

December 2023

PARISH MAGAZINE



The Light shines in the darkness and the
darkness has not overcome it

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and **Christchurch, Rhydycroesau** **50p**

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The Reverend Harvey Lloyd Gibbons, M.A.
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email: revdharvey@gmail.com

Curate:

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Tel: 07785 749 951 email: stoswald.curate@gmail.com

Associate Minister

The Reverend Jassica Castillo-Burley
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St Oswald's: Josephine Sands email: joasands@hotmail.co.uk.
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S Oswald's: Church Street, Oswestry SY11 2SY. Tel: 652861
Parish Administrator: Ms Carron Boulton email: stoswald.office@gmail.com

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Another year draws to a close, but...

They say that the older you get the faster time seems to fly by. I'm not sure about that but 2023 just doesn't feel like it's been a full twelve months! One minute it's Lent and then suddenly it's Remembrance Sunday – the wettest for at least seven years I'm told, and the Advent carol service appears on the horizon - it's December 3rd by the way!

As the nights draw in and temperatures begin to fall, things naturally start to close down for the winter, and our mood can become more sombre as we think back on the events that helped shape the year. So, what do you remember about 2023? No list can be exhaustive and whilst mine may include some of your memories, it will certainly exclude others. It certainly does not mention celebrities, food and drink, or sport.

On the domestic political front, the Partygate scandal continued to embarrass politicians and led to a one-time Prime Minister resigning as an MP, the alleged events of which were published by Nadine Dorris in '*The Plot: The Political Assassination of Boris Johnson*', Nadine herself resigning... eventually. Rising inflation resulted in the Bank of England raising interest rates which caused panic among those whose fixed rate mortgages were coming to an end, though savers saw a little light at the end of the ongoing 'cost of living crisis' tunnel and talking of tunnels, Phase 2 of HS2 was cancelled. As schools were looking forward to a new term, a crisis emerged around the use of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in schools, hospitals, and other public buildings. The Royal family didn't get left out either, Prince Harry published '*Spare*', his tell-all memoir on his upbringing with the Royal Family whilst Charles and Camilla were crowned King Charles III and Queen Camilla in Westminster Abbey, and stamps and coins bearing his image began to circulate.

Internationally, the FBI publicly confirmed that they believed COVID-19 originated in a lab in Wuhan, China. The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine saw the International Criminal Court issue an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights; Finland officially joined NATO, becoming the 31st member of the security alliance. Following new escalations in the conflict, the Doomsday Clock was set at 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to midnight since its creation in 1947. Violence returned to the Middle East after terrorist atrocities by Hamas followed by Israel retaliating by bombing and invading Gaza. Turkey celebrated its 100th anniversary as an independent republic though tragically, along with Syria, suffered a catastrophic 7.8 magnitude earthquake that killed 59,259 people.

As you might expect, technology featured large. A tragedy unfolded when Ocean Gate's Titan submersible imploded during an expedition to the wreck of the Titanic after all contact with the submersible was lost just one hour and forty-five minutes into the dive. Outer space also featured when NASA announced the astronauts for the first trip to the moon in over 50 years. Other nations got in on the act including India which became the fourth nation to successfully land a spacecraft on the Moon however, things didn't quite work out for Russia's Luna 25 lunar lander which crash-landed. It was a busy year for 'love him or hate him' Elon Musk whose SpaceX's Starship rocket exploded four minutes into its first full flight test, the US's Food and Drug Administration gave him the go-ahead to trial his Neuralink brain implants on humans, and he participated in the AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park where the UK government announced a 'world first agreement' between 28 countries on how to manage the riskiest forms of AI. However, Italy banned the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT over data security concerns, and Geoffrey Hinton, the 'Godfather of AI,' resigned from Google amidst growing concerns over its application.

Finally, no list these days would be complete without a mention of the weather which continued to break records in the UK and across the world. Storms caused significant damage across southern Britain, Wales and Scotland, and many British tourists had to abandon their Greek holidays after wildfires. Wildfires also caused extensive damage to Canada, and some American states.

I wonder how many, if any, of these news stories shaped how you remember the year?

We live in a twenty-four-hour media world and headlines are all well and good, but we must remember that behind every one of them be it local, national, or international, is a person or people. You do not need me to remind you that Christmas is just around the corner, the greatest story ever told. The story of Christmas has local, national, international, and cosmic impact and right at its heart is a person, the person of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Emmanuel.

God sent his son into the world not to create a headline, or to save a building or institution, but to save people, people like you and me. So, as you celebrate Christmas, remember those for whom the year hasn't ended as they might have wished. Not as a news story or headline, but as the person they are, or perhaps were, a person carrying the image of God, a person who God loves and treasures.

That same God loves and treasures you...may you and all those you call friends and family have a blessed Christmas in this year we call 2023.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Harvey Gibbons



Parish Church of St. Oswald

King & Martyr

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE

From Darkness Into Light

Sunday 3rd December

6.30pm.

**Come and hear the beautiful Advent carols
sung in candlelight procession**



CHRISTMAS AT PLACE OF WELCOME

Place of Welcome will continue as usual over the Christmas period. On Tuesday 19th December we will have our Mince Pies morning and Haydn Jones will once again be playing Christmas music for us at the piano. Everybody is welcome. It's free of charge as always, with any donations made on the day going directly to the FoodBank.

We will also be open on Boxing Day.

Weekly donations received at Place of Welcome in the past few months have enabled us to send £120 to fund four places at Crisis at Christmas. This year the Crisis charity will be taking over three hotels across London that will accommodate more than 400 people who would otherwise be sleeping rough over Christmas. Combined with many more who will receive support through their day centres across Britain, Crisis aims to reach more than 7,000 people experiencing homelessness this Christmas.

The Place of Welcome team wish you all a very happy Christmas and look forward to welcoming you warmly in the New Year.



PLACE OF WELCOME



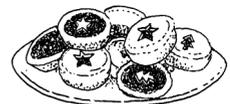
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

**10.30am UNTIL 12.30pm
IN THE PARISH CENTRE**

**Please drop in for a warm welcome,
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**with Christmas Music from
Haydn Jones at the piano**



No charge

Donations to the FoodBank



2023-2024

**Advent and Christmas
Invitation from
St Oswald's Church Oswestry**

Come along to sing carols,
listen to the Christmas story,
and celebrate the festive joy with us...

St Oswald's Church Oswestry

Advent Prayer in St Catherine's Chapel at 12 noon every Wednesday
Advent Reflection Group in Parish Centre at 19:30 every Wednesday

3 December 18:30

A Carol Service for Advent

17 December 18:30

Nine Lessons and Carols

24 December 10:30

Eucharist for 4th Sunday of Advent

24 December 15:00

Crib Service with Children and Family

24 December 23:30

Midnight Mass for Christmas

25 December 10:30

Christmas Eucharist

7 January 16:00

Christingle Service: Shine, Jesus Shine!

Christ Church Rhydygroesau

24 December 9:30

Communion for 4th Sunday of Advent

24 December 19:00

Service of Christmas Carols

25 December 9:30

Christmas Holy Communion



Follow our Facebook or check our website for updated information!!

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence. (Isaiah 64.1)

This is how we start a new church year. On the first Sunday of Advent, Isaiah's words rip through the air and his prophecy will continue to thunder around us Sunday by Sunday. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus cries 'Keep Awake!' and we hear his passion for this world to flourish and for his followers to take their place on the side of hope.

These cries of hope and determination are set against feelings of anguish and frustration. Surely this year, after months of praying for places of conflict, we recognise that anguish and hope. Perhaps scripture never feels more powerful than in Advent.

The world – and even the church - seem bent on division and conflict. The power and simplicity of scripture can give us strength, purpose and even unity.

I am so lucky to be employed by the diocese to help parishes think about their next steps. I'm advocating several 'next steps' at the moment. One of them is for churches to come together to read the gospel of Mark (the main gospel set for Sunday readings through this year) aloud in one setting. It's simple, humble activity, yet a bold one.

The experience of hearing a whole gospel read aloud can be transformative. It's very different from hearing it week by week, or reading it alone to yourself. We notice the power and awe of the overall story. We notice how the individual stories are framed in the a much bigger story. We understand how the parts we often hear fall into a particular sequence. We feel the ebb and flow of the story, the shifts of gear, and we imagine the disciples' experience much more easily. We notice the distinctiveness of the particular gospel we're listening to. And some parts of the story – perhaps especially some of the apocalyptic teaching – make more sense in their context.

Hearing scripture together is also an act of unity. Whatever your church tradition or theological conviction, any Christian can sit alongside any other Christian to hear the gospel read aloud. If we hope for unity, this is an activity to bring us together in our diversity.

Reading the whole Gospel, perhaps at the start of the year, or in Holy Week, can help frame all the weeks that follow. It can help both preachers and congregations. Understanding the big story helps understand all the individual stories it contains.

Could your church organise a reading of the gospel? Could you work with others around to do this? Who could that be good news for? Local schools and their parents? Ecumenical efforts? Or simply the discipleship of your own church community?

The gospels were written as whole stories to be heard. Let us receive them in that way, and encounter their power afresh!



Revd Simon Foster leads the Mission team for Lichfield Diocese which works with schools, parishes, fresh expressions, chaplaincies and the cathedral, to energise, resource and support them in mission and evangelism – looking out to and for our communities.

Contact Simon at simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org or see the team's web pages at www.lichfield.anglican.org/mission.



OSWESTRY AND BORDERS FOODBANK

The Trussell Trust have released their latest figures that show that more than 1.5 million emergency food parcels were provided by the Trussell Trust network between April and September this year.

This is the highest number of parcels our network of food banks has ever distributed in this six-month period.

The demand is increasing at the Oswestry Foodbank. Please consider donating as winter approaches and so many people are really struggling with the cost of living crisis.

I am playing the piano in the indoor market on Saturday December 16th from 10.30am. Donations to the Foodbank.

Thank you
Haydn Jones



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**Sunday 17th December
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GIFT AID UPDATE



We continue to be grateful for the charitable donations made to St Oswald's which are so valuable in contributing towards the upkeep of the Church.

As many of you are aware, for donations made by UK tax payers the Church is able to reclaim from the HMRC the basic rate tax you pay. This is called Gift-Aid. It means we can claim 25p of tax for every £1 you donate at no extra cost to you.

The Church submits claims for Gift Aid to the HMRC on a quarterly basis. I am pleased to let you know that for the first half of this year the Church received HMRC payments totalling £9,033. Our claim for the third quarter to end of September '23 is currently being processed, for which we are expecting an HMRC payment of £4,647.

There are 4 ways in which charitable donations to St Oswald's provide a channel for Gift-Aid:

1. Envelopes for Regular Giving: A box of envelopes with a reference number will be given to you containing one envelope for each week of the year. You can pop cash or cheques into the envelopes and bring along to any church service.
2. Bank Standing Order: This method for donations is increasingly attractive to parishioners, with the most popular frequency of donations being monthly.
3. Blue Envelopes available in Church: Simply complete your personal details on the front of the envelope, and pop cash or cheque inside.
4. Card Payment Machine in Church: This enables you to make payments using your debit or credit card, and is located at the back of the Church.

Each of the options enables you to Gift-Aid your contribution if you are a UK tax payer. If you are interested in participating in Option 1 for the Regular Envelopes, or Option 2 Bank Standing Order, please contact me and I will provide you with the necessary paperwork and information.

If you make regular donations to St Oswald's and your tax status has changed at any point this year, for example no-longer being a tax payer or

starting to pay tax, please contact me so that I may update our Gift Aid records accordingly. If you would like to check the tax status we have recorded for your donations please contact me.

My contact details are email alisonvincent43@btinternet.com and mobile phone 07541056235.

Thank you again for your continued contributions and your participation in the Gift Aid scheme. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

*Alison Vincent
Gift Aid Secretary*

FLYING BEARS ARE BACK!

The bell ringers of St Oswald's are delighted to announce that the teddy bear zip wire is back, on Tuesday 26th December from 10:30am -1pm.



Bring along your bravest cuddly toy to zoom down from the very top of the tower to the churchyard below. An opportunity to climb to the very top and enjoy the views, you can either set your own friend flying or descend the stairs to catch him/her/it as they land.

Whilst this event is free, any donations to the tower fund (to help maintain the bells) would be much appreciated.

Children should be accompanied by adults, but adults don't need a child to enjoy the experience themselves!

Brian Rothera



Greetings to all and our very best wishes for Christmas time and the coming year.

Alison & Malcolm Stockdale

St Oswald's responded wonderfully again this year to the Angel Tree appeal at HMP Berwyn. Twenty presents were bought for prisoners' children and £155 was contributed towards the scheme's overall postage costs.



May I pass on the grateful thanks of the organiser, Joan Winwood from Wrexham Prison Fellowship.

Elaine Leek

The
Children's
Society

Christingle & The Children's Society House Box Collections

Following the successful Christingle Service held in January last year, we are planning to hold another one this January on **Sunday 7th**. We hope to collect in all the Children's Society House Boxes for this service so that they can be blessed before being counted and returned to their owners. You are therefore invited to come along and join in the Christingle Celebrations and bring your House Box. If you are not able to attend please drop your box off at the church or at the vicarage (in Penylan Lane, opposite the Scout Hut) beforehand or get in touch with me and I'd be happy to pop over and collect it.

The Children's Society continues to work to ensure that every young person has the good childhood they deserve. That's why they fight for the happiness of young people when it's threatened by abuse, exploitation and neglect. They see the hope and courage in young people every day, and continue to support them through their most serious life challenges.

The Children's Society's goal and vision are built around the hopes of young people, to achieve long-lasting change for this generation and the ones to come. The fight continues to be stepped up in these times of immense pressures on children, young people and their families.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Children's Society and how to support them, please take a look at their website www.childrenssociety.org.uk or get in touch with me if you would like to become a House Box holder.

Liz Gibbons

St Oswald's Children Society Box Co-ordinator
St Oswald's Vicarage, Penylan Lane
Tel no: 01691 653467

Email: elizabethgibbons15@outlook.com

Sunday 7th January 2024
4.00 pm



St Oswald's Church
with House Box Collection

AN ANGLICAN JOURNEY

A recent BBC news item got it completely wrong when it referred to the Diocese of Jerusalem as; “a distant outpost of the Church of England” because the ‘Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East’ is an autonomous church in its own right with its own liturgies in Arabic and in English, and with its own Archbishop and clergy. It’s sometimes abbreviated to JMEC. The whole of our Anglican Communion is a federation of some 42 independent churches throughout the world, each of which traces its history back directly or indirectly to Henry VIII and the Reformation. Within those churches are some 852 dioceses. Most importantly, each of the churches is independent and none has authority over any other.

In the course of a career which was spread across the globe the Chesworths found themselves in some strange places but we were rarely separated from our Anglican family. Jan and I have been privileged to take part in whichever local Anglican church that happened to be where we were.

We started off our married life at our local Church of England parish in Leeds, migrating three years later to the Scottish Episcopal Church in Aberdeen. Our daughter was baptised on a brilliant sunny and sizzling-hot Advent day in an Anglican church in Caracas, Venezuela. In those days it was a part of the Anglican Province of the West Indies. Our son was baptised four years later on a brilliant sunny and freezing-cold Advent day in Aberdeen within the Scottish Episcopal Church. Years later I explored the call to ministry within the Anglican Province of Central Africa but did most of my training whilst in the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East within which I was ordained as deacon. I was ordained priest in the Church of England and then licenced in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf within JMEC to assist at the Protestant Church in Muscat, Oman. On coming back to Britain I served in the Scottish Episcopal Church before we returned to England in the late 90s. The only place where Jan and I have lived and didn’t find an Anglican presence was in the far south of Thailand. There we were looked after by the Roman Catholic church who had an English speaking Filipino priest. The only local Protestant church there had all their services without a formal liturgy and in colloquial Thai – that wasn’t much use when all we could struggle to say was ‘hello’ or ‘thank you’. In recent years, following our son’s emigration, we have been able to experience the Anglican Church of Australia.

For many people ‘Anglican’ and ‘Church of England’ mean the same thing but our church family is far bigger than that. It is, quite literally, a worldwide

movement. In England the majority of the population have probably had very little close contact with the church and their impression may be based on what they've seen on school visits and what they see in television programmes. Apart from occasions like royal funerals, coronations and Cenotaph services the Church gets some pretty harsh portrayals on television. Viewers of Agatha Christie's 'Miss Marple' might have an image of an average church being composed of nice comfortable 1930s, genteel, middle class, ineffectual congregations led by elderly ineffective and rather vague vicars. Older viewers will remember the bumbling Bishop of St Ogg's (played by William Mervyn) in 'All Gas and Gaiters'. More recently, comedy versions of the Church of England have been more gritty with Tom Hollander as the stumbling Rev. Adam Smallbone in 'Rev'. We may be tempted to think of Anglicanism in those very peculiarly English ways but they paint a very misleading picture. As Archbishop Justin Welby said last year; "the average Anglican is a woman in her 30s living in sub-Saharan Africa on less than four dollars per day".

Our Anglican Communion is far greater than just the Church of England and in future articles I would like to share with you some thoughts about the wider church.

John Chesworth

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MUSIC NOTES – DECEMBER 2023

As we come to the end of another year the Choir is busy preparing for Advent and Christmas. The Advent Procession and Carol Service (From Darkness into Light) starts us on our Advent journey at 6.30pm on Sunday 3rd December. This year we are returning to the pre-covid format in which the service begins in darkness with the Choir carrying candles at the West end. The procession then visits all parts of the church and as it does so the light increases until the point when choir and clergy enter the Chancel and Sanctuary when the church is full of light – a potent symbol of the Christian journey.

Because the 4th Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve, the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will take place one week earlier than usual on the 3rd Sunday of Advent; Sunday 17th December at 6.30pm. This traditional service, which is based on that sung every Christmas Eve by Kings College, Cambridge but with many more of the most favourite carols for the congregation to sing, is justly popular and usually attracts a large congregation. We do advise coming early to make sure of a good seat.

As we say 'If you can't get to King's College, Cambridge then St. Oswald's is the place to be'

After Christmas the choir will be on holiday until the 7th January. The service of Sunday 31st December will be sung by our new group 'The St. Oswald Singers'. They have already sung two services and their contribution has been well received. They will also be singing for the Crib Service at 3.00pm on Christmas Eve. We have space for a few more people and, if you enjoy singing, why not come and join. It is a very relaxed group, there is no audition and anyone interested will be made most welcome.

Finally

As this is the last Magazine before Christmas may I take this opportunity to thank you for your support for the Choir and music throughout the year and wish you a happy and holy Christmas

I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas services,

*Mike Donkin
Director of Music*

Services at S. Oswald's

December 3 <i>Advent 1</i>	08:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:30 Advent Carol Service
December 10 <i>Advent 2</i>	10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 17:30 Question Time
December 17 <i>Advent 3</i>	08:00 Holy Communion 10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 18:30 Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
December 24 <i>Advent 4</i> <i>Christmas Eve</i>	10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting 15:00 Crib Service 23:30 Midnight Eucharist <i>(first communion of Christmas)</i>
December 25	10:30 Christmas Day Eucharist
December 31	10:30 Parish Eucharist with sung setting
<i>Every Thursday</i>	10.30 Holy Communion (BCP)

MORNING PRAYER is said in the Chapel of St Catherine at 9am on Mondays and Tuesdays. It is streamed online through the church Facebook page at 9 o'clock on Wednesday to Friday. Sunday worship is on the YouTube page.

Enquires for Baptisms, Marriages etc should be made to the Parish Office. Please email the Parish Administrator (stoswald.office@gmail.com) for an appointment.

Services at Rhydygroesau

<i>Advent 1</i> December 3	09:30 All Age Service
<i>Advent 2</i> December 10	09:30 Holy Communion
<i>Christmas Eve</i> December 24	09:30 Holy Communion 19:00 Carol Service
<i>Christmas Day</i> December 25	09:30 Christmas Holy Communion



Parish Church of St. Oswald, King & Martyr
Music List - December 2023

Sunday 3rd December

Advent 1

- 10.30 Parish Communion *(Juniors & Choral Scholars)*
 Setting: Metrical to Hymn Tunes
 Anthem: Advent Message - How
 Voluntary: Fugue in G minor (BWV661) - J.S. Bach

18.30 Advent Carol Service

Please note that the service begins in darkness. Please be seated by 18.20

Sunday 10th December

Advent 2

10.30 Parish Eucharist

- Setting: Mathias - Communion Service in C
 Kyries: Plainsong - Orbis Factor
 Anthem: And the glory of the Lord (from Messiah) - G. F. Handel
 Voluntary: Adeste fidelis - John Cook

17.30 Question Time

(No Choir)

Sunday 17th December

Advent 3

10.30 Parish Eucharist

- Setting: Shephard - Addington Service
 Kyries: Plainsong - De Angelis
 Anthem: This is the record of John - Orlando Gibbons
 Voluntary: Prelude on a Te Deum - Marc-Antoine Charpentier

18.30 Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday 24th December

Advent 4 / Christmas Eve

10.30 Parish Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

- Setting: Archer - St. Albans Service
 Kyries: Plainsong - Cum Jubilo
 Anthem: Congratulamini mihi - Tomas Luis de Victoria
 Voluntary: Prelude & Fugue (BWV543) - J. S. Bach

15.00 Crib Service

(The St. Oswald's Singers)

23.30 Midnight Mass

(Choral Scholars & Adults)

- Setting: Jackson in G
 Anthems: O little one sweet - Old German trad (arr: J. S. Bach)
 Verbum caro factum est - Hans Leo Hassler
 Voluntary: In dulci jubilo (BWV729) - J. S. Bach

Monday 25th December

Christmas Day

10.30 Christmas Eucharist

- Setting: Thorne - Mass of St. Thomas
 Anthem: The shepherds sing - G. Howe
 Voluntary: Die Hirten an der Krippe (S.186-3). In dulci jubilo-Franz Liszt

Sunday 31st December

Christmas 1

10.30 Parish Eucharist

(The St. Oswald Singers)

- Setting: Shephard - Addington Service
 Anthem: What child is this - Trad (arr: Stainer)
 Voluntary: visiting organist

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER



**Charity Card Shop Open 10.00am to 4pm
Monday to Saturday until 9th December**

Saturday 2	0900	Orthodox Divine Liturgy
Monday 4	1000	Clergy Eucharist and Meeting
	1200	Ladies Group Christmas Meal—Derwen College
Tuesday 5	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome—Parish Centre
Wednesday 6	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1200—	1230 Reflections for Advent—St Catherine's
	1930	Advent Reflection Group (with St Oswald's Book Club) in Parish Centre
Friday 8	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
Saturday 9	1400—	2200 Fron Choir Concert
Sunday 10	1430	Churches Together Carol Service
Monday 11	0900—	1200 Moreton Hall Rehearsal
	1930	Building & Fabric Committee
Tuesday 12	0830—	1030 Oswestry School Rehearsal
	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome—Parish Centre
		Bellan House Nativity
Wednesday 13	0930	Moreton Hall Christmas Carol Concert
	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1200—	1230 Reflections for Advent—St Catherine's
	1300	Morda Primary School Christmas Service
	1930	Advent Reflection Group (with St Oswald's Book Club) in Parish Centre
Thursday 14	0800	Marches School Concert—Church & Parish Centre
	0945	Franciscan Prayers
	1415	Mothers' Union Fellowship Group
	1800—	1900 Marches School Concert
Friday 15	1000	Under 5's Playgroup—Parish Centre
	1330—	1600 Oswestry School Carol Service
Saturday 16	1030	Haydn Jones Playing the Piano at Oswestry Market Donations for FoodBank
Monday 18	1615—	1800 Woodside School Concert
Tuesday 19	1030—	1230 Place of Welcome with Mince Pies and Christmas Music with Haydn Jones at the Piano
Wednesday 20	1000	Under 5's Playgroup Christmas Party with visit from Santa—Parish Centre
	1200—	1230 Reflections for Advent—St Catherine's

/Cont on opposite page

DECEMBER CALENDAR Cont.

Wednesday 20 1930 Advent Reflection Group (with St Oswald's Book Club) in Parish Centre
Friday 22 1000—1200 Under 5s Playgroup—Parish Centre
Tuesday 26 1030—1230 Place of Welcome—Parish Centre
1030—1300 Boxing Day Bears—see page 15
Thursday 28 0945 Franciscan Prayers



ST OSWALD'S



UNDER 5'S PLAYGROUP

St Oswald's Parish Centre

(access on foot from the Broadwalk, off Church Street)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6 & 13

10:00 - 12:00

Please bring **snacks and drinks** for your children
Tea, coffee & hot chocolate is provided for adults

Parking available

DECEMBER 20

**CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH
A VISIT FROM SANTA**



**Next playgroup:
Wednesday, January 3**

For more information contact Reverend Jassica Castillo-Burley

stoswald.minister@gmail.com

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – 246

A NOTEWORTHY ANNIVERSARY

This month's article marks the eight hundredth anniversary of an important development in the life of our parish church and, very unusually for an event from so far back in our history, we can on this occasion mark it to the month or, if we wish, to the very day.

Regular readers of this series of articles may recall that, in March 2023, we discussed how, in previous centuries, St Oswald's may have been served by a college of priests known as secular canons, possibly twelve in total. We saw that, in the 1220s, those arrangements came to an end with the creation of the position of vicar of Oswestry, and the appointment of Philip FitzLeofth, or Philip Leofchild, as our first vicar. This is the name that we see on the wooden board, near to the south door into the nave, at the head of a long list of vicars from that date through to the present day.

We know of these details courtesy of the monks of Shrewsbury Abbey, who held rights to our parish church from the 1090s through until the forced closure of the abbey in 1540, following Henry VIII's drive, set forth through acts of Parliament of 1536 and 1539, to dissolve all monastic houses in England & Wales. Though the abbey has gone, the abbey's medieval cartulary – a manuscript volume containing, principally, details of the abbey's lands, rights and property, has survived. It is now preserved at the National Library of Wales, with a detailed precis of its contents by Dr Una Rees published in two thick volumes in 1975.

Amongst the rights set out in the cartulary are details relating to our parish church, and to changes agreed, at various times, in relation to tithes and other payments due to the church (or to the abbey), and in respect of arrangements for the provision of clergy. Shrewsbury Abbey, in common with monastic houses across the country, was keen to maximise the income it could draw from those parish churches – like our own - which it could count among its possessions. The abbey sought to 'appropriate' the income of those churches, so that only a small proportion went to the parish clergy, with the major part added to the abbey's coffers. The additional funds raised in this way helped to pay for ambitious rebuilding projects, and to pay taxes imposed by the king or by the pope.

The Shrewsbury Abbey Cartulary provides detailed evidence of a concerted move by the abbey, from around 1210 to the mid-1220s, to acquire, and to have confirmed, rights to the income of our parish church.

For example, at some point between 1216 and 1200, the abbot was granted an annual pension of 20 marks from the income of St Oswald's in return for his agreement to present three suitable clerks to carry out the duties of the church. Another document, again undated but from the years 1220-1223, includes the names Odelou the chaplain, Stephen the cellarer, and Reginald (or perhaps Roger) the sacristan, suggesting that these were the three 'suitable clerks' appointed by the abbot.

Shortly afterwards, the abbey went a step further, with the establishment of the post of vicar. Details are set out in two documents within the cartulary, one of which is, very helpfully, dated. The date is of course not given in a way which we would set it out – it is dated to the fourth day before the Kalends of January, in the fourth year after the translation of St Thomas [Becket] the Martyr – July 7th 1220, when the relics of Archbishop Thomas were moved from the crypt of Canterbury cathedral to an elaborate shrine at the cathedral's east end. These details, taken together, give us the date December 29th 1223. The second document, though undated, is clearly (from its content) from around the same date.

In the former document, Reyner, bishop of St Asaph, sets out the rights and duties of the vicar of the church of St Oswald of Album Monasterium [Oswestry]. He shall have "all oblations, obversions, and small tithes, and three messuages [properties] in the town. He shall "cause the services of the said church to be becomingly performed by two chaplains. He shall be liable to discharge the bishop's synodals and all other burdens, and shall be content with the portion above assigned. All garbs, hay [corn and hay tithes], lands and rents are reserved to the Abbey". These translations from the Latin are taken from the tenth volume of R.W. Eyton's *Antiquities of Shropshire*, which covers this matter in some detail. The document was witnessed by John FitzAlan, lord of Oswestry, Vivian de Rossall [near Bicton, north of Shrewsbury], Roger de Sybeton [Sibdon Carwood, near Craven Arms], Roger Anglicus, and 'many others'.

In the other document, the undated one, the bishop of St Asaph institutes to the vicarage of Oswestry a priest by the name of Philip son of Leofth, also named in this document as Philip 'Leofchilt', who had been presented by Shrewsbury Abbey. This second document also tells us that at that time the three properties in Oswestry in the hands of the new vicar were held by the vicar himself, and by two men recorded as Hugo Belle and Johannes Cute.

Taken together, these two documents confirm, as conclusively as is

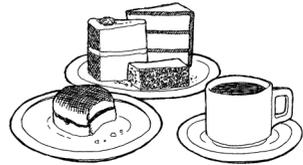
possible, that the position of vicar of Oswestry, dates back fully 800 years to December 1223, and that Philip FitzLeofth was instituted as our first vicar at that time. A noteworthy anniversary indeed.

John Pryce-Jones

Next month we will return to the monuments which have survived our church's sometimes turbulent history and which we can see today on the walls of the tower, and in the chancel.

CAKE AND COFFEE

It was lovely to see so many enjoying the Coffee and Cake tribute to our Mother Doreen Moulton on Sunday 22nd October. It was great that Mother's granddaughter, Jessica, and Great Grandson, Leo, were able to make it back to Oswestry in good time having attended a wedding on Saturday. Interesting to hear so many "stories" about Mother, the common theme being that she loved to read the lesson and that she always sat in the same place, which she always described as "her seat".



So I will finish with one last story, this one concerning the annual Service of Remembrance. Mother was very "outspoken" about this service as she was not very pleased having to give up what she perceived to be "her seat" in the Church to the Royal British Legion Standard Bearers. As she told everyone, she came to church twice a week, they only came once a year.

I am told the situation was resolved to her satisfaction as she was "upgraded" on Remembrance Sunday having been personally invited to sit with the Sidesman. Not everyone had that honour.

I am not sure if the story is absolutely true, but as they say, why ruin a good story with the truth.

Our thanks to the ladies in the kitchen

God Bless

Ian Moulton and Carol Barter

MOTHERS' UNION FELLOWSHIP GROUP

At our November meeting we remembered with sadness the death of Mair Bowen, a long-time member and we opened with a prayer of thanksgiving for her life and work followed by a period of silence.

The subject of our meeting was a very interesting and informative talk by Elaine Leek, which at times proved amusing, despite the topic being about her experiences of prison visiting.

Our December meeting will take place on Thursday 14th December at 2.15 pm in the Parish Centre.

May I wish all readers of the Magazine a blessed Christmas and New Year.

Pam Musson
(656212)

THE PREPARATION

Now discard the totem device's idle hegemony,
disconnect this disconnecting tooled idol,
stand back from tinsel's fading side-show,
freed to open self-exiled inner wonderings:
Reflect on the Triune Author's mastering deepness.

Take a break from this wheeling-dealing circus,
disinherit the serpent salesman's vaunted promises,
turn aside from the image's bewitching switching,
for there is more to it than this familiar game:
Something haunting within, beyond our little show.

Here before from the start, comes Christ for us, as us;
already, always there at the radiating centre,
upholding in Love, coming now to bear all things,
mystery, beyond digital mind's containing:
Requiring just the understanding, accepting heart.

November, 2023.

Mark Davis.

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ST OSWALD'S LADIES' GROUP

June opened our meeting telling of Mair Bowen's sudden death and we stood in silence to remember her. She had been the Treasurer of the Ladies' Group for many years. June said a special prayer for Mair and we all said The Grace together.

June then introduced Liz Jermy, Manager of the Oswestry and Borders Food Bank. Liz had spoken to us before and regretted that in the following years the Food Bank had grown from helping a few hundred people when it started in 2011 to an estimated 8,000 this year. Liz thanked St Oswald's for the continued weekly contributions and also from the Place of Welcome. (Gifts can be left in the Church porch and on the Vicar's driveway.)



The Food Bank has now extended to next door, No. 58 Beatrice Street, as a Support Centre to help with debt, budgeting, advice and form filling with members of the CAB and Samaritans and other help. Those receiving food parcels are not expected to be receiving food for a long period of time and hopefully will get help with families' finances and circumstances so that help is not needed. She described the work of the collection of food and its distribution and the work of the volunteers. A lot of thought is given to the food given out and sometimes vouchers for the town's supermarkets are given too. It must be remembered that it is not easy to pay for the heat to cook so it must be easy to heat.

There were a lot of questions afterwards and Liz answered carefully. One comment was how our generation had benefitted from Domestic Science teaching which has stayed with us all our lives.

It must be a lifeline for so many and it is good to hear of the work of volunteers. Glenda gave £200 from the Ladies' Group towards Christmas hampers.

Chris Abram then told of an exhibition of a Knitted Bible coming to St Oswald's next year and asked for volunteers to support.

On 4th December we will meet at the Orangery, Derwen College, for our Christmas Dinner, 12 for 12.30 p.m.

Ann Boulton

A swaying sensation, a crash and the kindly arms of a teacher picking me up. The year was 1978, and a 6 year old me, giddy with the excitement of being an angel, and forced to stand in my sparkly outfit for what seemed like hours (but was probably minutes), had fainted.

How much of this memory is truth and what has been added over the years I am not sure. Fast forward 30 years, and I am directing a nativity play. The ingredients are still the same: tinsel halos, a doll in a manger, Joseph, Mary, a donkey, innkeepers. Nativity plays have been a staple of my life forever, whether as actor, director, or spectator.

But like my memories of my ill-fated angel role as a child, what of the modern nativity play is truth and what is myth? There is no written record of the events of 1978 when a child fell off a stage, but the facts around Christ's birth were recorded, by the gospel writers. Luke tells us of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth and the shepherds, while Matthew tells of magi from the east. While most people know that aliens and lobsters are modern additions, many are more fuzzy on the other details. I almost caused a riot in a classroom once when I challenged the children to find the donkey in the Biblical account (look it up - he's not there!). There is also no mention of a stable, innkeepers, kings or animals.

So yes, there are parts of the story that are myth, but what is true? I love nativity plays, not because of the cuteness factor, or the tradition, but because in the midst of the tinsel and tutus, lies the most profound, earth-shattering truth. God took on flesh, to save his people from their sins, and that changed everything.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the most profound truth, around which the history of our world pivots. The nativity play is a glorious celebration of this truth, one that I pray will reignite our hearts this year, refilling us with the profound joy of God's love for his world, and giving us a truly happy Christmas.



Charmian Gamble is one of three Christian Distinctiveness Adviser supporting teachers and leaders in church schools across Lichfield Diocese.

charmian.gamble@lichfield.anglican.org /
<https://www.ldbe.co.uk>

PARISH NEWS

A reminder that subscriptions for the forthcoming year are due by the end of January - £5 for the twelve months or 50p each month. This means there is no increase on last year's price.

Subscriptions can be placed in the wall safe at the back of the church, either in cash (please note that the opening to the wall safe won't be wide enough to accept 5 x £1 coins) or by cheque made payable to St Oswald's Parish Church. Please include your name and mark your payment 'magazine'.

BONUS BALL

Congratulations to 30 September and October winners of the weekly Lotto Bonus Ball draw who have each received £29. The winners were:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ball Number</u>	<u>Winner</u>
30 Sep	52	Helen Roberts
7 Oct	26	Janis Gill
14 Oct	48	Dawn Milner
21 Oct	6	Jenni Holderness
28 Oct	6	Jenni Holderness

Though all the numbers are currently taken, two numbers will be becoming available in March. If you would like to join the Bonus Ball and help to raise £1,508 each year for St Oswalds, let me know and I'll allocate one, or both, of these numbers to you. The cost is just £1 per week - collected quarterly, half yearly or annually to suit you.

Paul Crosby
658606

DECEMBER COFFEE ROTA

3	Jane Wilkinson	Val Hamer	Carol Burke
10	Judi Neale	Babs Bone	Elaine Leek
17	Hazel Pryce	Dilys Lloyd	Jane Mayne
24	Val Hamer	Glenda Evison	Kay Cole/Fiona Pearson
31	Ann Sagar	Dilys Lloyd	Olwen Phillips





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HOLLY

We tend to ignore holly trees until December, when they brighten up our churchyards, as well as our churches and homes at Christmas time, with their shiny leaves and bright berries. For the rest of the year they are less conspicuous, with dark green leaves, dark brown bark and small white flowers in the spring. Holly is an interesting tree however. Before botanists brought tree seeds from other countries to our shores, winter foliage was unusual, and all evergreen trees were viewed as special. Use of holly and yew branches for winter decoration is an old custom, probably a mix of a wish to make the place look festive, coupled with superstition. Holly was believed to be a fertility symbol and a charm against witches, goblins and the devil. It was thought unlucky to cut down a holly tree.

Holly has good natural defences with the leaves of a young holly extremely prickly. As the tree matures, the prickles reduce, particularly on higher branches, out of reach of most browsing animals. Holly trees are dioecious meaning that there are male and female trees with the decorative berries only found on the female of course. Holly berries are a vital food source for birds and small mammals such as wood mice and dormice. In some cases, mistle thrushes will vigorously defend a particularly choice holly tree from other birds so have a look in your local burial ground and see if you see a flurry of activity.



If you would like to start digitally recording wildlife in your local burial ground then why not use a churchyard holly tree to get going. Take a look on our website under Be Involved or caringforgodsacre.org.uk/add-your-records to find out what to do. You will need to download the iNaturalist app onto a mobile phone, tablet or laptop. It's helpful to start recording with a familiar species and something that is easy to photograph. Maybe you have children or grandchildren in need of outdoor activities in the Christmas holidays? This could be a way to start exploring the wonderful wildlife to be found in churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries.

All the best,

Harriet Carty
Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor,
harriet@cfga.org.uk,

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **dioMEM22**

NEWSLETTER AND PRAYER DIARY NOVEMBER

The first half term has been filled with many collective worship assemblies, lessons, workshops and Christian Unions. During this term I was reminded of how our everyday actions reflect who we are as Christians. In one lesson this term, a small child asked me 'are all Christians loud?' This made me smile as this is clearly how he views me and therefore assumes that all Christians are the same. What a responsibility we hold as Christians, not just in the things we intentionally say or do to reflect Jesus, but within every part of our being.

This month I will be providing my first whole school prayer space of the year. Prayer spaces are a fantastic opportunity for children to learn more about prayer and to give it a go. During the prayer space the children will move around five different prayer stations. This year they will be able to pray for things they are thankful for, their worries, things they want to say sorry for, opportunities for the future, and for the world.

Christmas in a Box Workshops also begin this month. Christmas in a Box explores the characters in the Christmas story, their importance within God's big story and what we can learn from them today. As part of the workshop each child receives a mini box containing items and activities from the workshop as a reminder of what they have learnt. Currently nine of our local primary schools have booked this workshop.

Blessings

Jane Webber

Things to Pray For

- For Christmas in a Box workshops. Pray that these will allow the children to engage with the important message of Jesus.
- For pupils who are struggling with Identity and self worth.
- For the staff during the prayer space this month. Pray that they will also have an opportunity to explore prayer while attending the session.

SAMARITANS

Whatever you're going through, we'll go through it with you

Phone **116 123** calls are free

THE STORY OF 'SILENT NIGHT'

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Silent	M O H R L A A M A S S T	Joseph
Night	R T N E L I S T I L L E	Mohr
Loved	Y E M G L I A N R D N E	Young
Carol	J L B I N G M M T T O M	Priest
Austria	I O A L D U T L S G I E	Organist
First	T V S I T N S E U E S L	Midnight
Sung	O E I E T S I N A G R O	Mass
Stille	Y D N H P R R G A E E D	Melody
Nacht	O A G I P H H I H C V Y	Single
Heilige	U I L O R A C T F T H E	Bing
Christmas	N D E D O T A D R I H T	Version
Eve	G C A G A F R A E H A U	Third
Father		

Solution on page 42

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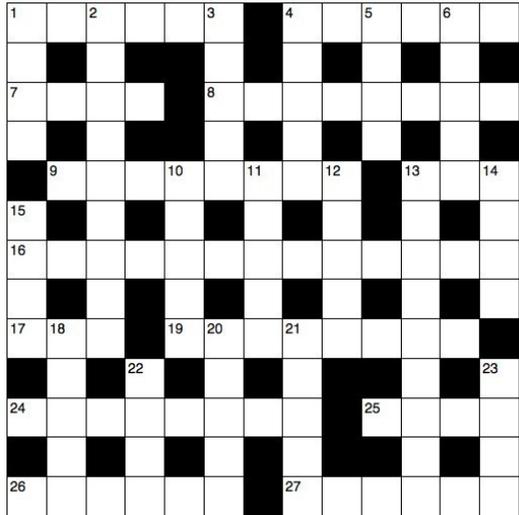
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Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)
 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)
 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)
 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)



Down

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)

- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad
(1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash
(2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

Sudoku

5		7				3		6
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						2	1	
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	2	8						
			7	3	8			
3		9				8		7

Easy

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6	1			7				
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				8				3
	7		8			9		
		2				6		
		3			2		8	
4				5				
1		6	3					
				4			9	7

Medium

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PUZ?LES

Solution on
page 42

REGISTERS



As God has lent them to us, so we say farewell and give back in HOLY DYING:

S Oswald's

November 15

November 17

November 21

Robert Carroll, aged 83

Richard Allan Thomas, aged 76

Edith Mair Bowen, aged 88



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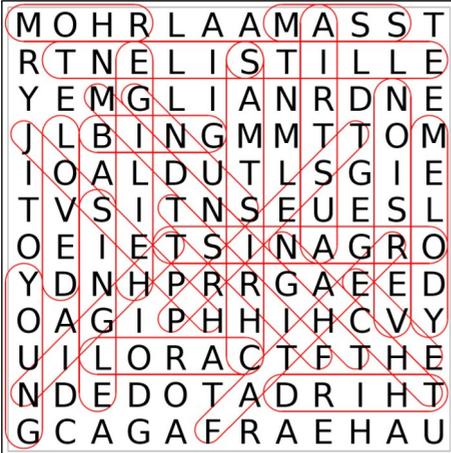
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LEGACY ADVISOR	Mr Michael Limbrey	654081
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Oswestry Parish Church exists to propagate and nurture the love of God through the teachings of Jesus Christ thereby serving the needs of the whole community and enriching everybody's lives, through worship and prayer.



Easy

5	9	7	8	1	2	3	4	6
1	3	2	4	9	6	5	7	8
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9	6	1	3	4	5	7	8	2
7	2	8	9	5	1	4	6	3
6	5	4	7	3	8	9	2	1
3	1	9	6	2	4	8	5	7

Medium

6	1	5	2	7	3	8	4	9
3	8	9	1	6	4	5	7	2
7	2	4	5	8	9	1	6	3
5	7	1	8	3	6	9	2	4
8	4	2	7	9	5	6	3	1
9	6	3	4	1	2	7	8	5
4	3	7	9	5	8	2	1	6
1	9	6	3	2	7	4	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	1	3	9	7

PUBLICATION DETAILS FOR NEXT MONTH

Material required: SUNDAY, 10 DECEMBER

Make-up day for working party, and publication: Tuesday, 19 December

Please note the early date for material for the January edition. This is so that the hardworking team who distribute the magazine for us every month will not have to work on Boxing Day.

PLEASE COULD ALL ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS IN THE CHURCHES TRY TO SEND IN SOME NEWS - EVEN IF YOU'VE NOT BEEN IN THE HABIT OF DOING SO.

Why not nominate a Correspondent? Email dianedawson15@gmail.com

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