

SEPTEMBER 2025

From the Editors

Welcome to the September edition.

We hope you have had a pleasant Summer break. We've certainly had some fine weather, perhaps a bit too hot at times; but we mustn't complain. The recent rain is most welcome; our reservoirs certainly need refilling.

We are living in turbulent times these days, both at home and abroad and there is much anxiety about how events in the world will unfold. It can be difficult to maintain an inner peace when all about us is in conflict. Jesus was very well aware of the tribulations of life and offers beautiful words to help us.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and be not afraid".

This peace provides a deep, inner calm or tranquility of soul, even when life is difficult and chaotic.

We also wish all those children who have made the move to different classes, and schools, to colleges or the world of work the very best success and happiness

We wish you all a peaceful September.

*"'Tis the last rose of
summer,
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely
companions
Are faded and gone."
- Thomas Moore, *The
Last Rose of Summer,**



St Mary's News

Rachel, Peter and Tim's epic adventure along the South Downs

Dear friends,

We made it! Over 9 days in July, Peter and I, along with my brother Tim and assorted family and friends, tackled 100 miles from Winchester to Eastbourne. This was a 'bucket list' adventure for my brother who was diagnosed late last year with a degenerative condition that is swiftly robbing him of his mobility and other functions like speech and bodily control. He tackled the hike on his Tramper - an off-road mobility scooter, while everyone else was on foot. We had set a challenging schedule, camping each night on my uncle's farm in the middle of the route, and were ably supported by my youngest brother, Steve, who headed up the logistics and did a lot of dropping off, picking up and returning folk to their cars.



This was truly a team effort. People arrived for a day or two to join in, and we spent many hours each day walking the rolling chalk downs, with the English Channel to our south and our sunny green countryside to our north. We wended our way through woods, fields, heathland and villages. We crossed rivers, roads and railways. We saw paragliders, windmills, castles and butterflies; rippling gold barley fields and sheep and cattle. I recommend the route for views of southern England at its best - white chalk tracks, white chalk horses, white chalk



cliffs.

Our two main challenges were the heat and the hills - there was not always shade easy to come by, and we were grateful for Steve bringing copious amounts of drinking water and large umbrellas at lunch time. He met up with us almost every time we crossed a road and we certainly couldn't have made it without him. The hills were often short and steep, and the 100kg Tramper needed a little assistance in places. But ropes and many helping hands saw us through with determination and good humour.

The days ticked by and so did the miles - and the fundraising total kept going up... so far we have raised over £10,000 for three charities close to Tim's heart - all connected with supporting people of all ages with disabilities, which is how Tim has spent his working life. This total is both staggering and humbling - we are so grateful for all your donations and valuable support. It helped us through some of the toughest spots and really felt like so many were 'cheering us on'



We made it to Eastbourne and our finishing ribbon with only a very few blisters and everyone still smiling. What an adventure, and what memories to keep. The whole trip was characterised by smiles, chat, laughter and 'mucking in' to get the job done. Truly challenging, truly memorable, and a truly beautiful journey.

Rachel and Peter Cunliffe .

Welcome back Chris

Last Sunday we welcomed Chris and Jacqui back after a much deserved family holiday in France. Apparently the weather was pretty hot. Nonetheless they had a good time and recharged their batteries. Chris thanked Frank Kendall for taking the services while he was away. Thankyou Frank.

Churchyard

Work is progressing apace on the work shoring up the retaining wall to the southeast side of the church. Many gravestones have been carefully removed and stored. Strangely a set of steps have been discovered near the retaining wall but we don't yet know why they are there. Watch this space. Some gravestones have been marked off in other parts of the churchyard. This is because SRBC who have responsibility for all health and safety issues with the churchyard have identified them as being unsafe. Over time they will be made safe again.



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**opening times vary over the Christmas period

The next Archdeacon of Blackburn, who will serve Church of England parishes across the County, has been announced by the Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev Philip North.

Rev Jane Atkinson (pictured), currently Area Dean of Poulton and Vicar of St John's Little Thornton, will take up the role in November this year; succeeding the Venerable Mark Ireland who retired in April. She will be one of two Archdeacons in the Diocese. The other is the Venerable David Picken who is the current Archdeacon of Lancaster.



The Church of England in Lancashire is split into two 'archdeacons' - the Archdeaconry of Blackburn covers the south of the region, while the Archdeaconry of Lancaster is for the north of the region. Each Archdeaconry is sub-divided further into 'Deaneries'.

Rev Jane will work closely with churches from the following Deaneries: Accrington, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Chorley, Leyland, Pendle and Whalley as well as serving the whole Diocese across Lancashire as a key member of the Bishop's Vision and Strategy Team.

Archdeacons also take particular responsibility for buildings, including church buildings; the welfare of clergy and their families and the implementation of Diocesan policy within an 'archdeaconry'.

Rev Jane will be installed as Archdeacon during Evensong at Blackburn Cathedral on Sunday November 23 at 4pm.

If you want to forget all your other troubles, wear too tight shoes. - Anon

Archbishop of York's Presidential Address to General Synod

rchbishop Stephen delivered the Presidential Address at the opening of the July General Synod group of sessions in York:

I think it was Graham Greene who said, 'If you are going to jump, make sure the water is deep.'

As I have spent a working lifetime of ministry reflecting on both the theology and the practice of evangelisation and mission, wanting, more than anything else, to share the good news about Jesus Christ, I have often returned to this: the deep waters of faith; the embracing waters of baptism where we die and rise with Christ, the calling of the Church of England to be centred in Christ, and from it the deep and profound spiritual and theological renewal which must follow.

Moreover, recent research like [The Quiet Revival](#) encourages us and challenges us in equal measure, since it appears to be those churches that offer a depth of tradition that are noticing new people in their midst.

We need then to renew the disciplines of prayer, the liturgical life, the contemplation of scripture as the wellsprings of those aquifers of faith, that alone sustain all ministry and mission. This must be our priority: a Christ-centred Church.

For this to happen, we need clergy and lay leaders who are formed spiritually and theologically so that we can nurture Christian discipleship and be able to teach and defend the Christian narrative in an increasingly fractious, sometimes hostile world.

It is that compelling narrative that will enable us to withstand utilitarian tides of opinion that risk making, for instance, assisted dying a reality in our national life, changing forever the contract between doctor and patient, pressurising the vulnerable, and assuming an authority over death that belongs to God alone.

Likewise, our complacency in the face of climate crisis, the challenges of racial justice, and the appalling inequalities of wealth and opportunity in our country, for me, point to the widening gap between what we say about Jesus Christ and how we actually live the gospel.

I therefore believe the Lord is calling us to profound spiritual renewal, to be a church of prayer, deeply rooted in the gospel and in this year of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, even more deeply rooted in the inheritance of faith.

Well, God has humbled us in so many ways this year. It hasn't been easy, but if it has made us more penitent, more determined to put victims and survivors first, more resolved to sort out all things to do with clergy discipline, terms of service, independent safeguarding, and other things besides, then, Synod, God the Redeemer who believes in His Church is at work among us.

It is my pastoral experience, on an almost daily basis, in the conversations I have with people on trains, in taxis, on pilgrimage, and even chatting with tourists, that people are longing for something more; for something to hope in. They are frightened by the wars and conflicts of the world.

Therefore, let us be bold in sharing this gospel; being a Church of welcome, hospitality, humility, reflection and peace.

The Quiet Revival research is telling us that a more spiritually-aware generation of younger people exploring faith and younger people in our churches now want to know more about the Christian faith. We need to respond to this.

Church of England, General Synod, we need to reset the compass. Jesus Christ calls us to follow Him. 'If you drink of this water,' says Jesus, 'you will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become a spring gushing up to eternal life' (see John 4.14). We then give from the overflow of all that we have received. Sisters and brothers, there is no other mission.

Editor: A senior Army officer recently addressed General Synod. Here are some excerpts...

Pray for Armed Forces amid 'uncertain' times, General Synod hears

A senior Army officer has urged the Church to pray for and support members of the Armed Forces "who put themselves in harm's way to protect our nation".

In a recent address to the General Synod, Brigadier Jaish Mahan, Deputy Commander of the 1st UK Division – who has served in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan – spoke of how the world is in a "complex place" currently with conflict in Europe and in the Middle East, and several other "unstable" regions around the world.

"My own personal experience of chaplains across my career and deployments has been that they have been truly exceptional people," he added.

Church News

He said the Army is “hugely privileged” to be supported by “truly exceptional” chaplains who, he said, are “part of the fabric of our family”. “Their role is complex, from pastoral and spiritual, through to moral, often helping our leaders make the right decisions on a difficult day,” he said.

Brigadier Mahan, a practising Christian, asked members to pray for and support members of the Armed Forces who face dangers to protect the nation.

He drew a connection between the place of the Armed Forces and the Church which he said had “always stood fast in times of crisis”.

He said: “First, please continue to pray for and support those men and women, and their families, who put themselves in harm’s way to protect our nation.

“Secondly, please consider how you as the church leadership might support our nation, now in this time of uncertainty and should, heaven forbid, we find ourselves in a largescale conflict.

“The military, like the Church, is part of the fabric of our nation, fundamental pillars that hold together our house, our society.”

Synod Roundup: Tuesday 15 July 2025

On Tuesday, the final day of General Synod, members heard from the Archbishop in Jerusalem, Hosam Naoum, who urged Christians to ‘speak out in the face of injustices’ and called for a permanent ceasefire to end the war.

Later in the morning, legislation making it easier for armed forces chaplains to minister around the country completed its legislative stages. The measure was passed unanimously in all three houses.

Synod also voted to remove any requirements relating to ‘Issues in Human Sexuality’ from the vocations process. After an amendment, this will now be temporarily replaced with the Guidelines for Professional Conduct of the Clergy during the period of discernment and training. In the last debate of July’s Synod, members discussed the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. The debate was triggered by Bishop Sarah’s motion, which asked Synod to reaffirm the ‘immeasurable and irreducible value’ of every person and to request His Majesty’s Government to improve palliative care funding. The motion was passed, with 238 votes in favour, 7 against, and 7 abstaining.

Editor: by Canon Paul Hardingham

New Beginnings

September is the time of year when we get back to our routines after the summer break. As whole-life disciples (lit: *learners*) we are all called to learn from Jesus and live like Him. God wants us to make a difference in our workplaces and schools, and with family and friends. As Paul writes: *'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.'* (Colossians 3:17).

'WHATEVER you do': God is at work in every aspect of our lives. He can use whatever we do to make a difference to those around. Do we believe this? Our lives shouldn't be like an orange, segmented into the sacred and secular, but more like an apple, in which all of our lives are available to Him.

'Whatever YOU do': God wants to use us to share God's love as we serve others around us, wherever we spend time. We can trust Him for the resources we need hour by hour, day by day, year by year. What do we need from Him?

'Whatever you DO': We work for God alone, in responding to God's love for us. How does this perspective make a difference when what we do is hard, unrewarding, or even unappreciated by others?

A man standing on a train platform was asked one day: *'Who are you?'* He replied, *'I am a Christian thinly disguised as an accountant.'* If we were asked the same question ourselves, how would we respond? As disciples of Jesus Christ, our identity is rooted in God and His call upon our lives. For each of us, September means learning from Jesus about how we might live for Him in the different places we find ourselves.

Begin at once to live and count each
separate day as a separate life.

Seneca

Editor: The Revd Dr Jo White considers ...

Reflecting Faith: First Impressions

This series has recently been looking at the opening and closing words of most church services.

They usually go something like this:

(In) The Lord be with you. And also with you.

(Out) Go in the light and peace of Christ. Thanks be to God.

This month let's consider what's pretty much the very next thing we generally do / say at the start of the service.

We acknowledge how great God is: the recognition of His power and might, His goodness and mercy as well as His ability to give us never-ending love. This makes us realise how 'little' we are and how we have not been as loving and forgiving to others – and indeed to ourselves – as we could have been.

This is sometimes called the 'Prayer of Humble Access'.

In a way it mirrors the prodigal son when he returns to his father. The son had demanded his inheritance NOW and then rushes off to have a good time in all the 'usual' ways, followed by poverty and having to work in the lowliest of jobs just to keep alive. Eventually he realised that even the pigs in his father's house lived better than he did – so he decides he will humble himself and return home. He doesn't expect to go back to his previous standing, but rather to beg forgiveness and ask to be a servant.

It's the ending of this story that is so exciting. The prodigal's father is told of his wayward son's approach, and everyone is expecting him to turn away. Instead he rushes out to meet and greet him. Not waiting for an apology or a begging word, the father covers him in rich clothes, holding him (no doubt) smelly body close and just loving him.

And spiritually that is what God does to each of us, as we come deliberately and consciously into His presence and turn to Him. He holds us close and forgives us.

This month

Next time you go to a church service, take note of the words you are asked to say close to the beginning and the wording of 'forgiveness' said over you. Then having been forgiven, try not to stir whatever it was up again – God won't.

Editor: We continue our series on prayer by the Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle.

Praying with the Prayers of the Bible - Learning to Pray by Example

Luke 11:1: 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

Luke tells us that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray after He had just prayed. This is very important. In His preaching Jesus had spoken about prayer; (e.g. Matt. 6:5-8) He had also included prayer in His teaching; e.g. Luke 18:1. But it was neither His preaching or teaching on prayer that inspired this request from His disciples; it was His *example* in prayer. Also, Jesus had sent His disciples out to preach, yet their request was not, 'Lord, teach us to preach.' They had witnessed the mighty miracles that He performed and saw the astonishment of the crowds (Luke 9:43), but they did not ask Him, 'Lord, teach us to perform miracles.' No, they asked instead, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

The disciples were beginning to learn that there was a direct link between the prayer life of Jesus and His Spirit-anointed ministry. We need go no further than what we find here in Luke's Gospel to see the consistent prayer life of Jesus. As news of His mighty ministry spread far and wide, 'great multitudes gathered to hear and be healed' (Lk. 5:15). This was 'high noon' in the ministry of our Lord and as the crowds gathered to hear Him, 'He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed' (v.16).

The next chapter tells us that Jesus made a habit of having whole nights of prayer. 'In those days He went out into the hills to pray, and He continued all night' (6:12). A little later the evangelist records that immediately following the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples were with Jesus – and He was praying (9:18). When Luke recounts the Transfiguration of Jesus, he says the Lord took Peter, John and James up the mountain 'to pray' (9:28).

Luke wants his readers to know about the prayer life of Jesus. At every step of His ministry we see Jesus praying. He prayed early in the morning before the day began; He prayed late in the evening after hours of demanding ministry; He prayed in secret; He prayed with His disciples, and He often prayed all night. He prayed in homes; He prayed by the roadside; He prayed on mountains; He prayed in boats; He prayed in the wilderness; He prayed in the synagogue; He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane; He prayed on the Cross.

No wonder that Jesus' example in praying prompted His disciples to ask, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' As we read and study the life and ministry of our Lord, we will be likewise moved to ask Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

God in the Arts

Editor: the Revd Michael Burgess surveys works of sacred art that can be found in various museums.

He gave us eyes to see them': William Holman Hunt's Scapegoat

14th September in the Jewish calendar is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It is a time of fasting and prayer, and its observance is regulated by Leviticus 16. The Old Testament ritual involved cleansing the priesthood and the people when a scapegoat bearing the sins of the faithful was sent into the wilderness. Much of that ritual has lapsed, but the heart of Yom Kippur is prayer that the relationship of love and service between God and His people would be renewed and restored. The goat that was sent by relays into the desert had a scarlet cord – a reminder that 'though our sins be scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow.'



It is the subject of William Holman Hunt's famous painting that is in the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight. This village was founded by Lord Leverhulme in 1889 for the workers in his soap factory. It consists of gabled houses and Elizabethan style cottages which nestle side by side around the impressive domed art gallery containing a wealth of paintings and sculptures. Work on 'The Scapegoat' began in 1854 and was completed two years later. Holman Hunt went to the Dead Sea to paint the goat in situ, following the Pre-Raphaelite principles of art embodying exact detail and accuracy in its subject matter. There is a photograph of the artist by his easel, a paintbrush in one hand and a rifle in the other. It was a time of political tension between Syria, Palestine and Turkey, which combined with the constant danger of hostile tribesmen in the area. Undaunted, Holman Hunt sketched by the sea and then finished the details off in his rooms in Jerusalem. He described the scene as a 'beautifully arranged horrible wilderness.' In the distance are the hills of Edom against the sky, and in the foreground the solitary goat with the scarlet cord over its head. It is a bleak landscape, and on the frame surrounding the picture are the words from Leviticus: 'The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region, and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness.'

We look at the painting with the eyes of faith and realise that the scapegoat was sent over the river Kidron into the wilderness, the very same river our Lord and His disciples crossed to the Garden of Gethsemane which heralded the passion of Jesus. We can see this sad creature, isolated and alone, bearing the sins of God's ancient people, and think of Isaiah's words: 'He was despised and rejected by others.' A scapegoat in the Old Testament bearing the sins of the people: the Lamb of God in the new covenant who takes away the sin of the world.

God in the Sciences

Editor: : Dr Ruth Bancewicz, who is based at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith

Big perspective, big questions

It was three years ago this summer that the first operational images from the James Webb Space Telescope astonished and delighted astronomers, as well as the rest of us.

Those of us who have grown up in an age when 'astronaut' is a career option (albeit a pretty specialist one) might struggle to identify with the wonder of these events, and the true scale of the challenge. Human beings developed the technology to send first a probe, then living people, out of Earth's atmosphere, and cross the 252,000-mile gap to the moon. It was in 1959 that the Luna 3 probe managed to send back grainy images of the far side of the Moon, and in 1969 Apollo 11 managed to actually land on it, take off again, and arrive back in one piece. It's the safe arrival home that gets me – like hitting the bullseye twice in a row.

For some space-travellers, seeing Earth from a distance is a life-changing experience; a shift in thinking dubbed 'the overview effect'. The observer feels a sense of awe at seeing the whole planet as a single entity rather than a fragmented collection of countries, and at getting a sense of the fragility of the whole system. It brings people out of themselves – something psychologists call a 'self-transcendent experience'.

Some people claim to have a ‘nothing but science’ approach to life that trusts only in things for which we can produce very concrete, measurable, evidence. Is it perhaps ironic, then, that this overview of the whole globe – which is made possible by science – can trigger such a deep sense of meaning?

Science can bring us to the big questions of meaning and purpose, but it doesn’t answer them. It’s important to recognise that science, wonderful though it is, has limits. Beyond those boundaries we step into other ways of knowing, such as philosophy or theology. At the interface between science and theology we can have some fascinating conversations.

The discussions about science and religion that I enjoy most happen when people share what really matters to them. What do you find beautiful? Which scientific discoveries changed the course of your life? How do you see yourself in relation to the cosmos?

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Danny Kruger’s extraordinary speech in the House of Commons

What does the MP for Devizes in Wiltshire have in common with the Anglo-Saxon king Athelstan?

It became clear this summer, during an extraordinary speech Danny Kruger MP gave to an all but empty House of Commons on the eve of the summer recess. First, some background: this month (4th Sept) marks the 1100th anniversary of the coronation of Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan, in 925AD. As grandson of King Alfred the Great, Athelstan became the first King of all England.

And his coronation revealed his decision that England should be a Christian kingdom, living under a version of the Law of Moses. So, like Alfred before him, Athelstan took oaths reminiscent of the ‘blessings and curses’ of Exodus 21 and 22, and promised to bring his young kingdom into the blessing of the Christian God, by means of obedience to His commands.

Danny Kruger reminded Parliament of this sacred oath made by the first king of all England this summer. The MP’s call for the restoration of our national Christian heritage has since been viewed more than three million times, and has been called a ‘roadmap’ for a Christian counter-revolution.

For Kruger called for the country to remember **Athelstan's** ancient Covenant. He said: "Uniquely among the nations of the world, this nation - England, from which the United Kingdom grew - was founded and created consciously on the basis of the Bible and the story of the Hebrew people. In that sense, England is the oldest Christian country and the prototype of nations across the West." He went on to say that the impact of "one thousand years" of the Christian common law tradition – is the demand "that power should arrange itself for the benefit of all the people under it, and specifically for the poorest and weakest.

"In the absence of the Christian God", he said, "we do not have pluralism and tolerance, with everyone being nice to each other in a godless world". Instead, we have "catastrophes of social breakdown, social injustice, loneliness and emptiness on a chronic scale."

Kruger stresses that "in abandoning one religion we simply create a space for others to move into." He identifies Britain today as being "a combination of ancient paganism, Christian heresies and the cult of modernism".

Kruger has written on the idea of spiritual warfare as reflected in the dynamics of law-making in Westminster in his book, *Covenant: The New Politics of Home, Neighbourhood and Nation*. He writes, "The culture war...is a religious conflict about the right gods to worship. As such, it is more than a series of skirmishes for the tokens of identity, for flags and statues and the history curriculum. It is a battle for the strongholds of society itself."

In his speech in the House of Commons that day, he developed this theme of 'strongholds'. He attacked the votes of MPs to decriminalise abortion and legalise assisted suicide. He said they had authorised "the killing of unborn children, of nine-month-old babies" and to "allow the killing of the elderly and disabled," describing these votes as "a great sin."

He went on: "The fact is that the strong gods are back, and we have to choose which god to worship. I suggest we worship the God who came in the weakest form, Jesus Christ. This God is a jealous god—it is Him or nothing—and we have to own our Christian story, or repudiate it."

Kruger believes strongly that secularist religion "must be banished from public life - from schools and universities, and from businesses and public services."

Instead, he has called for a "restoration" and "a revival of the faith." He warned: "a wind is blowing, a storm is coming and when it hits, we are going to learn if our house is built on rock or on sand."

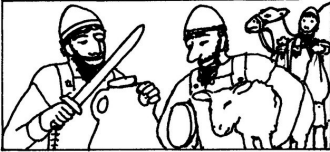
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Judges 6:1-7, 11-16, 25-35

Once the Israelites had moved into their
promised land, they obeyed God, but not for
long, so God let other countries invade.

The Midianites invaded every
year, and stole all the food
the Israelites had grown.



The Israelites had to
hide in the hills.



After 7 years,
the Israelites called
out to God for help.

Gideon was secretly
threshing wheat when
an angel arrived.



The Lord is helping you,
mighty warrior.



I don't
mean to be rude, but it
doesn't look like He is.

God said,



I will give you the
power.



But my clan
is the weakest in our tribe and
I'm the weakest in my family.

I'll be helping you. Start by pulling
down the altar built for Baal and
build one for Me.



Gideon did as he was told (but he
waited and did it at night).



In the morning, people
came to complain to
Gideon's father



If Baal is upset, he
can take his own
revenge, can't he?



Gideon sent out messages
to call men to fight the
Midianites..



and 32000 came.

Miscellaneous

Did you spot many butterflies this past summer?

The wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation is deeply worried about our butterflies. Or rather, the lack of them. It seems that more than 80 per cent of our species have declined sharply in number since 1970s.

Each summer sees the Big Butterfly Count, when the public is encouraged to send in the number of butterflies they have seen over a short period of time. Last year saw the lowest number of butterflies spotted in the count's 14-year history. Even the familiar species like the small white, common blue and small tortoiseshell had their worst summer ever. And a record number of people saw no butterflies at all.

Butterflies have been hit by climate change, the use of pesticides, and damage to their habitats. The drought this summer will have been bad news for their caterpillar offspring, which need growing plants to feed on.

So, this autumn, why not plan a happier year for butterflies in 2026? As you prepare your garden for winter, go to <https://www.rhs.org.uk/wildlife/butterflies-in-your-garden> for some ideas of how to make your garden butterfly-friendly.

British Food Fortnight 2025 – 26th September to 12th October

This annual 'celebration' of the diversity and quality of British Food is aiming to be bigger than ever this year, involving restaurants, pubs, schools, universities, care homes, the NHS, and even the Houses of Parliament.

Why not take advantage of the fortnight, and see what one of our local restaurants and pubs might offer?

Still danger in our rivers and coastline

Walking by rivers or the sea has long been a favourite pastime of those of us out for a relaxing stroll. But in the UK just now, beware. Too many of our rivers and too much of our coastline has been infected with raw sewage.

Some statistics: there are about 14,500 storm overflow drains in England, which are used to pump raw sewage into rivers and the sea when there is heavy rain. In 2024, there was a record 3.6 million hours of sewage spills into waterways. These spills suffocated wildlife by the millions and made bathing very unsafe for us.

The government is promising drastic action in the coming years, but meanwhile the widespread pumping of raw sewage is still going on. So – be careful out there!

Miscellaneous

All in the month of September

1,100 years ago, on 4th Sept 925 that England gained her first ever king. He was Aethelstan, King of the Anglo-Saxons (924-927) and then King of England (927-939). Aethelstan was grandson of Alfred the Great, and 30th great-grand uncle to Queen Elizabeth II.

300 years ago, on 29th Sept 1725 that Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive (Clive of India) was born. This British general helped to found the British Empire in India.

200 years ago, on 27th Sept 1825 that the world's first public railway opened. It was the Stockton and Darlington Railway in north-east England.

100 years ago, on 7th Sept 1925 that Laura Ashley was born. The Welsh designer and businesswoman was known for her traditional printed fabrics, soft furnishing and women's clothing.

Also 100 years ago, on 8th Sept that Peter Sellers, actor and comedian was born. Best known for the Goon Show, and as Inspector Clouseau in the Pink Panther film series. (Died 1980.)

90 years ago, on 3rd Sept 1935 that British driver Malcolm Campbell set a new world land speed record of 301.13 mph in *Bluebird* at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah. First person to break the 300mph barrier.

80 years ago, on 2nd Sept 1945 that V-J Day (victory over Japan Day) took place. Representatives from Japan signed the formal instrument of surrender on board the US battleship *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

75 years ago, on 3rd Sept 1950 that Italian racing driver Giuseppe (Nino) Farina became the first-ever Formula One World Champion after winning the 1950 Italian Grand Prix.

70 years ago, on 4th Sept 1955 that Kenneth Kendall became the first newsreader to appear on screen in the UK, reading the *BBC Television News*.

Also 70 years ago, on 21st Sep 1955 that Britain annexed Rockall, an uninhabited granite islet in the North Atlantic, to prevent the Soviet Union from placing surveillance equipment there to spy on Britain's secret nuclear missile tests.

60 years ago, on 4th Sept 1965 that Albert Schweitzer, German-born French theologian, philosopher, organist, physician and missionary doctor to Africa, died. Winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize.

15 years ago, on 19th Sept 2010 that the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was finally sealed after gushing oil for almost five months. It was the biggest marine oil spill in history. In 2016 BP agreed to pay fines of \$20.8 billion – the largest corporate settlement in US history. BP also paid more than \$65 billion in clean-up costs.

Miscellaneous

Editor: by Tim Lenton

Celebrating 200 years of the public railroads

Two hundred years ago, on 27th September 1825, the world's first public railway opened. It was the Stockton and Darlington Railway in north-east England.

Inspired and supported by a prominent Quaker, Edward Pease, and backed financially by many Quakers nationally, it has been described as “the great theatre of railway operations”, sparking the explosion of railways across the world and boosting the industrial revolution. About 20 miles of the original 25 mile stretch still exist, now as part of the Northern Rail line.

The technical expertise behind it all came from George Stephenson, an extraordinary self-taught engineer whose expertise, which originated in the mines, stretched beyond railways. His *Locomotion No 1*, built for the Stockton and Darlington line, was the first steam locomotive to carry passengers on a public rail line. He worked with his 18-year-old son Robert, who is known for creating the more famous *Rocket* four years later.

The first Stockton and Darlington train – which in fact ran from Old Etherley Colliery, some distance north of Darlington – was led by a man on horse-back with a flag. The motto of the organising committee was “At private risk for public service”.

With brakemen stationed between the wagons, the train reached 12 to 15mph and was greeted by an estimated 10,000 people at the Darlington junction, where some passengers left and more boarded. The average speed was calculated at about 8mph. Six wagons of coal were given to the poor by way of celebration.

A nine-month festival in County Durham and the Tees Valley – with art-work, spectacles and community events – is marking the bicentenary of the opening of the railway.

As a tribute to his life and achievements, a bronze statue of George Stephenson was unveiled at Chesterfield railway station in 2005. An earlier statue stands in Neville Street, Newcastle.

More info at: <https://railway200.co.uk>, <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk>

Millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon. - Susan Ertz

Remembering Albert Schweitzer

Sixty years ago, on 4th September 1965, Albert Schweitzer, German-born French theologian, philosopher, organist, physician and missionary doctor to Africa, died. He was winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize.

Schweitzer was a devout Christian with a passionate allegiance to Jesus. His key philosophy was “reverence for life”: no-one, he felt, should harm or destroy life unless it was absolutely necessary. It was this philosophy that gained him the Nobel Peace Prize, and led him in later life to campaign against nuclear weapons.

He was born in 1875 in Alsace, where his father was a Lutheran-Evangelical pastor, and he made an impression first in the world of music, becoming a musical scholar and organist, as well as dedicating himself to the restoration and study of historic pipe organs.

In 1903 he became Principal of the Theological College of Saint Thomas, from which he had graduated. In 1906 he published his key work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, which was published in English in 1910.

Schweitzer made a proposal in 1912 to work at his own expense as a physician in the Paris Missionary Society's mission at Lambaréné on the Ogooué river, in what is now Gabon, in Africa, then a French colony. He would not go before a committee to have his doctrine examined, but met committee members individually and was eventually accepted, raising his own funding partly through concerts. His wife, Helene, served as an anaesthetist for surgical operations.

There was some criticism much later of the informal, spartan arrangements (patients living on the hospital grounds during treatment, for instance), but his biographer – also a volunteer surgeon – pointed out that surgical survival rates were as high as in many fully equipped western hospitals.

Schweitzer died at Lambaréné, his grave marked by a cross he made himself.

“Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.”

Albert Schweitzer



As far as Reg could tell, the burglar had disturbed nothing in the vestry



"Delivery for whoever ordered the trendy alternative to a basket of groceries..."

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old but on building the new.

Socrates

Editor: The following poem was inspired by a lady called Phil Bevan who responded to God's call to take aid to Myanmar after floods there, many years ago...

God's whisper to me

God whispered in my ear one day
And said how it would be
I shrugged and turned away and said
"No way, You can't mean me!"

Next time it wasn't a whisper
He spoke quite loud and clear
He had a job for me to do
He said "have faith, don't fear".

So I took the challenge offered
But how should I begin?
This task was much too big for me
I had to trust in Him.

When the problems overwhelmed me
And I couldn't see my way
I'd put my faith and hope in Him
Fall to my knees and pray.

And my God, He never failed me
Through good days and through bad
He filled me with a courage
I never knew I had.

So if you feel God calling you
Don't doubt and answer "no"
He knows the plans He has for you
Step out in faith...and go!

By Mallie Sharpe



Get something out of it

Coming out of church, the wife asked her husband, "Do you think that Johnson girl is tinting her hair?" Her husband looked vague. "And that dress Mrs Hansen was wearing," she continued, "Really, don't tell me you think that's the proper costume for a mother of two." Her husband looked blank. "Oh, for heaven's sake," snapped his wife. "A lot of good it does you to go to church!"

Hymns for people over 50

Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah, I've Forgotten Where I've Parked The Car
Count Your Many Birthdays, Count Them One By One
Blessed Insurance
It Is Well With My Soul, But My Knees Hurt

Life choice

The choir was practising the anthem. The choirmaster said to the trebles: "Now don't forget, when the tenors reach 'The Gates of Hell', you come in."

No men

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, *"They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, so I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."*

Church service

A minister, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man get up and leave during the middle of his message. The man returned just before the conclusion of the service. Afterwards the pastor asked the man where he had gone. "I went to get a haircut," was the reply.

"But," said the minister, "why didn't you do that before the service?"

"Because" the gentleman said, "I didn't need one then."

Your choice

One beautiful Sunday morning, a priest announced to his congregation: "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons...a £100 sermon that lasts five minutes, a £50 sermon that lasts 15 minutes, and a £10 sermon that lasts a full hour. "Now, we'll take the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

Picture Parable

The tale of the RICH FOOL



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS

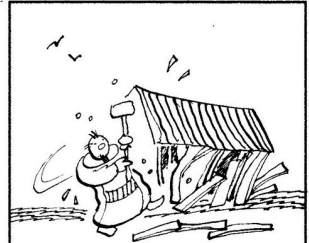


ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A MAN
WHO HAD LOTS OF LAND WHICH
GREW WONDERFUL WHEAT.

I HAVEN'T ANYWHERE TO
KEEP ALL THIS FOOD



I KKNOW! I'LL PULL DOWN
MY BARN AND BUILD
BIGGER ONES



THE MAN DEMOLISHED HIS
OLD BARN...

...AND BEGAN TO BUILD
NEW ONES.



SOON I'LL BE THE RICHEST
MAN IN THE TOWN!



I'M SO LUCKY - I CAN
EAT, DRINK AND BE
MERRY!



BUT THAT VERY NIGHT,
THE MAN DIED!



WHAT GOOD WERE HIS
RICHES NOW?



JESUS EXPLAINED - IT'S NOT
YOUR WEALTH THAT MATTERS,
IT'S HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE
THAT'S IMPORTANT