



**DOWNING PLACE  
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
CAMBRIDGE**

# **PLACE MATTERS**



**ISSUE 66  
NOVEMBER 2024**

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*Cover Photograph by Jess Uden*

*Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Elders and Members of  
Downing Place United Reformed Church*

## FROM THE MINISTER

Looking back, and doing so from the vantage point of a visit to Cape Town, I know how profoundly the years we spent in South Africa have shaped me. Quite apart from anything else, Jess was born there, and bears a name, Tsepiso, which in both Setswana and IsiZulu means ‘promise’. Her place at the heart of our family has, of course defined me just as the promise of parenthood always does.



*Geological Sketch Map of South Africa by E.J. Dunn*

*Public Domain image: Source - Wikimedia Commons*

There are, though, countless other ideas from those South Africa years that have become part of my way of thinking and living. Suffice it for me to share three in this month’s Place Matters. Maybe others will emerge elsewhere.

### 1. Sawubona

I did not learn indigenous African languages in detail, but some phrases and concepts were so commonplace as to become influential. Zulu people often meet each other, saying ‘Sawubona’. Literally, it means ‘I see you’, and indicates the worth and dignity of the one being greeted. It can even mean, ‘you are not my enemy’, or, to put that more positively, ‘you are my friend’. Sawubona appears in some Zulu translations of the Bible. There’s a somewhat cynical use

in Matthew 26.49, where Judas greets Jesus with, ‘Sawubona, Rabbi.’ There we might hear it suggesting that Judas wants the chief priests and the elders of the people to see Jesus, with the harsh twist that they are his enemies.

An entirely contrasting use of Sawubona comes in Luke 1.28, as Gabriel visits Mary. ‘Sawubona, favoured one’, he says. Here we can find the meaning of recognition and respect. Mary is to be an instrument in God’s hands, bearing Jesus, ‘the Son of the Most High’, whose impact will be as of a monarch reigning justly, compassionately, and forever.

Sawubona offers us a way of greeting each other. Alongside the ease and openness and warmth of ‘Hi’ and ‘Hello’, we might learn from Zulu speakers that every encounter is an opportunity to acknowledge and build up the other, rather than to ignore them, ‘pass by on the other side’, or slight them. Additionally, Sawubona can enable us to understand how God greets the Church. Just as Mary was greeted with the Sawubona of God’s messenger, Gabriel, so I find myself humbled by the thought that God says to us as Downing Place Church, ‘I see you; I regard you as of worth and dignity; I call you friends.’ That is why the Church, rich in fellowship though it can be, is no mere social club. It is the community of those whose relationships with each other and with God are well understood with this Zulu greeting ‘Sawubona’.

## 2. Pastoral and prophetic

Serving in South Africa in the late eighties and early nineties, it was impossible not to recognise the place of the church as a voice for the voiceless. Apartheid not only separated people according to their race but also afforded more worth and dignity to some than to others. Moreover, many opponents of that policy, enshrined in law as it was, were silenced. There were many years when the Church was amongst the very few who could critique what was going on and model a more integrated way of life. Even the Church did not do that consistently or unanimously, but there was a profound and powerful witness by black Christians like Desmond Tutu, so-called coloured Christians like Allan Boesak, and white ones like Beyers Naude.

These taught me in a way that nothing before had ever really needed to, that the Christian message needs both to nourish our inner life and to shape our life in the world. That being so, I came to understand the essential juxtaposition in ministry of the pastoral and the prophetic. The radical love God reveals in Jesus Christ, which is stronger even than death, must be offered as a pastoral word of renewal and refreshment to individuals as they live their daily lives, and as a prophetic word, a philosophical and ethical basis for society, so that it bears the hallmarks of God’s reign of justice and peace.

### 3. Christ enough

Although I have been a hymn singer all my life, it was on my first visit to South Africa, as a student minister, that I was taught about the place of hymns in shaping what people believe. The Revd John Thorne, my supervisor, used to say, ‘Nigel, some Christians sum up what they believe in the Creeds; we Congregationalists do so in what we sing.’ I have come to understand that very well over the years, which is why I so often illustrate a theological point with a quote from that treasury of Christian poetry, the hymn book.

I am most keen on hymns that help us reflect upon the person and work of Jesus Christ as the basis for our faith and action. A South African example that we rarely sing, perhaps because it is so Africa-specific, nevertheless influences me greatly. It is John Gardener’s, *Who will save this land and people?*, written in 1963. South Africa born and Oxford educated, Gardener lived and worked in Cape Town, where he was a school master. A lifelong Christian, he was initially Methodist and is now Anglican. The full text of his hymn is on a separate page of this edition of *Place Matters*. I value the hymn’s trenchant description of the challenges South Africa knew then. In the sixties it was facing up to the worst excesses of the still-developing apartheid policy. The hymn requires humanity to take responsibility, by accepting its errors and striving for a country that is guided home to wholeness and healing. The Church is depicted as a servant, God’s ‘outstretched hand’. But the hymn does not begin to suggest that the Church does this in its own strength. It does so because of Jesus Christ. For Christians, God is as God is in Jesus. He is full of the grace that reveals God, and of the truth that defines God. To be God’s servants, we need to be open to that grace and truth of Christ and pliable to the Spirit that is in Christ. That is enough. As Gardener puts it:

*Christ enough to break all barriers,  
Christ enough in peace, in strife,  
Christ enough to build our nation,  
Christ enough for death, for life,*

*Christ enough for old and lonely,  
Christ enough for those who fall,  
Christ enough to save the sin-sick,  
Christ enough for one - for all.*

Particular to South Africa, or relevant to us, too? With a few phrases adapted, I am convinced that this hymn speaks to our time in our place, to us. Christ is enough. Committed to hold together the pastoral and the prophetic, let’s walk his Way.

Sawubona

*Nigel Uden*

## Who will save ...?

Who will save our land and people?  
Who can rescue us from wrong?  
We are lost, faint, false and foolish,  
we have slighted God too long.  
Save the people, Lord our Saviour,  
guide us home from country far.  
Holy fire, consume our rancour,  
thy Kingdom come in Africa.

Make our land as clean and wholesome  
as the white of sea -washed sands.  
Stretch our vision vast and boundless  
as our brown-spread dusty land.  
Make our people strong and steadfast  
as the hills that claw the sky.  
Hear our prayer for land and people:  
"God bless Africa" we cry.

We believe God is our Saviour:  
Christ enough to heal our land.  
He will use the Church, his servants:  
we on earth his outstretched hand.  
May his Church in loving service,  
shown to all whose path is rough,  
give a clear, united witness  
and proclaim "Christ is enough!"

Christ enough to break all barriers,  
Christ enough in peace, in strife,  
Christ enough to build our nation,  
Christ enough for death, for life,  
Christ enough for old and lonely,  
Christ enough for those who fall,  
Christ enough to save the sin-sick,  
Christ enough for one - for all.

*John Brett Gardener 1930-*

## BRING ME SUNSHINE: THE WEDDING AT DOWNING PLACE URC

*Editor:* A wedding took place at Downing Place URC on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024. Hazel Sanderson and David Whitmore. Members and friends of Downing Place will know Hazel and David well – and you will learn/remember more about them in their Place Matters Profiles – October 2021 and September 2024. Jesus' first miracle took place at that wedding in Cana, and those of us who witnessed Hazel and David's coming together knew that we were blessed too. A week or so later I was wondering whether I could ask them to write a short piece for *Place Matters*, but Hazel was already one step ahead. Now read on!

*Hazel writes:*

David and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone who was involved in our wedding on Saturday September 21<sup>st</sup>. We were overwhelmed by all the good wishes, verbally, by email and by card. We received over 60 cards which was amazing. We set up a JustGiving page to raise money for Cambridge Women's Aid, and amazingly, we raised £750 for this worthwhile charity. Thank you.



We are also extremely grateful for all those who helped on the day. The wonderful flowers in the sanctuary, the welcome area, and all the table decorations in the Hub and Gibson Hall were arranged by Rosemary Johnson. We know that some of you benefited from these in the days after the service.



Our thanks must also go to Liz Barrow and her team who arranged all the tables, food, served tea and fizz and did all the clearing away afterwards! You were amazing. Lots of friends remarked on the wonderful spread, and the efficiency and friendliness of those serving. Liz also made the stunning cake, the last of which has only just been consumed! The handmade flowers on the top were **particularly fine and matched Hazel's dress perfectly.**

Several of you were disappointed not to be able to attend, and you would have been hard pressed for a seat! To see the church so full of friends and family and church members was a sight to behold and filled us with great joy. There is a local recording thanks to David Flynn, so if anyone would like to see it, please ask him for the link.



*Hazel and Mark*

It was a delight to be able to choose such personal music for our wedding. For those who have shown an interest, Hazel walked down the aisle (along with her handsome oldest son, Mark) to *'The Rose of St Magnus'* played by Blazin' Fiddles from the album called *The Key*. This is a beautiful tune played by solo violin and piano. For years we have enjoyed their folk music and have seen them play live many times. We wanted music that reflected our love of folk and later used pieces sung by the Spooky Men's chorale. This madcap, all male, acapella group from Australia have entertained many down the years. We chose two songs from their repertoire, *'Picture in a frame'* (written by Tom Waits) and *'The sweetest kick in the heart'* (written by Stephen Taberner, leader) Finally, we walked (danced) out to *'Bring me sunshine'* sung by Morecambe and Wise, to honour those who nurtured

and cherished us. Hazel chose this in memory of her parents, who absolutely loved Morecambe and Wise. What better words could echo the day than:

Bring me sunshine in your smile  
Bring me laughter all the while  
In this world where we live there should be more happiness  
So much joy you can give to each brand new bright tomorrow  
Make me happy through the years,  
Never bring me any tears  
Let your arms be as warm as the sun from up above  
Bring me fun,  
Bring me sunshine, Bring me love. Hey!

Woven around these personal choices were four hymns and a special pre-service musical selection of worship songs played by Mark Dawes, David and Penny Flynn. Hazel's sister, Janice Moore, read from 1 John 4 v.7-19 and prayers of intercession were written by Richard Shreeve, David's brother in law. The Rev'd Nigel Uden led the marriage ceremony, and gave a very entertaining talk on the story, 'The stork and the crane' by John Yeoman and Quentin Blake. Hazel's grandson, Theo, had the important task of being ring bearer, and Hazel's youngest son, Peter, was best man, looking after everyone very well.



*Theo had a very important job!*

We hope that gives you a taste of our special day.

With thanks,

*Hazel and David*

## FROM OUR ECUMENICAL CORRESPONDENT

### IV : The Roman Catholic Church

Parliament's declaration in the 1530s of England's religious autonomy, ascribing government 'in spirituals' to the whole Christian realm (including laypeople and led by the monarch) was not welcomed by everybody. For centuries ecclesiastical decisions had been reserved to clergy, chiefly bishops, relating closely to the See of Rome, and for many this was a principle they could not abandon. Some rose in rebellion and were suppressed, others refused to recognise the new reasoning by an oath, even when refusal was a capital offence: these viewed royal institutions as merely 'civil' authorities. That decade saw the first executions for such refusal - prominent amongst those condemned being the Carthusians of London, then Thomas More and John Fisher.

The Reformation statutes declared that the changes they wrought implied no deviation from 'the Catholic faith of Christendom', but that claim was contested. To believers loyal to the papal hierarchy, Henry VIII's England had already deviated. After the Reformation there were two understandings of what 'Catholic' meant. To Protestants it encompassed all Christians; but papal supporters reserved the term to themselves (and this article follows that usage). Acts of Parliament called them 'Papists' until George III's reign.

The introduction of Cranmer's liturgy under Edward VI took differences well beyond questions of authority. Worshippers in England's churches were no longer to adore Christ's presence in the elements of the Lord's Supper, to invoke the prayers of the saints, or pray for their ancestors in purgatory. Relics, shrines and pilgrimage were frowned upon; monasticism had already vanished with the religious houses, and priests began to marry. Papal supporters denied Parliament's standing to make these changes, but also held them wrong in themselves. A Catholic spirituality marked by sacraments, saints and symbolism contrasted with the Reformers' stress on Bible, preaching, confessional Articles and (relative) simplicity of worship. The veneration of the Virgin Mary, remaining prominent in one tradition, was deeply suspect in the other; and each condemned the other's teaching.

Mary I and her bishops shared this condemnatory view. The Protestant martyrdoms of her reign hardened attitudes, and when Elizabeth I's Parliament restored many earlier reforms, Catholic resistance intensified. A former Oxford academic, William Allen, discouraged Catholics from worshipping except with priests ordained by Catholic bishops; but of course such bishops were dying out. Allen inspired an English-speaking seminary in the Habsburg Netherlands; but priests ordained abroad were forbidden to enter the country, following plots to

kill Queen Elizabeth, a papal decree ('bull') claiming to absolve her subjects from their allegiance, and news arriving of Catholic repression in the Netherlands and the French massacre on St Bartholomew's Eve 1572. Several bishops had already been executed as traitors for asserting papal authority, including the Jesuits Edmund Campion and Alexander Briant. To supporters of that authority, these were martyrs for the true faith.

The Spanish Armada's destruction and the Gunpowder Plot's failure finally ended hopes of restoring a Catholic England by force. Another series of legal restrictions followed, then serious persecution under the military régime of the 1650s. But for the rest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English Catholicism was an innocuous minority faith: longstanding Catholic families were served by missionary priests (when necessary undercover). From 1623 the papacy appointed 'Vicars Apostolic' to oversee these, dividing England into four districts in 1688.

The Terror following the French Revolution, and early Victorian Ireland's potato famine, caused waves of Catholic migration to England. The French arrivals aroused sympathy, and in 1791 'Roman Catholic' (no longer 'popish') worship became legal. The impoverished Irish were welcome mainly as labourers and suffered much discrimination, but still made a difference to the country's confessional ratio. When in 1840 an Eastern District was created and its first Vicar Apostolic appointed a missionary priest for Cambridge, his congregation was mainly Irish. They were nevertheless able to fund the building of a chapel (St Andrew's) on land an earlier priest had secured in the 1820s.



*Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, St Ives: in the building that was formerly St Andrew's Chapel in Cambridge -  
on the site of what is now the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs*

*Source: David Bartlett / Catholic Church of The Sacred Heart, St Ives/CC BY-SA 2.0*

The mid-nineteenth century University was wholly Protestant and some undergraduates were given to disrupting Catholic services. Their behaviour fitted

a wider negative reaction to the creation of Catholic dioceses in 1850 (Northampton replacing the Eastern District). But the opening of matriculation to Catholic students and the existing building's inadequacy led one rich widow to fund the erection of the current central parish church on the site of St Andrew's Chapel (which, painstakingly dismantled, stands today in St Ives). In devotion to Mary, who stood as high as ever in Catholic estimation, and in memory of those sixteenth century figures who died resisting changes to England's religious constitution, the new building was dedicated to 'Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs' - OLEM. Mary features prominently in its decoration and the side windows (bombed out in 1941 but replaced) depict the martyrs.

Attending OLEM today (now in the Diocese of East Anglia), one notices both development and continuity. The Irish congregation of 1840 has been replaced by a multinational attendance with backgrounds in many Catholic countries. An average weekend sees some 2,500 worshippers. To Catholics, the Church is one and the same wherever one worships; but there is perhaps less feeling of belonging to a *local* church as well. Certainly nobody socialised after the mass I attended.

The English Martyrs windows remind us that the position they once took, asserting the authority of the clerical hierarchy over a single globally organised Christian community, remains Roman Catholic understanding today; though it does not now prevent engagement with other Christian bodies organised nationally or regionally, having other concepts of office and greater lay participation.

Above all, the doctrines and devotion for which continuing Catholics stood from the 1530s are still reflected in the liturgy, though with discernible simplification through the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, and most worship now no longer in Latin. The OLEM building is huge, but its atmosphere reverent whether during or outside service times. When I returned midweek to study the windows, several people were praying in silence. Perhaps that says it all.

*Augur Pearce*



*Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs.*

*Source: sps1955, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons*

*HINTS AND REVELATIONS:*  
JANE BOWER REPORTS ON THE RADIUS FESTIVAL



October 12<sup>th</sup> 2024 saw the second ever Radius Festival day, entitled *Hints and Revelations*, which, like the first one two years ago, was held at St. Mark's Church, Cambridge. Radius - the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain, a member-run charity – explores spiritual, social and ethical themes on stage, screen and audio-drama, and is open to all.

Two years ago I was invited to take part as a performer of my own material. This year, I was offered the chance to be one of two 'guinea pigs' in an onstage Masterclass on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, led by husband and wife TV/radio actors Martin Delaney (*Wrath of God*, *Judas Ghost*) and Emerald O'Hanrahan (Emma Grundy in *The Archers*). I jumped at the chance of a session of expert tuition.

Martin and Emerald quickly generated a warm, relaxed atmosphere in the church, and emphasised that the sanctuary was both a sacred and a safe space, in which all of us were free to explore and express ideas, beliefs and emotions. They began by inviting any who wished to do so to take part, in their seats, in short exploratory exercises, mental, vocal and physical. Between each exercise, my fellow guinea pig Guy Marshall and I read the same two speeches between Miranda and Prospero, using ideas generated by the exercises. It was quite astounding how our delivery changed and developed each time, and how emotional the speeches became, both for us and the audience. In under thirty minutes we had gained a far deeper understanding of the text and the way in which Shakespeare had skilfully handled the daughter/father relationship. I felt both drained and empowered, and would have been happy to keep experimenting all day!

A presentation was made to winner of the 2024 Radius playwriting competition, which went to Kit Walkham for her play *Holly and Lichen*.

After an excellent lunch (free to the first fifty who had booked tickets!) we were treated to a performance of *Hint of the Unknown God*, the poems of John

Betjeman presented by six local actors. Especially poignant was his poem *The Empty Pew*, written after his wife left the Anglican church. <https://voetica.com/poem/7484>

The day ended with a Question and Answer session, for which I had been invited to be on the panel with actress Amanda Root (RSC, *Persuasion*, *The Sixth Commandment*) and Rt. Revd Bishop of the Arts, Rob Gillion, former actor. Chairman Dr. Sean Lang of Anglia Ruskin University invited us to speak about theatre we had experienced which had a strong spiritual element, the links between drama and faith, and the difference, if any, between an audience and a congregation.

During the day many valuable conversations were shared, few being at surface level. I drove home feeling that familiar mix of being both privileged and humbled by the experience.

Join Radius: <https://www.radiusdrama.org.uk/>



## EASTERN SYNOD MEETING 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024

*Alan Rickard reports:*

The Eastern Province of the United Reformed Church met in Synod at Witham URC in Essex on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024, from 10.30am until 4.00pm. The **theme and focus of the agenda was ‘Ecumenism’.**

The meeting was constituted in prayer by the Synod Moderator Revd. Lythan Nevard, with opening worship led by members of the local congregation.

The Moderator then welcomed jubilee ministers, new members, newly accredited lay preachers, commissioned local leaders and Mission Partnerships. The minutes of the last meeting held at Downing Place URC on 9<sup>th</sup> March were approved, with matters arising taken.

**Lindsey Brown, the URC’s Evangelism and Ecumenical Officer, introduced and led on the day’s theme of Ecumenism. Mention was made of the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council held at Nicaea in 325 AD that will be celebrated world-wide in January. Reference was made to the six hopes for peace and justice in society of the Joint Public Issues Team, embracing the URC, the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church. At the local level, ecumenism is practised by involvement in Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs). Approximately a third of all URC pastorates today are LEPs, viz. 358 out of 1233. The recently-created, five-way partnership of Pathfinder LEP at**

Northstowe, Cambridgeshire was celebrated and reference made to Bar Hill and **Cambourne**. Attention was drawn to the ‘Shine Your Light’ 2024 vision scheduled on 12th -15th December with emphasis on community events and activities. A video was shown of Christian Aid’s Faith Will initiative.

Revd. Chris Bolster, an Anglican priest representing Churches Together in Essex and East London, spoke about his current and past involvement (in the north-west) with local ecumenical projects, after which there was opportunity for discussion. Awards were made and received for Faith in Action projects, including one for a bike repair station outside Whittlesford LEP.

Over the lunch break there was an opportunity to browse the bookstall provided by Soham Christian Bookshop.

Synod business continued in the afternoon with the receiving of updates and reports from Youth and Children / Mission and Training; General Assembly; Synod Clerk; Pastoral Committee; Mission and Discipleship Committee; Resources Committee.

Four resolutions were voted upon:

1. making Synod appointments and encouraging names for vacant posts, including Synod Treasurer and County Ecumenical Officer for Cambridgeshire;
2. receiving Synod Administration Fund and Church Life and Mission Fund reports for the period ending 31st August 2024;
3. receiving and accepting the URC Eastern Province Trust Annual Report and audited Financial Statements 2023;
4. receiving and accepting the Synod Administration Fund and the Church Life and Mission Fund budgets for 2025.

It was noted that a document outlining the Call Process to Stipendiary Ministry to Mission Partnerships within the Eastern Synod was withdrawn for further work before being brought to a later meeting for adoption.

Recent events such as the Big Day Out and Synod Roadshows were reviewed, with feedback from synod members present collected via a voting app on mobile phones. Closing services had been held at Christchurch LEP Great Yarmouth in August and at Trinity URC Norwich in September.

Revs. Catherine Ball and Ken Forbes have retired.

The meeting concluded with a short act of worship including Holy Communion, led by the Moderator.

Synod next meets at Plume Avenue URC, Colchester on 8th March 2025.



## AN INSIGHT INTO OUR RECENT JUNIOR CHURCH SESSIONS

As a congregation we celebrated the Harvest Festival on Sunday 22nd September, and our Junior Church group gathered to celebrate the abundance of food we are blessed with, and to remember the importance of sharing with others.

To get our brains buzzing, we started with a fun game, naming fruits and vegetables in the colours of the rainbow. Red was easy, but we found that blue, indigo, and violet were quite a challenge! How many can you think of? Next we read 'Handa's Surprise', which features fruits of every colour. The children listened intently, knowing there would be a quiz at the end – which animal took which fruit? And the tricky question – what does a granadilla actually look like? Even the Junior Church leaders admitted they would struggle to identify a granadilla! We then turned our attention to hedgehogs, who are busy eating fallen fruit and insects to prepare for their winter hibernation. Feeling the autumn spirit, we decorated foam hedgehogs with red, orange, and yellow leaves.



Remembering all the animals from Handa's story and our hedgehog friends, we recited this rhyme:

Multicoloured animals  
With stripes and dots and patches  
God made each one different

**There isn't one that matches.**

We live in a wonderful world.

We are fed and loved,

and we especially remember this at harvest time.

The following week we continued our exploration of some of the Old Testament stories by hearing the story of Esther. As the Jewish wife of the King of Persia, she turned out to be the Right Person in the Right Place at the Right Time to save her people. The children talked about what they thought it meant to be brave and strong, and acted out poses of what a brave person might look like. We then enjoyed singing the action song 'Be bold, Be strong, for the Lord your God is with you.' On the outside, Esther didn't appear to be bold or strong, but she showed herself to have a warm heart as she devised a plan to persuade the king to save from harm the Jewish people living in his land. We then threaded and wound wool around hearts made of card, as a reminder to act and help others, whenever we see the opportunity.



On 6<sup>th</sup> October we talked about how sometimes stuff goes wrong.

Have you ever

- fallen and cut yourself?
- started to use a felt tip pen and found it has run dry?
- had your water bottle leak in you book bag?
- spilt some sweets on the ground?
- woken in the dark and not much liked it?

All of us had done some of these but not all same the same day!

Job's story in the Bible starts by telling us how things were good for him. He knew God loved him and trusted God. Many things then went badly wrong. Even his camels were stolen. Still, Job loved and trusted God and knew that God loved him. We looked at a picture book about a boy who had a 'horrible, no good, very bad day', and while thinking about Job we coloured pictures with pens which had not run dry.

*Elza de Bruin, Lorraine Thornton and Jess Uden, with thanks to all the leaders and helpers for their contributions to the work of Junior Church.*

## MONTHLY SPECIAL CAUSE FOR NOVEMBER



MENSCRAFT is an East Anglian-based charity which focuses on the health and wellbeing of men. Their range of projects and programmes support men to manage life challenges such as unemployment, debt, family breakdown, parenting, addiction, bereavement, loneliness – and to address the emotions and behaviours such challenges may generate, including lack of self-worth, anger or withdrawal. Their approach enables them to work effectively with men who mainstream services find difficult to reach. They work both to help men recover from a crisis and to maintain their wellbeing, by providing a safe, non-judgemental spaces where men can take off the (metaphorical) armour and be authentic around one another.

Amongst its activities the charity

- Puts its beneficiaries in touch with each other to share experiences with a facilitator,
- Gives opportunities to explore and work in the outdoors,
- Gives opportunities for socialising,
- Enables its beneficiaries to consider issues from parenting to the problems of youth

See: <https://menscraft.org.uk/> for more information.

### WAYS OF GIVING TO OUR SPECIAL CAUSES

- Monthly Retiring Collection (cash, cheque or card)
- Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts (cash or card)
- Direct to the church bank account (reference SPECIAL CAUSE)
- Via our website - the **'Donate' button is on the homepage under the large photo of the congregation.** Select Special Donations as the fund
- In many cases, by direct donation to the charity via their own website

PREVIOUS SPECIAL CAUSES  
JULY - MOORFIELDS EYE CHARITY



Moorfields Eye Charity  
162 City Road, London EC1V 2PD  
Phone: 020 7566 2565  
Email: moorfields.eyecharity@nhs.net  
moorfieldseyecharity.org.uk

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25 September 2024

Dear Downing Place URC,

We are absolutely blown away by your amazing fundraising efforts in support of Moorfields. Thank you so much for raising a tremendous £3,363.50 for Moorfields Eye Charity. We are delighted that you chose to support us with your concert series and are incredibly grateful to all who made this possible. A particular thanks must go to Robert Graves, who nominated us as a beneficiary of your fundraising, and to Ian de Massini for organising the concerts themselves.

We would also like to extend our thanks to all who helped you reach such a fantastic total and contributed to raising money for people living with sight loss. This will help Moorfields Eye Hospital stay at the forefront of ground-breaking research, training of current and future health care professionals, and delivering excellent eye care which can improve the lives of Moorfields patients.

We very much hope you enjoyed your experience of fundraising for Moorfields Eye Charity. If you need anything further from us, please do let me know and we will be more than happy to help.

Thank you once again for all your efforts and we hope you enjoyed being a part of #TeamMoorfields.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne".

Joanne Green  
Head of fundraising and engagement

# AUGUST - THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MYANMAR



Dear Ann

....thank you so much to Downing Place URC for this extraordinary response to our appeal. We really are deeply moved by how the church has engaged with the situation of the Church in Myanmar, and personally with the General Secretary Pek Muan Cuang on his visit last year. This is such an under-reported crisis, and this gift, and your prayers, will mean so much to the Church and its work.

Every blessing to you all

Lindsey (Brown)



## SEPTEMBER - ROMSEY MILL



We raised a grand total of £2,364.73 for Romsey Mill in September, which together with £250 from our York Street Fund brought the total to £2,614.73.

The breakdown was as follows:

Wednesday Lunchtime Concerts	£1,370.34
Sunday Concert ( <i>The Planets</i> )	£239.00
Retiring Collection	£679.81
Other Donations & Gift Aid	£75.58
York Street Contribution	£250.00

## DOWNING PLACE URC - THE PLACE OF MUSIC

*Mark Dawes writes:*

This is the first in a sequence of articles by the Downing Place URC Directors of Music. We will look at the music that takes place in church and the ways music is conceived of and deployed, both within the Sunday morning services and at other times in the week. This first article will focus on a particular Sunday morning, and the music that formed part of the worship. Future articles will explore the different purposes of music on a Sunday morning, music in other services and in other parts of the musical life of the church. One article will describe our remarkable Hauptwerk organ, and the myriad opportunities it offers us as a church.

I am writing this a few days after Sunday 6th October 2024, so this article will **focus on the music in that Sunday's service. In terms of the music, this wasn't an unusual or special Sunday**, so I hope it will also give an overview of some of the decision-making that Ian and I carry out behind the scenes when we are **planning the music for each week's Sunday morning service.**

Ian and I have a planning document, shared online, with a section for each Sunday morning service in which we have the theme and the readings, and to which we add other information closer to the time, such as the hymns (chosen by the leader of the service). We consider the theme for the service, the readings and the church year, as well as anniversaries and other things that are happening in the world, and think about music that might connect to these. We note the musical forces that are available (for example, the choir sings once a fortnight, and orchestra plays once a month). Closer to the time we firm up our suggestions and Nigel (and other service-leaders) will often then have some further inspiration, ideas and input. Almost everything has been determined at least a week ahead, which allows us to rehearse in advance.

On Sunday 6th October, the readings for the service came from the letter to the Hebrews and part of Mark's gospel. **The gospel reading didn't link to any obvious musical ideas**, but Ian initially noted that the Hebrews reading features in three Bach Cantatas and that Messiaen had written a relevant organ work. **In the end, we decided that this music wasn't as exciting as some of the other possibilities that were available to us.**

The day before the service was National Poetry Day, and this reminded us that **we had intended for the choir to sing Ralph Vaughan Williams' wonderful setting of George Herbert's poem *Let all the world* at some point.** This piece is rarely sung with the original orchestral parts, instead being performed with an organ

accompaniment by Henry G. Ley. Ian went back to the original Vaughan Williams orchestral score, and created a brand new accompaniment especially for this service. Over the previous few months, Ian had created his own **arrangement of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*** (to mark the sesquicentenary of the birth of Holst), and this gave him enormous insight into the composing style of early-twentieth century English composers. Ian made use of both that experience and the incredible versatility of our digital organ when arranging RVW's *Let all the world*, introducing new musical lines that appear in the **orchestral brass writing, but which don't come through in the Ley organ part**. We rehearsed this with the choir and organ the week before, which allowed Ian subsequently to make some adjustments to the notes and to the organ stops he chose to use.

Vaughan William's setting of Herbert's *The Call* ("Come my way, my truth my light"), written for a solo baritone voice, seemed to fit very well as the second prelude, and Tim agreed to sing this, accompanied on the church's digital organ. A third Herbert poem, ("Love bade me welcome, but my soul drew back") is one that I had begun to set to music a number of years ago. This service prompted me to finish off the piece and to arrange it for Jennifer and Ian to sing as a soprano/counter-tenor duet as a prelude to the service.

A few days before the service came the news that Dame Maggie Smith had died. As a result, I played two piano arrangements in homage: the *Theme from Ladies in Lavender* and the *Theme from Downton Abbey*. It was nice to see smiles of recognition from members of the congregation while I was playing these.

As a long-standing musical arc, we have been playing arrangements of concertos. **On that Sunday, the third (slow) movement of Bach's E major Violin Concerto** seemed to lend itself well to being the music during communion. Ian played the violin melody on the accordion while I played the orchestral accompaniment on the piano. I know the Bach violin concertos fairly well, but this gave me a fresh perspective on the piece, as did the arrangement of the first movement of the same concerto that Ian played as the first prelude before the service.

For the postludes, we considered playing more of the Bach concerto, but Ian had come across a fun arrangement of a song called Tico-Tico (Portuguese for the Andean Sparrow) by the Brazilian composer Zequinha de Abreu. This was reminiscent of the work of the French organist and composer Louis Lefébure-Wély and enabled Ian and me to play a duet, sitting side-by-side at the organ. That became the second Postlude, and prior to that, we played a duet **arrangement (by Sybalt de Jong) of Bach's setting (from Cantata 192) of the hymn tune *Nun danket***, which had been the melody of the final hymn of the service.

In all, the service included some concerto movements, settings of different poems by George Herbert, involved singing from the choir and from Tim, Jennifer and Ian, used the organ, piano and accordion, and featured compositions/arrangements from Ian and from me. All-in-all, a fairly typical Sunday morning.

A TABLETOP SALE is being held on Wednesday/Thursday 27th/28th November in the Hub at Downing Place URC, from 10.30am to 3pm.

Proceeds will be divided between the Church, Sallymay International **Preschool in Sierra Leone and East Anglia Children's Hospices.**

Apart from knitted goods there will be other good quality items too.

Wanted: Jigsaws, jewellery, vases, ceramics, toys, games, handbags etc.

**Saleable objects always wanted for Sallymay: Children's books, stationery/school items and good quality children's clothing.**

Also ... A CHRISTMAS GIFT. Support your local Charity shops. Buy a toy or book for a child in Ukraine or the Sallymay International PreSchool in Sierra Leone. Donations being collected at Downing Place URC.

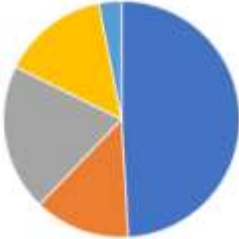
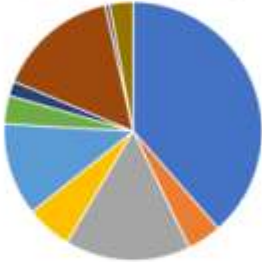


Many thanks. *Jess Uden & Anne Disney*

## CHURCH FINANCES

*This is the third in a series of items in Place Matters on the topic of finance, intended to keep members informed. In this month's article Colin Christy addresses some considerations in the preparation of the Downing Place URC budget for 2025.*

This month there are no numbers – it is simply some 'pie charts', providing images of the income and expenditure currently under review for the 2025 budget. In accordance with many members' request to show church and hall activities separately, the draft budget has been prepared on that basis. It is natural then to show the pie charts in this light. I have tried to reflect the comparative sizes of the income and expenditures in the sizes of the pie charts themselves: however this is approximate. The income from Church and Worship activities is almost three times the income from Halls and Outreach. Also, the expenditure pie charts are slightly bigger than the respective income ones. This reflects the higher level of expenditure compared to income in both cases.



<p>Church and Worship Income</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Offerings (including Gift Aid)</li> <li>■ Domestic properties let</li> <li>■ Lewis Gibson – York Street</li> <li>■ Dividends and Interest</li> <li>■ Miscellaneous income</li> </ul>
<p>Church and Worship Expenditure</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ URC Ministry and Mission contribution</li> <li>■ Worship, Ministry, Pastoral</li> <li>■ Staffing</li> <li>■ Administration</li> <li>■ Property costs – Church and Halls</li> <li>■ Property costs – Mansees</li> <li>■ Domestic properties let</li> <li>■ Depreciation</li> <li>■ Outreach events and Hospitality</li> <li>■ World Church and Public Issues Donations</li> </ul>
<p>Halls and Outreach income</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Church and Hall hires</li> <li>■ Synod income from York Street</li> </ul>
<p>Halls and Outreach Expenditure</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staffing</li> <li>■ Administration</li> <li>■ Property costs – Church and Halls</li> <li>■ Property costs – Pioneer Ministry</li> <li>■ Outreach events and Hospitality</li> <li>■ Pioneer Ministry</li> </ul>

## LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

### MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS AT 1PM

Free Lunchtime Concerts with a retiring collection shared between Church funds and our monthly Special Cause. Booking is not necessary. Refreshments are available before and after the concert. Come and bring friends!

Monday 4 November	Julian Hellaby (piano)
Wednesday 6 November	Ros Hart (violin) and John Richens (piano)
Monday 11 November	Dominika Rosiek (violin) and Miho Sanou (piano)
Wednesday 13 November	The Elmore String Quartet
Monday 18 November	Veta Velikhova (piano)
Wednesday 20 November	Jennifer Bastable (mezzo-soprano) and Ian de Massini (piano)
Monday 25 November	Geoff Clapham (baritone) Joanna Lam (piano)
Wednesday 27 November	Erina Ishiyama (piano)

Full information about each concert including the programme is available on our website

<https://downingplaceurc.org/lunchtime-concerts/>



## AUTUMN HOUSE GROUPS CONTINUE

### **“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth”**

The Birth and Growth of the Early Church;

Discussion groups based on studies in the first fifteen chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles* with some passages from the Gospels and Paul's letters.

Week 4      “Get up and go”                      Chapters. 9, 11, 12

Week 5      “Set Apart for me”                      Chapters. 13, 14

Week 6      “Pillars of the Church”                      Chapters 12, 15

This course will explore how the first followers of Jesus emerged from the shock of his crucifixion to become the basis of a new community which would grow and spread with remarkable speed to create other new communities in his name. They would encounter opposition from without and disagreements within; physical dangers, imprisonment and persecution; and new questions requiring new ways of thinking. Through it all they felt themselves empowered and guided by the Spirit of Jesus to pursue the commission they had been given. “*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*”.

Tuesdays 2.15pm at the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn Nov 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mondays 7.30pm on Zoom, hosted by Tim Rowland Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>.

Both will be led by Janet Bottoms.

Thursdays 2pm at the home of Freda Bradbury Nov 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>. Led by Penny Flynn

Please contact Janet for weekly material for Tuesday afternoons or Monday evening, and Penny for material for Thursday afternoons – or any other information. Printed copies will be available via the Office.

Please ask Tim for the Zoom link for Monday evenings.

You are welcome to attend any or all of the sessions, and to mix and match days/times for your convenience.

## LECTIO DIVINA FRIENDS

William and Deborah McVey are planning another series of online Zoom Lectio Divina for Advent.

This will start on Friday 29th November for four weeks.

That is - Fridays the 29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> December.

From 8.30 to 9.30 am, we spend the first forty minutes meditating on a passage of scripture and responding to it briefly; then in the last twenty minutes we share **more fully how this has 'spoken' to us today. If you prefer to simply sit and listen, that too is a way of sharing and gaining encouragement in faith.**

The four mornings will focus on scriptures highlighting the Season of the Spirit. Do indicate if this is something you would like to join in with.

If this way of prayer is something you have never tried, you are most welcome to join in any of the mornings to see if this is helpful. You will find a warm welcome from the ecumenical group of participants.

William will send the Zoom link – contact him if you have any technical questions about this.

Do make contact with Deborah if you want to ask more.





## Carol Singing for Christian Aid

**When:** Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2 till 4

**Where:** Grand Arcade shopping mall

**Who:** You and your friends

**Why:** to support the Christmas Appeal for South Sudan

to keep Christian Aid in the public eye

to show we are still working to bring help wherever it is needed

to enjoy a good singsong of your favourite carols

to start the Christmas season, on the eve of Advent

**Contact:** Sheila Porrer for more information and to say you'll be there. This may be the last time we are able to stage this event in the Grand Arcade. So, let's make it the best yet!

Sheila Porrer 01223 560066/07772 695229 [sheila.porrer@virginmedia.com](mailto:sheila.porrer@virginmedia.com)

**Christian Aid needs you!**

## NOVEMBER DIARY

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Fri	01-Nov-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	02-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	03-Nov-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Sunday Worship with Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Meeting re Zoe's research	12:45pm	Church
Sun	03-Nov-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:00pm	The Hub
Mon	04-Nov-24	Officers' Meeting	10:15am	Minister's Room
Mon	04-Nov-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Julian Hellaby (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	04-Nov-24	World Church and Public Issues Meeting	7:15pm	Zoom
Mon	04-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	05-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	05-Nov-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Tue	05-Nov-24	Worship Group Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Wed	06-Nov-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Ros Hart (violin) & John Richens (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	07-Nov-24	Midweek Worship led by Penny Flynn	11:00am	Church
Thu	07-Nov-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	07-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sat	09-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	10-Nov-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	10-Nov-24	Remembrance Sunday Worship led by the Revd Jeremy Caddick	10:50am	Church
Sun	10-Nov-24	Solidarity Hub	2:00pm	The Hub
Mon	11-Nov-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Dominika Rosiek (violin) & Miho Sanou (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	11-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	12-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:15pm	At the home of Elizabeth Whitehorn
Tue	12-Nov-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Tue	12-Nov-24	Elders' Meeting	7:30pm	Zoom
Wed	13-Nov-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - The Elmore String Quartet	1:00pm	Church
Wed	13-Nov-24	Solidarity Hub - Acorn the Community Union	7:00pm	The Hub
Thu	14-Nov-24	Prayer Meeting	10:15am	St Columba's Chapel
Thu	14-Nov-24	Midweek Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Thu	14-Nov-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Thu	14-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	2:00pm	At the home of Freda Bradbury

	Date	Name	Time	Location
Fri	15-Nov-24	Prayer for Peace Vigil	8:00am - 2:00pm	Emmanuel Room
Fri	15-Nov-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	16-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	17-Nov-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	17-Nov-24	Sunday Worship led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	17-Nov-24	Church Meeting	12:30pm	Church
Sun	17-Nov-24	Open Table Communion Service	7:00pm	Church and Hub
Mon	18-Nov-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Veta Velikhova (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	18-Nov-24	Autumn Housegroup	7:30pm	Zoom
Tue	19-Nov-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship join Fulbourn URC for 'The Word Together'	2:30pm	Fulbourn URC
Tue	19-Nov-24	Junior Church meeting	7:30pm	Rooms 1 & 2
Wed	20-Nov-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Jennifer Bastable (mezzo-soprano) & Ian de Massini (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Thu	21-Nov-24	Midweek Worship led by the Revd Alex Clare-Young	11:00am	Church
Thu	21-Nov-24	Gibson Lunch	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Thu	21-Nov-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Sat	23-Nov-24	Interfaith Forum	11:00am	Gibson Hall
Sat	23-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room



	Date	Name	Time	Location
Sun	24-Nov-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	24-Nov-24	Sunday Worship led by Tara Qu	11:00am	Church
Sun	24-Nov-24	<b>Newcomers' Lunch</b>	12:30pm	Gibson Hall
Sun	24-Nov-24	Solidarity Hub	7:00pm	The Hub
Mon	25-Nov-24	Monday Lunchtime Concert - Geoff Clapham (baritone) and Joanna Lam (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Mon	25-Nov-24	Property Management Group	7:00pm	Zoom
Tue	26-Nov-24	Cherry Hinton Road Tuesday Fellowship	2:30pm	St Athanasios' Church
Wed	27-Nov-24	Wednesday Lunchtime Concert - Erina Ishiyama (piano)	1:00pm	Church
Wed	27-Nov-24	Pioneer Minister's Steering Group	2:30pm	Emmanuel Room
Thu	28-Nov-24	Midweek Worship with Communion led by the Revd Dr David Cornick	1:00pm	Church
Thu	28-Nov-24	Knit One Give One	1:30pm	The Hub
Fri	29-Nov-24	Lectio Divina	8:30am	Zoom
Fri	29-Nov-24	Meditation Group	5:30pm	St Columba's Chapel
Sat	30-Nov-24	Nightlite	9:45pm - 3:00am	Emmanuel Room
Sun	01-Dec-24	Choir Rehearsal	10:00am	Church
Sun	01-Dec-24	Advent Sunday Worship with Holy Communion led by the Revd Nigel Uden	11:00am	Church
Sun	01-Dec-24	Open Table/Solidarity Social	7:00pm	The Hub

## NOTICES FROM PIPPA

- Please note that November 10th Remembrance Sunday led by Jeremy Caddick will begin at 10.50am.
- There will be an in-person Prayer Vigil held in the church on Friday 15th November from 8am to 2pm.
- The Pastoral Care group are organising two events:
  - Newcomers' lunch on Sunday 24th November after worship.** Please let Pippa or Hazel know of any new people and tell them about this invitation. We also need some members or friends to stay to be part of the welcome.
  - Friday December 13th at 11am, there will be a traditional Carol Service for all, but with a special invitation for those living with dementia and their carers. Refreshments will be served from 10.30am. The service will be live-streamed to care homes.
- There will be a Christmas Lunch after worship on Sunday 8th December, organised by the wonderful Liz Barrow - there is a **sign-up sheet on reception to indicate if you're coming and can offer help setting up, serving or clearing away.**

## MEMBERS PREACHING ELSEWHERE

3 November	Chris Baker Alex Clare-Young Janet Tollington	Haddenham Methodist Christ Church, Rayleigh Melbourn
10 November	David Cornick Nigel Uden	Buntingford Fulbourn
17 November	Chris Baker John Proctor Janet Tollington	Stetchworth & Cheveley Saffron Walden Bassingbourn
24 November	Chris Baker Janet Bottoms Liz Caswell Jo Clare-Young Janet Tollington	Trinity, Burwell Fulbourn Stetchworth & Cheveley Jessopp Road, Norwich Buntingford

## LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER

These are the readings suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary, as in **ROOTS**, the material used by our Children's Ministry team. They may be altered if that is the preacher's wish.

*3 November (4th before Advent)*

Ruth 1:1-18

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 12:28-34

*10 November (3rd before Advent)*

Ruth 3:1-5;4:13-17

Psalm 127

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44

*17 November (2nd before Advent)*

1 Samuel 1:4-20

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hebrews:10:11-14;(15-18),19-25

Mark 13:1-8

*24 November (Christ the King)*

Daniel 7:9-10,13-14

Psalm 93

Revelation 1:4b-8

John 18:33-37

*1 December (Advent 1)*

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36



*Photograph by  
Stillvision Photography*



*Photograph by Stillvision photography*

MAGAZINE EDITOR: Tim Rowland

ITEMS FOR MAGAZINE:

Please send items to both Tim Rowland and Ann Auger  
([ann@downingplaceurc.org](mailto:ann@downingplaceurc.org))

WEB EDITOR: Jess Uden

Please send all items to be included in the December/January edition to both Tim and Ann by the cut off date of Wednesday 20 November.

The December/January edition will be available from Sunday 1 December