried out in a loud voice:  
“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.”

They are before the throne of God  
and serve him day and night in his temple;  
and he who sits on the throne  
will shelter them with his presence.  
Never again will they hunger;  
never again will they thirst.  
The sun will not beat down on them,  
nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the centre of the throne  
will be their shepherd;  
he will lead them to springs of living water.  
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

What a scene! This is a glimpse through the eyes of one faithful follower of Jesus of the scene of intense heavenly worship, where the saints whom we remember at All Saints' tide are found. The company of those who share in Jesus's resurrection is too large for anyone to count. Of course, we remember at this time our own friends and family who are numbered among those who worship among that throng in Revelation 7. As a church, we are especially mindful of those who mourn the loss of Alan Malcolm and David Lewis during this past year.

It is merely happenstance that the annual act of Remembrance for the fallen of the First and Second world wars, as well as other armed conflicts during the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries comes immediately after this commemoration of the faithful departed.

War's shadow is long as one of the generation of young men killed during the Great War reflected in his poem, *Rhyfel* ('War'):

Man raised his sword, once God had gone,  
To slay his brother, and the roar  
Of battlefields now casts upon  
Our homes the shadow of the war.  
(*Ellis Humphrey Evans (Hedd Wyn), 1887–1917. Translated: Alan Llwyd*)

Despite the fact that very few of even the youngest veterans of the Second World War are still alive to relate their experience of that time, we still don our red or white poppies as we pause, reflect and remember. We still stand in silent testimony to our desire that the deeds of our forebears should not be forgotten. Brian Wren, the retired URC minister in his hymn, *Weep for the Dead* prays:

Summoned by love that leaves no room for pride,  
we pray that every continent and isle,  
wounded by war, war's hate may lay aside,  
and find a way to heal and reconcile.

The attacks on the south of Israel launched from Gaza on 7 October have given us all another stark reminder of the depths of human hatred and



depravity, however. Almost exactly 50 years after the beginning of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and as Jews celebrated the end of this year's cycle of religious festivals, Hamas terrorists systematically destroyed the lives of many hundreds of Israeli civilians in the largest mass murder of Jews since the end of the Second World War.

It saddens me to think that people in my own country are willing to equivocate when faced with these stark realities. Even when a Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket destroyed a hospital within Gaza itself, a significant number of people in Britain and throughout the world wanted to blame the Israeli armed forces for that catastrophe.

We should all stand with our Jewish neighbours at this time, and to this end Churches Together in Golders Green and District have issued the following statement:

Church leaders attending the Annual General Meeting of Churches Together in Golders Green and District express their concern for their Jewish neighbours and stand with them in the face of the increased anti-semitic violence locally. The group longs for the end of the needless loss of life and continues to pray for peace throughout our world.

I do not for one moment seek to condone the policies of the Israeli government in Gaza and the West Bank; a just and honourable solution must be negotiated with the people of Palestine so that genuine peace can emerge from 75 years of bitterness and hatred. Yes, all people need to "find a way to heal and reconcile".

We remember with thanksgiving those who have been an example of Christian love and service to us, and pray that we will be worthy examples to those who follow us.

Blessings to you and yours.

Your servant in Jesus, Aled Jones



**Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church**

# ANNUAL CHURCH BAZAAR

&

**TRANSFORM TRADE SALE**

*Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 11-2pm*

*In the Free Church*

\*



Come and browse - all  
the usual stalls



fairly traded goods \*  
cards and gifts

\* lots of homemade cakes, jams and  
food



\* many beautifully made  
gifts



And don't forget

\* our famously delicious homemade soups and  
lunches

**Admission free**

**In the Free Church, Central Square,  
NW11 7AG**



## News of the Family

As a church family we extend our condolences this month to Sally Lewis and her three children. Her husband, David, a longstanding member of the congregation died in early October.

His funeral service was held at the church on 1 November.

We also send our best wishes to Jean Merriman. She is recuperating at Southgate Beaumont Nursing Home after her recent hospitalisation.

Two significant milestones in the lives of our members have been marked recently: Elizabeth Swynnerton celebrated her 90th birthday, and Almira Richards turned 70 years old. It was good to sing 'Happy Birthday' to the two of them after our Sunday services.

*Aled Jones*



**The concert** given by Katherine Bamber and me on Saturday 14th October was a happy evening, attended by an appreciative audience of around 60. Our minister, Aled Jones, introduced the evening, and Pauline Jones kindly turned pages for me in both solo and duo pieces.

I am very grateful for the help given by many to enable the evening to happen; to those who prepared and served the refreshments during the interval, to Tony Wilson, who provided streaming on YouTube, which has been watched by 450 people online, and to everyone who contributed with their presence and their donations.

The evening was planned to raise money for the Christmas presents given by the church to patients at Edgware Hospital's Dennis Scott adult acute mental health wards, and I want to record my thanks for the generosity which enabled us to raise £1,091.

*David Trafford*



# **Bible Study**

## **Matthew 23**

### **Seven woes – Jesus warns the crowd about dead religion**

Last month we thought about the three parables which Jesus used during Holy Week to highlight the importance of being formed by the Way of Christ. These culminated in the rather sorrowful figure of the wedding guest being turned out of the King's banquet (Matthew 22: 13). God's grace is open to all, and God longs for all to come fully into God's presence. This means leaving behind the street clothes we previously wore, and putting on clean clothing for the feast.

Of course, the theme of repentance – turning from our old sinful ways, and being transformed into the people God longs for us to be – is at the forefront of Jesus's public ministry. The need for this becomes ever clearer during the remainder of Christ's final teachings. Before looking at chapter 23, it would be useful to consider the remainder of chapter 22.

The setting here remains the temple courts, and the religious leaders upon hearing the three parables go out in order to discuss how they can deal with Jesus (22: 15). One after another, they come back to Jesus to try to catch him out by asking a series of questions:

Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not? (22: 16–22)

At the resurrection, to whom will someone be married? (22: 23–33)

Which is the greatest commandment in the Law? (22: 34–40)

Each time they sought to ensnare him in his words, and each time the questioners were left speechless. At the very end of this non-stop question time, Jesus poses one of his own: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (22: 41). This time the Pharisees are stumped, and realise that they have lost the verbal sparring match.

Jesus, then, is left with the crowds and his disciples (23: 1). At the outset here, we need to be clear that Jesus is now no longer addressing the Pharisees themselves. He is talking to those he wishes to call to repentance. As we read these words in Matthew's Gospel, the key is to remember that they are written here today for us. In other words, Matthew recalls Jesus's sharp criticism of the 'teachers of the Law and the Pharisees' in order to criticise the parallel faults in his own contemporaries.



Therefore, as we read them we need to ask ourselves the question: does Jesus mean *me* here, and if so what do *I* need to do about it?

Chapter 23 opens the final long block of Jesus's teaching recorded for us in Matthew (chapters 23–25). In a way, it balances the first major portion of teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5–7). Let's think about the beatitudes (5: 3–12), for example, and contrast them with the woeful, cursed state of the Pharisaic attitudes outlined in chapter 23.

As the late Michael Green in his commentary on Matthew's Gospel writes,

Matthew is plagued by a deep fear that the leadership of his own churches could go the way of the Jewish leadership, and succumb to the ever-present danger for religious leaders of a Pharisee spirit. It is all too easy to lapse into blindness, hypocrisy, and fussing about minor ecclesiastical details while allowing the major matters of the faith to go by the board. One of the weaknesses of the modern church is that we major on minor matters and leave pressing issues unaddressed. (Michael Green (2000), *The Message of Matthew: The kingdom of heaven*, page 241)

After all, in the earlier sequence of replies to the trick questions of his opponents, Jesus insisted that the commandments of the whole Hebrew Bible could be summarised succinctly as commands to love both God and neighbour (22: 37–40). These are the big central matters. Anything which detracts from those core aims must be considered dangerous to our faith journey.

Jesus begins (23: 1–12) with a scathing description of Pharisaism. The Pharisees are criticised because their interpretation of the law takes little or no account of human frailty and tends to be more severe than humane. The image here in verse 4 is of the heaviest sack imaginable being filled with rules and shoved onto the back of the one who is made to carry it. The Pharisees themselves, though, won't even lift a finger to help. As Jesus says, "they do not practice what they preach" (verse 3).

Instead, they concentrated on outward show. Large prayer cases (phylacteries – cases containing prayers bound by leather bands to the arm and the head) and the long tassels at the corners of the prayer shawl could easily be seen by others (verse 5). Jesus suggests that the problem wasn't only a desire to show off.

There was also a craving for respect and honour (verses 6 and 7). Here, there is a significant shift in Jesus's approach. He turns now from referring to the third person desires of the scribes and Pharisees, and turns to

addressing his hearers directly in the second person (verses 8–11). The “they” switches to “you”, and by extension to “us”.

Titles of honour, places of honour are as nothing compared to the joy which comes from following the one who lifts every burden from our shoulders. What matters is the huge and humbling principle of verses 11 and 12: “The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

This then is a call to emulate Jesus himself. He issued the denunciations of Matthew 23 not from a great or pompous height, but on the way to the cross. There was no room for inflated luggage on that journey, either for himself or for his followers. Jesus had already promised that his load was easy and his burden was light, and that people carrying heavy loads should take his instead (11: 28–30).

Now he was about to embark on the final journey through the crowded streets of Jerusalem to shoulder the heaviest burden of all, so that his followers would never again have to be weighed down by it.

There are seven curses or woes recorded for us in Matthew 23. Woes were a funeral lament, a convention used during the time of mourning for the dead. The very word for ‘woe’, *ouai* (*ouai*) has a mournful sound, and Jesus speaks this wailing lament over and over against the Pharisees who appear to be religious, but are dead inside.

A key accusation which Jesus makes is that they are hypocrites; merely play actors wearing whichever mask suits the occasion. The woes function almost as a converse of the ‘blesseds’ of 5: 3–12. As the beatitudes set out the true way to serve God, so the woes describe the wrong way.

One by one, Jesus diagnoses the things which are holding the Pharisees back from the path of true repentance. He accuses them (verse 13) of rejecting God’s kingly rule in their own lives, and of blocking the kingdom way for others. Even their missionary ventures are censured: they had enthusiasm, but it was misdirected. All they really wanted to do was boost their own numbers and prestige (verse 15).

The Pharisees are also accused of breaking oaths as it suits them (verses 16–22). Everything is done to their own advantage by a process of cynical casuistry. It isn’t the temple and its altar which is important to them, but rather the gold and the gifts given in worship.

Next (verses 23 and 24), Jesus condemns the flagrant neglect of the law’s chief demands for justice, mercy and faith. All his opponents cared for was

measuring a tenth of the most insignificant garden herbs. This legalism is illustrated in the comical picture of an unclean gnat being strained carefully from wine to avoid impurity, but all the while the largest unclean creature in the world – a camel – is cheerfully gulped down.

The Aramaic which Jesus spoke when talking to the crowds helps to make the joke image clearer as he captures the pun on *qalma* (gnat) and *gamla* (camel). It isn't a joke, however, and Jesus insists that the teachers of the law and Pharisees are blind guides. Herein lies the danger of Christians insisting on fundamentally insignificant matters, while choosing to ignore, or even deny things which are of the utmost importance.

An exaggerated concern for external appearance is Jesus's focus in the fifth of the seven woes (verses 25 and 26). Ritualism has replaced a living relationship with God. So long as something looks good on the outside, it does not matter what lies beneath the surface. Jesus was on his way to accomplish a real renewal of the covenant with God, which all the Pharisees' intensification of superficial matters could never achieve.

Given their funereal origin, it's appropriate that the final two woes (verses 27–32) should talk about tombs and grave decoration. Pharisaism might look good on the outside, but inside there is nothing more than death and decay. There is nothing so repulsive as dead religion, and Jesus' words remind us that spiritual death under a religious veneer is no less a possibility today than it was then. It is to be avoided at all costs.

*Aled Jones*





## **Where are those ‘fingers of God’**

In last month’s article I spoke just as the workmen team of Pete and Jim were arriving to start on the insulating work; all outside walls have been lined on the inside with panels, held in place by metal rods and all covered with a smooth fine plaster scree. Gradually, our ‘base’ has become smaller and smaller until we resort to the kitchen with some precious items under the table, the top half covered with essential paper work, the printer and TV, with just enough space for our plates! Having had a massive sort-out, I thought we didn’t have much in the way of belongings; but it is still such a difficult dilemma to realize just what is important and what is not important to have at one’s finger-tips! Now we’re having a gap of a few days until the heating team arrive to install radiators and new boiler - probably also having to make a new cupboard in the bathroom and demolish the existing cupboard - deemed ‘too small!’

At the same time the outside works have started - rendering the walls, demolishing an unusable cellar and checking out the condition of the two chimneys - a difficult but not impossible job for those in the trade, but add Borth’s strong winds and you might have a problem! For protection all windows have been covered with blue polythene (giving a lovely blue reflection everywhere) and all outside walls painted bright red! Even in my usual laid-back state that was enough to wake me up and ask whether we had made a mistake - to be reassured that it was only a layer to help the render attach! Apparently we’re not the only people who panic at this stage! All we need now is a few days without rain to tackle this part of the programme!

And those ‘quiet moments’ to draw aside and listen to God can be hard to find and it’s almost as though I must stay here and not draw aside to seek God’s presence, God’s fingers, in these everyday happenings. Have I been taking the liberty of escaping from the reality of the world? I remember being so moved when I read of places and people who had been helped by Christian Aid and how those people didn’t keep their ‘help’, their ‘aid’ for themselves alone but let their ‘fingers’ share it with their neighbours! We read the newspapers with their reports and invariable ‘gloomy’ details and really have to search for such examples of ‘good happenings’ but they are there somewhere. In last month’s article I wrote about finding places where I could go – a search to find ‘somewhere’ where I could find God’s presence - but perhaps by drawing aside I’ve been missing the point. This thought came to mind when listening to the Rev Sharon Grenham talking about her experiences as a prison visitor in a week when the Daily



Service's theme was 'prisons.' She described her work, for which she needed special training, as one where hope needs to be brought into situations of uncertainty, in situations where one needs to 'look up, look around to see the compassion of Christ in every weary step you take throughout every long day - places where it is so essential to know that where the King is beside you, light will shine'. How difficult, how impossible it must be to draw aside, from the noise and the bustle, the closeness of everyone else! How challenging to convey the thought that even in their present situation they are not forgotten, to have to be those 'fingers of God' bringing hope.

Do you, like myself, feel that you're totally inadequate to even attempt to be that small finger of hope? If so, remember the almost impossibly strange fact that God works through flawed people such as you and me. There are numerous examples of people in the Bible who God has used to 'achieve the impossible'. Not just in the Bible but in our lifetime. I'm reading 'A London Sparrow' by Phyllis Thompson about the life story of Gladys Aylward. She relates how many years after her return to London, Gladys gave several talks about her experiences of a lifetime of service in China. At one talk she said: "At the time I went to China I was the most unlikely person to do anything, let alone go to China. I had never passed an examination.....But God wasn't asking me if I could read properly. He was saying: 'Gladys Aldward, would you allow me to open your ears and your mouth and let me drop you into China because it's to these people I want you to prove my glory and tell of my salvation' ....if God ever worked a miracle in this whole wide world He worked one in my head....I am only humble before a great Almighty God who says 'When I call I will equip'."

We are called to be 'salt' and 'light' to the world. As I get older I'm finding it impossible to be the 'practical' help often needed but I don't despair as I realize my 'finger' can become one that listens - and in this hectic, 'sorry, no time to stop and listen' busy world, there are many who need a 'listening' or 'understanding finger' to make a connection with them - just to show that they are not alone and for them to realize that someone does care. Perhaps through us, they will find 'those ever-lasting caring arms!'

So back to the kitchen - our 'base' which is becoming so cluttered. I have lost all my notes on this article which is now based on faith and trust. We await the arrival of our 'heating team' next Monday. My cups of tea were rewarded with a bunch of roses from (workmen) 6'7" Jim and shorter Pete!

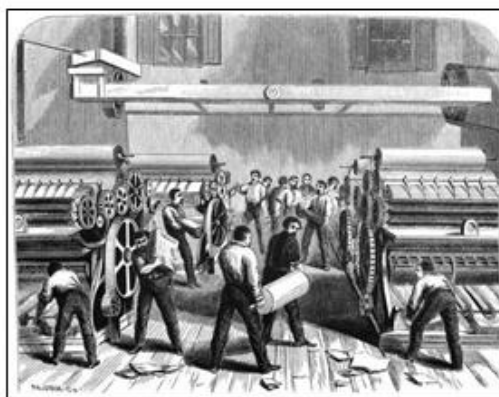
*Rosemary Birch*

## From the Archives

### 1913

*This extract is from very early on in the Church's history. Our Norman and Beard organ is mentioned at a cost of £580 (!) and is still admired to this day. The short time frame for building the Church – just over two years from Committee to opening –*

*seems quite remarkable by today's standards, as the cost of £12,099! The mention of the Eisteddfod seems very apt, considering the Welsh ministers we have had and now have!*



### From Year Book 1913

#### *A Few Historical Notes*

#### *Formation of the Church*

A provisional Free Church Committee came into being on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1909, and carried on the work of arranging services until the church was formed on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1910, when 56 persons enrolled themselves as members. The Constitution was adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1911. The services were conducted successively in the Institute, in the Club House, and again in the Institute, until the new Church in Central Square was opened on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1911.

#### *The New Church Buildings*

The cost of erecting the Church was £12,099 and that of the Manse £1,000.

#### *The First Minister*

The first Minister is the Rev J H Rushbrooke MA, formerly of Highgate, who was unanimously invited on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1910, and commenced his pastorate on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1910.

#### *Opening of Organ*

The organ, erected at a cost of £580 (which sum was collected by Mr F Litchfield), was opened by Mr G D Cunningham FRCO ARAM, Organist of the Alexandra Palace, on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1912. The instrument is of fine tone and reflects credit on its builders, Messrs Norman and Beard.

#### *Eisteddfod and Summer Mart*

An event of great interest was the Eisteddfod and Summer Mart, held on

June 20, 21 and 22, 1912. The competitions created several keen contests and many of the performances of the competitors were of high merit. A distinguished list of adjudicators willingly gave their services and contributed largely to the popularity of the Eisteddfod. The net proceeds from the combined effort were £435.

#### *Open-Air Work*

The successful inauguration of open-air work was not the least important of the Church's activities during the year.

## 1943

*The second extract contains arrangements for a Service of Thanksgiving at Armistice Day, which of course we still have as Remembrance Sunday on 12 November (this year). It is interesting to note how many of the Church's young people were away during the war, serving in various capacities for the war effort. The Advert reminds us of coupons for purchases (such as clothing and meat) but not, it seems, for books. Also the letters then in telephone numbers which many of us will remember.*

### **From the News Letter November 1943**

My Dear People

I am writing earlier than usual as there are things to be said about Remembrance Sunday, which falls this year on the first Sunday in November. It has been suggested to me that we should make it a special occasion for remembering young people who are serving in this war, especially those who are overseas. We think of them almost every time we meet together, but the suggestion is that for once their names should be read. The list is a long one, and read deliberately as we should wish it to be done, it will take some time. But the suggestion commends itself to me and will, I feel sure, commend itself to all of you. We shall wish to remember also those who served, and particularly those who fell, in the war of 1914-18, but there will be no conflict in our minds between the two. I want therefore to extend a special invitation to all whom it may concern – which is surely practically the whole population – to join with us on Sunday morning, November 7<sup>th</sup>, in an act of remembrance, intercession and thanksgiving. Very fittingly, the service will conclude with the Lord's Supper, the greatest of all acts of remembrance. Other arrangements for Armistice Week will be announced later, but I think we may take it for granted that there will be a short service on the Thursday



morning beginning at 10.45am.

We do not see as many men and women in uniform at the services as we did a year ago, but letters continue to reach me with pleasing regularity.

The demands of the State continue to make heavy demands upon the Churches. Not that many people are now being called into the Forces, but they are becoming more and more involved in war duties, even if it is only in half-time jobs. It becomes increasingly difficult to find anyone with leisure to help in young people's work or to sing in the choir. The State has a great advantage here, for it can force people to do its bidding. The Church has no force to use, and would I hope decline to use it if it had it. We can but make a moral appeal and trust to the loyalty of our friends. So far we have not appealed in vain. It looks however as though some who thought they had earned an honourable discharge will have to put the harness on again. At all costs, the work must be maintained for, as I have said again and again, in importance it is second to nothing. Frank Ballard

*Anne Lowe*

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## JOHN BIRCH'S DIARY

**Hope for the future** The third year of our living at Borth is about to begin – as is also a new chapter of our lives as parents and grandparents; our grand-daughter Megan and husband Jack are on the point of not only making themselves parents but us great-grand-parents (looking forward to giving you specifics next month.)

**Convention has it that as you get older, life becomes more predictable,** more placid. It's great then when this isn't the case and that is certainly true for us. I was an only child and have been very blessed not only by over 50 years of married life – but by having caring children and grandchildren. They may be distant in location but they are often in contact – and it's because they want to, not just family duty.

**Rosemary and I are now together 24/7** – which wasn't the case for many years with my running a business; and it's not just us and our earthly family but our family under God which has transferred itself from many years at the Free Church to a small but caring congregation centered at the church in Aberystwyth. We feel very much an on-going part of both our family and God's family above. Rosemary and I are so grateful to God that we have been so provided for by both our faith and family. Even more remarkable as our initial meeting happened when Rosemary was a 'free' replacement - but that's another story of God's extra-ordinary plans!!

**I am always intrigued to connect with a situation** which gives a link back to history, where we all came from. Cambridge University Botanic Garden contains a **living clone of an apple tree planted by Sir Isaac Newton** after coming up with the concept of gravity when he'd witnessed the fall of an apple from a tree in the garden of his childhood home in Woolsthorpe Manor, Lincolnshire. Artist Nabil Ali has made ink from the clone's bark. He said, "I thought I'd end up with black pigment but it's a dark golden yellow. I'm calling it Newton's Gold."

I spent the first 20 years of my life in Shropshire; each year a **Horse Ploughing Competition** took place just outside Shrewsbury, a tradition that still continues. In Bishop's Lydeard, Somerset, the National Championship, now in its 72nd year, is being held, attracting over 250 ploughmen and women from all over Britain. It's great when





history is not only appreciated but continues to live and add to life.

***It's satisfactory when the law catches up with perpetrators*** and deals with them but the sad and bad reality is that the harm caused cannot be put right. This refers to the situation with a damaged tree believed to have been about 300



years old on Hadrian's Wall and known as the ***Sycamore Gap Tree***. Hadrian's Wall was built by the Roman army on the orders of the Emperor Hadrian and had a UNESCO World Heritage status, and was voted English Tree of the Year in 2016. It's expected that new shoots will grow from the remains but the connection with history is now lost for ever. A man in his sixties and a boy of 14 have been arrested. There is nothing to suggest that the cutting down was anything other than just unmitigated destruction!



***Molly and Jekyll (a young lady and her parrot)*** were brought to safety by Ogwen Valley Rescue when Jekyll was chased away by peregrine falcons. Jekyll appeared none the worse for his adventure and greeted the Snowdonia rescue team with "Hello".

***A rare plant*** Staying with Nature a forager looking for mushrooms in the Wye Valley (on the Welsh border) found what turned out to be a "I knew right away that this was special," Chloe Newcomb Hodgetts said. "I did a happy little dance...I knew right away that this was a special find and I just sat and admired it for a few seconds." Thank you, Nature.

***In 1966, Asquith Xavier applied to be a guard at Euston Station. He was turned down.*** Mr. Xavier was a black immigrant and was part of the 'Windrush Generation' coming to London from Dominica. His application was rejected, but a campaign led to him - and many more immigrants - being able to take on and perform excellent ongoing work. A train now bearing his name and picture was





brought into service by his daughter Maria. She said, “To think about what our father experienced while applying for promotion with the racial discrimination he faced ....A train being named in his honour is truly amazing.”

***One final link to nature*** - not to be passed by as it's an incredible story of hope and perseverance happening over a long period. Two years ago a 'malnourished and dehydrated' turtle was washed up on a shore in Scotland. She was named Iona after the island where she made 'landfall,' and she was not expected to last the night as she was found in 10 Celsius degree water and was the smallest live stranded loggerhead turtle recorded in the UK. Todd German of Sea Life, Scarborough, said: “Sea turtles are really facing challenges and I dread to say they're human-faced challenges.” Found more than a thousand miles from her normal habitat, Iona has now been restored to health and released into the Azores, in the mid-Atlantic.

***Where is the 'loo t?'*** Police are investigating after 35 portable toilets were stolen from a race-track in Herefordshire! The units are said to be worth £1000 each! Owner Neil Griffiths said, “I'm slightly baffled by it .....it's everything else we put inside them as well, like sanitizing units ..



all that is gone!” West Mercia Police said it's investigating the incident! Is there no end to the wide and varied selection of loo t ? (I'll leave to your imagination what 'everything else' included!).

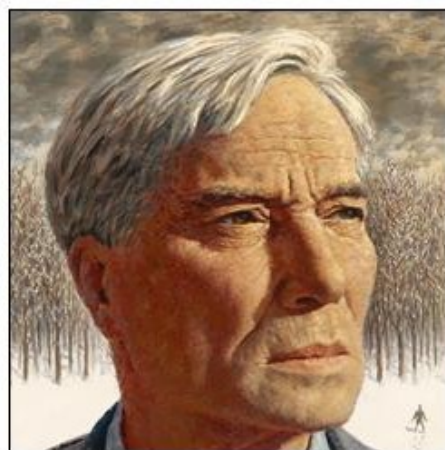
***John Birch***





## Why was *Dr Zhivago* first published in Milan?

The older members of our society, such as myself, who were already grown-up at the time of the Cold War, should bear in mind that they carry history within them and that an aspect of this history is the culture wars between “the West” and the then Soviet Union. Two very important figures in these culture wars were the dancer, Rudolf Nureyev and the poet Boris Pasternak. The latter, in 1956, thought that he might be able to take advantage of the thaw introduced by Khrushchev, which meant among other things, censors with a lighter touch, to get his novel *Dr Zhivago* published in the important literary journal *Novy Mir*. It had always been understood, anyway, that a writer could get away with more in a journal of this type as its readership was limited to the intelligentsia and senior Party members: a blind eye was usually turned to coded messages critical of the authorities. However, Pasternak was to be disappointed in that his manuscript was rejected by *Novy Mir* and this made him determined to risk having it published abroad. Perhaps one reason for his temerity was that he may already have been in poor health as he was to die of lung cancer in 1960.



A manuscript of the novel was smuggled out of the country and delivered to Feltrinelli, publishers in Milan, whose owner, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, in common with many Italian intellectuals of the post-war period, was a member of the Italian Communist Party. Of course, Feltrinelli realized at once that this was a hot property that was likely to make his company a lot of money. For example, the film rights alone, sold to MGM, made the company \$450,000. But it will not have been profit alone that persuaded Feltrinelli to publish this rogue text since his Slavic adviser said that to reject it would be “a crime against culture.” News of this unwanted development reached the authorities in Moscow and in alarm they dispatched the Secretary of the Writers’ Union, Alexei Surkov, to beg, persuade or threaten Giangiacomo Feltrinelli not to publish Pasternak’s text. What happened, what was said at the meeting between the publisher and Surkov, would make a fascinating two-hander, a one act play for the theatre or television. But Surkov was to return to Moscow with his tail between his legs: the novel was translated into Italian and published in 1957. Even worse for the Soviets, Feltrinelli negotiated translations into





eighteen other languages. Because of *Dr Zhivago*'s immediate success, Feltrinelli decided not to renew his Party membership in 1958; for his part, Pasternak - who understandably feared for his life - was expelled from the Union of Writers. Needless to say, the CIA rubbed their hands with glee at this unexpected propaganda coup. In the USSR the novel circulated in the customary *samizdat* (self-publication) form until its publication was finally allowed in 1988. Since 2003 it has been a school text for year 11 in

Russian secondary schools.

Returning now to the 1960s, the drama didn't stop with the publication of *Dr Zhivago* because in 1958 the Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature to Pasternak's novel. He was told that if he went to Stockholm to collect it, he would not be allowed to return home and so Pasternak stayed in Moscow. What then was all the fuss about? Khrushchev was to say after he was deposed that having read *Dr Zhivago* he regretted that it had been denied publication in 1956. For his part, Gromyko wrote in his memoirs that in denying the novel publication, the Soviet authorities had over-reacted. After all, *Dr Zhivago* ends in the 1930s and so a generation that included the tumultuous period of the Great Patriotic War had elapsed before Pasternak approached *Novy Mir* in 1956. If Surkov had succeeded in persuading Feltrinelli to - at least - make some cuts in the text, what would he have insisted on being redacted? Here are a few extracts that would no doubt have been struck out with a red pencil:

'All around there was self-deception, empty verbiage. Humdrum life still limped, floundered bow-legged somewhere out of old habit. But the doctor saw life unvarnished (...) He considered himself and his milieu doomed.

'Commissars with unlimited powers were appointed everywhere, people of iron will in black leather jackets, armed with means of intimidation and with revolvers, who rarely shaved and still more rarely slept.

'Marxism and science? To argue about that (...) is imprudent (...) But come what may. Marxism has too little control of itself to be a science. Sciences are better balanced. Marxism and objectivity? I don't know of a movement more isolated within itself and further from the facts than Marxism.

'Yuri Andreevich could not bear the political mysticism of the Soviet intelligentsia, which was its highest achievement or, as they would have

said then, the spiritual ceiling of the epoch.’

However hard the censor worked he was doomed to fail because of the novel’s intellectual and spiritual integrity. Pasternak, who loved Tolstoy’s work, was a humanist to the core. He puts personal and family relations first and expects the state to behave in a benevolent manner towards its citizens. So the core extract is something like this one:

‘All that’s productive, settled, all that’s connected with habit and life, with the human nest and its order, all of it went to rack and ruin along with the upheaval of the whole society and its reorganisation.’

For Pasternak, the Russian revolution acted as a kaleidoscope that shook up the population, uprooted and scattered it; starved, brutalized and massacred it. Above all, in Pasternak’s own words, the Russian people were deprived of their ‘human nest.’ And because the author chooses to concentrate on a fistful of characters, he is able to show in detail how their lives are turned upside down. The Russian people are deprived at this time of great suffering of the consolation of their religion; throughout the novel there are references to the rituals and liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church. It may be religion that imparts a spirit of benevolence towards other humans and also to animals, although vermin – a by-product of the neglect provoked by revolution – is an undesirable exception.

Just one important aspect of *Dr Zhivago* that the censor would not have objected to is Pasternak’s obvious love and close observation of nature. Russians seem to have a visceral love of their vast lands, one that can make exile particularly painful. Pasternak excels at conjuring up winter scenes. Some of these may have a practical slant: extreme cold requires a good deal of wood to burn in a large stove. The pressing need for a supply of wood to last the winter is brought home to the reader at several different points in the text. The winter is treated with love, respect and possibly awe because of its ferocity. This deeply felt appreciation and respect for the cold; its undoubted beauty but also the dangers it may bring with it, is something we in western Europe do not understand. If either Napoleon or Hitler had paused to think properly about the awesome majesty of the Russian winter they would both have stayed at home and saved millions of lives by their prudence.

One final point is that there is nothing wrong with the film version of *Dr Zhivago*. Why not admire Julie Christie’s beauty and Omar Sharif’s good looks? This said, it is indispensable to bear in mind that the film version bears little if any resemblance to the original work and should therefore be kept in some compartment of the brain remote from the original.

**Verity Smith**

*Note: Textual quotations are from the Penguin Vintage Classics edition (2011)*



## **What I did on my Hols (A Few Years Back!)**

Wandering through the Students Union one evening in 1963 I saw a notice advertising a student trip to Russia. In those far off days the prospect of such a trip seemed quite exotic and challenging – a bit different from the usual France and Germany stuff - and I signed up

An advantage of such a trip in 1963 was that it had to be entirely by train. (Nowadays, one would presumably take a flight straight to Moscow or St Petersburg – which is not the same thing at all!). Accordingly, our student group – some 14 to 20 people – congregated one afternoon at Victoria station where our ‘leader’ introduced himself – a strange, hippyish kind of character who proudly showed us a small case of contraceptives he was planning to sell in Moscow (not a particularly wise thing to do I would have thought). From Victoria it was train to Dover for the ferry to Calais and then train to Brussels and Liege and finally to Aachen, just over the German border. It was at Aachen that we finally located and boarded the train bound for Russia – and it was also there that we got our first taste of authentic ‘Russiana.’ For there, facing the door at the end of our allotted carriage, was a samovar happily gurgling away, complete with a fat, ruddy faced attendant who (as we boarded) was doing his best to tick our names off some kind of scrappy list with the remains of a blunt, stubby pencil. He had a hard job (our names had been ‘russianised’ for him but not very well) but he was very helpful and cheerful.

That night we settled down to sleep or doze as best we could in our allotted seats until we were awoken early next morning at a Berlin station ready to be checked out for the onward journey through East Berlin and East Germany. Militia entered our compartment with some serious weaponry (just like the films) and herded us out into the corridor while they searched belongings and examined our papers. Eventually they seemed satisfied and sat down in our seats and started passing around some tins of food they had discovered. They seemed to find them very interesting – but were not intent on confiscating them – they just wanted information about them. They then relaxed and we all started trying to communicate in an abysmally poor mixture of German, Russian, English and French. Finally, they bundled themselves out with cheery goodbyes and we were on our way again.

The whole of the day was then spent trundling through the rest of East Germany and Poland. By then, the train had become very long (we were all in a part of one carriage) and made frequent stops to take on more and more passengers. It became very crowded with plenty of mums and kids and ‘Babas’ (ie ‘Grans’) loaded with bags of this and bags of that and even



(did I imagine it?) – the odd bit of livestock (ie baby chicks in cardboard boxes). We sat tight in our comfortable seats until overcome by shame and guilt we signalled some of them to come inside and take our places while we did the best we could in the corridor. It was a long day. Towards evening the train became less crowded as the Babas and chickens gradually decamped and we pulled into the (then) fabled border station of Brest-Litovsk. The European train had done its stuff and we crossed the platform to where a wide gauge Russian train was waiting for us. (For train buffs, the European gauge is 4ft 8 1/2 ins, the Russian gauge 5ft – the difference consequent upon a Russian decision that no invading foreign train should be able to cross the Russian frontier without immense logistic difficulties). Also awaiting us were two young female Intourist guides who ushered us on board and showed us our allotted ‘couchettes’ – ie sleeping berths, two on each side of a compartment. There was no gender discrimination so changing into night attire (if you wanted to change) was done in one of the toilets followed by a discreet knock on the door to make sure the coast was clear to enter. The night and the following day was then devoted to getting through Minsk (now in Belarus) and Smolensk accompanied by ‘in-board’ entertainment of propaganda announcements and music over speakers in each compartment, speakers which could be turned down but not off (except at night).

There followed a fortnight’s sight-seeing – seven days in Moscow and seven in St Petersburg – doing the standard stuff of Red Square, Kremlin, Lenin’s tomb, the Hermitage, Peterhoff, Winter Palace, etc. Sadly, all these visits and lectures are now a part of a 60 year-old blur: it is the overall impressions and incidentals that tend to remain in the memory, eg the surprising number of antique shops in Moscow (and why were so many of them stuffed with grandfather clocks?) as well as ice-cream vendors selling their beloved ‘morozhenoye’! And the sight of people on the Metro escalators actually carrying and reading poetry books.

If truth be told, perhaps the strongest memory that comes to mind is being simply exhausted by the itinerary laid on for us. I quickly came to the conclusion that while we students were no strangers to the odd late-night and half-pint of shandy, the Russians were in another league entirely. There was simply no comparison. For example, we were given an invitation to go to a show at a ‘typical’ worker’s club – which was fine, but the evening seemed to go on and on for ever with no sign of any entertainment until about ten in the evening when people slowly took their seats - the show starting about ten thirty. The problem was that our ambitious itinerary required us to be up and at it early next morning.

After some days of this routine we all became a bit exhausted and I vividly

remember us galloping back to the dormitory in our 'Gostinitsa Druzhba' (friendship guesthouse) where we threw ourselves on our beds desperate for any chance of a nap (however brief) before the next round of sight-seeing and appointments.

Tiredness was exacerbated by chronic constipation – like Coleridge we all 'became strangers to the toilet' – a function of the diet we had which was heavy on bread and carbohydrates and very (very) light on vegetables and fruit. So light in fact that I remember one day when we were told by our excited guides that there would be a special treat for us at lunch which turned out to be a few tomatoes (a rare luxury in 1963)! On the other hand, there were frequent occasions when caviar was freely available (both red and black varieties) together with Russian champagne (from Georgia).

In those days most of us smoked so these privations could be endured as long as we had access to cigarettes. There were plenty available. The most luxurious were Sobranies but they were very expensive. The best middle range was a brand called Troika\* which we tended to default on. Those with stronger egalitarian instincts (as well as stronger lungs) faced up to the papirosi - these were cardboard tubes with a plug of tobacco at the end; they took a lot of devoted sucking to get the smoke through and when finally it arrived you wondered whether it was worth it. But they seemed to be very popular - a badge of belonging!.



*A squashed papirosa*

### **Conclusion**

Years later I was asked why I wanted to visit Russia. At the time I said the usual stuff about wanting to meet people, experience different cultures etc. However, thinking about it afresh, I realise that the chief attraction of it was that it simply wasn't England! In fact it was the very opposite. Russia was the size of an immense continent; England – or rather the UK – was a just a number of small islands off the coast of Europe; the Russian climate was dramatically extreme whereas England just had to endure the boredom of its equable 'northwest maritime' weather; Russian history was simple and dramatic with its revolutions, its wars, civil wars and invasions – English history (if truth be told) was complicated and a bit boring (except perhaps for Henry VIII and his six wives - but then again, Peter the Great was just over 7ft tall whereas Henry VIII was just a bit fat!)

*\*I read on the internet that the Troika brand is now in great demand by collectors of old cigarette packets. If I had brought home a few unopened packets I would now be worth a fortune!*

**John Ditchfield**



# JOHN BIRCH'S COMPETITION

## *Competition No. 57: London's Famous Parks Part I*

London is made up of 40% green spaces including 3,000 parks. How well do you know them?

Link up the Park with the brief description.

1. You may find the delightful statue of JM Barrie's Peter Pan - the boy 'who never grew up'.
2. A large green park, made famous for a 'free speaking corner'; contains one of the first highways in England and the Diana Memorial Fountain.
3. This park is known for its fantastic rose garden with 30,000 roses in 400 varieties, and contains an Open Air Theatre.
4. This park is the oldest of the Royal Parks and is split by a 'significant line.'
5. This park houses an art gallery in a large resurrected 'pump-house!'.
6. This is the largest of London Royal Parks and is home to ancient trees and herds of deer.
7. This park is situated in Kensington and gets its name from the remains of a Jacobean Mansion.
8. This park is in the City of Westminster and was first enclosed by King Charles II. It is unusual as it has no lakes, no buildings and very little in the way of flower beds!
9. This is the second largest Royal Park, situated in the Borough of Richmond; made famous as General Dwight Eisenhower planned the D-Day Landings from a hut here in World War II; 300 red and fallow deer live here.
10. A park surrounding a burnt out palace and from here, in 1936, the first BBC live Television Broadcast in the world was made.
11. The most royal of London's Royal parks by being bordered by three royal palaces. Also home to some famous winged residents made famous by Ogden Nash's description "What a wonderful bird is a ..... what his beak doesn't hold his belly can!"
12. Built around the remains of a huge Hall which housed the Great Exhibition in 1851, and now the home of full-size dinosaurs' models!!





## *Answers to Competition No. 56 Statues in London Part II.*



1. Christopher Columbus
2. Queen Elizabeth I
3. Robert Raikes
4. Millicent Garrett Fawcett
5. Oliver Cromwell
6. Yuri Gagarin
7. Charles II
8. Winston Churchill and Roosevelt
9. Taxi
10. Paddington Bear.



*We look forward to your answers - send them either by email to [jbirch1821@gmail.com](mailto:jbirch1821@gmail.com) or by post to J. Birch, Pantgwyn, High Street, Borth, Ceredigion, Wales SY24 5HY*



## WORDSEARCH: VARIETIES OF VEGETABLES

C	N	R	O	C	T	E	E	W	S	P	I	N	A	C	H
A	U	T	O	M	A	T	O	E	S	I	R	U	W	A	S
U	I	R	P	O	T	A	T	O	E	S	B	L	T	K	E
L	L	R	L	R	S	H	E	E	D	E	W	S	E	S	S
I	O	H	A	Y	S	N	T	C	R	L	E	E	L	A	C
F	C	E	A	I	C	O	A	G	U	O	L	I	E	U	U
L	C	I	D	R	O	A	I	E	T	T	T	P	R	G	C
O	O	A	H	R	I	N	B	A	B	N	T	L			U
W	R		T	P	E	C	T	B	E	R	Y	E		P	M
E	B	E	Y		A	O	O	L	A	K	E		L	I	B
R	E			R	P	R	N	T	A	G	S	N	O	N	E
B			R	T	E	E	S	L	B	N	E		N	R	R
		O	E		E	L	E	N	O	E			I	U	
	T	E		R			E	I	I		A		O	T	R
S	W		G				N	C		P		N	N		
S	M	U	S	H	R	O	O	M	S				S		

AUBERGINE BEETROOT BROCCOLI CARROTS  
 CAULIFLOWER CELERY CUCUMBER CURLY-  
 CABBAGE CURLY-KALE GREEN-LENTILS  
 HARICOT-BEANS LEEKS LETTUCE MUSHROOMS  
 ONIONS PARSNIP POTATOES PEAS RADISH  
 RUNNER-BEANS SPINACH SWEDE SWEET-CORN  
 SWEET-POTATOES TOMATOES TURNIP



Put the remaining 16 letters together to find which British explorer in 1589  
 planted some potato seeds on his Irish estate and presented the grown vegetables  
 to Queen Elizabeth I.

*Compiled by Rosemary Birch*

Answer: Sir Walter Raleigh

## JUNIOR WORDSEARCH: CARD GAMES

S	O	L	I	T	A	I	R	E	V	S	E
N	P	G	N	I	K	Y	O	L	P	O	X
P	E	O	G	A	M	E	H	A	N	D	S
A	C	E	O	M	E	G	D	I	R	B	W
T	S	D	U	N	H	E	E	L	N	H	E
I	D	R	C	Q	S	V	A	O	I	C	G
E	S	U	I	T	N	E	L	S	W	L	A
N	Y	F	R	A	A	N	T	E	L	U	B
C	J	A	C	K	P	E	Z	A	M	B	B
E	E	L	G	O	F	I	S	H	E	S	I
H	T	S	D	N	O	M	A	I	D	H	R
P	E	X	A	U	A	T	S	A	N	A	C

SNAP  
PAIRS  
SPOONS  
GO FISH  
UNO

HEARTS  
SPADES  
CHEAT  
RUMMY  
WHIST

SOLITAIRE  
PATIENCE  
CANASTA  
BRIDGE  
CRIBBAGE



CREATED BY VECTORPORTAL.COM

*Compiled by Liz Alsford*



# DIARY

<b>Monday</b>	<i>10.30am to 11.30am Study Group</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>10am to 12 noon Toddler and Parent/Carer group</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	<i>6.30pm Choir Practice in Church on alternate Thursdays</i>
<b>Saturday</b>	<i>10.30am to 12.30pm West End Café open</i>



## Audio - Visual Live streaming

Sunday Services and Friday Concerts are usually live-streamed on YouTube and these will remain on the Church's YouTube channel. If you are in the building, there is a chance you might appear on camera.

Seating in the side aisles is never filmed and the Stewarding Team can assist you if you would like a seat out of shot of the recording equipment.

## NOVEMBER

- 5**     **11.00am** Family Communion Service led by the Minister.
- 3.00pm** Annual Bereavement Service led by the Minister
- 12**     **10.45am** Remembrance Sunday, United Service with St Jude's in the Free Church led by the Minister.
- 14**     **7.30pm** Elders/Trustee Meeting
- 18**     **11am-2pm** Annual Church Bazaar
- 19**     **11.00am** Family Service led by the Minister.
- 12.30pm** Church Meeting
- 6.30pm** Informal Evening Service led by the Minister.
- 24**     **1.00pm** Concert by the Lakeside Clarinet Quartet. Light lunch from 12.15pm
- 26**     **11.00 am** Family Service led by Mrs Sarah Beaumont, URC Lay preacher

## DECEMBER

- 3 11.00 am Family Advent Morning Communion Service led by the Minister**  
**6.30pm Advent Carol Service at St Judes with joint St Judes & Free church choirs**
- 10 11.00 am Family Service led by the Minister.**
- 12 7.30pm Elders & Deacons Meeting**
- 17 11.00 am Nine Lessons & Carols led by the Minister.**
- 18 7.00 pm Carol Singing around the Suburb with St Judes, meet in the car park. Followed by seasonal refreshments.**
- 24 11.00 am Family Service led by the Minister.**
- 25 11.00 am Christmas Day Service led by the Minister**
- 31 11.00am Family Service led by Revd Derek Lindfield**
- 31 11.30pm Watchnight Service led by the Minister followed by Fireworks on the Square**

## JANUARY

- 1 3.00pm Piano Concert by Duncan Honeybourne followed by tea and mince pies.**



### NEWS AND VIEWS



PRODUCTION  
DISTRIBUTION  
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Ditchfield  
TYPESETTER  
EDITOR

John Ditchfield  
Jill Purdie and others  
Joan Holton and Marion

John Ditchfield  
Marion Ditchfield

The next edition of News and Views will be a double issue for December/January and will be published on Sunday December 10th 2023. Articles should therefore be delivered to the editor, Joan Holton or the typesetter, John Ditchfield ([john\\_ditchfield@hotmail.com](mailto:john_ditchfield@hotmail.com)) by Sunday 26th November.

*We welcome articles, as well as reviews of books, films, plays etc. from members and friends. These will not always represent the views of the editorial panel or of the Church. Publication is at the discretion of the Editors.*

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