

CORNERSTONE

The Magazine of
WITNEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone.
In Him the whole fabric is bound together, as it grows into a temple,
dedicated to the Lord (Ephesians 2:21)



2024

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The next 2-monthly edition, covering December 2024 & January 2025 is due on **Sunday 1st December**

Your Editor

Doesn't time fly as we have suddenly reached the publication of the Autumn edition covering September, October and November!!

In contrast to previous years the weather has generally been good over the last 3 months, and, even though some cannot bear the heat, hopefully most of you have managed to take a break of some kind, some possibly more relaxing than others, and are now feeling rested and refreshed, ready for the next church activities – Harvest, AGM & Hi5's activities

If, like me you like sport, there has been plenty to celebrate via the Wimbledon and the Olympics where the UK did very well; all of which had good coverage on the television; which obviously for some, wasn't particularly good

As you read this the schools will soon be getting ready to re-open for the Autumn term

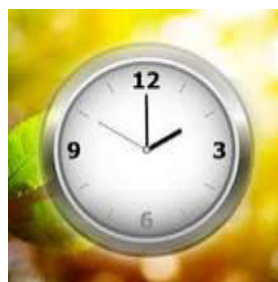
I now turn to some of this month's contents: along with the standard contributions, the Prayer Letter on this occasion focuses on one particular sad event; Lesley Barter has written a poem & a 2nd article on do we really need a church; Tony Houghton gives us a foretaste to serving in St Andrew's Bookshop, and some articles have been extracted from Parish Pump to name but a few

Many thanks for those who have contributed for this edition, but would encourage anyone to consider submitting article(s) for the next edition by either:

E-mail: terrypowlesland@uwclub.net

jacquipowlesland@uwclub.net

or, just plainly written on paper, which can be typed up



**BST ends 27 October
Clocks go BACK**

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September, October & November Diary

Services: 10.30am weekly & 6.00pm on first Sunday of the month

Sept

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 st | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| | pm | Rev Bryan Doyle | Communion |
| 7 th | 11.00am | Saturday Praise | |
| 8 th | am | Rev Elaine Kinchin | |
| 15 th | am | Rev Judi Holloway | Communion |
| 22 nd | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| 29 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| | 3.00pm | tba | Madley Park Residential Home |

Oct

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 5 th | 11.00am | Saturday Praise | |
| 6 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle - Harvest | |
| | pm | Rev Elaine Kinchin | Communion |
| 13 th | am | Rev Judi Holloway | |
| 20 th | am | David Kinchin | Communion |
| 27 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |

Nov

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| 2 nd | 11.00am | Saturday Praise | |
| 3 rd | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| | pm | Rev Bryan Doyle | Communion |
| 10 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| 17 th | am | Rev Elaine Kinchin | Communion |
| 24 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |

Dec

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 st | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |
| | pm | Nanna Blackman | Communion |
| 7 th | 11.00am | Saturday Praise | |
| 8 th | am | Rev Bryan Doyle | |

The following events are given for your particular attention:

Sept

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 3 rd | Lite Bite piece of the Word | | 12.15 |
| 5 th | Hi 5's Beetle Drive | Thursday | 6.00pm |
| 10 th | Chair-based Exercise Class | | 10.45 – 11.45am |
| 14 th | Witney Workshop Sanctuary | | 10.00 – 12.00 noon |
| 22 nd | Church Meeting - AGM | | 12.00 noon |
| 28 th | Witney Book Circle | | 10.30am |

Oct

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| 1 st | Lite Bite piece of the Word | | 12.15pm |
| 4 th | Hi 5's Foodbank Quiz | Friday | 6.00pm |
| 26 th | Witney Book Circle | | 10.30am |

Nov

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| 5 th | Lite Bite piece of the Word | | 12.15pm |
| | Hi 5's Hobby Evening | Tuesday | 6.00pm |
| 30 th | Witney Book Circle | | 10.30am |

Dec

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------|
| 3 rd | Lite Bite piece of the Word | | 12.15pm |
| 5 th | Hi 5's Games Taster Evening | Thursday | 6.00pm |

Rotas

WELCOMING TEAM

| | | |
|-------------|----|-------------------|
| Sept | 01 | Lesley Barter |
| | 08 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 15 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 22 | Janet Hayes |
| | 29 | Part Smith |
| Oct | 06 | Lesley Barter |
| | 13 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 20 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 27 | Janet Hayes |
| Nov | 03 | Pat Smith |
| | 10 | Lesley Barter |
| | 17 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 24 | Jean Hodgson |
| Dec | 01 | Janet Hayes |
| | 08 | Pat Smith |



FLOWERS

| | | |
|-------------|----|-------------------|
| Sept | 01 | Rita Hayes |
| | 08 | Janet Hayes |
| | 15 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 22 | Judi Holloway |
| | 29 | Rita Hayes |
| Oct | 06 | Harvest |
| | 13 | Janet Hayes |
| | 20 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 27 | Judi Holloway |
| Nov | 03 | Rita Hayes |
| | 10 | Janet Hayes |
| | 17 | Jacqui Powlesland |
| | 24 | Judi Holloway |
| Dec | 01 | Rita Hayes |
| | 08 | Janet Hayes |



SUNDAY COFFEE

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Sept | 01 | Elaine Kinchin & Heather Houghton |
| | 08 | Pat Smith & Janet Hayes |
| | 15 | Sue Birdseye & Claire Woodward |
| | 22 | Jacqui & Terry Powlesland |
| | 29 | Jean Hodgson & Ann Clack |
| Oct | 06 | Harvest Lunch |
| | 13 | Elaine Kinchin & Heather Houghton |
| | 20 | Pat Smith & Janet Hayes |
| | 27 | Sue Birdseye & Claire Woodward |
| Nov | 03 | Jacqui & Terry Powlesland |
| | 10 | Elaine Kinchin & Heather Houghton |
| | 17 | Jean Hodgson & Ann Clack |
| | 24 | Pat Smith & Janet Hayes |
| Dec | 01 | Sue Birdseye & Claire Woodward |
| | 08 | Jacqui & Terry Powlesland |



THURSDAY COFFEE (10 – 12)

| | | |
|-------------|----|----------------|
| Sept | 05 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 12 | Elaine Kinchin |
| | 19 | Judi Holloway |
| | 27 | Ann Clack |
| Oct | 03 | Pat Smith |
| | 10 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 17 | Elaine Kinchin |
| | 24 | Judi Holloway |
| | 31 | Ann Clack |
| Nov | 07 | Pat Smith |
| | 14 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 21 | Elaine Kinchin |
| Dec | 28 | Ann Clack |
| | 05 | Pat Smith |
| | 12 | Jean Hodgson |

Soup Lunch re-starts (12.00 – 2.00)

See Rota in kitchen



Nanna Blackman as standby - We would be extremely grateful for other people to join

SOUND SYSTEM

| | | |
|-------------|----|------------------|
| Sept | 01 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 08 | Nanna Blackman |
| | 15 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 22 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 29 | Nanna Blackman |
| Oct | 06 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 13 | Nanna Blackman |
| | 20 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 27 | Nanna Blackman |
| Nov | 03 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 10 | Nanna Blackman |
| | 17 | Terry Powlesland |
| Dec | 24 | Tony Houghton |
| | 01 | Terry Powlesland |
| | 08 | Nanna Blackman |



For ALL the Rotas, every effort has been made to meet individual circumstances.

However, if the dates are not convenient for you, please change with someone else

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----------------|
| Sept | 01 | Theo Howells |
| | 02 | Gail King |
| | | Clare Woodward |
| | 03 | Bryan Doyle |
| | 08 | Joy Dawe |
| | 09 | Judith Bungey |
| | 12 | Jean Hodgson |
| | 18 | Julia Hutchings |
| | 19 | Ann Clack |
| | 23 | Clare Ryan |
| | 28 | John Garrett |



| | | |
|------------|----|-----------------------|
| Oct | 08 | Rita Hayes |
| | 10 | Susan Wass |
| | 13 | Luke Lau |
| | 15 | Chris Esapa |
| Nov | 17 | Olaug Usher-Witz |
| | 18 | Fleur Faith de Fraine |
| | 19 | Nanna Blackman |
| | 20 | Mavis Younger |
| | 26 | Ellie Rose Esapa |
| | | Elaine Kinchin |
| | | Hilary Pratley |

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I hope that you have all enjoyed the Spring and Summer of 2024, and spent wonderful times, in God's beautiful creation, with friends and family. It's during these times that we sometimes "call back the past" and remember special experiences that we have shared together. It's the **togetherness** that makes these memories special – the sense of family and community, and at the heart of these times, is a very special ingredient, called **love**.

Over the next three months, September, October and November, let's revisit this theme of love and in particular the **love of God** because it is the basis for abundant life – everything we experience daily, is shaped by God's love. It is only when we discover our true worth in the eyes of God, that we can start to comprehend how much He really loves us – His immeasurable love!

Let's push the pause button on the busyness of life and stop to remember and experience afresh the life-giving love of God, and welcome the Holy Spirit to refresh, renew, restore and reshape us into the people God desires us to be – children of our Loving Heavenly Father, who know their worth in the eyes of their Father. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life."

The depth of God's love for us can be summarised in these few words from 1 John 4: 16, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us..." He paid the price for our sins through His sacrificial death and then rose again to conquer death, to give us eternal life with God.

My prayer is that we, as a church, will

draw near to God, through reading His Word, prayer, worship and fellowship, and discover afresh God's heartbeat of love, and be still and know that He is God, He is good, and His love endures forever!

Your brother in Christ, Bryan

The following article, written by Paul Hardingham, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and considers what it takes to be a disciple, and is entitled:

And whatever you do!

In the church today we sometimes assume that discipleship is more about the *sacred* part of our life, rather than the *secular as well*. Are we aware of what God is doing in our school, workplace, with friends and family, on our street or in our leisure time? Whole life disciples spend every day with an awareness of the presence of Jesus in their lives.

It's helpful to think in terms of *frontlines*, the places where we spend most of our week:

Everyone has a frontline: young or old, working or not, sick or well. This could be our workplace, home, college, community or club.

As churches we need to be *committed to helping each other* see the significance of our frontlines in God's purposes. Are we supporting one another, especially in prayer?

With less than 6% of the UK population now going to church, God wants to use us as salt and light *wherever* we spend time. Christians are exactly where they need to be to serve Him, so that others might see what a disciple of Jesus looks like, as we grow as disciples ourselves.



PRAYER LETTER No 214

Suzanne & Keith Nockels & family

Keith was our caretaker in the latter part of 1990's and lived in the Church flat, and Suzanne trained to become an ordained minister whilst living in Witney, and they had two sons, Joe & Isaac. Suzanne had served as President of the Congregational Federation and had visited our Church many times over the years, and yesterday (28th August), we heard of the following very sad news from the Congregational Federation:

On Saturday 24th August, Suzanne and Isaac Nockels were involved in a car accident in Suffolk, whilst travelling to Suzanne's parents' house. Suzanne suffered only minor injuries but unfortunately, Isaac didn't survive.

The family are currently spending some time together and supporting one another through this obviously devastating event. If you would like to send your condolences by email or card (to Suzanne and/or Keith's home addresses), then they would be welcomed. However, please do not try to contact them by phone at the current time, as they need space to grieve.

In the meantime, we are sure you will want to join us in prayers for comfort and peace for the family, Isaac's friends, the churches of Tapton Hill and Hillsborough Tabernacle and all who feel his loss most strongly.

When we have any further information, we will pass that on to you.

Every Blessing, Elaine

Please note that for up-to-date prayer requests contact Elaine 07534 879449)

The following article has been written & submitted by Lesley Barter, and is entitled:

Do we really need a church?

During the summer months many of us will have had the opportunity to visit different churches, either to explore the beautiful interior or to attend worship. This is always an enriching experience for several reasons: many churches are stunningly beautiful and filled with art and architecture to take the breath away. There are often stained-glass windows that tell stories and reflect the glory of God through light and colour. Some churches greet us with an atmosphere that invites reflection and prayer, while others abound with the joy and energy that speaks of the restorative message of the Gospel. My favourites are those that have endured centuries of changing fortunes. Their very walls tell stories of persecution, endurance and steadfast faith. Some are just ruins but they somehow retain a holiness and an atmosphere of peace. Others tell of opulence and generous bequests from those who strove to secure their place in Paradise.

Recently we celebrated the anniversary of our own church building and we revisited our history, through the people who had come and gone, leaving their mark on our hearts. I have come relatively recently to join the pageant and I was moved to hear of the ups and downs that have led us to where we are today. But in the shadows is the dilemma that faces all Christians in Britain today: Is our Church fit for purpose? Indeed, are we sure what that purpose is? The activities of our modern lives jostle for position on Sundays – work, household jobs, sport... We are already finding more secular activities to pay for the upkeep of these precious church buildings. Do we need to get together to

worship God? Do we need a building in which to do so? Has it morphed into a comfortable club which we are struggling to make truly inclusive? It is also increasingly difficult to find enough people who are able to manage it and the cost of maintaining historic and listed buildings is a huge burden.

Is it therefore time we stopped thinking of churches as consecrated places of worship, but instead as community resources, managed by the council and used for leisure activities, food banks, even job centres. They could be drop-in centres for advice such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. They could be mental health hubs or art galleries – the options are numerous. In this day and age are we being selfish, clinging on to our dedicated spaces? The early Christians didn't have them. Maybe it would focus our attention more on the real reason for collecting together - developing our faith and worshipping God. Also the pastoral care for which church groups everywhere are well-known. Are we just distracted by the need to maintain buildings and formalise our organisation?

These dilemmas are certainly not peculiar to our own church. They are common in this country and inextricably linked is our very history. Our churches tell the story of our heritage, but their care and future depends on our finding answers to some difficult questions. I don't pretend to have the answers, but I hope and pray that God does.





The following article has been written & submitted by Tony Houghton, and is entitled:

Serving in St Andrew's Bookshop, Witney

When Lynda Overton put out a message to the churches about volunteers to help in the shop, God prompted me to respond. I was a bit hesitant as to how I could fit it in but God has planned out the schedule. So this summer I have been able to do holiday cover for Lynda and then Jeni who share looking after the shop 3 days each.

When we lived in Wantage I had sometimes helped in the gift shop/ bookshop attached to the Baptist Church, the King's Centre. But St Andrew's here in Witney is different: it serves a much wider area, especially now that many Christian bookshops have closed. The recent one to close is Highworth which also served Swindon. We also get visitors to Witney who are on holiday.

Last week, I had a couple from Cornwall; a lady from Devon who used to teach at Woodgreen School; a young couple camping locally from Sussex where their local Christian Bookshop had closed; a German couple who were driving through and saw the A-Board sign outside the shop. Last year I had a couple visiting the UK for two weeks from Belarus with their young son. If you were travelling to the UK for a couple of weeks why would you not schedule a visit to St Andrew's bookshop, Witney!

We get people from Oxford as there is no Christian Bookshop there – the St Andrew's branch on The Plain in Oxford closed before Covid. There are some more academic type Christian books in Blackwell's for students but not our range of 'everyday' Christian books. Many people get their daily devotional booklets from the Witney shop.

The other week Lynda was ill, recovering from Covid and I went into to cover the Monday. A couple came in from Swindon to buy a study Bible for their adult grand daughter who had given her life to Jesus the night before at a service. I was so thankful that we were open as they had come over from Swindon specially. And with shops you don't expect to have to ring up and ask, "Are you open today?"

Then last week a lady and her teenager daughter came in. They eventually bought a Cross on a necklace. I asked, "Where are you visiting us from?"

"Eynsham. My mother [the grandmother] has been visiting us for a month from Hong Kong. Yesterday she gave her life to the Lord, and she goes back to Hong Kong on Saturday. We wanted to get her a Cross to wear as she returns."

Alleluia!

There are many stories like these all the time. What I love about St Andrew's is that everything that goes out of the shop has God's Word on it somewhere: gifts, cards and books. We sell a lot of cards and people come from all the surrounding towns and villages to get a card with a verse in it. I think the range of children's books is especially wonderful and many are not very expensive.

Lynda and Jeni do a great job in keeping the shop well organised and making sure that there is a good and appropriate range of cards and books. There are always a selection of special offers. We have had a clear out of some new books so the summer sale has featured two shelves of books for a £1.

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12

The following article has been written & submitted by Lesley Barter, and is entitled:

A Fairytale for Adults

Jesus had a lot to say about bread and he often used it to illustrate his teachings. One important occasion is related in John 6 v 32-35

This is a Fairy Tale for Adults - about bread and some other things, so readers must imagine that they are 6 years old again:

Once upon a time in a land far, far away (actually it was Fairytale Land, which the younger ones among you may remember), there lived a King – as you know, there were many Kings in Fairytale Land, most of whom were busy trying to marry off their sons and daughters to unsuitable people. This particular King, whose name was Derek, by the way – largely because no one has ever heard of a King named Derek, a name unfairly neglected among the upper echelons of the aristocracy..... Anyway, this particular King didn't have any children, so he spent most of his time enjoying himself. He particularly enjoyed eating and drinking and because his land was prosperous and fertile he was able to indulge himself and so did all of his Court. The old skills of cooking from scratch and making bread died out, since they didn't have the advantage of Masterchef to help them. Most of his subjects were comfortably off, but in a corner of the land in a hovel deep in a dark forest, lived an old woman who was very poor and who lived on the plants she grew and the wheat that she turned into bread. (She wasn't one of those ones who pushed people into her oven and made them into gingerbread, in case you were worried). You may also be wondering why the many old women living in forests in Fairytale Land never bumped into each other on their stick gathering expeditions, but this was because they were very skilful with Google Maps.

Anyway, as the years went by Global Warming hit Fairytale Land. No one listened to David Attenborough's warnings and prosperity dwindled. Crops failed and the Good Life came to an end. This did have the advantage of halting the epidemic of Diabetes that was in danger of engulfing them because of all the rich food and general over indulgence, but it got to the stage of imminent starvation. King Derek sent out an appeal for anyone who had the skill and resources to make bread.

Luckily, the Old Woman got the message on her mobile phone, so she gathered up her basket, some loaves that she had made earlier and donned her wolf-proof cape, before setting off for King Derek's castle.

Eventually, after several diversions (thanks to Google Maps) she arrived and was immediately made a Dame for her Services to Food. She patented her bread recipe and made millions, so she was able to build an enormous extension to her hovel. We won't go into the effect on the surrounding forest.

However, everyone did not live happily ever after because although their physical needs had been met, their spiritual ones had not. They quickly realised that there was a vital missing ingredient to their bread.....but that's another story and you will find it in John's Gospel.

The following article, written by Tim Lenton, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

The 'Father of English Medicine'

Four hundred years ago, on 10th September 1624, Thomas Sydenham, the English physician who became known as the "father of English medicine", was born in Dorset. His textbook on medicine, *Observationes Medicae*, became the

standard medical textbook in England for the next 200 years.

Sydenham came from a Puritan family, and his medical studies were interrupted by his fighting for the Parliamentarians in the Civil War. He had a deep Christian faith and believed in simple remedies based on natural theology. His treatments contrasted with many of the complex, speculative prescriptions of his time.

His work generally led to a more scientific approach to medicine, and he was compared to Hippocrates, the ancient Greek 'Father of Medicine'. When he studied medicine at Oxford, he became a friend of renowned chemist Robert Boyle and philosopher John Locke.

Sydenham had an astute and courageous mind that rejected much of the received wisdom of his day. He stressed the importance of observation, stating: "You must go to the bedside."

One of his achievements was to identify and differentiate scarlet fever and measles, two extremely dangerous diseases at the time. He recommended fresh air and exercise, and also diagnosed St Vitus' dance, sometimes called Sydenham's chorea, for the first time.

He was a founder of clinical medicine and epidemiology, and his treatise on gout – from which he himself suffered – was considered a masterpiece.

He also wrote a book on fevers and treated victims of the Great Plague in 1665, as well as introducing laudanum into medical practice for pain relief.

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

Walking is a great way to exercise

You may be young or old, working endless hours, or retired. But there is one exercise you can still undertake almost anywhere, for

however long or short a time: walking.

According to health specialists, the simple act of walking "ticks so many boxes – improving our brain, mental and musculoskeletal fitness, as well as our physical fitness."

Here are five reasons why:

Walking raises your heart rate and makes you breathe faster - It gives you the benefit of a moderate aerobic workout – without the stress on your joints. As for your blood sugar levels, consider this: after a meal your blood sugar level rises and your pancreas releases insulin to bring it down. But even a five-minute walk can help by blunting the spike in blood sugar. Try and keep your pace brisk – aim for 100 to 130 steps a minute.

Walking improves your bone density - Walking briskly engages the muscles along the back side of your body – the glutes, hamstrings and calves. They in turn put a bit of pull on your bones, which stimulates your bones to produce osteoblasts, which improves your bone density and reduces your risk of osteoporosis.

Walking improves your mood - It stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system (nerves that relax the body during stress) and stimulates your amygdala (that part of you which controls your emotions). And if you can walk near water (rivers, coast, in the rain) you get exposed to negative ions in the air. These electrically charged molecules are excellent for your mental health.

Walking helps your brain - You will sleep better, and your brain will be in better shape for memory and cognition. Walking also stimulates creative thinking – studies have found walking is a great time for problem-solving.

Walking helps your body shape - An instant way to look younger is to stand tall. So walk with your head up, shoulders back, and lengthen your back, to stand up straighter. And with firmer muscles, your overall body shape will improve, which in turn will boost your confidence!

The following article has been extracted from Parish Pump, and is entitled:

All in the month of September

400 years ago, on 10th Sept 1624 that Thomas Sydenham, English physician, was born. He became known as the 'father of English medicine'. His textbook on medicine became the standard medical textbook in England for the next 200 years.

250 years ago, on 4th Sept 1774 that British explorer Captain James Cook became the first European to discover New Caledonia in the south-west Pacific, during his second voyage.

150 years ago, on 21st Sept 1874 that Gustav Holst, was born. This British composer, arranger and educator is best known for *The Planets*.

100 years ago, on 25th Sept 1924 that British racing driver Malcolm Campbell broke the land speed record for the first time. He recorded a speed of 146mph in a 1921 Sunbeam Grand Prix car at Pendine Sands, Carmarthen Bay, Wales.

90 years ago, on 22nd Sept 1934 that the Gresford Colliery Disaster took place in Wales. An explosion killed 266 miners and rescuers. It was one of Britain's worst coal-mining disasters, but the cause of the explosion remains unknown.

80 years ago, from 17th to 25th Sept 1944 that Operation Market Garden took place. The Allies attempted a massive airborne invasion of German-occupied Netherlands, but they were forced to withdraw. The story was told in the film *A Bridge Too Far*. The operation included the Battle of Arnhem – German victory.

75 years ago, on 1st Sept 1949 that the Christmas song *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* was released. It was sung by the American movie-star and singer, Gene Autry, nicknamed the 'Singing Cowboy'.

70 years ago, on 15th Sept 1954 that the iconic photograph of Marilyn Monroe's billowing skirt as she stood over a New York subway grate was taken during filming for *The Seven-Year Itch*. The event was staged as a publicity stunt.

60 years ago, on 4th Sept 1964 the Forth Road Bridge opened in Scotland. It links Edinburgh to Fife across the Firth of Forth. (A second bridge, the Queensferry Crossing, opened in 2017 and largely replaced it.)

50 years ago, on 8th Sept 1974 that former President Richard Nixon was granted a full and unconditional pardon by his successor Gerald Ford for any crimes he may have committed or participated in while in office. (Nixon had resigned in August after Watergate.)

40 years ago, on 10th Sept 1984 that British geneticist Alec Jeffreys discovered genetic fingerprinting, also known as DNA profiling. It allowed criminals to be identified from hair, blood, or sweat left at crime scenes. It also allowed families to trace their lineages or determine the paternity of children.

30 years ago, on 22nd Sept 1994 that Roy Castle, British TV presenter, dancer, singer, comedian, actor and musician, died. Best known as the presenter of the children's TV show *Record Breakers*. He himself broke nine world records while presenting the programme, including the fastest tap-dancing.

20 years ago, from 1st to 3rd Sept 2004 that the Beslan school hostage crisis took place in Russia. Armed terrorists took over 1,100 children and adults as hostages. Russian security forces ended the crisis on the third day, entering the school with tanks and heavy weapons. More than 300 hostages were killed, including 186 children. Hundreds more were injured.

10 years ago, on 18th Sept 2014 that the Scottish independence referendum was held. The citizens of Scotland voted to remain in the UK rather than becoming an independent country. (Independence: 44.7%; Remain in the UK: 55.3%)

The following article, written by Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, has been extracted from Parish Pump, and Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith, and is entitled:

Faithful to Scripture, Faithful to Science: Alister McGrath on science and Christian faith

Alister McGrath is well-known as a theologian, but he started out as a scientist. After becoming a Christian as a student, he wanted to learn about his new faith, so he studied theology at the same time as completing his PhD in molecular biophysics. He has not lost touch with science, but has continued to write and speak about how science and Christian faith work together. In this extract from a recently released interview, he shares his experience of being a scientist and a Christian.

“I think my most vivid experience of wonder took place in the 1970s when I was on vacation in Iran. We were travelling on a bus in the middle of the night because it wasn't hot then, and the bus broke down. We found ourselves in the middle of this solemn black desert, and the night sky shone with a brilliance like I had never seen before. That just overwhelmed me, it made me think there is something really wonderful here.

“Now, I was a Christian by that time and I knew how Christianity could answer that but it just struck me, that sense of wonder has two possible outcomes. One is science - this universe is wonderful, what's it all about? But of course, it is also about religion, the deeper levels of things that science can't really engage. I think one of the things I have discovered over time is that maybe this sense of wonder both opens the gateway to science and to faith, and that those two together are able to answer questions which on their own they simply couldn't.

“I think science is wonderful at asking questions. Some of those questions can be answered, but very often when you do answer them, they simply open up yet more questions. But of course, there are some more fundamental questions I think science simply cannot answer - they transcend its capacities to answer, and you might think of non-empirical questions like, ‘Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? What is good and how do I live a good life?’

“These are real questions and they're good questions but they're not scientific questions. And the psychologists tell us that we really need answers to those questions if we are to lead a fulfilled human existence. You find some scientists who say, ‘Well because science can't answer them there are no answers to be given’, but actually most realise that there are answers waiting to be discovered - it's just that science can't deliver them.

“Science fills in part of a big picture but there are parts of the picture you have to fill in from somewhere else. Science is part of the answer but only part, and faith supplements it, giving us a vision of life that is exciting and reliable, and also something that we can inhabit meaningfully.” Find more on www.wondersofthelivingworld.org