

THE

March - May 2025

ELBOW

The Magazine of **Formby Methodist Church**

Hope
for all

From the Editor

Easter is of course a time of mixed emotions - during Lent and on Good Friday in particular we remember the events of Christ's crucifixion, followed of course by our celebration of Easter Sunday.

And so it is as I write this - on the one hand we are still enjoying the euphoria of our 150 celebrations, but it is also a sad time, as we have just lost another very dear friend. Bob Jenions passed away on 11th February. He was a very popular figure around Elbow Lane and we will miss him greatly. We send our heartfelt condolences to Vicky and the family. I am delighted that Trevor Simpson, a close friend of Bob's over many years, has been able to write a tribute to him (see p8).

Our 150 celebrations finished in December on a high note (see p10). But the spirit of 150 is still very much alive! Following the success and popularity of its visit last March, the '*Love Train*' will be calling once again at Elbow Lane on Tuesday 4th March (see p21). If you missed it last time around, I can assure you that you're in for a treat!

The approach to Easter is reflected in this issue of the '*Elbow*'. See p13 and back cover for details of our special services, including a series of Friday morning Lenten Studies led by our Minister, while you can also find a Lenten reflection on p12. I am delighted to have received two poems from two of our Stewards, Jenny (p14) and Ivy (p28), both of which are particularly appropriate, and indeed poignant, at this time.

These were just two of several contributions which I have received from church members - for which a very big thank you. And still on the subject of contributions, please don't forget that, much appreciated as I know the '*Elbow*' is, it is also not cheap to produce - there is a donations box in the porch every Sunday morning!

Thanks is so often such a forgotten word - and this is particularly important when it comes to our Property Committee. During Half-Term, they and others as well have been busy repainting the Church Hall. So for that, and indeed all the work that Ian, Graham & co. do behind the scenes and which so often goes unrecognised, a very big thank you.

And, of course, my thanks as always to Graham Watts and Helen for their invaluable help and support - I couldn't do it without you!

A very Happy and Joyful Easter to you all!

SERVICES AT ELBOW LANE

2 March, 10.30	Holy Communion	Rev Sheila Prest
9 March, 10.30	Morning Service	Mr Rodney Hoyle
16 March, 10.30	Morning Service	Deacon Alison McCauley
16 March, 6.30	Evening Service	Miss Lesley Goddard
23 March, 10.30	Morning Service	Mr Andrew Lovelady
30 March, 10.30	Mothering Sunday Service	Mr Nigel Mawdesley
6 April, 10.30	Morning Service	Mr Colin Fyles
13 April, 10.30	Palm Sunday Service	TBA
17 April, 2.00	Maundy Thursday Service	Rev Sheila Prest
18 April, 9.30	Good Friday Service	Rev Sheila Prest
20 March, 8.30	Holy Communion	Rev Sheila Prest
20 April, 10.30	Easter Sunday Service	Rev Sheila Prest
27 April, 10.30	Morning Service	Rev Patrick Evans
4 May, 10.30	Circuit Service	Leyland Road Southport
11 May, 10.30	Holy Communion	Rev Sheila Prest
11 May, 6.30	Circuit Service (Easter Offering)	Rev Sheila Prest
18 May, 10.30	Morning Service	Mr Rodney Hoyle
25 May, 10.30	Morning Service	Rev Sally Binymin

See p13 and back cover for more details of our Easter services

With Ukraine, Israel and Gaza in mind

“Nations which went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were finished” – Winston Churchill

“There is no instance of a nation benefitting from prolonged warfare” - Sun Tau

Minister's Letter

As we journey towards Lent and Easter and having been reminded by the 80th anniversary of the Holocaust where we heard personal accounts of how ordinary people were affected during World War 11 got me thinking about the father-in-law of an artist friend of ours. Kenneth Skidmore was an airman whose plane was brought down in German occupied France during the War.

He became a Methodist Local Preacher and wrote a book about his ventures of how he traversed down through France as far as the Pyrenees which he climbed in winter conditions and on to Gibraltar and back to freedom in Britain, to his homeland. His book was called *"Follow the man with the pitcher"* and refers to part of his journey.

This book is not a World War 11 novel but rather a personal spiritual journey. Kenneth's traumatic journey led him to a village where the only way to continue towards freedom was to walk through the main square where he was terrified of being apprehended. Then suddenly a man with a pitcher of water began to traverse the square. Kenneth remembered from his Bible how Jesus instructed his disciples to *"follow the man with a pitcher"* of water to direct them to a room for the last supper. With this in mind Kenneth went head down and followed the man to the far side of the village and on his way. This book is an amazing story of keeping his faith through the trials of that time. He used his pocket Bible to spiritually guide him reading Psalm 1 on the first day Psalm 2 on the second and so on. Kenneth was assisted by resistance workers and sympathisers who risked their lives to return him home.

Thankfully he did return to safety. As we think of our own Lenten journey and are reminded of the temptations of Jesus, that assurance that God is always there to come home to is always the case. No matter what our trials and tribulations, by trying to avoid temptations we know that God is always there to guide us and welcomes us with open arms.

May we keep the faith as we journey on to the Cross where Jesus offered his life for us and was raised on Easter Day that we might have life eternal.

Love and prayers
Sheila

Mothering Sunday

There is an old Jewish saying: 'God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.'

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday' - as the fourth Sunday in Lent is affectionately known. It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every Spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families - which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name. This special day became a day of family rejoicing, and the Lenten fast was broken. In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In recent years the holiday has changed and in many ways now resembles the American Mother's Day, with families going out to Sunday lunch and generally making a fuss of their mother on the day. (from the Parish Pump)

A Minister in a rural church had been having trouble with the offerings. One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from our local farm please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want money from a thief!"

The collection plate was passed around and for the first time in months, everybody gave!

'You'll Never Walk Alone'

A Fond Memory of Bob

We were all sad to hear of Bob Jenion's death on 11th February. Bob's funeral will be on Thursday 6th March at Southport Crematorium at 11.00, followed by a Service of Thanksgiving in Church at 12.00. Here his close friend Trevor Simpson shares a precious memory of Bob.

Many members of our Church knew Bob much longer than I did. They will have shared holidays in Canada, on narrow boats and other places and could spend happy hours wandering down memory lane with Bob and Vicky. By the time Maureen and I first met Bob at the end of 2000, many of those activities were drawing to a close.

My particular memory of Bob took place in May 2001. I still have the ticket to remind me of the date! Our son, Alan, had a season ticket at Anfield which qualified him for a ticket to the Cup Final v Arsenal. By a stroke of luck (for me!) he had arranged to be on holiday on the day of the match, so I was offered the chance to use it. But as we had only been living in Formby for a few months, I knew very few people in the area and didn't fancy driving to and from Cardiff on my own. So like a good Methodist, I consulted my Pastoral Visitor for advice. Geoff Horne, bless him, instantly suggested that I should speak to Bob Jenions, knowing that



Bob also had a Liverpool season ticket. Bob didn't need much persuasion to agree to going to Cardiff! Fortunately, both ticket vouchers were for the same part of the Millennium Stadium.

So it was hastily arranged that I would queue for the tickets and Bob would organise overnight accommodation on the way back from Cardiff. (I should explain that Bob had been to Cardiff for the League Cup Final in the previous year, along with the aforementioned Geoff Horne and stayed overnight in a small hotel en route).

So it all happened, I drove and Bob navigated. I hadn't previously travelled anywhere with Bob, so didn't fully appreciate that perhaps navigation wasn't one of his strongest attributes! Nevertheless, we made it, parked up about a mile from the ground and reached the Stadium in good time. All the time, Bob was clutching a carrier bag, which I assumed held a rather large supply of sandwiches. What I hadn't reckoned on, however, was the supply of hats, scarves and rosettes that he had accumulated over the years, which I was required to wear! So it was that we entered a local hostelry, suitably adorned in red. The only problem was we were playing Arsenal, whose supporters were sporting the same colours! That didn't faze Bob in the slightest. He regaled everyone with his Scouse banter and unending good humour.

The game itself ended in a 2-1 victory for Liverpool. So the long trek back to the car took place in good spirits. Bob never failed to greet any downcast Arsenal supporters on the way, telling them to cheer up and how unlucky their team had been. Surprisingly, we reached the carpark unscathed!



We found our overnight accommodation fairly easily and Bob led the way in, to be greeted enthusiastically by the Landlady with the unforgettable line, *"I see you've got a different fella this year!"* I don't recall much of the rest of the evening, except that there were two single beds in the room!

It would be incomplete not to mention that I arrived home with an invitation to a Birthday party at Bob and Vicky's the following week. This was the next step in a long-lasting friendship with them.

We will always remember Bob for his unfailing good humour and friendship, all of which was triggered by a ticket for a Cup Final. It is just so sad that, in his last years, Bob could not recall anything about what, for me, was an unforgettable day.

Our 150 celebrations finished on a high note with our Christmas Tree Festival at the beginning of December, closely followed by a Christmas Tapestry on 5th December - the feedback on that evening has been fantastic. Thanks to everyone who helped in any way.

But we still have plans for 2025! At present, we have arranged two evenings, when two of our choirs from 2024 will be returning - the Love Train on Tuesday 4th March (see p21) and Sefton Ladies Choir on Tuesday 24th June.

And you never know - there may even be other events later in the year!

Alastair

Formby Artisan Market



10am - 3pm



**Food
Cafe
Crafts
Gifts
Dogs Welcome**

SATURDAY

15th March

**Methodist Church Hall, Elbow Lane,
L37 4AF**

A Lent Reflection

Somebody asked a Christian friend why he was eating doughnuts, when he had given them up for Lent! He answered, *"I told God, if He wanted me to buy doughnuts, He should find me a parking space. On the eighth time around, there it was!"* Rather than seeing Lent simply as a time to give things up, let's use it intentionally for self-examination, reading Scripture, penitence, fasting and prayer.



At Jesus' baptism, God's voice says, *'You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.'* (Luke 3:22). The Holy Spirit then leads Jesus into the wilderness, where we find Him coming to terms with who He is. Satan's temptations challenge Jesus in key three areas of His identity: His divine sonship, political power and Messianic role (Luke 4: 1-13). It is as though Jesus was looking into the mirror at Himself to discern what kind of Saviour He should be.

For us, Lent is an opportunity to hold up a mirror to ourselves and ask the question, *'who am I?'* It's a season of honest encounter with who we are, what we've done, and how we should live. What will we see when we hold up the mirror to ourselves? Keeping Lent, the 40 days running up to Easter, could mean taking time to read Scripture, studying a Christian book or spending five minutes each day in silence! We might fast by missing one or two meals, refraining from TV, alcohol, social media, or scrolling on our phones. All of these can help us to give more attention to God in our lives.

Whatever we do, Lent is a season for self-reflection, as we prepare ourselves to receive afresh the forgiveness and healing that God offers.

(from the Parish Pump)

A Prayer for Lent



We beseech you, O Lord, that as our bodies grow weaker for lack of food during the season of fasting, so our souls may grow stronger. May we learn to fight more valiantly against evil, and to strive more earnestly for righteousness. Thus, through abstaining from the fruits of the earth, may we bear more abundantly the fruits of Your spirit.

(From the Gelasian Sacramentary (c.500), the oldest official prayer book of the Western Church)

Our 150 Flower Festival calendar has been very well received - even in Canada, thanks to Jean Horne, who sent it to Rev Dr Richard Boehme, whom some of you will still remember from our Canadian exchange. Here is his reply. *Ed.*

Dear Jean

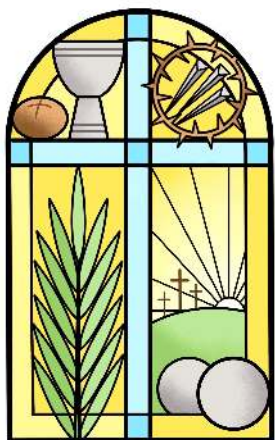
Yesterday the Formby Methodist Church 2025 Calendar arrived. Joan and I are thrilled with it. We have looked closely at every page and read the words that accompanied each picture. What a celebration that floral extravaganza must have been! I especially liked the picture of the interior of the church. It is a beautiful, worshipful setting, although there have been many changes and improvements since we were there. It brought back such pleasant memories. The summer of 1989 is still fresh in our memories. It is wonderful to see your congregation still thriving after a century and a half. Long may it continue.

We are in the heart of winter here right now, with lovely white snow adding beauty, but the plunging temperatures are causing goosebumps. From what I hear, the UK is experiencing some very low temps also. Stay warm!

Joan joins me in expressing appreciation for your generous gift of the calendar.

We will treasure it month by month all year long. Thank you. 🙏

Blessings and love, Richard



EASTER AT ELBOW LANE

Our Minister, Rev Sheila Prest, will be leading a series of six Lenten Studies in church every Friday at 11.00am (coffee will be served from 10.45), starting on 7th March and continuing through to Good Friday. The theme will be the one chosen by the Church of England for 2025, 'Living Hope'. Please do try to attend if possible.

Other special Easter services:

17 April - Maundy Thursday, 2.00

18 April - Good Friday, 9.30

(followed by Walk of Witness)

20 April - Holy Communion, 8.30

(followed by Easter breakfast)

Easter Sunday, 10.30

Our Minister will lead all these services

This is a poem written by Jenny Wallbanks' dad, which he had asked to be read at his recent funeral as a way to share his faith with those present. It goes through the pain and hope of Easter

The Funeral Wrecker

I heard a man on the radio say that Jesus wrecked all the funerals He ever went to - including His own.

Look and see, can it be
Deity, dies for me?
Child given; life given;
Nails driven; side riven.
Blood's spurt; God's hurt.
Dice rolled in the dirt,
Winner gets a one-piece shirt.
Pitch 'n toss, by the Cross,
Mini gain, mighty loss -
Forgiven men to enable
Owning 'my Designer' label.
Joints scream; heart torn;
God/man dies; women mourn.
All this for man reborn?
Emmanuel? Go to Hell!
Yes, He went **there** as well.
Three-day drive, took the dive,
Now He's coming back alive.
Rolled rock, soldiers' shock;
"Blame it on His scattered flock"
(Shroud unwound; on the ground).
"That's the lie to spread around".

But Death is wrecked
and Evil's checked;
Hell-bound men can defect,
Now God's Elect is resurrect.
Hallelujah!

Prayers for Ukraine

Here are two prayers for the people of Ukraine. The first is a patriotic hymn written in 1885 which has become an official spiritual anthem of Ukraine. It gained national significance when it was performed during the Ukrainian War of Independence in 1917-20 and has been a part of Ukrainian church services since the Russian invasion of 2022. It seems all the more relevant now as once again the fate of Ukraine - indeed its very survival - hangs in the balance. The second prayer is particularly poignant at this time, as we also remember Israel and the innocent victims in Gaza - it was recently written by a Jewish rabbi specially for Ukraine (the word evil in the last stanza is a clever play on words - the Hebrew words for 'evil' and 'Russia' are very similar!) *Alastair*

Lord, oh the Great and Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Bless her with freedom and light
Of your holy rays.
With learning and knowledge enlighten
Us, your children small,
In love pure and everlasting
Let us, oh Lord, grow.
We pray, oh Lord Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Grant our people and country
All your kindness and grace.
Bless us with freedom, bless us with wisdom,
Guide into kind world,
Bless us, oh Lord, with good fortune
For ever and evermore.

May God grant the Ukrainian people the fortitude to resist and reverse any
onslaught from Russia
May the defeat of Putin's army bring about a rebirth of freedom for the
Russian people
May Russia and its neighbours live together in amity through democracy
May the hope of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy ring throughout the land
May all evil dissipate like smoke, for the removal of tyranny ushers in the
overall reign of God.

A Testament of Faith

Jacqui Parkinson has spent ten years and used 25 million stitches completing her 44 'Threads through the Bible' 'tapestries'. As it says on the back of the guide book ... it "travels from the 'all is good' of creation through to the 'all is good' of the New Heaven and Earth, via the brokenness and turmoil of the intervening years".

She first completed **'Threads through Revelation'**, followed by **'Threads**

t h r o u g h Creation' and last year completed **'Threads through the Cross'** depicting some of the events from the New Testament and the first time they have all been shown together is at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

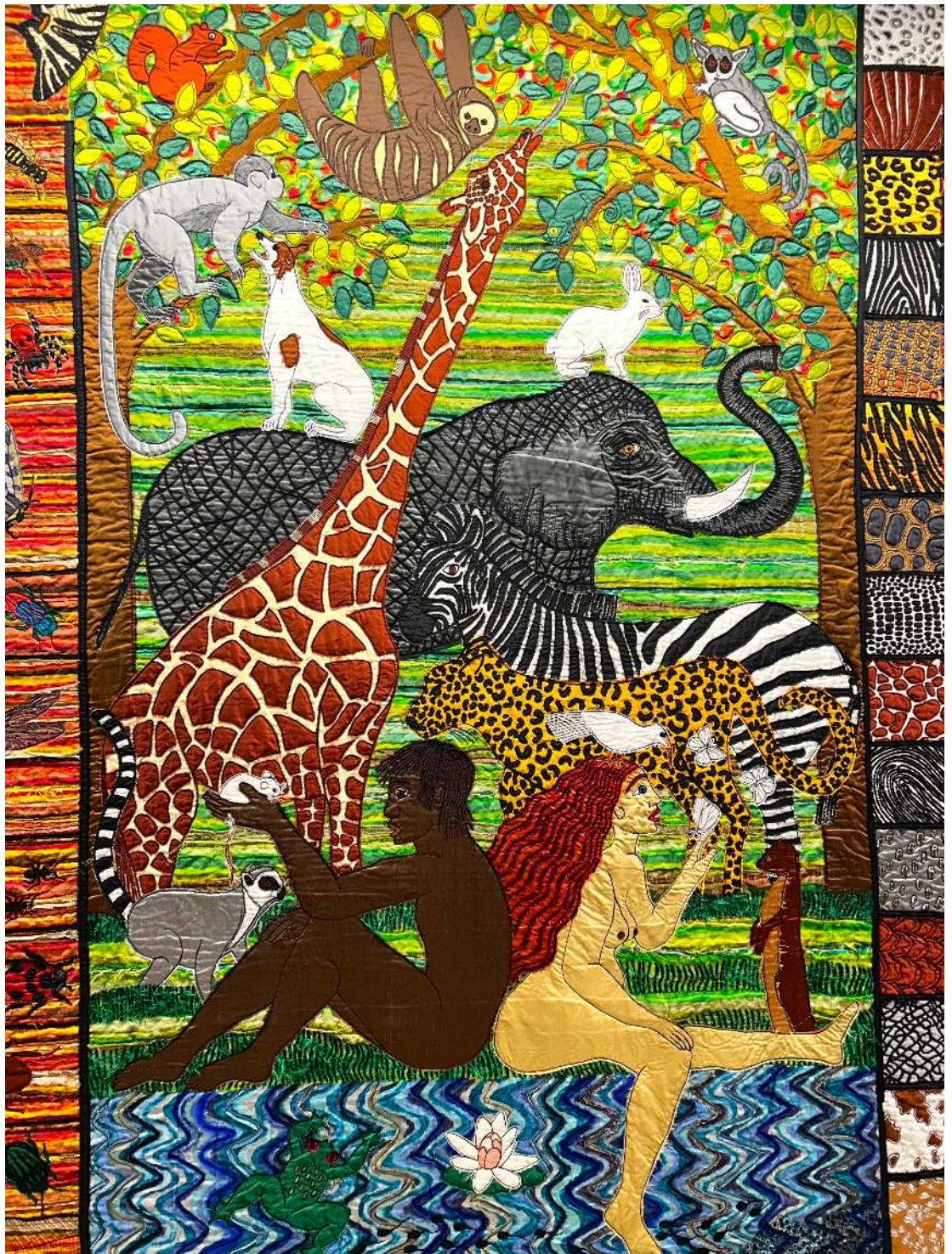
It is an amazing task to take on both technically and mentally. To commit so much of your life to sharing your faith and interpreting it in such a fascinating way.



There is so much more than you first realise. Symbolism plays a key part in many panels. God the three-in-one is present in the often appearing three stranded spiral. Accompanying Adam and Eve as they exit the Garden of Eden are the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and Jesus, the Lamb of God, walking out between their legs indicating the promise of

Redemption. Then there are the birds included in each panel of *'Threads through the Cross'*. The Last Supper shows a cuckoo symbolising Judas the traitor. There is a phoenix rising from the ashes as the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost.

You could return again and again and still see something new. There is so much hidden detail in all the sections. The book of



Revelation is not something with which I'm very familiar so that needed a lot of explanation but you get the sense of a dream or nightmare vision and her interpretation is absolutely fascinating.

Together, Jacqui's three tapestries are a really magnificent achievement. And what a way to share your faith!

Unfortunately, by the time you read this, the exhibition will just have finished. However, if you haven't already seen it, it will be touring the country in the coming months so you may still be able to catch it - or, like me, see it again!

Jane

The Food Bank

A heartfelt thank you to all at Formby Methodist Church for your continued donations in support of needy families - amazingly it is now over 17 years since Steve Gerrard and I started collecting for the Food Bank. Elaine who supports the church has received some typical thanks from the needy families she works with. We cannot include names as I'm sure you will understand. (Phil Morgan)

"I can't express how much it helped us through this difficult time of year. With our loss it's been hard for us all. Can you thank everyone involved and wish them all the best from thefamily. God bless them all .x"

"Elaine, and everyone, I can't BELIEVE the food we got. Lots of lovexx"

"Me mum has no credit on her phone but she said tell ya a massive thank u to the church and the you for our hamper. We had lots of goodies on Xmas day. Thanks..... me mum xxxxx"

"Tell them that the girls send their love and thanks. We have some electricity (heat) and gas the arrears have been paid and the girls wore their pjs last night and the food was amazing. Will you thank from the church. It's unbelievable that strangers would help us in this way. I can't thank you enough honestly all our love and xxxxxxxx"

The Trustees of Sefton Children's Trust and families also send their thanks for the lovely toys during the Toy Service on 1st December. Your kind donations of £330.00 were used for more toys for the Christmas party (see opposite).

Appeal from Marie-Anne Kent

(ex Superintendent Minister)

In a moment of madness, I agreed to run the London Marathon for Christian Aid!!! I would really value your encouragement, so please sponsor me if you can.

Just search Marie-Anne Kent on [justgiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com)

Many thanks for all your support

Sefton Children's Trust

(A local charity supporting local children)

26 Brooks Road

Formby

L37 2JL

Tel: 07967597526

Email: anonakelly66@hotmail.com

www.seftonchildrenstrust.org



05 February 2025

Methodist Church, Formby

Dear Phil and friends

On behalf of all at Sefton Children's Trust, we would like to thank you all for your very generous donations and gifts towards our Christmas events. We really do appreciate the annual contribution for our small local charity. It is so kind of you to continue to support this small 'kitchen table' charity as so many charities are requesting support, we do really appreciate that you chose Sefton Children's Trust to donate to. Your donations enabled us to make a massive difference to the families we support throughout the year, especially when Christmas is a particularly difficult time financially for them.

Toys and hampers were distributed in readiness for Christmas and also at this year's annual Christmas family fun activity day held on Saturday, 11th January. The children watched a short film of themselves at camp 2024 plus a film at the Plaza followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Each child was given a present along with their siblings (aged from 0 to 16) and the day was a huge success. This is often the first experience of a fun activity for both the parents/carers with their children. In some cases, it is the first time the parents/carers have experienced these activities either as children or adults and your contribution made a difference.

Last year was our 40th year of providing adventure holidays for local children from families who are experiencing difficulties, and Manor Adventure, Shropshire, has been booked for a week in July this year. We aim to continue to offer as many children an opportunity to just be a child, to be removed from the stresses and strains of their everyday life.

Once again, on behalf of us all at Sefton Children's Trust, volunteers, trustees, and families, many thanks. Nearer the time in July we will send you an invitation to our open day at The Manor.

Yours sincerely

Anona Kelly

Vice Treasurer

Trustees:					
C Huyton	Chairperson	N McCaskill	Secretary	M Gillan	Treasurer
E Ley	Vice-chair	A Kelly	Vice Treasurer	A Maddocks/ K Dean-Sheahey C Bennett A Taylor Anna Patterson	Trustees
Registered Charity Number 1016643					



A few of your 2024
shoeboxes with children
from Motovilivka, Ukraine.



Thank you
for all your
support and
prayers!





Formby High School Music Department

LOVE TRAIN

A night of gospel, pop, soul and uplifting voices

Featuring:

- ♥ Voiceworks
- ♥ Midnight Voices
- ♥ G:Force Gospel Choir

Tuesday 4 March 2025, 7.30pm

Formby Methodist Church ♥ Tickets FREE ♥ donations on the door

The Story behind the Hymn

‘Low in the Grave He Lay’

Robert Lowry (1826 – 1899) is hardly a household name in Britain - he is better known in America, where he was a popular preacher and writer of over 500 hymns and gospel music - the best-known include *Shall We Gather at the River*, *How Can I Keep from Singing?*, *Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus* and *Low in the Grave He Lay*. He also composed the tune for *I Need Thee Every Hour*.

Lowry was born in Philadelphia, the son of a northern Irish emigrant in the early 1800s. He studied at the University of Lewisburg where he began to preach and write hymns. He entered the Baptist ministry in 1854 and during the next 45 years held a number of pastorates. He was also responsible for the publication of over 20 popular hymnals.



Although he always maintained that his vocation was preaching and that music was merely a sideline, it is as a hymn writer that Lowry is chiefly remembered. Of his many hymns, perhaps the best known is *Shall We Gather at the River?* written during a heatwave accompanying an epidemic which claimed many lives. Almost overcome by the heat, he suddenly envisaged the passage in Revelation, chapter 22: "*And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*".

Despite its popularity, however, Lowry did not regard the hymn highly: he wrote, "*It is brass band music, has a march movement, and for that reason has become popular, though for myself I do not think much of it.*" But it certainly did become popular. He recalled, at a Sunday School celebration in London, "*The chairman of the meeting announced that the author of 'Shall We Gather at the River?' was present, and I was requested by name to come forward. Men applauded and women waved their handkerchiefs as I went to the platform. It was a tribute to the hymn; but I felt that, after all, I had perhaps done some little good in the world, and I felt more than ever content to die when God called.*"

On another occasion, he had got into a car filled with half-drunken lumbermen. *"Suddenly one of them struck up, 'Shall We Gather at the River?' and they sang it over and over again in a wild, boisterous way. I thought that perhaps the spirit of the hymn, the words so flippantly uttered, might somehow survive and be carried forward into the lives of those careless men, and ultimately lift them upward to the realisation of the hope expressed in my hymn."*

By the mid-1880s, Lowry's health was seriously deteriorating, and he had begun to suffer from increasing deafness. Nevertheless, he continued his pastoral work until his death in November 1899.

In *'Low In The Grave He Lay'*, (aka *'Christ Arose'*) written in 1894, Lowry uses dramatic contrast to good effect - the first two verses are solemn, while the chorus is exultant, proclaiming the Resurrection.

Verse 1 talks of Christ lying in the tomb waiting for resurrection day:

*"Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Saviour,
Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!"*

Verse 2 tells about the preparations to keep Christ's body in the tomb:

*"Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Saviour;
Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!"*

Verse 3 speaks of how Christ came forth from the grave:

*"Death cannot keep its Prey, Jesus my Saviour;
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!"*

Each verse is usually followed by the chorus, although it is just as effective when all three verses are sung one after the other, building towards the triumphant affirmation of the chorus.

*"Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes!
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"*

Although he once said, *"I would rather preach a gospel sermon to a receptive congregation than write a hymn"* Lowry's hymns have endured - he was surely one of the world's greatest gospel hymn writers.

Alastair

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

We have started 2025 with some very interesting afternoons. Our own Steve Gerrard shared his memories of attending Sefton Church with his parents, before they all joined Elbow Lane. With his assistant Dave Blake, we were able to use the large screen and enjoy the historical photos of the Church, the quiet streets and no cars! The highlight of the afternoon was singing many of our favourite old Sunday School Songs.

Nicky Grimshaw gave an inspiring, personal and devotional illustrated talk, using several Quilts she had made over the years. It was most interesting. We were also educated by Paul with his Super Bike, representing the Charity 'Merseyside and Cheshire Blood Bikes' with his devotion and passion for the very important work they do to support the NHS. As you can see, one of our members was even allowed to try out his bike!

We are a very friendly and welcoming Group that meet every Thursday from 2–3.30pm. We extend an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us. And an Appeal! Sadly we have no pianist. Do you know anyone who would like to play for us? A very big Thank You to Janet who has planned our Programme.

Irene

LADIES FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

MARCH and APRIL 2025

March

- 6th 'Banners' with Anne White
- 13th Members Afternoon
- 20th Bee Keeper Carol – Wild "N" Bee
- 27th Rev Ian Hu

April

- 3rd Rev Patrick Evans – Cycle Ride to 'D Day' Anniversary
- 10th Games and Easter Quizzes
- 17th Maundy Thursday – Rev Sheila Prest in Church
- 24th Easter Break – No Meeting

ECO NEWS

We started our New Year with an Eco coffee morning on 11th January. The weather was pretty grim and not many people had been at the church the previous Sunday so we didn't have the chance to encourage people to come to the coffee morning. On the coffee morning the weather was pretty grim again so we were not very hopeful of people being able to come along. We were surprised and delighted when people did turn up and we say thank you to all who came along and helped on the morning. We raised £192.95. This money will be used towards some of our projects and to help build toilets in counties where toilets are needed ie toilet twinning. Thank you for your generosity.

Our Eco Christmas tree brought lots of smiles at the Christmas Tree Festival as did the whole event. Jenny Hunter had the idea of using a wooden ladder as a framework and all the decorations were eco-friendly.

Recycling is still something we are encouraging in the church and in our homes. We are hoping to work towards our silver award as an ecofriendly church. We are hoping to organise another trip to Veolia Discovery Centre to find out how recycling works. If you would like to be included in the trip or know anyone who would like to join us, please, let Jenny Wallbanks know or myself or Colin or any of the group. We will need to organise a date and cars to transport people.

Ivy Chapple

The Craft Group

The Craft Group meet every Monday in the Circle Room. This is an example of the Group's latest work - making Prayer Shawls as a token of support for those who may be going through a difficult time.



What a Bally- Ho!

During a recent meal with some Befrienders Volunteers, a wide-ranging discussion turned to some reminiscences about childhood holidays in Ballyhalbert, a small village on the east coast of Northern Ireland. This soon expanded into the subject of the proliferation of place-names in Ireland beginning with 'Bally'. A quick online check revealed that there are more than 5,000 of them, spread throughout the island. The word means settlement or homestead.

I have a few personal favourite Ballys to share: -

Ballybunion, despite its rather unlikely name, is a delightful seaside resort in County Kerry, with miles of golden sands and stunning cliff-top scenery. It also has a highly regarded Championship Golf course, which has hosted the Irish Open.



Ballyvaughan, with its nearby Black Head lighthouse marking the entry to Galway Bay. I particularly remember the name from an early age, as the grandfather of one of my

pals had been lighthouse keeper there. I was often regaled with (possibly apocryphal) tales of dramatic sea rescues!

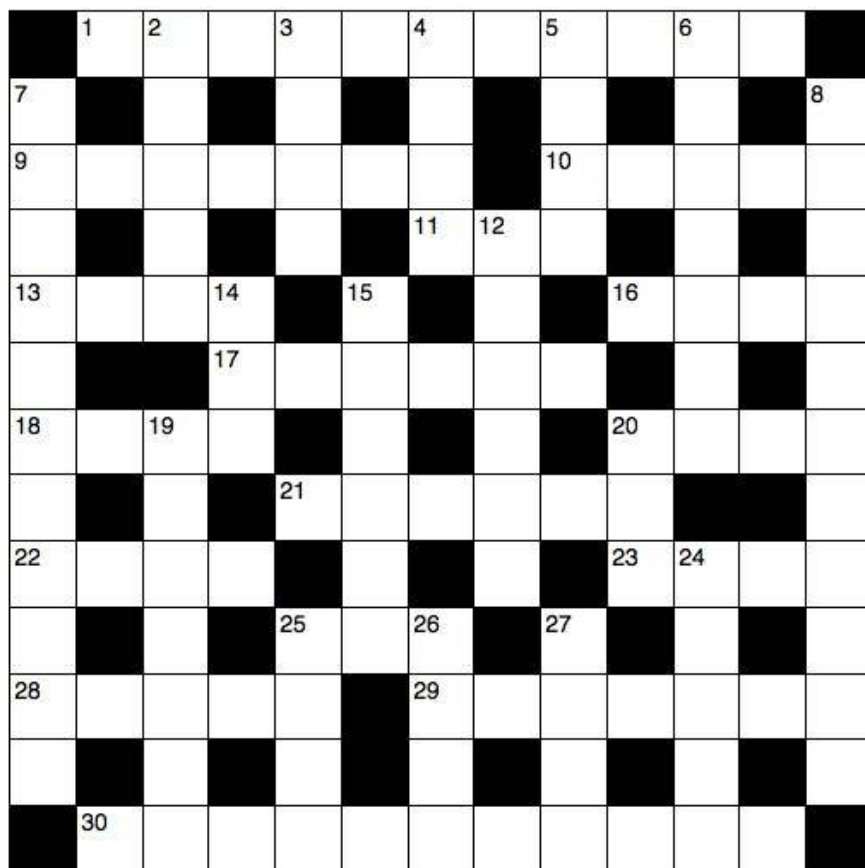
By contrast, **Ballyhackamore** is the decidedly unromantic name of a district of East Belfast, quite close to where I grew up. It means the 'townland of the slob land or mudflats'. Surprisingly, it is enjoying something of a revival and is now regarded as one of the 'go-to' areas for eating out. I suspect that two or three of our readers might find this hard to believe!

However, my overall favourite Bally has to be **Ballyjamesduff** in County Cavan. It was immortalised by the love song written by Percy French (buried in Formby St Lukes graveyard), "*Come back Paddy Reilly to Ballyjamesduff*". I had always assumed that the town was fictitious, but it actually has a population of about 3,000 and dates back to the 18th century, possibly named after a law-enforcement officer stationed there at the time.

Finally, my earliest memory of Bally is from infant school days when we learnt the unforgettable lines:

**"If Ballywalter hadn't been so Ballymena with his Ballymoney,
we'd have had a Ballycastle for our Ballyholme".**

(Trevor Simpson)



Across

- 1 These letters come between Romans and Galatians (11)
 9 'You will not — me to the grave' (Psalm 16:10) (7)
 10 King of Moab to whom the Israelites were subject for 18 years (Judges 3:14) (5)
 11 Town with mineral spring (3)
 13 Mede (anag.) (4)
 16 High-fidelity (abbrev.) (4)
 17 He succeeded his father Rehoboam as king of Judah (1 Kings 14:31) (6)
 18 A son of Simeon (Genesis 46:10) (4)
 20 Controversial religious book, *'The — of God Incarnate'* (4)
 21 'He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you — — and hear' (Acts 2:33) (3,3)

22 'You — me together in my mother's womb' (Psalm 139:13) (4)

23 Edit (anag.) (4)

25 To whom has the — of the Lord been revealed?' (Isaiah 53:1) (3)

28 Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:23) (5)

29 'When Mordecai learned of — that had been — , he tore his clothes' (Esther 4:1) (3,4)

30 Sympathetic (Proverbs 11:16) (4-7)

Down

2 'That was why his parents said, "He is — —; ask him"' (John 9:23) (2,3)

3 Integrated Services Digital Network (1,1,1,1) 4

4 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his — of thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7) (4)

5 Concept (John 8:14) (4)

6 'Do we, then, — the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law' (Romans 3:31) (7)

7 Industrious (2 Timothy 2:6) (11)

8 'I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be — in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you (Ephesians 1:18) (11)

12 'Out of the same mouth come — and cursing' (James 3:10) (6)

14 This was how many of the Jewish leaders described Jesus (John 10:20) (3)

15 Vitality (Job 20:11) (6)

19 He urged David to kill Saul at Hakilah (1 Samuel 26:8) (7)

20 'So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul — with the church and taught great numbers of people' (Acts 11:26) (3)

24 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord — — ' (Deuteronomy 6:4) (2,3)

25 Parched (Matthew 12:43) (4)

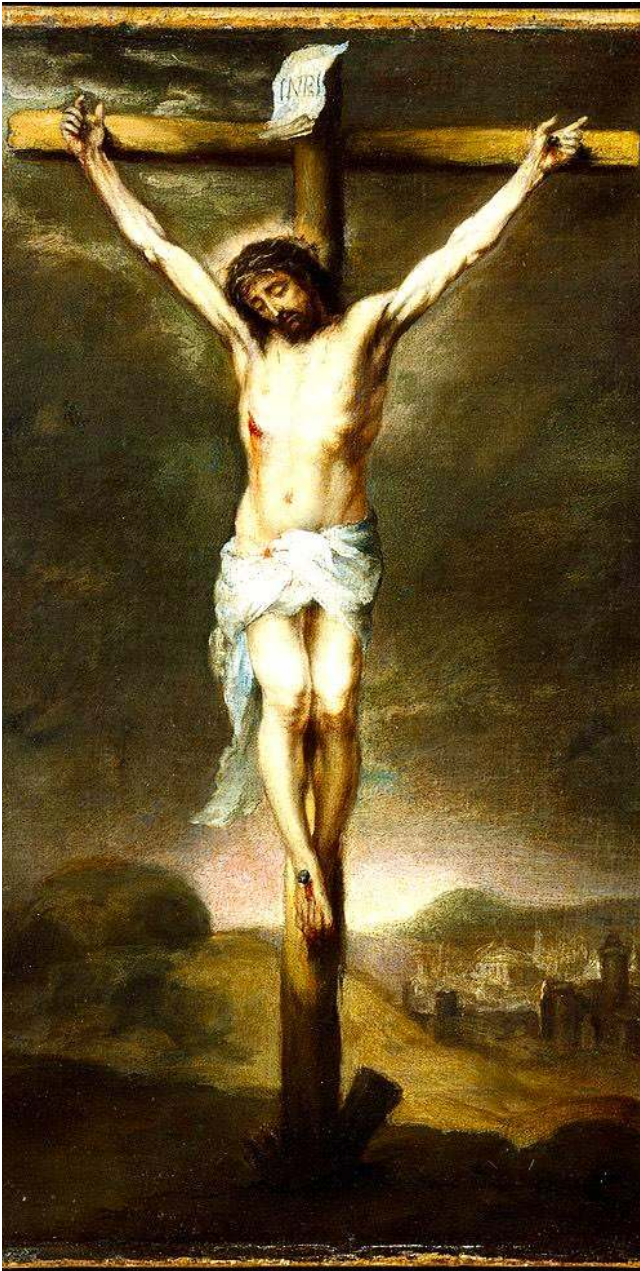
26 'In the image of God he created him; — and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27) (4)

27 Disparagement (Psalm 15:3) (4)

(see p39 for Answers)

A poignant reflection for Good Friday by Ivy Chapple

Death of my friend



And I looked on His face
It was battered and torn.
It seemed as though
It had lost all its form.
And I looked on his
countenance
No longer aglow,
It was tearstained and weary,
Overflowing with woe.
And I looked on His body
Torn limb from limb
Stretching and yielding
I asked, Is that Him?
Isn't that the carpenter who
grew up in Galilee?
Isn't he the man who once
talked so wonderfully?
Isn't that he who raised up
the dead
And when thousands were hungry
He gave to them bread?
Isn't he the man who in a
stable was born?
Could it really be him now so
lost and forlorn?

And I looked and looked again
He was once bold and strong.
Could it really be him?
What had he done wrong?

And I said to someone
"Isn't that the man from Galilee?
Can you, please tell me
Why he hangs on that tree?"

“Yes that’s the man, though
I know not what he’s done wrong.
He used to show God’s love
Now he’s killed by the throng.”

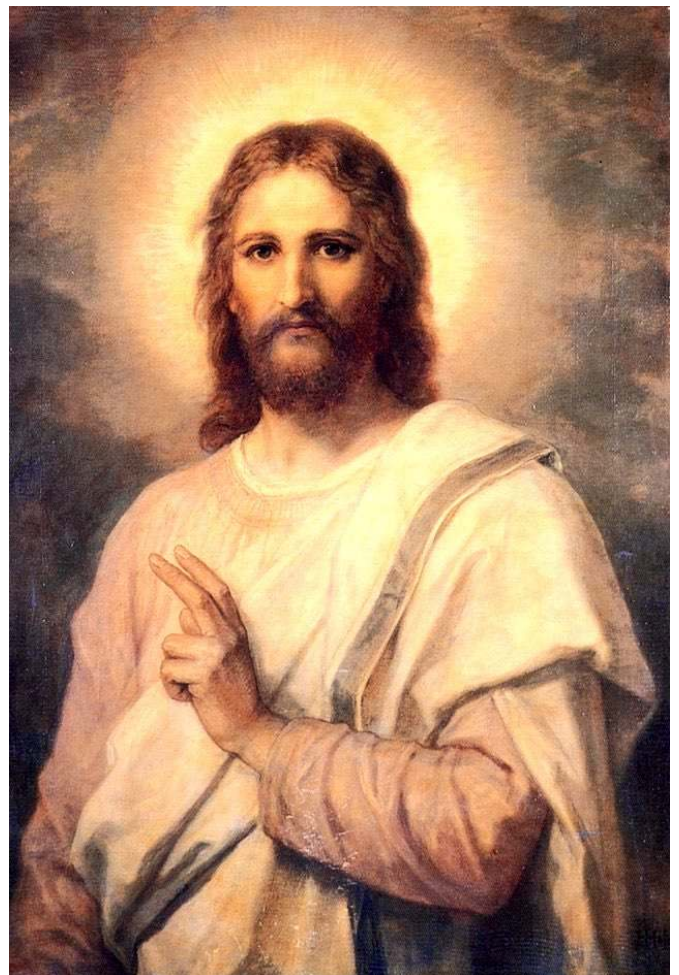
And I watched and I waited
I just couldn’t take it in.
This was Jesus of Nazareth.
What had we done to him?

And then it went dark.
There was no earthly sound
And a voice rent the air,
“It is finished did resound.”

And I realised my friend Jesus
Was about to die
And I fell to my knees
And I cried out in shame
Why did we do it?
He was not to blame.

The sky remained black.
The earth it did shake.
Dead men from tombs
Did rise up and awake!

Oh sorrowful day,
What does this all mean?
I know you. I love you.
I want you to stay.
But now you have gone
And I don’t know the way.
I remember your smile.
I remember your face.
You gave joy to me.
Has it all gone to waste?
I’ll miss you. I love you.
What’s left now for me?
You were everything to me.
Now you hang on a tree!



Monty Don, Chelsea Flower Show and dogs

This coming Spring Monty Don is going to design a garden for dogs for the Chelsea Flower Show. Monty's garden will include a well-kept lawn for doggie comfort, and a large tree for shade. For the dog's human friends, there will be spring-flowering bulbs.

The garden is the result of a collaboration between Radio 2 and the Royal Horticultural Society. It will also include a brick path inscribed with the names of the dogs belonging to the Queen (Jack Russells Beth and Bluebell), the channel's presenters, RHS ambassadors and Monty's own retriever, Ned.



Monty says: *"This is an irresistible opportunity to join with the RHS and Radio 2 to share my love of gardens and dogs at the world's greatest horticultural event."*

(from the Parish Pump)

FLOWER ROTA

2 Mar	Iola Douglas	Trish
9 Mar	Annette & Michel Lempereur	Trish
16 Mar	Jane & Alastair Gillies	Vicky
23 Mar	Sylvia Robinson	Vicky
30 Mar	Barbara Hilton	Margaret
6 Apr	Dave Miles	Margaret
13 Apr	Brenda Domville	Trish
20 Apr	Lil White	Trish
27 Apr	Pauline Poynton	Vicky
4 May	Mo Swain	Vicky
11 May	Jean & Roy Allan	Margaret
18 May	Edna Gilmour	Margaret
25 May	Peter Warren	Trish
1 June	Anne White	Trish

Please put your donation in the envelope provided, sign it and confirm whether you can gift aid your donation, then give it to the flower arranger as listed above. Thank you.

Vicky (873317)



VE DAY[®]

80TH ANNIVERSARY

A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

8 MAY 2025

'D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024', when the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy was commemorated, through the lighting of over 1,000 beacons lights of peace throughout the United Kingdom that night, was a truly memorable occasion. Following on from the success of that day, the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on 8th May 1945 - the day when the final document of Nazi surrender was signed - will be celebrated in a similar way.



The end of the War in Europe was a momentous occasion, bringing to an end nearly six long years of fighting, as a result of which millions of lives were either lost or would never be the same again. And what a day of celebration 8th May 1945 must have been - indeed, I have often thought, if I could be Dr Who for a day, this is the one day I would choose to go back to! Although I also wonder, amidst all the euphoria of the day, how many thoughts were spared for the troops still fighting, and still being killed, in Asia - sadly, the Japanese surrender was a few long months away.

Nevertheless, although the Government in their wisdom have decided not to make the day a Bank Holiday, '**VE-Day 80 - 8th May 2025**' still promises to be a memorable day of celebration. A unique VE Day flag will be raised at 9.00am and beacons and lamp lights of peace will be lit at 9.30pm throughout the country. Parties and concerts will be held throughout the UK. And in Formby, there will be an afternoon Tea Dance in the Gild Hall, followed by a concert for everyone the following Sunday evening.

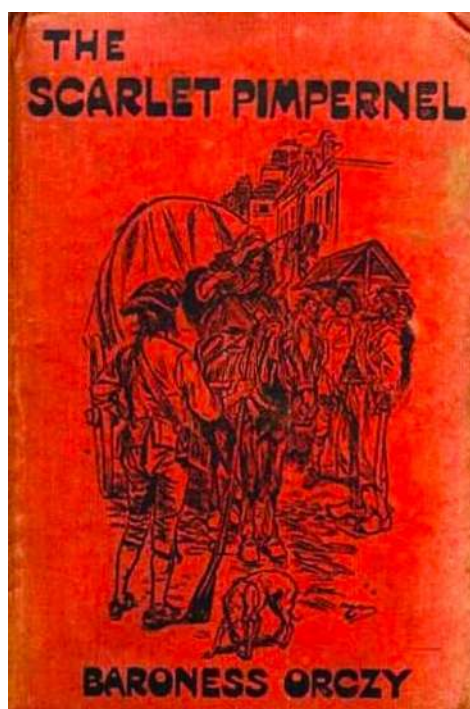
Alastair

The Story of the Two Pimpernels

Most of you will have heard of the Scarlet and the Tartan Pimpernel, but who exactly were they? And indeed, what is a pimpernel?

The OED defines a pimpernel as “a small European plant of the primrose family”. There are three main types of the flower - white, purple and ... scarlet.





Cover of the 1908 Edition

It was a Hungarian novelist, Baroness Emmuska Orczy who, in 1903, gave a whole new meaning to the scarlet pimpernel. Her novel of that name featured Sir Percy Blakeney, an English aristocrat who was also a master of disguises and something of a swashbuckling hero who rescued fellow aristocrats from certain death during the French Revolution in the late 18th century and smuggled them to safety in England. Blakeney used a drawing of a small red flower - the scarlet pimpernel - as a signature which he always left behind to confirm his involvement in such an escape.

*“We seek him there, we seek him there,
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere,
Is he in heaven? - Is he in hell?
That damned elusive Pimpernel.”*

As Orczy's novel achieved popularity - and the book has twice been made into a film, and more recently a television series starring Richard E Grant - the term ‘scarlet pimpernel’ came to be applied to any daring hero who smuggled those in danger to safety in another country - or indeed to any daring or mysterious person.

In complete contrast, however, the Tartan Pimpernel was a very real person, with a very different character to the fictitious Sir Percy Blakeney. In fact, the contrast could hardly have been greater - he was actually a Scottish Presbyterian minister!

Rev Donald Caskie, as I found out during a recent holiday on the beautiful Scottish island of Islay, was born in 1902 in the capital, Bowmore - famous, amongst other things, for its very distinctive, almost unique round church - and it is there that he was buried.



During World War II, however, he was serving as Minister of the Scots Kirk in Paris at the time of the German invasion of France in 1940. Although he had several opportunities to flee, he took the brave decision to stay behind to help establish a network of safe house and escape routes for Allied soldiers and airmen trapped in enemy territory. This, of course was highly dangerous work - he was constantly in danger of capture and even execution. Indeed, when he was finally arrested and interrogated, he was sentenced to death, and it was only due to the intervention of a German pastor that his life was saved.

Donald Caskie was largely responsible for the safe return of over 2,000 soldiers from Nazi occupied France - a figure all the more remarkable as he had no training whatever in this challenging role.

After the War, he returned to his church in Paris, before coming home to his native Scotland where he ministered in Wemyss Bay until retirement in 1968. He died in 1983.

The *'Record of Church of Scotland Ordained Ministers'* does not do him justice - it simply lists him as having been "*engaged in church and patriotic duties in France, 1939-45*". Hardly an adequate tribute to a man of extraordinary bravery and integrity who was responsible for saving so many lives.

Alastair

‘My First Sermon’

by

John Everett Millais

There is a story of two men talking about their new minister. One says to the other, “This new one’s not a patch on the old minister. With the old one preaching I was asleep in five minutes. With the new one it takes all of ten.” Some churches in times past employed ‘sluggard-walkers’ who had long rods and walked down the aisles, ready to wake up the faithful if they had nodded off during the sermon.

Sluggard-walkers are not needed for this month’s painting, *‘My First Sermon’* by John Everett Millais. It hangs in the Guildhall Art Gallery in London, which was built on the site of an amphitheatre and only completed in 1999. It has over 4000 works, many of them from the Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite period. Among them is this painting by Millais which depicts Effie, his five year old daughter sitting in Church. She is dressed properly and sensibly for the occasion with feathered hat, muff and a cloak of vivid red. Her mother’s prayer book and gloves are by her side. Effie is listening with great concentration.



cc John Everett Millais, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons

When the painting was exhibited in 1863, it was a great success. In the following year Millais produced *‘My Second Sermon’* – a very different occasion, for Effie has now fallen asleep with her hat by her side. Millais was often criticised for his sentimental portraits of children as in *‘Cherry Ripe’* and *‘Bubbles’*. But in 1864 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, praised this second painting for reminding us of “*the evil of lengthy sermons and drowsy discourses.*”

As we look at Effie alert one Sunday, asleep the next, we can smile. But we might also ask how we respond to the Word that comes to us through the medium of words in the weekly sermon. The preacher has the daunting task of using this everyday coinage of words to draw us into that mysterious, life-giving realm of the Word, Jesus. The words spoken must make a straight path for the Lord to reach each human heart.

The two paintings of Millais depict the reality and fragility of this endeavour. Sometimes our attention is engaged; at others, drowsiness closes our eyes and even our hearts to the good news of salvation. On occasions the sermon sows seeds, which can bear fruit. At other times, all kinds of factors mitigate against the sermon's success. Let us pray that as listener or as preacher, we may be aware of the dynamic power of the Word, which, as Karl Rahner wrote, calls us *"out of the little house of our homely, close-hugged truths into the strangeness of the mystery of God that is our real home."*

(from the Parish Pump)

Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld (1905 – 1961) claimed to be an agnostic humanist. So it was a surprise when after his death in a plane crash, his private papers contained some notes entitled *"negotiations with myself – and with God"*. His prayers have a naked honesty which is deeply moving. This one was written during the year of his untimely death.

Negotiations with myself – and God

*"Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon our efforts,
That we before Thee, in love and in faith,
Righteousness and humility,
May follow Thee,
With self-denial, steadfastness and courage,
And meet Thee in the silence.*

*Give us a pure heart that we may see Thee,
A humble heart that we may hear Thee,
A heart of love that we may serve Thee,
A heart of faith that we may love Thee,*

*Thou whom I do not know
But whose I am.*

*Thou whom I do not comprehend
But who hast dedicated me
To my fate. Thou –*

St Patrick, beloved apostle to Ireland

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz!

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born in the west of England, between the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he *"knew not the true God"*.

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

But by 435, well-educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish

paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.

(from the Parish Pump)

With St Patrick's Day on 17th March, here is a poem based on one of his prayers

The Breastplate of St Patrick

I rise today with the power of God to guide me,

The might of God to uphold me,

The wisdom of God to teach me,

The eye of God to watch over me,

The ear of God to hear me,

The word of God to give me speech,

The hand of God to protect me,

The path of God to lie before me,

The shield of God to shelter me,

The host of God to defend me

Against the snares of the devil and the temptations of the world,

Against every man who meditates injury to me,

Whether far or near.

Draw me into Yourself

Draw me completely into Yourself,

So that I might completely melt in Your love.

Lay upon me, stamp upon me,

So that my stubborn pride might be destroyed.

Embrace me, kiss me,

So that my spiritual ugliness may turn to beauty.

Lock me into Your chamber,

So that I might never stray from Your presence.

Johann Freylinghausen, German Pietist (1670 – 1739)

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers what to many can be a daunting task

Reading in Church

'He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord.' (2 Kings 23:2)

A friend was unexpectedly asked to read at a service as someone was unwell. He was caught just as he came in the church! Most of us like to look over a reading first and find the meaning of the passage. Some Bible readings are challenging, with difficult names of places and people. If it makes you feel better, no-one else knows how to pronounce these either, because there is no one around from Bible times!

It is not nice to be given a reading at the last minute, but then not good for the minister to be suddenly let down. To tell you the truth I have never liked reading, as it makes me dreadfully nervous. I prefer to preach or lead than read!

People worry about reading in church. Some of them would happily talk to a class of children or a boardroom, but there is something about church which is different. Perhaps we expect too much of ourselves. The best reading I ever heard in church was by a non-church goer. He did not know the reading, so he put a different emphasis on the passage. If you are reluctant, why not slip into church and give it a trial on a Saturday, when no-one is around?

Reading in church is a genuine ministry and is vital. It is important to give it our best try, as a way of learning about our faith. The Bible is meant to be heard as well as read.

(from the Parish Pump)

Beware of these contagious diseases in church!

Frontophobia: A morbid fear of the front seats in church. The sufferer is struck by an attack just inside the church door, and so collapses in the nearest back seat.

Ear Frequency Destruction: Caused by sitting near the loudspeaker when the minister is singing full volume, off-key, etc., into the microphone.

Double Auricular Clearance: A condition due to the simultaneous opening of both ear ducts, which allows sound to enter one ear and leave the other without any absorption thereof. The condition is especially acute during the Bible reading and sermon.

Church Meeting Paralysis: This can strike suddenly, when a post in the church needs filling. A good dose of enthusiasm works wonders with this sad affliction.

Easter Sunday at Formby Methodist

Come and help us celebrate...



This Easter join us to celebrate, Jesus is Risen. Feel free to come along to some or all of the following:

Easter Sunday - 20th April

8:30am - Early morning communion

**9:00am - Easter breakfast, no need to book,
just turn up**

10:30am - Easter Sunday communion service.

During the service Adventurers and Explorers will leave for their Easter celebrations, including taking part in an Easter Egg hunt.

If you'd like to come to Maundy Thursday or Good Friday services please look at our website www.formbymethodist.church