

SEPTEMBER 2026

From the Editors

Welcome to this September edition

Rain at last! After the baking Summer the recent rains have been a blessed relief and our gardens will be very happy.

Much work is going on related to the appointment of a new Vicar and the process is explained in Page 2. It can be a slow affair so please be patient as the PCC find their way through a quite complex process. Please pray for the PCC and the Diocese as they strive to appoint a Vicar who will look after the spiritual needs of the people of our parish.

Many of our young ones will be experiencing new classes, new schools or maybe entering the world of higher education or work. Please pray for them all as they try to navigate what can be a bewildering time.

Autumn

Yellow the bracken,
Golden the sheaves,
Rosy the apples,
Crimson the leaves;
Mist on the hillside,
Clouds grey and white.
Autumn, good morning!
Summer, good night!

By Florence Hoatson



Vacancy or Interregnum—What's Happening?

On the 15th July the PCC met with our Area Dean (Rev Hannah Boyd) who took us through a Mission Action Planning Process. The purpose of this was to try to determine the priorities for our parish in the coming months and years. It was very fruitful meeting with plenty of ideas which we hope to put in place. Obviously a lot of the work cannot be done until a new Vicar is appointed the seeds of ideas are there.

On Sunday 30th August the PCC met with Bishop Joseph Kennedy, Bishop of Burnley. He explained in full the process for the appointment of a new Vicar to our parish.

Firstly we need to compile a Parish Profile which is used to showcase our parish to anyone who may be interested in applying for the benefice. There will be what is called a Section 11 meeting on Wednesday 2nd September. At this meeting we hope to approve the Parish Profile and to appoint two representatives who will be part of the Appointments Team. Once the Parish Profile has been approved it will be circulated on a system called Pathways which clergy have access to. Any clergy interested will then submit their application to the Diocesan Appointments Office.

The Bishop of Burnley will firstly check that the applications meet the necessary criteria. Assuming that there are suitable applications, the appointments team will shortlist the candidates and invite them for interview.

The Appointments Team will comprise: the Bishop of Burnley, the Patron (Mrs Alicia Ward), the two PCC representatives, the Area Dean and the Archdeacon. The Area Dean and Archdeacon will provide support and advice. Assuming suitable candidates come forward The Bishop, the Patron and the two parish representatives will interview them on Thursday 10th November.

On this day the candidates will speak to the two church school headteachers and be asked to conduct a school worship. Candidates will also be asked to present a sermon to the Appointments Team as well as answering a number of questions.

If no candidate is thought suitable at this time the process will start again with a projected interview date some time in March/April 2027.

If a candidate is approved then an offer will be made. It will, however, be 2 to 3 months more before they will take up the position here at St. Mary's because notice will need to be worked and accommodation made available.

St Mary's News

As you will appreciate, this process is confidential and we would ask that parishioners do not ask the parish representatives, the PCC or churchwardens for further information until the appointment has been made.

A running commentary will not given. We understand that parishioners are naturally keen to know what is going on but we would ask for your prayers and patience at this time.

We would like to thank the Area Dean for her active support and encouragement and to the Churchwardens and invited clergy for allowing St. Marys to keep the gospel of Jesus alive in Penwortham.

Churchyard

Work continues in the churchyard and more of the car park has been made available for use. The headstones are now being re-instated by approved monumental masons. Once the work is complete the car park will be cleaned and the coping stones which delineate the carpark and the road will be reset and made safe. According to SRBC the work will be completed by October this year.

Maintenance Team

Thanks also go to our small maintenance team who are keeping the fabric of our beautiful church in good order. The work of Adrian Carlton, Andy Rae and John Pickering has been invaluable over the recent months.

Dates for Diary

Heritage Open Days Saturday and Sunday 12th and 13th of September. If any parishioners would like to act as a steward on these dates please put your details on the list at the back of church.

Education Sunday

Sunday 13th September

Harvest

Sunday 11th October. Holy Communion will be offered at both 8.15 and 10.15



PENWORTHAM FOODBANK

**PENWORTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE
KINGSFOLD DRIVE PR1 9EQ**

EVERY FRIDAY
BETWEEN 0930 AND NOON**

**DONATIONS OF NON-PERISHABLE FOODS ARE
URGENTLY REQUIRED**

We thank all who have donated food in the past but we need further supplies: particularly pasta, pasta sauce, tins of soup, tins of baked beans and canned fruit

**BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO CHURCH, OR TO THE
FOODBANK ON A FRIDAY MORNING**

OR

ARRANGE A BANK TRANSFER/STANDING ORDER* TO:

Account name: Churches Together in Penwortham
Sort Code: 30-96-85 Account No: 00415955 (Lloyds Bank)

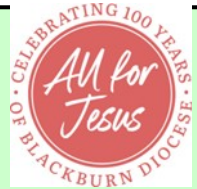
OR

MAKE A DONATION (cheque or cash)*

*We are registered for Gift Aid so if you are able to make a financial donation and are a UK taxpayer then please let us have your contact details so we can arrange for a Gift Aid form to be sent to you.

**opening times vary over the Christmas period

Bishop of Blackburn highlights growing humanitarian crisis in link Diocese in South Sudan



Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev Philip North, has drawn attention to an escalating humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and the work of churches and aid agencies responding to thousands of people displaced by violence. Writing in the current edition of the 'Church Times' newspaper, Bishop Philip describes the situation facing the Diocese of Liwolo, one of Blackburn Diocese's international link Dioceses, and highlights ways people can support financially at this time. Around 10,000 people, mostly women and children, have sought refuge in church compounds after recent conflict near the South Sudan-Uganda border.

The Diocese of Blackburn has developed close links with the Diocese of Liwolo in recent years.

Bishop Philip and the Bishop of Liwolo, Rt Rev Joseph Aba, first met at the Lambeth Conference in 2022, the gathering of Anglican bishops from around the world that takes place every 10 years.

The pair have met several times since through Blackburn's international partnership links.

Following a meeting earlier this year with Christian Aid representatives and partner organisations, Bishop Philip says strong local relationships are helping aid reach communities quickly, including support for families forced to flee their homes with few or no possessions.

Anyone who wants to help can support the crisis in Liwolo in two key ways. The first is by donating to this year's Harvest Appeal for the Diocese of Blackburn, on the Diocesan website for details of how to give. The other way is through Christian Aid and there is a page on the charity's website where you can give.



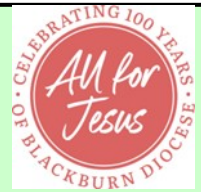
And he also warns in his article: "The plight of South Sudan and neighbouring Sudan is largely forgotten in the global media. Other conflicts and other personalities command all the attention."

Building bridges with leather and willow at annual Vicars v Imams cricket match

Vicars and Imams from across Lancashire headed to the crease once again last week for another interfaith cricketing encounter. The match was the latest in an annual series stretching back many years now.

A side from Blackburn Diocese took on another from Lancashire Council of Mosques at Padiham Cricket Club. With a rich heritage of enjoyable moments, the match captures the imagination every year it takes place.

There has been local, regional and - more recently - even national media and national church press coverage of the event.



Blackburn Cathedral has fresh opportunities for new choristers.

Being a chorister at the Cathedral is a free, high-quality musical training. Choristers receive professional coaching in singing, music reading, and performance, without tuition fees.

There are no auditions, and no experience is needed, and children start in years 3 and 4. This opportunity is open to all youngsters.

Choristers sing in the Cathedral's regular services, concerts and special events, as well as on major national broadcasts and recordings.

Choristers have recently appeared on BBC1 and Radio 3, both live.

Meanwhile, choristers from the cathedral featured on the Bishop's Christmas message video (pictured) in 2025.

The Cathedral also has junior choral scholars and opportunities to continue singing into the teenage years, and many of our country's best musicians across many genres have started life as Cathedral Choristers.

For more information please contact the Director of Music, John Robinson initially by emailing him on john.robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk



Children in care facing 'enormous challenges', General Synod hears

The Church of England dioceses have been urged to examine how they might do more to help children in the care system, in a recent debate at the General Synod highlighting the 'enormous challenges' facing looked after children and care leavers.

Members voted unanimously to back the appointment of a lead bishop to advocate for the more than 80,000 looked after children in England, care leavers and carers. They also called on the dioceses to examine how they might provide support to looked after children.

In the words of one speaker,

“A lead Bishop could amplify the far too often unheard and unseen children and young people and their families, could encourage good practice in dioceses, and ensure that care experienced young people are not overlooked in conversations about housing, education, safeguarding, mental health, and the criminal justice system.

“Most importantly, it would send a powerful message to young people and their families themselves: The Church sees you and values you. The Church is listening.”

Religious persecution on the rise worldwide

More countries are persecuting people for their faith. So reports the Pew Research Center in the USA. Its most recent annual study of religious freedom shows that the number of countries with *high* or *very high* levels of social hostilities involving religion rose sharply in 2023 (the latest year for which data is available).

Among the reasons are increases in the harassment of religious minorities and worldwide reverberations of Hamas' October 7th attack on southern Israel and Israel's military response in Gaza.

In 2023, 55 countries had elevated (high or very high) levels of social hostilities involving religion. Pew Center monitors a total of 198 countries and territories around the world. After categorising incidents that have been publicly reported by the U.S. State Department, the United Nations and other international organisations, the Pew Center rates each country on

Instead of letting a mob of hoodlum tasks surround and trample me to death, I force them into a single file and handle them one at a time. - D Mallough

The **Government Restrictions Index** (GRI) captures various ways that government officials, laws and policies can impinge on religious freedom. In 2023, 58 countries had high or very high levels of government restrictions on religion. Among them were China, Iran, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Syria and Uzbekistan.

The **Social Hostilities Index** (SHI) captures various kinds of harassment and violence by private individuals and nongovernmental organisations (including terrorist groups) that are motivated by religion or that target religious communities. Among the countries with very high SHI scores in 2023 were Nigeria, India, Israel, Syria, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Among the religious groups, Christians faced persecution in the most countries: incidents were recorded in 165 nations. Nigeria retains the world's highest social-hostilities score.

C of E welcomes Government consultation on RE in the National Curriculum

The Church of England has welcomed a recent announcement from the Government that they will consult this Autumn on the potential of RE becoming part of the National Curriculum, for the first time ever.

This is part of the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Review as outlined in the Schools White Paper – *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*. An Expert Advisory Group (involving both National Society for Education and Diocesan colleagues) was brought together earlier in the year to work collectively on these recommendations to the Secretary of State.

The group's work has outlined the core legislative requirements needed to both ensure that the current arrangements for church schools are preserved, and that high-quality programmes of study can be made available through the proposed National Curriculum. The Rt Revd Jonathan Frost, Bishop of Portsmouth said: "As Chair of the National Society for Education, I fully welcome this government consultation on RE moving into the National Curriculum.

"This both elevates the importance of the subject as integral to the flourishing of every child in our nation and also preserves long-standing arrangements for church schools which make up a third of the state sector. The Church of England will respond to the consultation in the Autumn, and the National Society for Education will work closely with its Diocesan partners to further embed the excellent practice in teaching, leadership and curriculum design across its schools.

Church News

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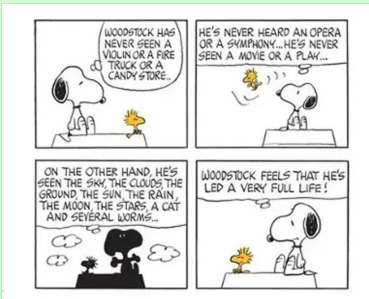
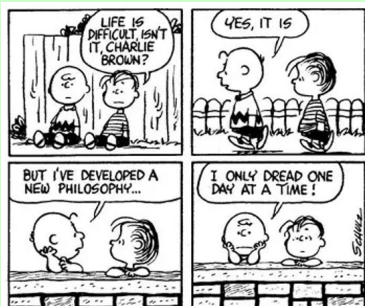
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New report explores young adult journeys to faith in the Church of England

Young adults are coming to faith in a range of different ways, some very different from previous generations, according to a new report.

New research commissioned by the Church of England uncovers how growing spiritual curiosity among young adults has led to a range of unexpected routes by which they are discovering Christian faith and finding community in Church of England churches.

‘Understanding Young Adult Journeys to Faith in the Church of England’ draws on in-depth interviews with 30 young adults aged 18 to 30 who began attending Church of England churches for the first time within the five years following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conducted by Theos think tank and recently published, the research explores how Generation Z is engaging with Christianity in new ways amongst a changing cultural context.

The report identifies several recurring themes in their paths to interaction with faith and the Church of England.

Social media often served as an initial point of contact, introducing young adults to Christian ideas through podcasts, testimonies, debates, influencers and online content.

For many, this led to deeper exploration through reading the Bible, engaging with theology and asking wider questions about meaning, purpose and truth, often before attending church for the first time.

Personal relationships were consistently found to play a significant role, with encouragement, invitations or stories from teachers, chaplains, friends, partners, clergy and church members often helping young people move from curiosity to attending church.

Community and a sense of belonging also emerged as a common experience of church, with many participants citing this as one of the reasons they continued attending and became more involved.

Young people interviewed as part of the research were drawn to a wide range of Anglican traditions, including cathedrals, Anglo-Catholic and contemporary evangelical churches.

Across traditions, they reported being engaged by the “authenticity” and “seriousness” of worship, and valuing “confidence, consistency and depth” in the churches they had chosen to attend.

Editor: by Canon Paul Hardingham

Saint Matthew – called just as he was

This month we remember Matthew's call to be an apostle of Jesus and ask what it means for us to follow Christ.

Jesus calls us where we are:

'Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him.' (Matthew 9:9).

It was just an ordinary day at Matthew's tax booth, when Jesus called him. He simply got up and followed! Despite Matthew's past, his occupation and what people thought of him, Jesus still called him. Are we ready to follow when Jesus calls us into a relationship with Himself?

Jesus comes to where we are:

'While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' (10,11).

Jesus went to Matthew's home and ate with tax collectors and sinners, demonstrating that He meets people where they are, despite their sin and shame. The Pharisees avoided sinners, because they believed only the perfect could have access to God. When God is at work in the lives of those we don't expect, allow Jesus to open our hearts to embrace what He is doing.

Jesus comforts us where we are:

'On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill.' (12).

Jesus came to save sinners and to give hope to the hopeless. The Pharisees were so committed to keeping the law, that they had forgotten God's heart of compassion. However, Jesus reminded them that they were witnessing God's love in action. In what ways can we express compassion towards others, especially those outside the community of faith?

*Being a star just means that you just find your own special place,
and that you shine where you are.*

Dolly Parton

25th Anniversary of 9/11

Twenty-five years ago, on Tuesday 11th September 2001, terrorist attacks demolished the Twin Towers in New York. They killed 2,996 people and injured more than 6,000. Events like 9/11 raise the inevitable question: *Why does God allow such suffering to take place?*

There are no easy answers to this question! We cannot fully understand why such things happen, although we live in a fallen world, where people make real choices. Yet the Bible affirms that God identifies with our suffering, supremely when Jesus experienced suffering and death.

It is on the Cross that God knows what it is to lose a loved one in an unjust attack. *'I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the Cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?'* (John Stott). What does this mean? We cannot know why God allows evil and suffering to continue, but we do know that He does love and care for us: *'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.'* (John 3:16). God loved us enough to fully engage with the mess of the world.

We also can view such events in the light of resurrection. Jesus said: *'I am the Resurrection and the Life. The one who believes in Me will live'* (John 11:25). Resurrection points to the restoration for us of the life we lost. New heavens and new earth point to a world and relationships restored and perfected! In *The Lord of the Rings*, Sam Gamgee exclaims: *'Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead! Is everything sad going to come untrue?'* The answer of the Bible is Yes!

Our whole life is taken up with anxiety for personal security, with preparations for living, so that we really never live at all. - Leo Tolstoy

Editor: The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on aspects of Christianity.

Reflected Faith Series - The Peace

Last time we reflected on the time of 'Intercessions' within our service. This month, we consider what comes next.

In a Common Worship Communion service, the 'Peace' comes straight after the Intercessions. There is no such thing with a Book of Common Prayer (BCP) service.

A time of sharing 'The Peace' is not restricted to Communion services, but may take place in other services also.

It does not have to follow the Intercessions, but instead could also be held towards the start or end of the service.

Where you place 'the Peace' is significant: having it at the beginning emphasises the community coming together, whilst towards the end of the service might be to emphasise the importance of being together that encourages and enables us to take God with us into our everyday lives.

But why have it at all? Haven't we all come together to this service to worship the same God? To be together with others who think and believe as we do?

Hopefully yes, but sometimes we just need a visible sign of that very unity and a reminder that we are a part of this community where we are, as well as a part of the wider church across the world.

It is so easy to forget this. To just go on repeat and not be conscious of this enormous honour that we have to 'meet together in His presence'.

'Sharing the peace'- however we do that - with one another is a demonstrative act of community. Everyone is included.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you – And also with you.

This month

Where is 'The Peace' placed within your service and what do you think is the reason for that? Does making a physical connection – however you do that – with those around you make a difference to your thinking about 'community'?

Plan ahead - It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his series on the books of the Bible.

What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Daniel

This month we return to looking at Old Testament books. The book of Daniel describes his life in Babylon during the sixth century B.C., when he served both Babylonian and Persian rulers.

As a teenager, Daniel and his three friends were deported in 605 B.C. to Babylon, where he lived for over 70 years. They were trained as officials in King Nebuchadnezzar's court for three years. Their names and diets were changed to reflect Babylonian culture and take away their Jewish identity. However, Daniel and his friends showed the superiority of their Jewish diet and gained the favour of the king.

Chapters 1-6 are largely narrative, with Daniel and his friends (renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego) demonstrating that God is in control. The three friends refused to worship the pagan Babylonian gods and were thrown into a fiery furnace. However, they emerged unharmed because of God's miraculous protection. He also delivered Daniel from a den of lions when he refused to worship the Persian king Darius. Daniel also interpreted several visions and dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The second half of the book (chaps.7-12) consists of a series of visions, which show that God is in control of history.

The book affirms that God is the sovereign ruler of the world and rewards His faithful servants, as expressed by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego: *'If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'* (Daniel 3: 17,18)

A lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself." — Rumi

God in the Arts

Editor: Editor: Have you ever thought how an actual church building might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation? The Revd Michael Burgess continues his procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the church bells. .

He gave us eyes to see them' – the Church Bells

'Summoned by Bells' is the title of John Betjeman's poetic autobiography, where he describes how bells summoned him to school and to church. Bells announcing the joy of weddings and Sunday services; and also marking out times of sadness and the death of loved ones.

One of the strangest bell-towers is at St Augustine's Church, Brookland in Kent, north-east of Rye. It was originally built in the medieval period, and now stands as a triple coned, wooden, octagonal tower detached from the church, and clad with shingles in 1936.



The story is that the tower looked down at a beautiful bride about to marry an unpleasant groom: it was such a surprise that the tower jumped off the church in shock. The truth is that the church was built on marshy ground, and a stronger foundation was needed for the bells. And so the tower was built north of the church.

Like all belfries and steeples, it is an impressive witness to the place of bells in human life and work: as time-keepers, announcing both festive occasions and emergencies, and calling people away from more worldly pursuits to worship. That is why bells have always been blessed at their installation for their true function is to ring out the harmony of heaven.

The tenor bell at Warburton Church in Cheshire is inscribed with the words, 'I bid you to the house of prayer. St Werburgh's hallowed name I bear. Good folk draw near and humbly pray, as prayed that saint in olden day.' As a little boy, John Betjeman would listen to the bells with his teddy bear, Archibald. 'I heard the church bells hollowing out the sky, deep beyond deep, like never-ending stars.' For him, for the people of Brookland, and for all of us, the bells were like stars lighting up the sky with faith and joy and praise.

God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

How can a Christian be a scientist?

I used to ask this question as a student. I wondered what it was like to have a career in science, and how being a Christian might make a difference. Eventually I met a good number of successful scientists who were sincere Christians, and I learned that science and faith are a great combination. Dr Francis Collins, former Director of the project to decode the whole of human DNA, wrote that it is “possible for the scientist-believer to be intellectually fulfilled and spiritually alive, both worshipping God and using the tools of science to uncover some of the awesome mysteries of His creation.” So, what do people like this make of the opportunities and challenges of a life in science? Although our beliefs may affect what we notice about the world and how we interpret our data, they don’t affect the outcome of the experiments themselves. If a Muslim and a Christian drop the same ball from the same height under identical conditions, it will fall at the same speed. This means that a scientist can be respected by her colleagues for doing good work, regardless of what she believes and what her colleagues think of her worldview. Science is an exercise in observing and measuring things, and coming up with general principles about the way things are. The world has been declared by God to be ‘very good’ (see chapter one and two of Genesis), and exploring it is a way to express our gratitude to Him. Scientific discoveries can also bring a sense of awe and wonder that feeds into our worship. Some people don’t want to get involved in certain lines of research because of ethical concerns. On the other hand, there are many issues that make Christians want to get stuck into new research that will help care for people and the rest of creation, such as medical research, ecology or developing appropriate technologies. Organisations such as Christians in Science and the Faraday Institute gather together scientists who are also people of faith, and others who are interested in the subject. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, and express their beliefs in a variety of different ways. What they have in common is the conviction that you don’t have to choose between science and God. As the young people in our churches prepare to return to their studies, online if not in person, let’s encourage them that science (along with many other fields) is a great way to serve God.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 12:1-14, Luke 6:1-11

The Pharisees watched Jesus to see if he broke any of God's laws, or the rules they had made up to stop the laws being broken.

Jesus' disciples were hungry so they picked some wheat from a field as they walked.



The Pharisees said to Jesus



But King David broke the rules when he ate the bread that was only for the priests*



And priests are allowed to work in the temple on the Sabbath*



Don't you understand when God says 'keeping rules' doesn't make up for not having kindness'?*



If you understood, you would know my disciples did nothing wrong.



The Pharisees followed Jesus to the meeting place



The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of breaking rules, so they asked him a trick question.



If your sheep fell into a ditch on the Sabbath you would lift it out.



People are worth far more than sheep, so it is right to do good on the Sabbath



Hold out your hand.



The Pharisees left and made plans.



Miscellaneous

All in the month of SEPTEMBER

It was:

250 years ago, on 9th September that the Second Continental Congress adopted the name United States, which replaced United Colonies.

200 years ago, on 5th September 1826 that John Wisden, British cricketer was born. Founder of *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanac*. Launched with 112 pages in 1864, it now runs to 1500 pages and is the bible of cricket.

175 years ago, on 19th September 1851, Wiliam Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme, was born. Co-founder of Lever Brothers with his brother James. Now called Unilever, this global consumer goods company operates in more than 190 countries.

125 years ago, on 29th September 1901 that Enrico Fermi, Italian-born American physicist was born. Creator of the first nuclear reactor, he became known as the 'architect of the nuclear bomb.'

90 years ago, on 21st September 1936 that Frank Hornby, British inventor, died. Remembered for Meccano, Hornby Model Railways and Dinky Toys.

70 years ago, on 25th September 1956 that the world's first transatlantic cable, TAT-1, went into service. It could carry 36 simultaneous calls, later increased to 72. It was retired in 1978.

65 years ago, on 11th September 1961, that the World Wildlife Fund (now the World Wide Fund for Nature) was founded in Switzerland. Nowadays it is the world's largest conservation organisation, operating in nearly 100 countries with over 35 million supporters.

60 years ago, on 8th September 1966 that the Severn Bridge was officially opened. Linking Wales and England over the rivers Severn and Wye, it carries about 32,000 vehicles a day

50 years ago, on 5th September 1976 that the first episode of the Muppet Show was broadcast on ITV in the UK. It attracted 15 million viewers and ran for five series until March 1981.

40 years ago, on 7th September 1986 that Desmond Tutu became the first black Archbishop of Cape Town. Retired in 1996.

25 years ago, on 11th September 2001 that the terrorist attacks on America took place. Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers in New York, into the Pentagon, and into a field in Pennsylvania (following a passenger revolt – the intended target was Washington DC). 2,973 people were killed.

20 years ago, on 3rd September 2006 that Andre Agassi announced his retirement due to back problems. He was 36, a former world number one in tennis, and the 1996 Olympic champion.

Miscellaneous

Editor: by Tim Lenton

John Wisden and his famous 'Cricketers' Almanack'

Two hundred years ago, on 5th September 1826, British cricketer John Wisden was born. He was the founder of *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack*.

Launched with 112 pages in 1864, it now runs to 1500 pages and is the bible of cricket.

Wisden was a builder's son, born in Brighton. He moved to London after his father died, and lived with the outstanding Sussex wicketkeeper, Tom Box. Wisden was only 5ft 4in and weighed seven stone when he made his first-class debut for Sussex against MCC in 1845, taking nine wickets. He became known as Little Wonder.

He averaged 225 wickets a season for twelve years, took 455 wickets in 1851, and clean bowled all ten wickets in the second innings for North v South in 1850. He bowled fast, round-arm (before overarm was permitted) and was said to have had an extraordinary off-break. He was also a strong batsman.

Away from the game, Wisden began a cricket equipment business in Leamington Spa in 1850, and five years later opened a "cricket and cigar" shop in central London, initially in partnership with fellow-cricketer Fred Lillywhite. Wisden was also cricket coach at Harrow School and in 1867 bought The Cricketers, a public house at Duncton in Sussex.

In 1859 Wisden – by now bowling slow – was involved in the first tour by an English team to Canada and the United States, where he achieved a double hat-trick, taking six wickets in six balls. Because of rheumatism, Wisden retired from cricket in 1863 at the early age of 37 and started publishing his annual *Cricketers' Almanack* the following year. Described now as the most famous sports book in the world, the iconic yellow-bound volume contains comprehensive match records, chapter and verse, prophecy, history and the occasional sermon. It is known simply as *Wisden*.

Editor: by Tim Lenton

Hornby trains and Dinky toys

It was also 90 years ago, on 21st September 1936, that Frank Hornby, the British inventor, died. He is remembered for the immensely popular Meccano, Hornby Model Railways and Dinky Toys.

Hornby was born into a Liverpool working-class family and was said to have been inspired by the industry in the city. He was brought up as a Methodist and was interested in music, having a strong tenor voice. He met his future wife, Clara, when they were members of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society choir: they married in 1887 and had three children.

To amuse his two sons he constructed a model crane using perforated strips of metal held together with nuts and bolts. It could be dismantled and the parts used to build other things: this formed the basis of Meccano, which when refined proved hugely popular.

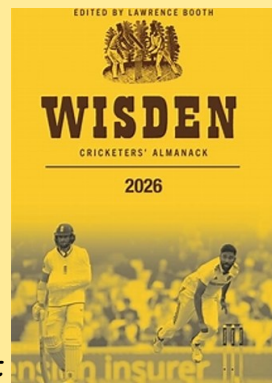
After the first world war he turned his attention to the construction of toy trains, powered by clockwork. At first these were made from kits, but it was not long before they were sold as ready-made train sets – a perfect children's toy. Dinky toys started as an accessory but soon developed into big sellers in their own right.

Later Hornby, who was described as polite and a “keen observer of morality”, became a Conservative MP for Everton. In his youth he joined the anti-alcohol Band of Hope and set up a number of groups and clubs dedicated to the improvement of society. He was a great believer in determination and the ability to overcome setbacks.

This enabled him to become not only a visionary but a practical creator in toy development and production. His persistence in adapting his original ideas and making them workable brought him deserved success in producing three of the most popular lines of toys in the 20th century.

Cricket is a most precarious profession; it is called a team game but, in fact, no one is so lonely as a batsman facing a bowler supported by ten fieldsmen and observed by two umpires to ensure that his error does not go unpunished.

John Arlott



Back to School - facing that first Day

No matter how old we are, we can probably remember our first day at school – being left at the door, meeting children we did not know, separated from the adults we did know and had trusted since the day we were born. But on the other hand, there was the excitement: a big step along the road of life, new friends to make, another adult to become important in our lives. Yes, quite a lot to handle when you're rising five!

And that's what hundreds of thousands of children are going to experience this month. Parents may have prepared them for it, and they may in a slightly apprehensive way be looking forward to it, but it must feel to the five-year-old like a massive step into the unknown.

Not much less is the anxiety of mum, who leaves her precious child, proudly resplendent in their new school uniform, in the Reception class-room. Will he or she suddenly panic, and cry for that familiar parental cuddle? Will they feel abandoned in an alien setting? Will they like the teacher?

Of course we'll be praying for them, and we know that like millions of others before them they will very probably eventually decide that their schooldays were among the best of their lives. But end of class can't come soon enough for mum on that first day! How wonderful when they come running out, laughing and excited, clutching a piece of paper with some obscure crayon marks on it – written evidence of their first day's education.

Can't sleep? Could these drinks be keeping you awake?

Sleep experts suggest the following possible suspects:

Alcohol. It interferes with the way your brain shuts down for the night. It can disrupt the deeper, more restorative level of sleep that you need.

Hot chocolate. Here it is the added sugar that is the problem. It gives you an energy boost that you don't need at bedtime!

Tea or coffee in the afternoon. Caffeine stays in your system for at least five hours.

That glass of water by your bed. It will probably wake you up in the night. Instead, consider increasing your liquid intake earlier in the day.

But if you *really* want a drink at bedtime, here are three that might help:

Chamomile tea has an antioxidant called apigenin, which promotes sleepiness. Warm milk contains tryptophan, an amino acid that helps produce serotonin and melatonin. And peppermint tea soothes your digestive system.

Those new Royal Mail solar-powered digital post-boxes

Royal Mail has converted about 3,500 of the old trusty red post-boxes into digital affairs, out of the 115,000 post-boxes in the country.

The new solar-powered digital post-boxes feature a solar panel roof, a built-in barcode scanner, and an extra-large drawer that accepts parcels up to shoebox size.

The idea is that the solar panels on top capture sunlight to power the digital scanner and automated drawer mechanism. So, then all you have to do is to scan the 2D barcode on your pre-paid parcel label, using the box's scanner to automatically open the large drawer. The traditional letter slot remains, for regular stamped mail.



As for proof of posting? You use the Royal Mail app on your phone to track and request confirmation when you drop off an item.

If you don't want to download an app or use a printer, the good news is that you can still send your parcels as before, at a post office counter.

Why wearing slippers isn't always so cosy

Many of us love the comfort of wearing our slippers around the house. They are warm and cosy and keep the carpets clean. But – if you wear them for many hours a day, beware: slippers can be dangerous when they show signs of wear and tear. Soles with holes, flaps, worn down backs, or frayed uppers are the reasons for thousands of painful falls each year. How sturdy are your slippers? If you can fold them in half, they are not supporting your feet. So walking on the hard floors in your home will mean that the impact from each step goes straight to your knees, hips and lower back.

And what about arch support? Anyone with arthritis, sciatica, knee and back pain or plantar fasciitis will really struggle without it. Instead, slippers need to have a rubbery cushioned thick sole, which provides some shock absorption. And they need to have a heel cup indentation, so it is easy to keep the slipper on. Otherwise, you will be clawing your foot to hang on to them, which will put strain on the tendons below. Some people find that croc-style clogs are a good option. At the end of the day, it pays to be good to your feet. They are a complicated and wonderful mix of 26 bones, 33 small joints, 29 muscles, and dozens of tendons, ligaments, nerves and blood vessels. In the words of the Psalmist, your foot is 'fearfully and wonderfully made' and deserves your protection and support.

Poems and Prayers



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



"Yes" cried the stranger, "I am the Greek you forgot as soon as you left college!"

One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu—the essence of being human.

Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation

Desmond Tutu

The Sower

He works beneath the morning sun
He scatters wide the seed;
Rests not before the work is done
That bread may fill our need.

Some fell upon the hardened way
Where clay was hard as stone,
Birds ate the seeds right where they lay
And none was left alone.

Some landed on the rocky soil
Soon sprang their leaves of green -
To wilt beneath the sun's dread boil
As if they'd never been.

Some fell among the choking weeds
The tares took all the light;
Their growth then overwhelmed the seeds,
Which disappeared from sight.

But some fell on the fertile loam
The rain fell from the sky
A hundredfold their seeds had grown
As they grew strong and high.

Let not your heart be made of stone
Nor fail when troubles come;
By no foul sin be overgrown,
But thriving 'neath the sun!
By Nigel Beeton

House Blessing

Have you ever blessed your house? If not, here is a prayer to help you on your way!

God bless the house from ground to stay,
From beam to wall and all the way,
From head to post, from ridge to clay,
From balk to roof-tree let it lay,
From found to top and every day
God bless both fore and aft, I pray,
Nor from the house God's blessing stray,
From top to toe the blessing go.

From Poems of the Western Highlanders



Police

A young clergyman, fresh out of theological training, thought it would help him better understand the world if he served as a policeman for a while before taking on a congregation.

He studied hard and passed the exams; passed the physical; and then came the all-important final interview. One question was: "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He promptly responded, "I would pass an offering plate." He got the job.

Wedding guest

A little boy at Sunday School learned about the time Jesus went to a wedding and changed the water into wine. "And what did you learn from that story?" asked his father afterward.

The boy thought for a moment and answered, "If you're having a wedding, make sure Jesus is there."

Questions

The phone rang. It was a salesman calling from a mortgage refinance company: "Do you have a second mortgage on your home?" I said no.

"Would you like to consolidate all your debts?" I explained that I had no debts.

"How about freeing up cash for home improvements?" I said I was happy with what I had already.

There was a brief silence, and then he asked, "Are you looking for a husband?"

Get rid

A man bought a new fridge for his house. To get rid of his old fridge, he decided to put it outside in his front garden, along with a sign saying:

'Free to good home.' For three days the fridge sat there without even one person looking twice at it.

So eventually the man changed the sign to read: 'Fridge for sale: £30'.

The next day someone stole it.

Look

What makes airport security think they can find something in your wife's handbag when even she can't?

Wedding

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

"Because white is the colour of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life."

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Picture Parable

