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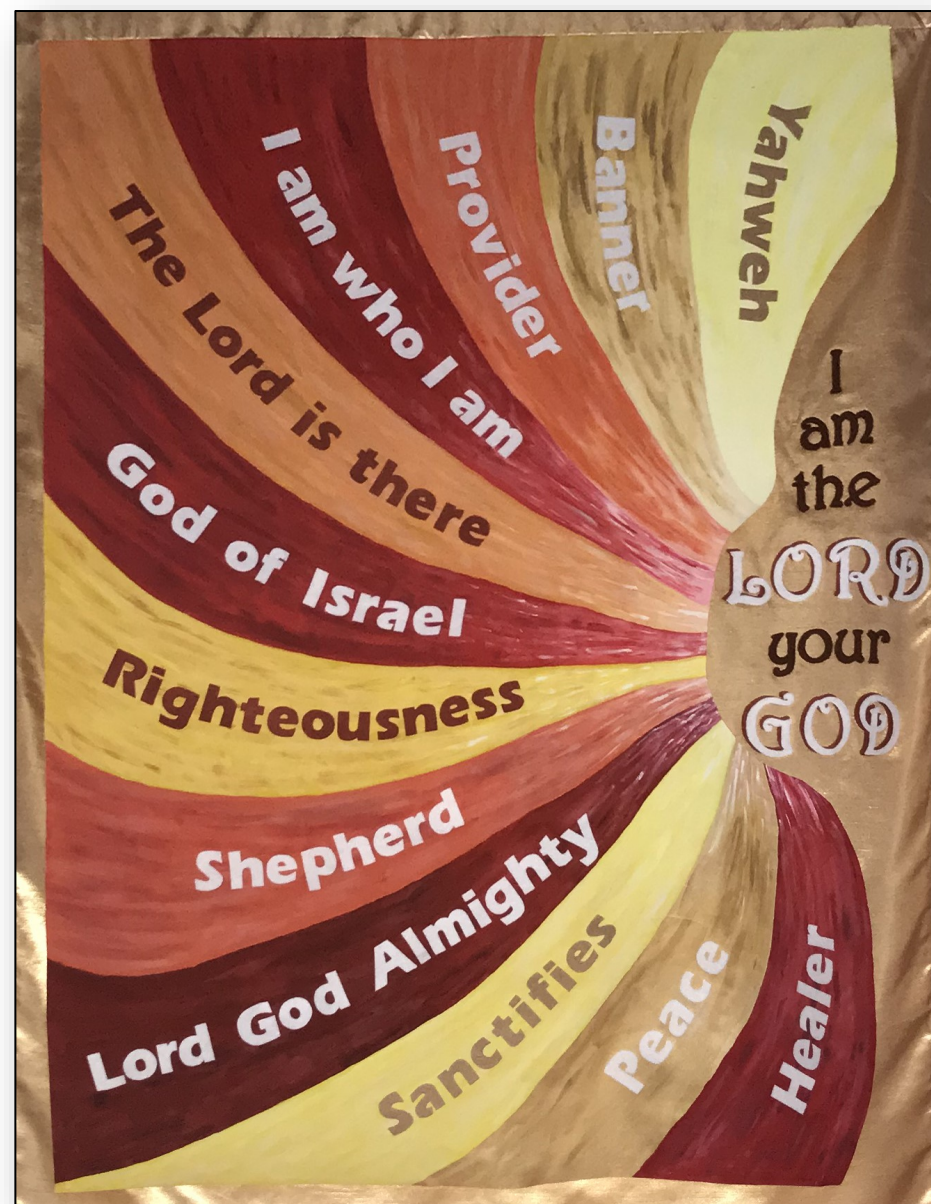
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# THE MESSENGER

AUTUMN 2021



THE MAGAZINE OF  
**WHITSTABLE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
MIDDLE WALL

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# Minister's Letter

Autumn 2021

Dear Friends,

The war-time poster with the words 'Keep calm and carry on', printed under a crown, seems very appropriate just now. It has an enduring and wise message. Some years ago I was given a framed copy and I have it hanging in a fairly prominent position in my study. It resonates with the Scriptural injunctions to be still and to trust; to find calm specifically in God and to trust completely in His unfailing love.

Those biblical encouragements are not issued under the Tudor crown featured in the poster, but under the crown of the King of kings and Lord of lords. For example, in the context of total confidence in God's overarching sovereignty and goodness, Psalm 31v9 takes the 'Keep calm and carry on' theme to a new level: 'Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord'. Similarly, St Paul speaks of squarely confronting anxiety with prayer and of resting in the promise that 'the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts

and your minds in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4 vs6&7).

As we move forwards as a church fellowship, through the uncertain times ahead, we need to deepen our trust in God and keep closely in tune with His good purposes for us. At the beginning of a recent service, Elisabeth very helpfully drew our attention to these really timely and inspiring verses:

"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You." (2Chronicles 20v12)

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!" (Isaiah 43v18)

I also wish to pass on the following insights

regarding future church life expressed a few weeks ago at a local Baptist ministers' internet forum –

"There is an enormous temptation to try to 'get back to normal' and reinstate everything. But surely God is asking us to seize this unique opportunity to reflect and refine instead of simply pressing reset."

"I don't want to miss out on the new thing that God is doing because it's





more comfortable to dream of going back to what we did before. I don't yet know what God is doing, and I'm taking great comfort from the fact that it doesn't look like anyone does. Let's continue to listen to God, embrace the discomfort of this time and press forward one step at a time."

It is my earnest prayer that as a result of adopting outlooks such as these we might indeed be like the men from Issachar, who had joined David at Hebron at a critical time after Saul had died. Of them it is recorded that they 'understood the times and knew what Israel should do.' (1 Chronicles 12v32).

May God give us the discernment, the flexibility, the grace and the decisiveness we need at this juncture.

Yours in Christ's service,

Paul



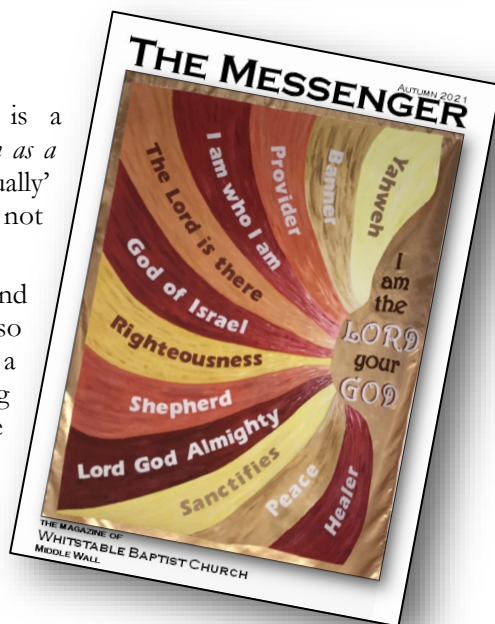
## Cover Picture

Our cover picture, on this occasion, is a photograph of a banner (*sometimes known as a hanging!*) seen in a church we visited 'virtually' during the pandemic when we were not allowed to visit anywhere 'for real'.

The autumn colours appealed to me and seemed appropriate for this issue. I also found the words most encouraging and a reminder of a God who was here long before any pandemic and who will still be there for us long after this one is over.

I hope you all kept well and were able to enjoy the summer.

Tony Harris



## Memories of Barbara and June

It is with sadness that we report the death, last month, of Barbara Milsted and June Gluning. Lucy has sent us the following memories:

**Barbara:** I remember Barbara Milsted from many years ago. I used to print the pages for the then monthly Church Magazine. Barbara and her husband would then collect them, fold and staple them, and so complete the actual magazine – not sure when it became known as 'The Messenger'. (*since 1948 Ed.*)



**June:** I have known June Gluning over many years, the most memorable occasion being that we were baptised together in July 1971, just 50 years ago. At that time we were members of the 'Young Wives Group'.

Three of the group were baptised on that day, the third one being Joan Humphrey who died a few years ago.

Lucy Gambrill

## BMS Birthday Scheme

Many of our readers will know that June Gluning managed the BMS Birthday Scheme for many years on behalf of our church.

As mentioned above June sadly died just recently so the sending of cards will therefore be suspended temporarily but, hopefully, we will soon find someone to take over this role and continue the valuable work which June had done so well.

If you would like to know more about helping in this way, please contact me.

Andrew Frame

01227 794489

secretary@middlewall.co.uk

## Ride+Stride: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021

It's that time of the year once again: Ride + Stride is a sponsored bike ride, or walk, in which people all over England walk or cycle between churches. This is an opportunity for you to help raise funds and, at the same time, visit local churches of your choice on your own (*as probably the majority of people do*) or with friends or family.

This annual event is a fun way of visiting other churches in the area, some of which you may not have been in before. It takes place between 10am and 6pm but you can choose to spend just an hour or two or a whole fun day out, whichever suits you best.

It gives you exercise and, at the same time, raises money for our own church and churches that are in need of support.

Alternatively, if that is too much of a physical challenge, you can still support the event by sponsoring someone who is taking part and/or to sit in our church hall for just an hour or two to welcome visiting riders and striders, sign their forms and offer them a drink and a biscuit and any other facilities they may need.

Please contact me for further details if you would like to be part of this fun event and let's see if, together, we can try to exceed the £133,879.89 that was raised last year!

I have sponsor forms and a list of the churches taking part so that you can plan your route.

Beryl Harris  
01227 780969 [berylgharris@gmail.com](mailto:berylgharris@gmail.com)

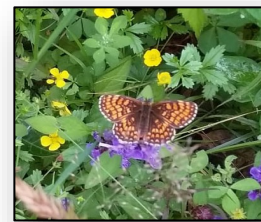


## A Walk in the Woods

One of the privileges and pleasures we have had since the start of the pandemic has been a 'walk in the woods.' As Geoff is listed as vulnerable, we have sought out places to walk that are as far away as possible from other people. Being a bit of an introvert, that suits Geoff just fine, but we have both come to appreciate our forays into the great East Blean Woods, which is a nature reserve that spreads across three roads between here and Canterbury.

We have walked in it on various paths through all seasons and weathers. It has been a joy to discover each of the wildflowers as they appeared, from the first wood anemones in March, to the heathers and ragwort of late August. There is always birdsong, though we can't identify most of it, some small mammals (squirrels and rabbits) and plenty of insects. The buzzards make an occasional appearance. We're not as experienced and knowledgeable as Jim, and I dread the thought of getting lost, but we're learning to note certain trees and waymarks to bring us back safely.

Tyler Hill recreational ground has a car park that almost always has a space, and therefore it is one of our 'regulars.' Early on in the pandemic it was one place I could arrange to meet my family coming down from London! Walking one of the paths in the woods there last winter we came upon a glass dove someone had hung on a branch in the middle of the woods. What a privilege to be reminded of God and His love through the thoughtfulness of a stranger! We look for it every time we walk that way.



On another day we walked into the woods from Denstroude Lane, and stopped to chat to some of the rangers working there, marking trees to be reserved or removed. He told us that the very rare heath fritillary butterfly lays its eggs at the base of the birch trees which have the cow wheat wildflower growing there, which the caterpillars eat when they are hatched. What a delicate balance of plants needed to sustain a beautiful butterfly!

Can you believe that the plan is for European bison (who once lived here) to be released into the nature reserve in the next few years? And all this in one of the most populated parts of England...

Creator God, you have given us so much to marvel at. Help us to look after your creation so that future generations will find you in the beauty that surrounds them in places like East Blean Woods.

Jean Rothery



## Thoughts During Lockdown

It has been strange during Lockdown that we can remember in detail events which we had thought long forgotten – and in such detail. Events which, at the time they occurred, were significant and could have been life changing. Such an event took place when I went on a fishing trip with a group of Karen hill tribesmen living on the banks of the Thai River Kwai.

We had agreed to meet by the river early one morning. The river was shrouded in mist and you could barely see one bank from the other. We loaded up our fishing gear into the dugout and pushed off into the current to go down stream. We were heading for a pool in the river where the villagers knew there were plenty of fish. Because it was still the wet season there was plenty of water giving a strong current which took the boat along at a good pace and the villagers had to exercise care to keep it clear of fallen trees close to the riverbank.

I was positioned towards the middle of the boat which was, in the circumstances, part of the reason that I survived what was meant to be an ordinary fishing trip. We were entering part of the river where there was a tight bend and I was only just aware of the overhanging branch when it struck me on the side of the head. I was swept into the water and lost consciousness.

The next thing that I knew was that I was being dragged by my hair along the side of the boat. One of the Karen fishermen saw what had happened and had grabbed my hair, keeping my head above water. Two of the other men pulled me up over the side and into the boat where I lay spluttering the water that I had managed to swallow. My rescuers found a place where they could beach the boat and give me time to recover. It was only then that I realised how close I had been to drowning!

I did not feel that I wanted to travel by boat anymore since I was feeling rather sick so I decided to walk back home to the village, following the river. It gave me plenty of time to reflect on what I had experienced so when Gloria asked me what I had been doing I told her I had been feeling unwell. It was only in later years that she discovered the whole story.

Ed Manser



## Climate Sunday

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September is being designated Climate Sunday, ahead of the UN's climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow during November. How should we approach the challenge of climate change?



*We have damaged God's creation:* God delights in His creation – 'God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31). However, we have damaged this world and impacted people created in His image. The burning of oil or gas and cutting down forests is increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. The global average temperature could increase by 1.5°C in 2030, resulting in significant damage to our planet. Already, increasing temperatures are melting ice caps, raising sea-levels, changing rainfall patterns and creating extreme climate events. It's the 70% of the world's poorest population who are being impacted most!

*Hope is found in Jesus:* He has an intimate knowledge of the workings of creation. *For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.* (Colossians 1:16,17). Our hope for the future lies in what Jesus has done and continues to do in the world. He is the one who sustains creation and will bring everything to completion.

*An invitation to respond:* Simple everyday actions can help to sustain our planet, including recycling of waste, energy-saving and changes in our lifestyle and diet to help the planet. We can fix our eyes on Jesus as we pray for our world, and for our world leaders gathering in Glasgow, asking that they may reach a good agreement for the future of our world.

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## Messenger Deadline

Contributions for the next (*Christmas/Winter*) edition of The Messenger should be handed (*or preferably emailed*) to Beryl or Tony by –

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

A big thank you to all those who have contributed articles for **The Messenger**, especially during these difficult times, and to our loyal proof-reader, Jane, and also to the generous person who covered the postage costs (*again!*)

## Update from Annabelle

### my next step of faith with God at All Nations Christian College!

To my Whitstable Church family, greetings from the big city!

I hope you are keeping well and able to enjoy catching up with friends and family as restrictions have eased over the summer. My thoughts and prayers have been with you all over the last year – Dad, Mum and Doug ensure I am kept up to date!

I would like to take this opportunity to share a recent exciting update with you as I move into a new season with the Lord. During 2020, God has used the lockdown to quieten my schedule and refocus my life back to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, as well as speak into my future.

As most of you know, since I was young, I have had a heart for the world, and I have been privileged to visit, volunteer and work in many different nations. Last summer however the Lord began calling me in a new direction. This was to become connected to All Nations Christian College and study cross-cultural mission! All Nations is a wonderful international bible college in Hertfordshire, specialising in training for mission work and I am about to start a practical 2-year degree on Biblical and Intercultural Studies. This course covers theology, communicating cross-culturally, mission in Africa and Asia, justice, development and global peace, arts for mission and study of Greek and Hebrew. I will also be partnering with my local London church (Newlife Palmers Green) over the two years as my main ministry placement where I will have lots of opportunities to learn from others, contribute to mission in the church and serve my community.

I am really excited at where the Lord is leading me, to learn, grow and be part of His mission to share the love of God and see His Kingdom expand globally! I believe this will equip me with knowledge and experience which will prepare me to serve Him wherever He wants me next. Our God is faithful and I know I can trust in Him as I step out in this new adventure.

### How can you support me?

As I step out in faith, I would love you to support me in this as my Church family over the two years, perhaps in prayer, encouragement or if possible, in financial support too.



**Encouragement and Prayer:** Your prayers would be very much appreciated as this is a big step of faith for me as I finish my current job and start a new chapter with God. Do let me know if you would like to receive regular updates via email or join a Facebook group. (*I will send invites to those I know!*)

**Financial support:** As you may have guessed, a two-year degree with All Nations is a significant financial commitment. However, I am confident in God's provision and can testify to how He has already provided for my course fees for both years! I still need to raise around £16,000 over 2 years for accommodation, books, living costs etc.

**Any gift would be a huge blessing, and you can do this in the following ways:**

Via my GoFundMe page: [www.gofundme.com/f/support-annabelle-to-go-to-bible-college](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-annabelle-to-go-to-bible-college)

Via Stewardship (online or via paper form, and you can gift aid donations) – please email me at [annabellewilson34@gmail.com](mailto:annabellewilson34@gmail.com) for details.

Or drop an envelope to my parents' house, they will pass it on.

May God richly bless you and your family,

Annabelle

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight."*

Proverbs 3 v 5-6

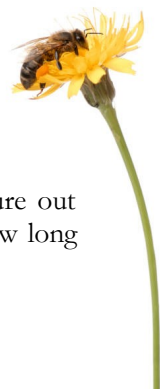
## Patience

"He has the patience of a rock," I said of a friend to Mary.

"I'd rather have the patience of a flower," she said. "Waiting as a seed underground, preparing, putting out roots and shoots, growing into the sunshine, giving pleasure, helping feed the bees."

I knew I had been taught a lesson, even while I tried to figure out what it was. I suppose the true virtue of patience is not in how long you can wait, but in how you behave while you wait!

*(From The Friendship Book)*





## Pilgrim's Progress

After the Bible, John Bunyan's wonderful Christian allegory, the Pilgrim's Progress, is one of the most celebrated and widely-read books in the English language. It has been translated into more than one hundred languages around the world and keeps its place as a Christian classic.

Names of people and places from its pages have been commonplace wherever English is spoken. We need only recall Mr Great-Heart, Mr Valiant-for-Truth, Giant Despair, Madame Bubble, the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, the Delectable Mountains, the Hill Difficulty and the Celestial City.

Bunyan was born on 28 November 1628, at Elstow, near Bedford, England, of a poor family. He had little formal education and his father taught him to be a metal worker. His first wife died young. His second wife, Elizabeth, helped him considerably with his blossoming literary career. His conversion was the result of reading the Bible, and the witness of local Christians. From that time the Bible became the great inspiration of his life. He wrote more than fifty books on Christianity. A Baptist by conviction, he had little time for the Established Church.

Bunyan became a popular preacher, but because of his opposition to the Established Church and because he did not have a Church of England preaching licence, he was imprisoned in 1661. It was in prison that he wrote Pilgrim's Progress. It was not only Bunyan's greatest book but was destined to become one of the most popular Christian books in the world.

Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory, using the names of people and places from the Bible to teach spiritual lessons. The vivid and unforgettable imagery in the Pilgrim's Progress covers the whole Christian gospel from sin and condemnation all the way through faith, repentance, grace, justification, sanctification, and perseverance to heaven itself.

Bunyan died on 31 August 1688. His portrayal of the death of Mr Valiant For Truth is Bunyan at his allegorical best. This brave old soldier of Jesus Christ had received his summons to 'go home.' Calling his friends together he says, 'My sword I give to him who shall succeed me in my pilgrimage. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought His battles, Who will now be my rewarder.' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

© Parish Pump



## You Are Love

UK singer/songwriter, Philippa Hanna, wrote the song 'You are love' for Christians Against Poverty (CAP) in our 20th year. She tells us more about the inspiration behind it...

"I wrote this song to be an anthem to empower us as Christians, to go out into the dark places and turn people's lives around. I know that debt can affect anybody. Years ago I owed £6,000, and was receiving letters from debt collectors. I felt powerless and afraid. I experienced anxiety and depression with it and it's hard to find work to pay off your debts when you can't face an interview without having a panic attack.

It was my faith that helped me to put my life back together. When I started getting to know Jesus, I began to think differently. I felt His grace and unfailing love for me, and knew I could have a new life and a new start. With some help, I was able to pay it all back and now I'm debt free.

There's a line in the song that says "You're the answer", and Jesus really was the answer for me. Another of my favourite lyrics is: "Your love keeps moving the mountains and your love keeps calming the waves."

I wanted to keep coming back to that in a place of worship. I want this song to say: whatever the situation is, God can still move that mountain. That's what CAP does, it takes families who can't afford to eat, and gives them back their future."



**PHILIPPA  
HANNA**

The song is now available to purchase as a digital download – head over to [www.capuk.org/youarelove](http://www.capuk.org/youarelove). All profits go to CAP to help even more people out of poverty.

*From the CAP magazine*

**Your love  
keeps  
moving the  
mountains  
and your  
love keeps  
calming  
the waves**

## Firmin & Postgate: the making of Smallfilms

(An exhibition at The Beaneys – House of Art & Knowledge in Canterbury)

Peter Firmin and Oliver Postgate created such iconic children's programmes as Bagpuss and The Clangers from studios at Blean, near Canterbury, in outbuildings including a converted pigsty and a barn.

Peter and Oliver met in the 1950s: Oliver was a TV stage-manager and Peter was a commercial artist (where he learned many of his skills) and lectured at Central School of Art. Oliver worked under the name Smallfilms from 1959 with musicians and actors, and with Peter providing the majority of the design of puppets and illustration.



This celebration of the huge output of Smallfilms from small rural roots gives fascinating insights into early, pre-CGI (*Computer-Generated Imagery*) animation. The partnership and the films produced have received recognition over the years, including doctorates for Oliver Peter (*and Bagpuss!*), a lifetime BAFTA for Peter, favourite children's programme status for Bagpuss, and an enthusiastic reception for the new Clangers which Peter, and Oliver's son Daniel, were closely involved in producing.

The films also spawned a considerable output of books, comics and other merchandise over the years, examples of which are included in the exhibition.

The exhibition would not have been possible without the enthusiastic contribution of Peter Firmin, including very generous amounts of his time! All the items in the exhibition are loaned by him unless specified otherwise.

We are also showcasing Peter's skills and output as a printmaker, with opportunities to buy his work.

Our grateful thanks also to Joan Firmin and to Daniel Postgate (himself a successful children's author) for the loan of original photographs and scripts.

And our thanks for all their help to our volunteers Jane Orwell, John Hawkins, Lydia Heeley and Paris Linkin.

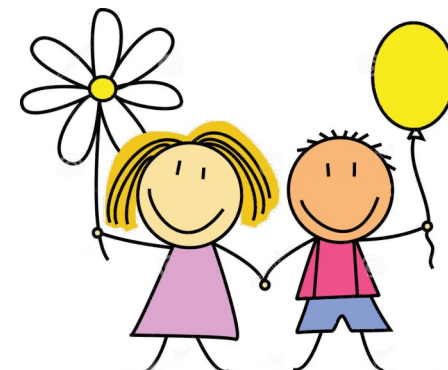


## People Need People

By Benjamin Zephaniah

When there's no one but you  
People will always need people.  
To please  
To tease  
To put you at ease,  
People will always need people.  
To make life appealing  
And give life some meaning,  
It's useful to have other people.  
If you need a change  
To whom will you turn.  
If you need a lesson  
From whom will you learn.  
If you need to play  
You'll know why I say  
People will always need people.

As girlfriends  
As boyfriends  
From Bombay  
To Ostend,  
People will always need people  
To have friendly fights with  
And share tasty bites with,  
It's useful to have other people.  
People live in families  
Gangs, posses and packs,  
It seems we need company  
Before we relax,  
So, stop making enemies  
And let's face the facts,  
People will always need people,  
Yes  
People will always need people.

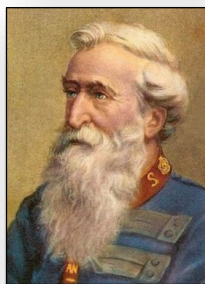




## The Founder's Song

In the Salvation Army this hymn is known as "The Founder's Song", having been written by William Booth, and I have had these verses on my mind and thought they might well bless, inspire, encourage and possibly challenge others as they have and continue to do for me.

Ray Jones



William Booth

- 1 O boundless salvation! deep ocean of love,  
O fullness of mercy, Christ brought from above,  
The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free,  
Now flowing for all men, come, roll over me!
- 2 My sins they are many, their stains are so deep,  
And bitter the tears of remorse that I weep;  
But useless is weeping; thou great crimson sea,  
Thy waters can cleanse me, come, roll over me!
- 3 My tempers are fitful, my passions are strong,  
They bind my poor soul and they force me to wrong;  
Beneath thy bless'd billows deliverance I see,  
O come, mighty ocean, and roll over me!
- 4 Now tossed with temptation, then haunted with fears,  
My life has been joyless and useless for years;  
I feel something better most surely would be  
If once thy pure waters would roll over me.
- 5 O ocean of mercy, oft longing I've stood  
On the brink of thy wonderful, life-giving flood!  
Once more I have reached this soul-cleansing sea,  
I will not go back till it rolls over me.
- 6 The tide is now flowing, I'm touching the wave,  
I hear the loud call of the mighty to save;  
My faith's growing bolder, delivered I'll be;  
I plunge 'neath the waters, they roll over me.
- 7 And now, hallelujah! the rest of my days  
Shall gladly be spent in promoting his praise  
Who opened his bosom to pour out this sea  
Of boundless salvation for you and for me.

## Looking back on the horror

The TV pictures looked like some macabre video game, with toy aircraft crashing into matchbox towers. Then incredulity turned into utter dismay. This was real: the most powerful nation in the world had been invaded by 19 airborne Islamic terrorists, with devastating effect. Nearly 3,000 people died.

The US government announced a war on terror. Futile invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan followed, with more loss of life.

9/11 was 20 years ago this month. Five years later, coordinated suicide attacks on London's transport system were carried out, also by Islamists. 52 people of 18 different nationalities were killed and more than 700 were injured. In 2017, 23 people died and 1,017 were injured in the Manchester Arena bombing. There have been other terrorist murders; at least three plots have been foiled during the coronavirus pandemic.

Today, the MI5 estimate of the threat of a terrorist attack in the UK hovers between substantial and severe.

The world isn't as secure as we had once hoped. In addition to the menace of unconstrained violence, our planet is silently protesting against centuries of abuse, and we're only just waking up to our accountability as stewards. At the same time, we must come to terms with the knowledge that Covid-19 and its variations are permanent additions to the list of deadly diseases to be held at bay by immunisation. There will be more to come.

Our forebears, who lived in even riskier times, drew strength from Psalm 91:

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust."  
For He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence ...

The Psalm is no panacea, or divine guarantee of earthly immunity, but the assurance that God holds the whole world in His hands and His ultimate purposes will not be thwarted.

© Parish Pump



# MISSION

## Bible Society

Working in over 200 countries, Bible Society is a charity on a global mission to bring the Bible to life for every man, woman and child. We believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change – for good.

### About Us

In some parts of the world, the Scriptures are difficult to access or are simply unavailable. In this country, the Bible is readily available but has lost its significance and its value is unrecognised by millions.

We're working hard here at home and in key areas across the world to change this. We find ways to translate the Bible and distribute it, create digital formats, advocate for its place in society and help people relate to and make sense of it in their everyday lives.

### Our History

In 1800 a 15-year-old Welsh girl named Mary Jones trekked 26 miles through the rugged terrain of north Wales to buy a Welsh Bible. Mary was so determined to have a Bible of her own, in her own language, that she saved up for six long years before her walk to Bala.

With the help of Revd Thomas Charles of Bala, who arranged lodgings for Mary and sold her three Bibles for the price of one, Mary's determination was rewarded. Her story – and her unswerving desire to get hold of God's written word – soon became the talk of the churches in the area.

Inspired by Mary's story, and by the need for reduced-price Bibles for Welsh speakers, Revd Joseph Hughes questioned other church leaders: "If for Wales, why not for the kingdom? And if for the kingdom, why not for the world?"

That question, posed at a meeting of the Religious Tract Society in 1802, would reverberate across Wales and, ultimately, the world. It was the moment that set in motion the founding of our society.

Captured by the vision of God's Word being available for the wider world, William Wilberforce and other members of the Clapham Sect decided to act. They made this vision part of their campaign to 'make goodness fashionable' – in the hope of inspiring people to fall in love with the Bible and a biblically-inspired lifestyle.

On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1804, at a meeting of around 300 at the London Tavern in Bishopsgate, Wilberforce and the campaigning groups he was a part of formed the British and Foreign Bible Society.

At this moment, they could only begin to imagine what this society would achieve in the coming years.

# MATTERS

Since that day, the British and Foreign Bible Society has become Bible Society – a charity committed to offering the Bible to the world.

We have won the admiration of royalty, from George III through to our current monarch, Elizabeth II. Our work has survived, even thrived, through the unfolding events of two World Wars. We persevered to find openings in the communist Soviet Union and during the Cultural Revolution in China. There are now about 150 local Bible Societies around the world, which undertake the work in their locations. In 2011, we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible with cultural events across the country.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of these giants of our past – Mary Jones, Revd Joseph Hughes, William Wilberforce and others – committed to faithfully living out their belief that the Bible should be made available for every man, woman and child in the world.

For over 200 years Bible Society's mission drives a huge range of activities. In some parts of the world, bringing the Bible to life focuses on translation and distribution projects. Elsewhere it focuses on leadership training, or literacy programmes, or interfaith dialogue. Closer to home, in England and Wales, it focuses on advocacy effort, schools' outreach and devotional resources.

We're doing everything we can to help individuals and communities to engage with the Bible because we believe that when they do, lives can change – for good.

### How you can help

Please pray with us so that all our planning and action is guided and empowered by God's Spirit and so that our vision will become reality. (*'We pray for God's power to help you do all the good things that you hope to do and that your faith makes you want to do.'* 2 Thessalonians 1.11, CEV)

We're on a global mission to offer the Bible to every man, woman and child – and we need your help. Giving a financial gift is a great way of joining us on our mission, and helping connect people to the Word of God.

**Online:** [www.biblesociety.org.uk](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk)

**By Post:** Please make cheques payable to Bible Society and send to: Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon, SN5 7DG.

**By Phone:** You can call our friendly team any time between 9am-5pm (Monday to Friday) on 01793 418222 or Freephone 0808 178 4921.

**By Text:** Simply text BIBLE to 70500 to give £5.



## It's a Funny Old World!

The comedian Lily Tomlin once said, 'I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realise I should have been more specific.' It could apply to so many of us. Except, perhaps, the Queen, whose role couldn't be more specific – and who in 2015 broke the record of being not just somebody, but the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She – and we – have seen huge changes over her 63 years: smartphones, selfie sticks and 'slebs' ('celebrities', to you and me) among them. But there's another bit of our lives that some believe she also governs: our language.

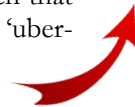


We call it the 'Queen's English', although, of course, English is subject to everyone because its changes are entirely democratic. But alongside the BBC and the Oxford Dictionary, the Queen is seen as one of those who knows the difference between the proper kind of English and the improper kind. Yet is this still true?

Let's start with pronunciation. Even our monarch's sounds have changed. Compare a Christmas broadcast from the beginning of her reign with one from this century and 'or' has most definitely been left 'off', along with 'veddy naice' and 'syuper'. Her Majesty may not have gone quite as far as Tony Blair's happy sprinkling of 'y' knows' when talking to Britain's 'yoof', but she's clearly recognised that speaking about her new 'het' would be a little orf-putting. (Mind you, which of us hasn't changed our accent to fit our audience? I was once given detention for absent-mindedly mimicking the Glaswegian brogue of my chemistry teacher.)

The formality that ruled in the 1950s has also melted away. HM Revenue & Customs now talks to us like a friendly uncle with openings like, 'I've sent you two forms.' Meanwhile, some businesses favour gobbledygook. Top of the list is the promise to 'solutionise' our needs – and just this week I was asked by a coffee-shop barista whether I was being 'serviced', and Countdown host Nick Hewer still groans about being asked at a restaurant if he'd been 'menued yet?' I've decided not to tell him that the new, gender-neutral term for the person doing the asking is a 'waitron'.

Chocolates these days, HRH will have noticed, are no longer 'milk' or 'plain' – it's all about percentages. They come 'enrobed in velvety ganache' and 'hug their fillings'. It's enough to make the Milk Tray man angry, although even that word is now not enough – he'd have to be 'incandescent' or 'super-' or 'uber-cross' to even raise his eyebrow.



Back in the 1950s, political correctness hadn't yet raised a finger. Today it means well, even if it does promote the occasional silliness like 'spotted Richard'. And we have spellcheckers, too, which can produce hilarious results. A colleague recently delighted in the results of a 'find and replace' search that replaced an American text's use of 'pants' with 'trousers' and so coughed up the surreal mention of a focus group's 'partictrousers'.

English is the fastest-moving language in the world and that's what keeps it shining brightly. If some among us hate the words 'totes amazeballs', the 1950s had their own candidates – when the Queen took to the throne, 'boogie', 'psychedelic', 'sexy' and 'beatnik' were all the rage.

"English? Who needs that? I'm never going to England!" said Homer Simpson once. But most of us – young and old, whether we like chatting about hip hop or hip ops – need it quite a lot. And that goes for the monarch, too. Who knows? In another 63 years, the Christmas message might be a royal rap.

© Susie Dent & *Women's Weekly*

## Harry Secombe – genius for buffoonery

One hundred years ago, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1921, Sir Harry Secombe was born in Swansea. The comedian, actor, writer, singer and TV presenter was one of the stars of the anarchic 1950s radio series, *The Goon Show*.

His family belonged to St Thomas Church, and his elder brother, Fred, became a Church of Wales priest. Later in life Sir Harry was a presenter of religious programmes, such as the BBC's *Songs of Praise* and ITV's *Highway*.

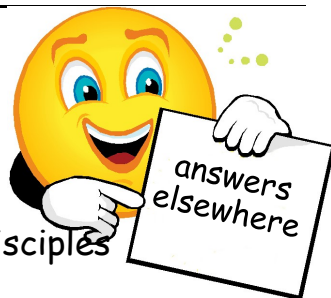
He met Spike Milligan during the war in North Africa and later bumped into him again at the Windmill Theatre, where he was doing comedy routines. There they also met Peter Sellers and Michael Bentine – forming the team that eventually produced *The Goon Show*. A natural clown with a "genius for buffoonery", Harry was the focus, and he moved on to star in a series of films, including *Oliver!*

He was also a talented and popular tenor. He was knighted in 1981, referring to himself as Sir Cumference in reference to his size – he was later forced to diet for medical reasons, and died at the age of 79 of prostate cancer. His tombstone bears the inscription "To know him is to love him".

© Parish Pump



# Just For Fun!



## A Word Search

Can you find the names of all twelve disciples in the grid below?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| A | P | T | E | J | A | N | B | G | S | I | M | O | N | D | Andrew      |
| O | P | C | L | E | S | C | R | O | A | O | A | E | K | B | Bartholomew |
| F | T | E | I | H | F | A | S | D | D | B | C | F | H | A | James (1)   |
| O | A | K | T | P | A | F | E | U | U | V | T | A | R | S | James (2)   |
| C | U | B | G | E | C | W | W | N | J | A | G | K | P | A | John        |
| S | G | I | E | R | R | L | E | W | B | J | O | B | N | M | Judas       |
| B | P | I | L | I | H | P | M | E | T | A | Y | D | M | O | Jude        |
| N | A | C | V | M | C | X | O | A | H | P | R | C | D | H | Matthew     |
| O | K | J | A | D | G | B | L | I | T | E | N | J | C | T | Peter       |
| E | L | O | D | B | A | F | O | H | W | W | A | F | U | B | Philip      |
| J | I | H | R | C | S | O | H | G | B | S | I | D | E | F | Simon       |
| A | A | N | T | M | A | T | T | H | E | W | P | T | D | A | Thomas      |
| M | Z | H | A | O | L | D | R | U | A | M | R | E | U | I |             |
| E | T | B | J | F | A | H | A | B | S | E | M | A | J | L |             |
| S | D | S | E | C | P | I | B | O | C | B | G | K | F | A |             |

## An Apology!

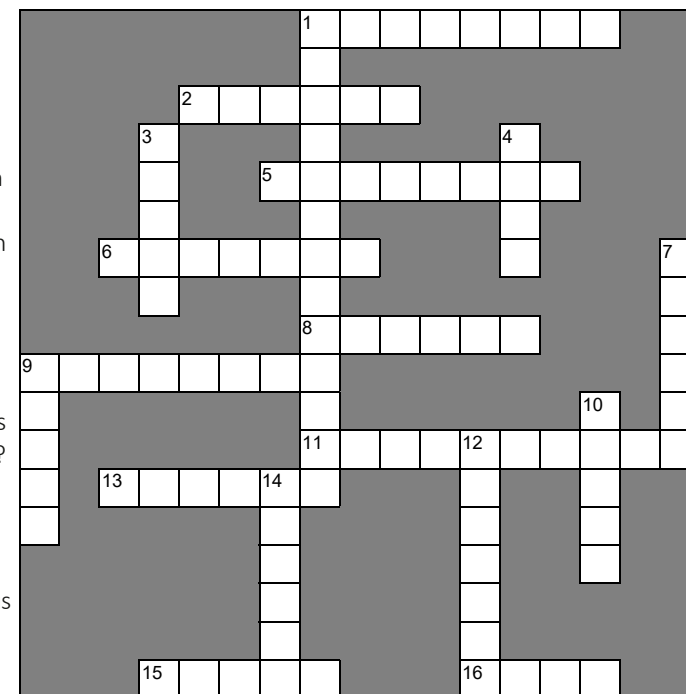
Our humblest apologies for the errors in the 'Professions' puzzle in the previous (*Summer*) edition of *The Messenger* - we hope it didn't spoil your enjoyment of the rest of the magazine. *Ed.*

### Across

- Name the Hebrew mother of Moses?
- John the Baptist baptised Jesus in which river?
- Which king had a sundial?
- In which town did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?
- In which book of the Bible is the parting of the Red Sea?
- Who took the place of Judas in the twelve disciples?
- Which is the last book in the Bible?
- What was the profession of the first person to find the injured man in the parable of the Good Samaritan?
- To whom did Jesus say this, "Get (*thee*) behind me, Satan?"
- By which previous name was Paul of Tarsus known as?

### Down

- Where does Jesus encounter the devil? (7,6)
- How many golden lampstands were built and placed in the Temple?
- Where did Jesus perform his first public miracle?
- What was Jacob's eldest son called?
- Where was Paul shipwrecked?
- What was the goddess in Ephesus called who was worshipped the most?
- What kind of insects did John the Baptist eat in the desert?
- Who asked for the head of John the Baptist?



(Puzzles submitted by Tricia Price)



## Five things we've learnt about Truth in the pandemic

A vital issue for us from recent months has been 'How has truth fared during the pandemic? Here are five key points.

### Truth can save your life

Knowing the truth about the Covid-19 virus and vaccines gave vital protection during the pandemic. The advice of scientists, health professionals and researchers has been widely sought out and debated.

But we've also seen a rise in conspiracy theories, anti-vaccination campaigns and growing confusion as people challenge the extent of the pandemic, and whether Covid-19 is really a threat. Social media algorithms stand accused of spreading misinformation faster than reliable facts and corrections.

### Truth comes from trust

Knowing who to trust is one of the fastest growing challenges facing anyone wanting to know more about the pandemic and its causes.

While faith in doctors and scientists is generally good, trust in politicians has remained low, and scepticism and confusion are growing.

### Truth can be found on your doorstep – but not always

Local information has become more important, especially during lockdowns. But with local newspapers and radio in decline, neighbourhood social media networks have been taking their place, spreading information – not all of it verifiable and sometimes incorrect.

Often, it's fear that drives our response to the stories we read. We eagerly consume stories highlighting a new 'threat' from Covid or scapegoating people not keeping to the lockdown rules. We respond emotionally, 'with our gut' – rather than our brain or intellect.

### Truth has to be valued and protected

Reliable, trusted journalism has been at a premium. ITV News journalist Julie Etchingham defended the role of the media during Covid-19. The news presenter, a practising Roman Catholic, explained: "Many in our front-line services and the wider public are demanding answers. We are there on their behalf."

In December 2020, Yorkshire Post editor, James Mitchinson, published his response to a reader who believed social media posts rather than his newspaper's reports. The open letter, headlined 'Do not believe a



stranger on social media who disappears into the night' sets out the contrast between verified public interest journalism and disinformation posted online.

### Truth can be complicated – and that's ok

Throughout the pandemic, politicians have spoken about 'following the science.' This, they have said, has guided their decision-making. Yet scientists can have a range of views, based on similar research findings. It's in the discussion and debate that scientific truth arises.

People accept that the 'scientific evidence' is not always straightforward. We know that truth can be complicated, from our own daily lives. So politicians who level with their electors about the complexity of the decisions are often received with more credibility.

In continuing to ask the question "Where is Truth Now?" our modest project is helping to keep the conversation going – and encouraging others to do the same.



© Parish Pump



(Submitted by Arthur Newman)

## Zoom On!

Almost two thirds of UK churches plan to carry on streaming their services online, even after lockdown restrictions lift.

According to a recent survey by the insurance group Ecclesiastical, and Bible Society, 93% of churches have used new ways to keep in touch with their congregation and over two in five churches (43%) saw an increase in attendance as a result.

Live streaming has undoubtedly helped churches keep their services going during the pandemic, but this research suggests most, 62%, would like the new habit to stay.

In the survey, 93% said that they had used the video platform Zoom since March 2020, while others used Facebook (60%), YouTube (5%) and Microsoft Teams (1%) to stream to their congregation.

Over two in five of the churches who had used these new channels said that they had seen an increase in attendance against their usual numbers, leading most to say they will carry on streaming after lockdown ends.

As one vicar in Norfolk said, “At the height of the pandemic we were getting over a hundred visits to our Facebook page a day, ten times as many as beforehand.

By using social media we’ve been able to reach many more people than ever came through the actual church door each week, so it’s definitely something we’re looking to continue offering. There is certainly more hope now than there was this time last year and we look forward to the Lord leading us from this difficult time into freedom and new beginnings.”

© Parish Pump



## Zoom Off?

Did video chats make people feel lonelier during lockdown? When the first lockdown began in March 2020, video calls were hailed as a way for loved ones to stay in touch. Tools like ‘Zoom’ soared in popularity as people swapped physical hugs for on-screen kisses. The media marvelled at this, but did it do more harm than good, particularly among older people?

A new study, published in the journal ‘Frontiers in Sociology’, has found that over-60s who chatted online felt lonelier and more depressed than those who didn’t. The report’s co-author, Dr Yang Hu of Lancaster University, said: “We were expecting that a virtual contact was better than total isolation but that doesn’t seem to have been the case for older people”. He stresses that video chats affected all forms of mental health, not just loneliness. One of the reasons for this, he says, is that those who were unfamiliar with video tools found it stressful to learn how to use them. But more confident users suffered too because they were overwhelmed by having too many video chats – or “burnout” as Dr Hu calls it.

Another painful reason is that a video chat can remind you of what you’re missing. You can’t hug a screen or a memory. The report collected data from 5,148 people aged 60 or over – both before and during the pandemic. It’s the first report to assess social contact and mental wellbeing during lockdown, though the authors don’t claim that video chats caused loneliness, only that they were associated with it. Dr Hu called for more research, saying it’s “possible that people who felt more isolated and lonelier tended to make virtual contact more frequently” – getting trapped in a cycle that only made them feel increasingly worse.

Caroline Abrahams, director of Age UK, said: “It’s not over the top to point out that, in the worst cases, loneliness can kill in the sense that it undermines resilience to health threats of many kinds, as well as leading to older people in the twilight of their lives losing all hope so they lack a reason to carry on.” Patrick Vernon, associate director at the Centre for Ageing Better, pointed out that while he saw many examples of older people using technology to stay connected in “really positive ways”, a lack of confidence “can prevent people from using the Internet in the ways that they’d like to.”

The report suggested that more should be done to teach older people digital skills. It also said that if further lockdowns are needed, authorities should set up safe ways for families to meet face to face as video interaction can boost wellbeing only when supplemented by physical contact. This approach may gain support as the wider effects of lockdown become known – though hopefully we’ll never have to put it into practice. Let’s hope the days of being restricted to virtual hugs have gone for good!

*From Computer Active magazine*

## Who Cares?

You don't actually have to take the quiz. Just read straight through and you'll get the point...



### Take this quiz:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor/actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

**Here's another quiz.** See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.
6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier?

**The lesson:** The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards.

They are the ones that care.

## Free Gifts

God's free gift to us is salvation; ours to others is a smile.

David Tait

### Answers to the Crossword (page 21)

**Across:** 1 Jochebed, 2 Jordan, 5 Hezekiah, 6 Bethany, 8 Exodus, 9 Matthias, 11 Revelation, 13 Priest, 15 Peter, 16 Saul

**Down:** 1 Judaeen Desert, 3 Seven, 4 Cana, 7 Rueben, 9 Malta, 10 Diana, 12 Locusts, 14 Salome.

### Word Search Solution (page 20)

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

## The Last Laugh

### Adam's Rib

The Sunday School was teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially interested when he heard how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week, his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and she said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

*(Submitted by Charlotte Godding)*





# Beryl's Back! (page)

## Beryl Who?

This is not actually Beryl's Back Page – she's having a break. She's been a bit busy of late and so I said, "Don't worry, have a break, leave it to me!"

I then did what I usually do when I am looking for inspiration and turned to my computer. I Googled 'Beryl's Back Page' and was amazed at what came up – more than 40,000 results!

The first 'hit' was an extract from a Sherlock Holmes story – "The Beryl Coronet" – I quote: "the Beryl Coronet is one of the most precious public possessions of the empire. A coronet is a kind of crown, and beryl is a type of gem. There are 39 beryls in this particular coronet, set in gold. Their value is enormous!" Well, I know there have been a number of Beryls in our church but I didn't expect there to be that many. I didn't read the rest of the story.

Google also mentioned a Red Beryl, a Queen Beryl, and Beryl Markham (*nee Clutterbuck – there's a name you'd want to change!*) and that is one I know: in 1936 she became the first woman to fly solo backwards across the Atlantic, non-stop. Well, not exactly backwards, but she went from east to west which is against all the wind and weather – much more difficult and took much longer – 20 hours! (*Her aeroplane was called 'The Messenger' – there's a coincidence!*)

Red Beryl was an actress. She was also a communist which, in the 1940s, was not a good thing to be if, like her, you wanted a good job in the Civil Service and a career as an actress!

Queen Beryl was the commander of the Dark Kingdom and the first of many villains that would clash with the Sailor Senshi. I have no idea what that is all about but I think it is something to do with video games – so Douglas will probably know!

Google also informs me that there was an exhibition of paintings in Somerset House by Beryl Bainbridge. This Beryl was best known as a writer but was also a "highly accomplished visual artist".

And, finally, many of you will know the works of Beryl Cook – remembered for her instantly recognisable colourful paintings of larger-than-life people.

But, enough of all these other Beryls, what I expect most of you will be asking is, "when will our Beryl be back?"

All being well, in the next issue.

Tony Harris



### BMS Birthday Scheme:

Temporarily suspended – please contact the secretary for more information  
Andrew Frame 794489 secretary@middlewall.co.uk

### Treasurer:

Please contact the Diaconate, below treasurer@middlewall.co.uk

### Choral Group:

Ray Jones 772997 juneray.orpheus@gmail.com

### Church Flowers:

Pam Tyler 277624 pamverat@aol.co.uk

### Diaconate:

|                                   |              |                               |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Andrew Frame ( <i>Secretary</i> ) | 794489       | secretary@middlewall.co.uk    |
| Jean Myhill                       | 277297       | jean_myhill.gov@hotmail.co.uk |
| Alison Oliver                     | 07745 292968 | a.l.oliver@icloud.com         |
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| Ken Pacey*                        | 265572       | peanuts47@hotmail.co.uk       |

*\*Acting Deacons*

### Minister:

Rev Paul Wilson 273849 minister@middlewall.co.uk

### Prayer Chain:

|                 |        |   |                         |
|-----------------|--------|---|-------------------------|
| Rev Paul Wilson | 273849 | } | prayer@middlewall.co.uk |
| Margaret Frame  | 794489 |   |                         |

### Secretary:

Andrew Frame 794489 secretary@middlewall.co.uk

### The Messenger:

Tony & Beryl Harris 780969 messenger@middlewall.co.uk

### Website:

Tony Harris 780969 webmaster@middlewall.co.uk

### Worship Group:

Jean Rothery 265276 jean.rothery@outlook.com

### Young People's Groups:

Anne Wilson 273849 ypf@middlewall.co.uk

*If the person or organisation you want is not listed please contact the Secretary.  
(Unless otherwise given, the dialling code for all telephone numbers is 01227)*