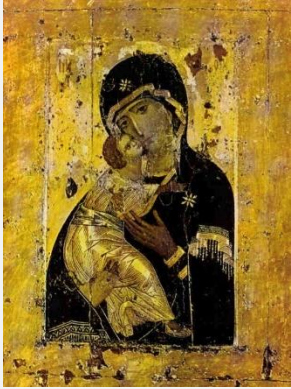


Issue 6:
July 2022



The Virgin of Kyiv

A candle in....

THE

WINDOW

News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

Phew what a scorcher!

I'm sitting in the garden formatting this magazine – enjoying the morning, before it gets too hot. I hope you find things of interest in it.

Have you ever put a message into a bottle and thrown it into the sea, hoping for a reply? I guess that would be regarded as littering and therefore politically incorrect but uploading this magazine to the internet is a bit like that. We know that it is downloaded a significant number of times but we are not sure if it has any impact or meaning. Do give some feedback to the authors and consider contributing an article yourself.

Turn the page to find, amongst other things, a reflection on leadership.
RR

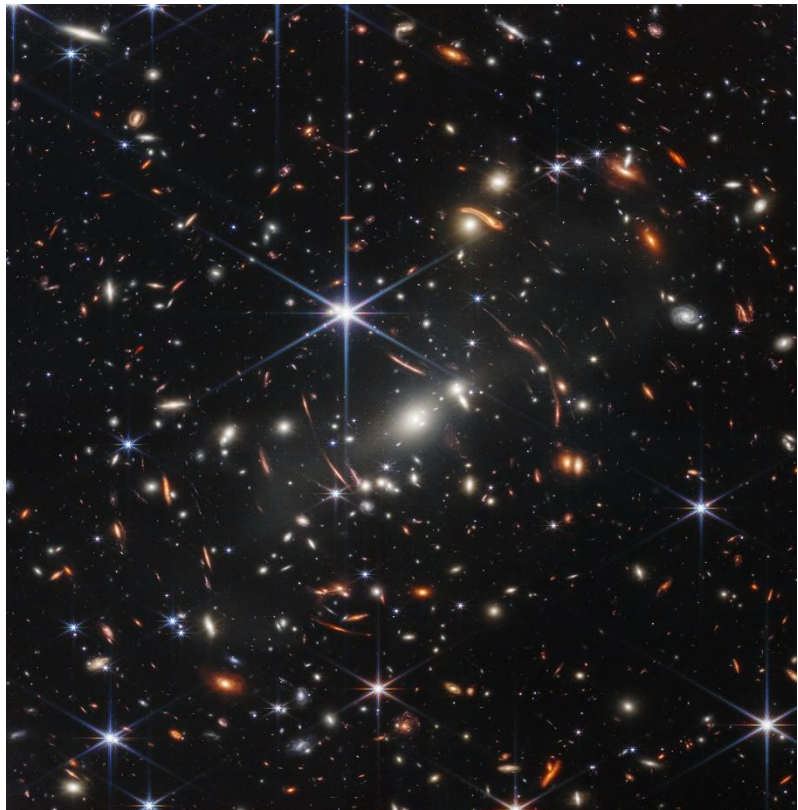
This issue was shaped
by:

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This picture, released yesterday, is the first image from the James Webb Space Telescope. As reported in the February magazine, the telescope launched on Christmas Day. The image shows an area of the night sky that would be hidden if you held a grain of sand at arm's length. Most points of light in this image are galaxies. It is similar to the 'Deep Field' picture taken by Hubble some years ago but the JWST can 'see' infra-red and therefore sees further back in space and time.

Jotham's Parable

Paul Sheppy

One day, the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves.

They said to the olive tree, "Be our king." But the olive tree answered, "Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honoured, to hold sway over the trees?"

Next, the trees said to the fig tree, "Come and be our king." But the fig tree replied, "Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?"

Then the trees said to the vine, "Come and be our king." But the vine answered, "Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and humans, to hold sway over the trees?"

Finally, all the trees said to the thorn bush, "Come and be our king." The thornbush said to the trees, "If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!"

This is a parable which ought to be better known. It was told by Jotham, a grandson of Gideon. His father (Gideon's son) was called Abimelech – a name meaning "My father is king." Gideon led the military expedition which made the settlement of Israel possible into a land of promise. The people asked Gideon to become their king. He refused the offer, saying the God who had led them through the desert would be their ruler.

We nod approvingly, but Jotham appears to think differently. And he does so, because his father, Abimelech, seized power and was ruinous for Israel.

In the parable, Gideon is represented by the trees who rejected the role of king. Abimelech (Jotham's father!) is the thorn bush who takes on the role and becomes the source of a destructive fire.

Picking leaders is a tricky business. In the old days (I mean in the early days of the Church), bishops refused the role and it took considerable persuasion to move a candidate to acceptance of the office. Nowadays, God help us, people write up their CVs and apply for the vacant see.

Can you imagine how anyone can seriously write an essay entitled, "Why I would be a good Bishop of Camberwell"? There's no such see, so put your laptop away!

As I write, I watch Boris Johnson having to make his resignation speech. Some are sad; some are gleeful.

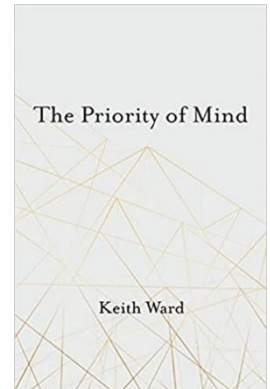
Jotham's parable reminds us of the danger of personal ambition as a quality in leaders. I spoke recently to a friend who had been a full Colonel in the Royal Artillery. I asked him what leadership was about. His answer was that you had to be able to outline clearly your objective in such a way that people were willing to come with you – even at risk to themselves.

Christ, our leader, descended to the dead and felt abandoned by God, so that we might live and know ourselves loved. No thorn bush he – but our living Vine, bringing joy to us all with the cup of salvation which we bless.

Keith Ward: The Priority of Mind

A review by Rob Rutherford

Those of us that study physics are used to thinking of living things as made of molecules which in turn are made of atoms which contain protons neutrons and electrons and the protons and neutrons in turn are made of quarks. These ‘fundamental’ particles are glued together by the forces of nature whose characteristics are described in elegant mathematical equations which together make up what is called the ‘standard model’ of physics. Some scientists are materialists and think that matter and ‘fields’ and the associated laws are all there is in a meaningless Universe. Others are interested in how the ‘laws’ have a deep richness that allows the development of ‘intelligent’ life capable of contemplating the Universe and, indeed, understanding it. Still others, such as Max Tegmark, Paul Davies and Seth Lloyd are beginning to talk about the importance and possibly the priority of information. This approach, originated by John Archibald Wheeler, summarised in the phrase ‘it from bit’, hints at a possible change in scientific theory to recognise the immaterial. Keith Ward goes further – he might say that information cannot of itself make things happen or sustain the Universe but that the Mind of God can.



This recent book by Keith Ward (published in November 2021) is only 82 pages long but it contains a wonderfully clear summary of his philosophy and theology. Here is the central question: What has supreme importance? Is it matter or mind? His philosophy takes science seriously - as illustrated from page 28 - but goes further:

“The scientific approach is invaluable and has changed our understanding of nature. It is by no means to be ignored or opposed. Yet for any adequate understanding of human nature, it must be regarded as *incomplete*. A place has to be found for the life-worlds of sensation, perception, feeling, and thought, for value, meaning and purpose; in short, for the existence of mind.”

The book is divided into four sections of which I will comment on three. In the first part, Keith outlines the important characteristics of the human mind. Talking of the scientific method, it concludes with a significant irony:

“Theories need to be tested. But you have to have the theory before you can test it, and very few of us have the ability to construct such theories. To do so is to have a very sophisticated purpose or aim; one has to place a high value on intellectual understanding; and one has to use symbols that have meaning. The irony is that a highly purposive, valuable, and meaningful activity has to be engaged in to produce a theory that nature has no purposes, values or meaning. Physicists are parts of nature so at least parts of nature have purpose and value.”

In part 2 Keith Ward focusses on the ‘Cosmic Mind’ and the nature of creation. Science tells us that the universe is evolving. “...the history of the universe is the story of the gradual unfolding of its potentialities, which have been there since the beginning of time. It is only with the origin of intelligent minds that the universe begins to understand, value and direct its own course.” Keith says that this ‘self-realising’ universe is hard to see as an accident but he acknowledges that it is also hard to see it as “completely directed by an all-powerful being who cares for the good of all things..... there are too many conflicts and failures and dead ends for that to be plausible”. So the ‘omnipotence’ of God is questioned but the eventual goal of a universe full of value and goodness is not.

Part 3 consists of a description of all the things that make life worthwhile. What is our role? To seek truth, beauty, love.. This isn’t just an academic analysis: “I absolutely prioritise moral action over theoretical speculation”. Keith argues that we can all contribute to the goodness of the world. “Truth and understanding, beauty and creativity, friendship and love of others – these are the values to which each intelligent mind can make a contribution that could be made by no-one else.”

There’s a challenge to us all.

Children Heard and Seen - We need your help!

“Children Heard and Seen” is a national charity which supports families impacted by parental imprisonment. Set up in 2014, its focus is on reducing intergenerational offending, and mitigating the impacts of imprisonment for children and young people. Based at Cumnor in Oxfordshire, the charity now supports families across the country, especially since the pandemic, when on-line help became a vital part of the charity’s work in order to reach those most in need.



The charity has a strong track record and since its inception has helped over 600 children.

Awareness is raised regarding the experiences of children with a parent in prison. This helps influence attitudes in society towards these young people, who find themselves in situations of shame, social isolation and stigma through no fault of their own. A whole family approach is adopted and help is tailored to each individual child’s specific needs. In 2019, “Children Heard and Seen” won the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to a volunteer group across the UK in recognition of its outstanding service within the community. In 2020 the charity received another award from the Criminal Justice Alliance for supporting families throughout the pandemic.

The Mothers’ Union in Oxford Diocese and in Abingdon have been supporting this charity for several years, especially families in the Milton Keynes area. In the Oxfordshire area, the police are now notified when a parent is sent to prison, so that the Mothers’ Union can give them information about “Children Heard and Seen”. We have provided boxes of goodies at Christmas and Easter, along with gifts and knitted items in the winter months. Now we have been asked to help in another way.

Each year during the school summer holidays, the charity provides a residential weekend for families from all over the country who are affected by imprisonment. From 19th to 21st August, they will be at Camp Hill House in Cumnor, and Abingdon, being the nearest MU branch, has been asked to provide cakes for this weekend. There will be 100-150 people attending, most of them children. Our MU group is diminishing in number, so we need some help. Tray bakes have been especially requested, but any cake, round, loaf, or fairy cakes would also be gratefully received. We have been asked to make them look attractive for the children.

Please let me know if you are willing to contribute. I will need to have your cakes by the morning of 19th August so that I can deliver them in the early afternoon. I would really like this to be a great parish effort and so that we can help in just a small way to make this a happy weekend for these families. Thank you in advance.

Elizabeth Dawson.
(Branch Leader, Abingdon MU)
Tel: 01235 526415.
e.m.dawson.15@outlook.com

To find out more about the charity, you can watch a video here:

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/who-we-are/>

Communion Bread

Norman Dawson

Some will know that I bake the bread which is used at the Family Eucharist on Sunday mornings at St Helen's. Here's why:

When I was growing up, my parents and I attended the local parish church of St Andrew, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston where I had been baptised, confirmed, and where my parents, and, later, Elizabeth and I, were married. We used communion wafers and I didn't think anything about it.

In September 1966 I went up to Clare College Cambridge and began going to the Chapel. Here, a loaf of bread was used. I liked the symbolism of the single loaf being taken, blessed, broken and shared. And it seemed right... if it says bread then why not have bread!



Photo by [Kate Remmer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

However, I did not realise that all this had significance far beyond Cambridge. The Dean of the College immediately before my arrival had been the Rev John Robinson who went on to be Bishop of Woolwich and famously, three years earlier, had written *Honest to God*.

In his time at Clare, John had prepared the order of service booklet which we used in Chapel. Professor Rev C D F (Charlie) Moule writing in Robinson's biography says that the Eucharist booklet "became a celebrated manual, in demand all over the world. The extraordinary thing was that what it presented was Cranmer's 1662 rite as pure and virtually uncontaminated as could be found anywhere in the country. What brought it vividly to life was the intelligent use of action, such as the offertory procession – with loaves and wine from the College Buttery - brief and restrained, but sufficient to point to the theology of the action. The bringing of the unconsecrated bread left over to the Chapel breakfast made the link with the secular world explicit."

John Robinson went on to be part of the liturgical panel which prepared Rite A, B and The Alternative Service Book and so much of what we did at Clare has been incorporated in the liturgy that we use at St Helen's today.

When Elizabeth and I and the girls moved to Cheshire I volunteered to bake the bread for the Family Eucharist there at St John the Evangelist in Kingsley. We moved to Abingdon and I was delighted to discover that the Rev Michael Goode's wife Jenny baked the bread for the Eucharist. When Michael retired I was pleased to step into the breach left by Jenny Goode and have done so ever since.

One of the joys of emerging from the pandemic has been, again, to see the loaf lifted up and broken during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Here, for interest, are some quotes about the Eucharist from John Robinson's book 'Liturgy coming to life':

"Here is the beginning point of the transformation which has to be wrought out, first in us, and then through us, till the whole body of this old world becomes conformed to the likeness of Christ's glorious body."

"Do we really want a new and better world? Then this is the great solvent of the old, transforming it by divine alchemy into the new. Here, rather than at death, is where the resurrection of the body begins."

A beautiful resident of the Orkneys

Sue Holligan

The choice of holiday venues seems to have been greater this year than for the past two summers but we decided to stay in the United Kingdom. We love Scotland, and islands and have long wanted to visit the Orkneys. We had several reasons for this: its peace and quiet, the outstanding colonies of seabirds, world famous archaeological sites, and for my husband a chance to visit the places his father walked whilst serving on the home fleet in Scapa Flow during the Second World War. We packed plenty of warm clothes and waterproof outer garments and had a great holiday visiting all the places we had planned but it was a meeting with an unexpected creature that was the highlight for me.

The most notable neolithic sites on the largest island, Mainland, are the Stones of Stenness (built in about 3100 BC) the village of Skara Brae (lived in between 2500 and 2000 BC) and the Ring of Brodgar (dating from 2500 BC). The Brodgar stone ring, surrounded by a deep ditch, lies on a raised piece of land between two lochs, a beautiful setting. It was a cool, cloudy day when we visited with few other people present. After spending some time looking at the stones and surrounding area I walked along the grass path running around the exterior of the ditch. As I wandered, enjoying the mystical nature of the place, a relatively large creature with a coat of thick brown fur ran out of the rough grassland onto the path just in front of me. As I paused to watch it, it stopped in the middle of the path and looked all around with its black beady eyes. It had the rounded snub nose of a vole with little twitching whiskers, small neat ears, a stocky body and quite a short tail. It was much bigger than the British field vole but not as big as the water vole. After a few seconds it turned round and disappeared back into the rough grassland. I had never seen a creature like it before.



As we returned to our car, we met a warden and I explained what I had seen. The warden was almost as excited as me and told me I had seen an Orkney vole. These large voles are only found on the Orkneys and appeared there over 5000 years ago. They seem to have come from the continent, Belgium was thought to be their origin but current thinking suggests they came from the Iberian peninsula and were brought in by Neolithic traders. Their skeletons have been found in Skara Brae. They were possibly brought in accidentally with hay for livestock but

maybe used as food for sailors, in the same way that Roman travellers dined on edible dormice. They are genetically distinct from the British voles.

The voles are food for birds of prey such as hen harriers, kestrels and short eared owls, but more recently another predator arrived. In 2010 stoats were introduced to the Orkneys. One stoat's den has since been found to have 100 rotting vole carcasses in it! Over the next few years the voles at Brodgar seemed to disappear. In 2018 they began a campaign to clear the stoats from the islands so that my sighting of this Orkney vole round the Ring of Brodgar was proof that these charming creatures are increasing in number again.

The Orkneys were an amazing place to visit, we saw some wonderful sights, glorious views of seas and skies in sunshine, rain and gales, met friendly residents, made nodding acquaintance with puffins and ate delicious scallops. However meeting that delightful little rodent was perfect. Its species has survived the Neolithic people who took it there, the Vikings and other foreign invaders, and now the twenty first century stoat invaders. It is only found on Orkney, it deserves the Orkneys and I am sure the Orcadians will take good care of it.

60 years of Rock n Roll

Roger Cox

60 years is a long time is to be rocking and rolling on stage..or off..but that's what the greatest Rock and Roll band in the world were doing on Sunday night in Hyde Park!

The Rolling Stones are celebrating their 60th anniversary together with a string of concerts this summer in the UK and Europe....yes this could be the last time (😊) the Stones play together, only two of the original line up are playing...National Treasure Sir Mick Jagger and Keith ('Keef') Richards, aka the Glimmer Twins, coauthors of many songs that have stood the test of time and still sound as good as when I first saw them on stage in Bristol 51 years ago, at (what was then called) the Colston Hall.

Back then, March 9th 1971, their setlist included Jumping Jack Flash, Midnight Rambler, Honky Tonk Women and of course Satisfaction. The 50,000 plus 'fans' in Hyde Park last Sunday were delighted to hear these numbers reprised in style together with many other old favorites from their best years...those when 'the other Mick' (Mick Taylor) brought his musical magic to Stones songs with his virtuosity on lead guitar!



The Rolling Stones, Hyde Park, July 3rd 2022

Sir Mick will (*Deo volente*) be celebrating his 79th birthday later this month so it's a remarkable achievement for him to be able to dance for two hours on stage...and sing at the same time!

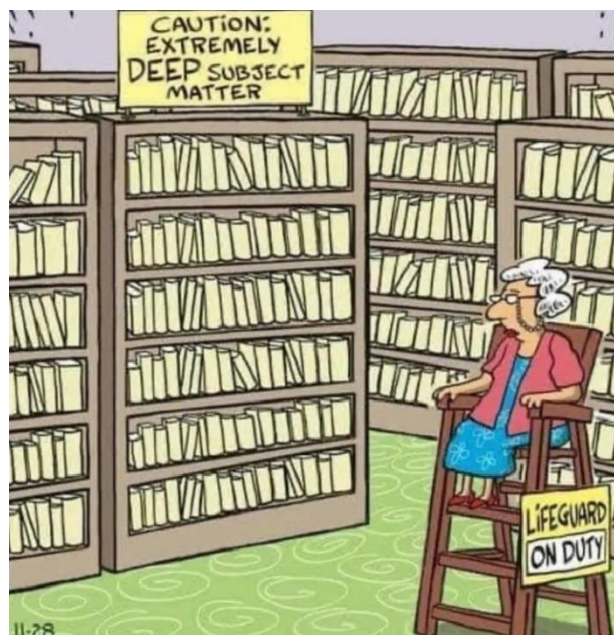
No problem about hearing or seeing him at Hyde Park – even from 100m away. The sound system was more than adequate for everyone to hear the band – with or without hearing aids! Many of the audience were of course also in their eighth decade. And with the stage screen towering up as high as the Great oak tree in the park, seeing was the band was like being at the front row.

I went to the concert with my son George who asked me after the show 'well dad what did you think?'...my answer, 'it was not quite as exciting as 50 years ago – but they still are the greatest Rock n Roll band in the world'!

Literary Travels

Louise Heffernan

1. Who walked out one midsummer morning?
2. Which of Dicken's novels takes his hero to USA?
3. Who travels from Gateshead Hall to Ferndean Manor via Lowood, Thornfield and Moor House?
4. In which novel does the main character sail with a Bengal tiger?
5. Who travels to Lyme Regis and falls off the Cob?
6. Which trilogy ends in the Oxford Botanic Garden?
7. Who journeys in a back-to-front world across a chessboard?
8. Whose journey prize money is nearly lost because of a mistake over the date?
9. In which novel do Henry Pulling and Aunt Augusta travel together to Brighton, Paris, Istanbul, Paraguay?
10. Whose journey along the Thames took them to St Helen's Church? And what was the name of their dog?
11. Whose tragic flight from the law ended at Stonehenge?
12. Who went to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat?
13. The wanderings of which classic hero have given us a name for any long, meandering journey?
14. Which novelist takes his heroine to Florence with her cousin Charlotte?
15. What is the name of C S Forrester's protagonist, a young naval officer?



Summer Events:



Piano Recital

St Michael & All Angels' Church
Park Road, Abingdon

Welcomes

Mami Shikimori

"Exquisite" Sunday Times
"Sheer Delight"
"Dazzling" BBC Music Magazine

Sunday 21st August 2022, 3pm

Favourites including
Beethoven's "Appassionata" sonata
Tchaikovsky's "Chanson Triste"
Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm" ...

Tickets available from the Bookstore, Fairy Street, Abingdon or at the door. Adults £12/children free. Refreshments included and FREE PARKING.

Proceeds to church funds & charities The Abingdon Bridge & Tairo.
Enquiries to: 07724 160435


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Andrews Property And Purpose

Photo Credit: Andres Landino

MOTHERS' UNION
Cream tea
Tuesday 9th August at 2pm
in the Parish Hall



DOG CAFÉ
St Michael's Church
Every summer Sunday from 11am to 12 noon
Coffee, tea and cakes for humans
Water and dog biscuits for our best friends





RIDE + STRIDE
for Churches



Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust

September 10 2022

<https://ohct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/>

Recording St Nicolas Church Abingdon

Eluned Hallas

On Sunday 3 July, our Sunday congregation was swelled by members of the Abingdon Arts Society Church Recorders* group, who came to present a copy of the wonderful 'Record' made of St Nicolas'.

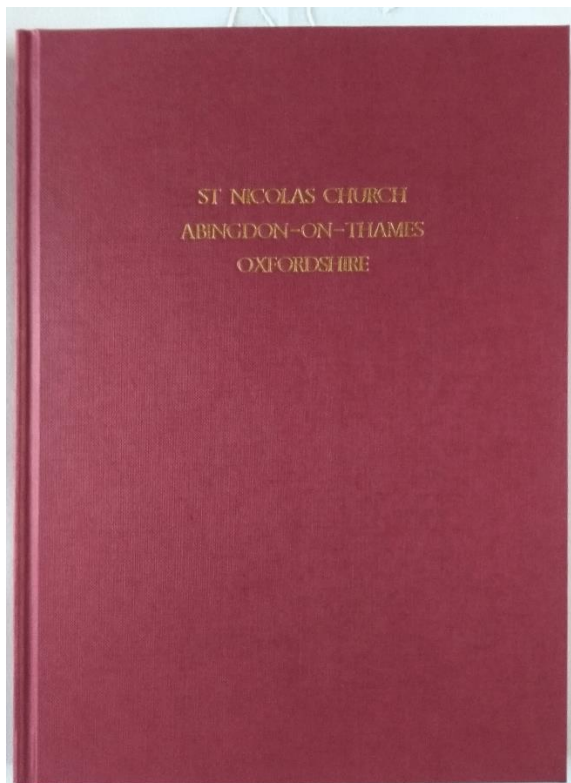
Over four years (2015-19) members of the group visited St Nicolas every fortnight and photographed, measured and described every artifact in the building - bells, furniture, altar linen - the lot. If it stayed still long enough it was recorded. The written record was then scrutinised – and questions referred back for further checking. Once approved by the Arts Society, hard bound copies were printed and deposited with the English Heritage Archive, the Oxfordshire Record Office and the Victoria and Albert Museum Art Library. The Abingdon Arts Society has also donated a copy to Abingdon Library.

We would like to thank and pay tribute to all those who worked on the Record: Sue Hodgson, Mary Saunders, Ken Beavis, John Butler, Peter Heritage, Jane Heritage, Jackie Hummel, Zita Miller, Gill Barrett, Hilary Case, Stella Hambleton, Cathy Norris, Julia Parker, Elizabeth Maynard, Anne Scott and Martin Gulliver who took the photographs. A special thanks to Liz Rhodes MBE who spent many weeks collating and annotating the work so that it complied with the very strict requirements of the Arts Society.

Formal presentation was delayed by Covid, but we are delighted to now have a copy in St Nicolas – where it can be viewed / consulted by request.

*Church Recorders are dedicated to the promotion of Church Heritage throughout Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

<https://www.theartssocietyabingdon.org.uk/Home.aspx>



Let me keep my distance, always, from those
who think they have the answers.

Let me keep company always with those who say
“Look!” and laugh in astonishment,
and bow their heads.

Mary Oliver, from her poem ‘Mysteries, Yes’

(for more information about Mary Oliver, see Issue 4 2022)

Summertime

Eileen Duckett

Summertime from the opera Porgy and Bess is one of my favourite songs. This is my take on it.

Summertime
And the living ain't easy
War in Ukraine
And inflation is high
All our bills
Have skyrocketed
And covid
Is still with us
So there's a reason to cry.

One of these days
Our world will be ruined
If we
Don't do something now
So let's care
For our beautiful planet
And please everybody
Don't let it die.

Summertime
Let's be optimistic
If we can afford it
Let's give to the poor
It will make
Our lives richer
And God
Is still with us
So please don't cry.

Puzzle Answers:
Don't peek yet

1. Laurie Lee
2. 'Martin Chuzzlewit'
3. Jane Eyre in the eponymous novel by Charlotte Bronte
4. 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel
5. Louisa Musgrove in 'Persuasion' by Jane Austen
6. 'His Dark Materials' by Philip Pullman
7. Alice in 'Through the Looking Glass' by Lewis Carroll
8. Phileas Fogg in 'Round the World in Eighty Days' by Jules Verne
9. 'Travels with My Aunt' by Graham Greene
10. Jerome K Jerome's 'Three Men in a Boat' (J, George and Harris with their dog Montmorency)
11. Tess of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' by Thomas Hardy
12. The Owl and the Pussycat: Edward Lear
13. Odysseus in Homer's 'The Odyssey'
14. E M Forster in 'A Room with a View.'
15. Horatio Hornblower

Literary Travels: the answers

Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the new Parish Website:

abingdonparish.org.uk

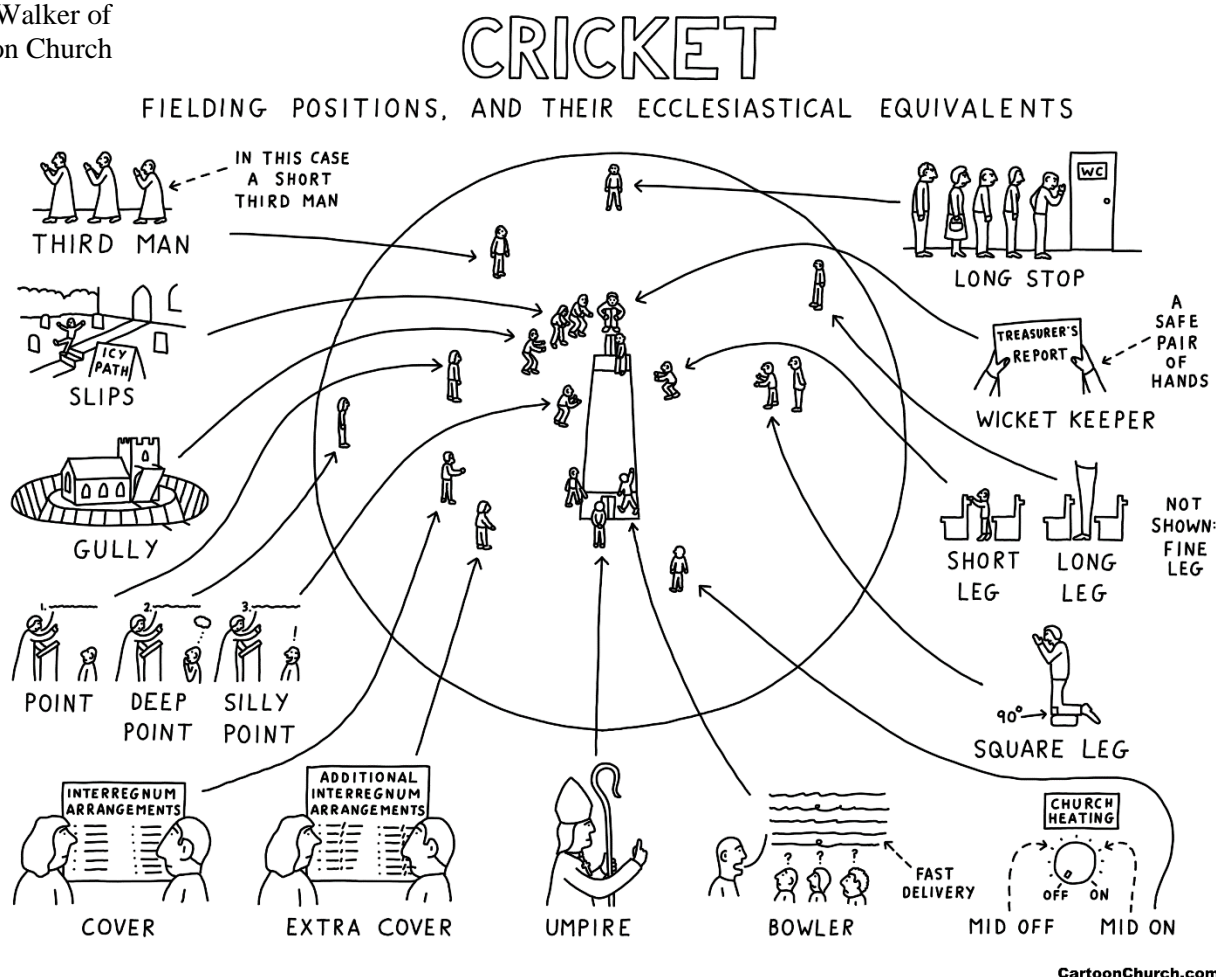
Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

FOOD BANK. The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support. **Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.** See the June issue for more details.

You can also make donations by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked 'for Food Bank' or via the Foodbank website <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/> or the Parish office have details if you want to donate via online banking.

And finally, from
Dave Walker of
Cartoon Church



Thanks to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published in September: ideas and contributions to Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk

We would also welcome responses to any articles published here or in previous issues.