

COMMENT

The magazine of the churches in Tring and the villages

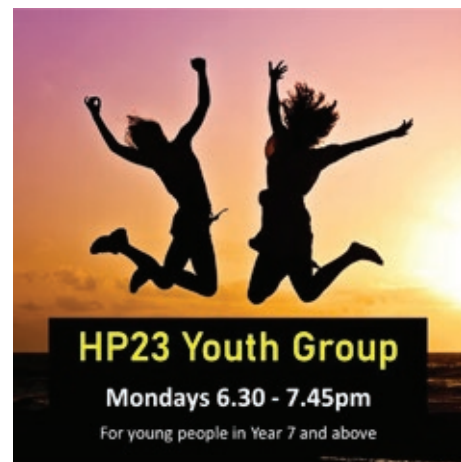
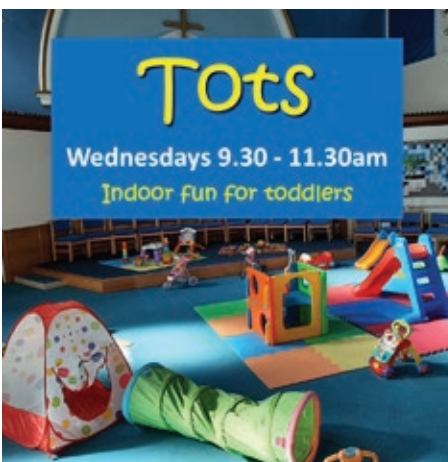


High Street Baptist Church - Tring

Growing in the message and challenge of God



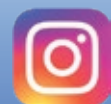
For details of our services, junior church, prayer meetings, and special events visit our website.



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tringbaptistchurch



High Street Baptist Church

Harvest



Harvests were particularly early (and poor) across the country this year. It means that when many schools and churches are gearing up for Harvest festivals, they are totally out of sync with the agricultural year. That, I am afraid, will be the case with St Peter & St Paul's Church this year but at least the children from Bishop Wood School will have had some time to practise and rehearse and be able to take part in our Harvest festivals.

Alongside the celebration of the agricultural world, there is another more modern October tradition. That is celebrating the feast of St Francis on 4 October with a pet service. Francis has long been associated with animals.

Pets can be divisive. There can be a split between dog owners and cat owners (and obviously cat owners are just wrong!). But even as a committed dog owner, I agree there is nothing worse than dog mess on the pavement, and both dogs and cats aren't always great for wildlife. There is also a time and a place for dogs. I was taken aback the other week with how many dogs were in the shops in St Albans. I am all up for a dog in a pub when having a pint, but not so sure about the presence of dogs when having a meal – unless outside – and I am definitely not a fan of dogs in restaurants.

So, what about dogs and churches? Well, Mungus is very regular in St Peter & St Paul's; not on a Sunday, but he does like to come and be fussed over at a midweek communion. Nettle is getting too old and is quite happy to have some peace at home. On my theory that dogs and meals don't mix, Mungus has to sit in the vestry during the service, but he does love to be spoiled at coffee afterwards. Judging by the number of dog treats in the cupboard, there are many people who like to treat him too!

In an earlier life I worked for the

Mission to Seafarers and my chocolate labrador then was Gladstone. Gladstone was fluent in Polish, Russian, Lithuanian and German (and in fact, all languages spoken by the seafarers of the North Sea). He would sit and listen to their woes and give them comfort.

Our celebration on St Francis' Day



will focus on the comfort and joy which pets bring to their owners. All of us need to be comforted at times.

Huw Bellis
Tring Team

COMMENT

The magazine of the Churches in Tring

Please submit your article to the Editor by the 1st of the month.

Aim for 500 or 1000 words and please send a head and shoulders colour photo or jpg and any other photos in high resolution.

Contact us at:
comment.magazine@gmail.com



Foodbank update



Trussell Trust General Area manager Lia and her colleague Rhianon, along with the DENS foodbank manager, visited Tring foodbank, located in St Peter & St Paul's Church, last month.

Tring's foodbank is run under DENS foodbank which works in partnership with the Trussell Trust. The outcome from the meeting was that our foodbank is run very well but we need to now look ahead and learn how to 'signpost' people to different services and extra help. Suggestions were made as to

how we could have better signage and how we could promote the foodbank a bit more so that the local townspeople know how to find us.

DENS noted that Tring was a very good donator, especially around harvest times, and this was a big help. There is a lot of help out there for people but it's just about how to get them to find it.

All in all the talk was a good one and foodbank volunteers who attended found it useful and also were pleased to note they were doing their volunteer role properly.

Trussell Trust's aim is to remove the need for foodbanks. They are working towards this with more signposting to other services who can help and lobbying the government about better

wages, more help, etc. Foodbank parcels are only for emergency need so we need to be able to get to the root of the problem to fix it. This is where signposting comes into it all.

The current high needs list, if you can help, includes: tinned fruit, baked beans, tinned/packet soup, rice, tea bags, tinned sweetcorn, tinned ham, cooking sauces, tinned kidney beans, tinned tomatoes, tinned vegetables, cereal bars, long life juice/squash, tinned spaghetti hoops, carrier bags and shower gel.

Thank you to all of our foodbank volunteers and to all who support it by giving.

Trish Dowden
Tring foodbank

Bumbling about in the background



My recent retirement from paid work has taken me back to the starting blocks to revise my opinions on a few things.

The freedom to attend meetings during the day instead of only evenings means I have been able to sample all sorts of activities and ‘join’ groups previously closed to me. I have been privileged to get to know better people with whom I had barely exchanged a few words previously.

I used to think people who went to house groups or Quiet Days were the holier members of our churches and it wasn’t for me... but maybe they are the people who want to be holier.

I used to think that maybe the people who lead intercessions or attend

prayer meetings or retreats are those who are ‘good’ at prayer and know God more intimately. But maybe they are those who want to get to know God better and learn to spend more time in prayer and quiet reflection. I certainly need that!

I have learned that some people love the smaller groups in someone’s home where they can get to know each other better and study the Bible together: they feel it’s a safe place to be challenged by God among other like-minded people; but others don’t feel ‘safe’ unless they are learning together in a church building or where someone leads them and they don’t need to put their thoughts into words. How good it is that we can have both kinds of group to meet people ‘where they are’.

I have learned that some of the deepest and most useful conversations can be had while walking together

or driving someone somewhere... or when some other activity is taking place (knitting, sewing, cooking, eating, serving, washing up...).

I have learned that keeping an open mind about all those things I thought I had ‘sewn up’ and being prepared to make a u-turn if things have changed – or I need to change – is the way forward. (Thank you for that excellent *Comment* article, John Whiteman!)

I have been inspired and humbled by some of the older members of our community, who are still young at heart, and have served God faithfully for decades yet describe all they have achieved as ‘bumbling about in the background’.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this learning experience. More please!

Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul

Reflection and interaction



Michelle Grace presided at the August Worship for All service in St Peter & St Paul’s Church and used Duplo (big Lego) pieces to prompt reflection and

interaction. Each of us

was given a piece when we arrived and we had to share them, swap them, join them together. The final step was for each of us to add our own piece to the construct on the altar. It turned into a slightly shaky tower (some of us thought that was an apt symbol for the Church of England...). The photo depicts Michelle

giving the notices while nicely posed with her construct.

John Whiteman, St Peter & St Paul



Parish registers

Baptism

We welcome these children into our church community and pray for their families.

Rosa Pütz Shepherd
Oscar Burley

Funerals

We thank God for the lives of the departed and pray for comfort for those who mourn.

Edith (Edie) Catherine Spearpoint 94
Elizabeth Sims 89
Paul Stroud Cox 93

Biblical connections

Find four groups of four in the grid below that share a connection.

Answers on page 30.

GREEN PASTURES	STORM	SAUL	SHEPHERD
ELIJAH	LYDIA	FISH	JESUS
OBADIAH	DAVID	WINE	STILL WATERS
PHILIPPIAN JAILER	SHADOW OF DEATH	LOAVES	ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

The war on healthcare in Gaza



On 4 September, over 100 local residents listened to a harrowing description of medical conditions in Gaza at St Peter & St Paul’s Church from an eyewitness, a Gaza medic, Professor Nick Maynard, an NHS Consultant Surgeon from Oxford who has been making trips (as leader of an Oxford training and medical support team) to support Gaza hospitals over the past fifteen years. He returned from his latest trip in July 2025 after working at Nasser Hospital for a month.

Nasser Hospital was subject to an infamous ‘double-tap’ attack as recently as 25 August 2025, when at least twenty-two medics, patients and journalists were killed. At the time of writing, Nasser is the last hospital still functioning in Gaza in some limited capacity, despite recent bombardments by the Israeli military.

Nick recounted his own experiences and the injuries he had witnessed, and described the indiscriminate bombings and attacks as ‘unequivocal evidence



of genocide’ and ‘multiple war crimes’. Having worked in Gaza since 2010, he has witnessed how precise previous Israeli aerial attacks were on specific floors or rooms in buildings. Now there is simply widespread indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas and refugee camps.

Quadcopter drones roam through hospitals and refugee camps, indiscriminately shooting patients and civilians. Nick described specific patients he had treated, including a pregnant woman and a breastfeeding mother, both shot in their tents in refugee camps by quadcopters.

The healthcare system in Gaza has been specifically and systematically targeted – hospitals and clinics repeatedly bombed, medics and their families bombed in their homes, medical supplies and medicines blocked from entry into Gaza, doctors and medics detained, tortured and murdered in Israeli prisons.

The audience found these descriptions gruelling, even more so knowing that Nick was talking about his own colleagues (whom he described as heroic, inspirational people... having to use very basic equipment) and his patients who were saved through his surgery but then died because there were no antibiotics to treat them, nor any food to feed them post-surgery. Lack of fuel or electricity has meant that ventilators and incubators stopped working and patients and newborns simply died.

Nick also described the widespread rampant malnutrition in Gaza as a



result of Israel closing all borders and destroying the aid system. Malnutrition means that mortality rates shoot up, as patients with malnutrition are far more vulnerable to infections and medical complications. Most chillingly, he talked of his own experience of seeing the gunshot wounds suffered (mostly by teenage boys) at the aid distribution sites run by the USA group Gaza Humanitarian Foundation: how on one day all the wounds would be to heads, the next day to abdomens, the next day to testicles. Other witnesses have described this as deliberate target practice on young Palestinians by the occupying Israeli army.

To close, Nick asked his audience to act, to share what they had heard, to join protests and to boycott Israeli goods. He asked his audience to write to their MPs demanding that the UK government stops facilitating this genocide by Israel.

The talk was arranged jointly by Chilterns Peace & Justice Group, and the Tring Justice & Peace Group. Refreshments were kindly provided by Tring Team Parish and Culture Bakery, Tring. Donations were taken for MAP (Medical Aid for Palestine).

Peter Dobson, Justice & Peace Group

A huge humanitarian crisis



For some months now, Justice & Peace Group members have been joining with others in Tring Town Centre every Friday, from 5.00 to 6.00pm, to conduct a silent vigil and protest about what has been happening in Gaza.

Our placards say things like: ‘Pray for Peace in the Middle East’ ‘Stop the Genocide’ ‘Aid is not a Weapon of War’

We have noticed an increasing amount of support for what we are doing. People sometimes beep their

horn, as they pass, or wave, or give a thumbs up. Some passers-by have genuine questions. Once, on a hot day, someone stopped to give us bottles

of water. On occasion, people walking through the town, or waiting for a bus, have joined us to show solidarity. At the end of term, a group of girls from Tring Park School stood with us and sang ‘Amazing Grace’.

We are not there to argue about politics or history. We are witnessing a huge humanitarian crisis, destruction of homes and livelihoods, people fleeing for their lives and aid being prevented



from reaching them. We want to see a ceasefire on both sides, peace throughout the region and for every human being to be valued.

If you feel you would like to express your support for Palestine in this way, please join us each Friday until there is peace.

Anne Nobbs
Justice & Peace Group

Simon and Jude, 28 October



'So I draw a veil over Mr Ramesh who once, on the feast of St Simon and St Jude (Choral Evensong at six, daily services at the customary hours) put make-up on his eyes and bells

on his ankles, and naked except for his little belt danced in the back room of the shop with a tambourine'.

Alan Bennett's monologue of a vicar's wife who, caught between her husband's appallingly glib piety and his parishioners' fervent self-righteousness, turns quietly to drink. She disgraces herself during lunch with the bishop, collapses while arranging flowers in the chancel, and finds redemption in the arms of a young Asian shopkeeper, whose sad wonder at her perpetual inebriation steers her towards sobriety.

Why Bennett chooses Simon and Jude as the date of a particularly memorable encounter between Susan and the obliging shopkeeper is unclear. Maybe they are simply names he recalls from his Anglican childhood, but I am enough of a fan to think it more than coincidence.

It is customary for the Collect on a Saint's Day to name the saint and reference some edifying glimpse of their life and work that we might imitate, but

Simon and Jude are absent from their own party, so to speak. They are not mentioned and the prayer eulogises only general saintly virtues.

Part of the reason for this is that, as with many of the apostles, their names are recorded in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, but what happened to them after Pentecost is not mentioned. What is certain is that both Simon and Jude had namesakes amongst their fellow apostles who were destined to be better known.

To distinguish him from Simon Peter, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark call Simon *Kananaïos*. Luke describes him as *Zelotes*. Both titles come from Hebrew meaning zealous and probably allude to his Israelite nationalism. Even if he did not belong to the extreme Jewish sect of Zealots, it is likely that he was ardent in his Jewish identity. After Pentecost, an abundance of legend takes him through Egypt and Persia, and some even have him martyred in Lincolnshire! In art his emblem is the falchion, a single-edged sword, similar to a machete.

Jude is listed by Luke as 'Judas son of James' and John calls him 'Judas not Iscariot'. He is commonly identified with Thaddaeus in the lists of apostles in



Matthew and Mark. The infamy of his namesake led to Jude's reputation as patron saint of lost causes, for only someone who had exhausted every other option would pray to a saint with a name so similar to the betrayer. Western tradition says that Jude joined with Simon to preach the Gospel in Persia; and church convention says that their relics were brought to St Peter's in Rome in the 7th/8th century. Jude's usual symbol is a club.

Alan Bennett has a sublime gift for making us look deeply at the ordinary things of life, and in so doing, recognize their beauty. Simon and Jude make us look again at the unlikely people called by God, and in so doing, recognise ourselves. God, whose choice has no limits and whose imagination has no bounds, chooses us.

Linzi James
St Peter & St Paul

Poem of the month



Here is a short, imaginative and rhythmic poem in which the author, contrary to the traditional association of gloom and despair with the

decay and darkness of autumn and winter, takes delight and comfort from the shorter days and coming of snow. It is almost a quiet song – indeed, it has been set to music and clearly shows the author's pleasure in celebrating the change in seasons.

Emily Brontë, poet and novelist, best known for her only book 'Wuthering Heights', was born in 1818,

one of six children of the Revd Patrick Brontë and his wife Maria. Maria and two of her daughters died young – only Patrick lived beyond the age of 38. It was a lonely and isolated existence but all the children read and wrote widely. Apart from a brief stay in Brussels, Emily spent most of her life at home in Haworth and in her writings she gives no details about herself or her character. She was described by others as shy and quiet but her only novel, not well received at first, has become one of the finest novels in English. She died, probably of tuberculosis and cold, in 1848, aged 30.

Kate Banister
St Julian's, St Albans

Fall, leaves, fall

*Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.*

Emily Brontë
**First published in a book of poems
by all three sisters under male
pseudonyms in 1846**

Repair Sheds: more than just a workshop



When I first got involved in running the Repair Sheds project back in 2020, I couldn't have imagined how much it would come to mean to me – and to so many others. Like everyone,

we faced enormous challenges during the pandemic. Lockdowns forced us to close our doors temporarily and isolation hit many of our members hard. But what struck me most was the determination of our 'Shedders' to stay connected, even when the sheds themselves were silent.

Repair Sheds are places where people – primarily men over 50 – come together to work with their hands, share skills and, most importantly, talk. Our workshops provide structure and purpose to many who are retired, bereaved or simply feeling disconnected. For others, it's a place to keep busy and put their lifelong knowledge to good use, often helping their community in the process.



Each Shed gives members the chance to work on their own projects, but we also dedicate around a third of our time to making or repairing things for our host venues or local organisations. We've built benches, planters, noticeboards and even bespoke furniture for local schools



and charities; and we always aim to work sustainably, using recycled timber wherever possible.

Since taking the reins in 2020, I've seen firsthand the difference this project makes – especially when life feels uncertain. The joy of seeing someone return after a long illness, or watching a quiet new member open up after a few weeks of shared tea breaks and teamwork, is what keeps me going.

We now run sheds at a local school and co-located with Sunnyside Rural Trust in Hemel and Northchurch – but the demand for places is growing. We're proud to say we have a waiting list, and even prouder to announce that we'll soon be opening a brand-new shed in Kings Langley. We're also exploring opportunities in Tring and are actively seeking a suitable site to launch a new shed there.

Of course, this work wouldn't be possible without the generosity of others. That's why we are incredibly grateful to Tring Brewery for selecting Repair Sheds as their Charity of Choice for 2025. So far, they've raised over £5,000 for our cause – a phenomenal amount that will help us reach even more people in the coming months. For those familiar with the Family Fun Day held in the churchyard of St Peter & St Paul's, you may also have spotted our stall, where the Shedders sell

their crafts to support the project. We also thank FOTCH for this opportunity!

This summer we reached a particularly special milestone—the 10th anniversary of the Repair Sheds project. To mark the occasion, we gathered for a celebratory BBQ with beer kindly donated by Tring Brewery.



Around twenty Shedders joined us, and we were delighted to welcome Chris Lee, who founded the project in 2014/15. Chris gave an inspiring talk about how he set it all up in the early days, the challenges he faced and the vision that has guided us ever since. Hearing his story reminded us that the project's roots lie in simple but powerful ideas: friendship, creativity and shared purpose. The afternoon was filled with laughter, good food and gratitude – a fitting tribute to a decade of community spirit.



As we reflect on the past ten years, it's humbling to see how far we've come. What began as a small local initiative has grown into a lifeline for dozens of men who might otherwise be isolated or struggling with their mental health. We're not just building bird boxes or sanding down old furniture, we're building community, confidence and connection.

If you or someone you know might benefit from joining, volunteering or supporting the Repair Sheds, we'd love to hear from you. There's always room for another pair of hands – or another good story over a cuppa.

To find out more or to arrange a visit, please contact me at tony@communityactiondacorum.org.uk.

Tony Mackinder
Repair Sheds Officer
and St Peter & St Paul

Jane Ducklin
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Records of the past



Like most people, I do not have a record player anymore; but many years ago I must have had a vision of the future, because I transferred many of the family's

collection of LPs on to cassette tape. I put a blank tape in the cassette recorder and set it to record mode, played the LP on the record player, all the time standing guard to make sure no one entered the room and added unwanted noise to the recording.

Does anyone remember 'Sing Something Simple' or 'Your Hundred Best Tunes' from Sunday evening radio? These were hugely popular programmes with many spin-off records released which my parents bought, although I am not sure if they ever played them! I do not know what happened to most of the LPs but some were kept, maybe for the album covers and sleeve notes, or simply because we didn't like to throw them away.

Many things come full circle and vinyl is now very much back in fashion. My brother is one of the people who never abandoned traditional records, albeit forced to compromise at times, and has a handmade turntable on which to play his extensive collection of music. He is also custodian of some of my more precious LPs from yesteryear, notably the Beatles albums 'A Hard Day's Night' and 'Help', Simon and Garfunkel's 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' and David Bowie's 'Hunky Dory'. But a few discs remain with me, alongside their home-recorded cassette versions.

Aside from the music, there are cassettes of family and local interest: a Carol Concert from Wigginton School, Tring School Music Festival 1986, Radio

4's visit to Tring in 'Down Your Way' and people from Long Marston and Wilstone recorded at the Wilstone History Society meetings in the 1980s, talking about village life from the 1900s onwards. Most special of all are the three cassettes my father recorded of his life as a child and then young adult, up to joining the army during the Second World War.

But returning to LPs, one of the records I have kept is entitled 'Tring Parish Church Choir Sings For You'. The sleeve is a sepia colour photograph of St Peter & St Paul's Church and the reverse lists the music being sung and the participants. The Director of Music was Keith Pearce, the organ was played by William Thallon and Colin Stevens. There are sixty names listed in the choir: Richard Collings was Head Chorister, Joanna Thallon was Senior Girl and among the choristers are many names still associated with Tring forty-five years later. The recording was made on 16 and 31 March 1980, recorded by Paul Crichton and produced by Neil Collier, for Priory Records of Tring. Sixteen pieces were performed, including works by Elgar, Purcell, Vaughan-Williams, Pietro Yon and Orlando Gibbons. (If you were one of those singers, do let the Editor know what you remember of that time!)

The sleeve notes explain that: 'THE MUSIC on this record reflects the wide repertoire of the choir. In addition to our main function of leading worship in Tring, we regularly visit The Abbey Church and Cathedral of St Albans to sing services during the Cathedral choir's holiday. Similar visits for a week each year have been made to the cathedrals of Llandaff (twice), Wells and Norwich. Future plans include visits to Winchester and Hereford. The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and at present three of our trebles sing with R.S.C.M Cathedral Singers.

'TRING PARISH CHURCH, dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, was started some seven hundred years ago, and completed in the fifteenth century. Serious deterioration of the stonework has recently caused a major appeal to be launched. The restoration of the church will also necessitate the cleaning and overhaul of the 3-manual organ, built originally by Henry Jones towards the end of the last century and restored in 1952 by Noel Mander.

'PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THIS RECORD WILL HELP TOWARDS THE ORGAN RESTORATION.'



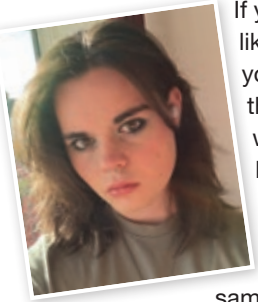
THE CHOIR

Trebles	Altos
Richard Collings (Head Chorister)	Sarah Barrett
Joanna Thallon (Senior Girl)	Jacqueline Booth
Team Leaders:	Vivianne Cook
Alex Mills	Mercedes Gibbs
David Ogden	Catherine Gittins
Lawrence Watkins	Sarah Heale
Juliet Fletcher	Deborah Manzie
Jane-Anne Purdy	Carol Moule
*****	Patricia Sims
Tenors	
Guy Banham	David Banyard
Robert Blackborow	Tony Barry
James Collings	Patrick Deverell
Paul Collins	Ernest Philp
Kelvin Davey	Colin Stevens
Simon Emery	Robert Stevens
Helen Ferguson	Robert Stringer
Matthew Gibbs	James Thallon
Sebastian Gibbs	Roger Turner
Sarah Gibbs	
Deborah Gibbs	Basses
Julia Gibbs	Peter Heale
Jonathan Heale	Roderick Manzie
Timothy Hook	Michael Moule
Gavin Kennedy	Timothy Roberts
Fiona Kennedy	David Stacey
Clive Ogden	William Thallon
Paul Rush	David Watkins
Belinda Reynolds	
Anita Sandy	
Samantha Silver	
Alice Stevenson	
Jemma Street	
Justin Watkins	

Some aspects of church life change and evolve while other things stay the same, but the continuity provides grounding and comfort in an increasingly fragile world. St Peter & St Paul's Church needed restoration work in 1980, it needs restoration work now. A lady who sang in the church choir in 1980 is still very much involved with St Peter & St Paul today. I will keep the LP of Tring Church Choir, and its back-up cassette, alongside all the others, especially as an oral historian has told me that cassette tape, if played regularly, is expected to outlast CDs and other modern media. Who could have foreseen that in 1980?

Alison Cockerill
St Cross, Wilstone

In the name of God...



If you were anything like me as a child, you probably thought the Bible was written in English, that 2000 years ago, Hebrews were speaking the same tongue we do today. It was much later that I learned the true languages of the Bible: a beautiful blend of Hebrew and Greek. But even then, the Greek found in the New Testament isn't likely to be the native language of any figure who knew Jesus. These were Aramaic-speaking Jews who might've known a bit of Latin or Greek for political or trade reasons or Hebrew for worship, but by no means spoke these languages in day-to-day conversations. The Bible is a mythical biography written in translation. But the kicker is that words weren't the only thing that differed between the Bible and history; names, too, changed.

Our name for the son of God is a rabbit hole of borrowing. Before Jesus was the Latin *Jesus*; before that, the Greek name *Iesus*; and before them all, the Hebrew name *Yeshua*, which, as well as Jesus, would eventually evolve into the English Joshua. But that only covers his first name. When I was younger, I thought that Christ was not a title, but a surname. However, this still leaves the question of what exactly Christ's surname would have been. The answer

is simple: he's named after his human father, with the suffix 'ben' placed before it. And so, when we take the Hebrew name of Joseph (Yusef) and place it after the suffix, we get the historical name of Christ — Yeshua ben Yusef, the anointed one. If he were walking along Tring High Street today, we might know him as Josh Josephson.

The spread and change of Christ's name perfectly mirrors the spread of Christianity across Europe (from Palestine to Peckham), turning from a small Jewish sect into the largest religion in history. But despite its prominence in European history, reverse-engineering Jesus' name reminds us of an often-forgotten fact – these people lived in the Middle East. The Hebrew names of biblical figures (Yohanan, Miriam, Ya'akov) are closer to their Arabic equivalents (Yuhanna, Mayram, Ya'qub) than they are to John, Mary, and Jacob. Even Christ's surname (ben Yusef) has an Arabic equivalent in the suffix 'bin'. Christ lived in a climate closer to modern Iran than he ever did France or Scotland.

The western history of Christianity is often the history of European politics: squabbling popes, crusades, rebellious reverends. My entire denomination is the product of an English king disagreeing with papal divorce laws. But this continent was not the birthplace of the church, nor of those who first spread the gospel. The evangelists were Jewish radicals, born in the modern West Bank of Galilee, with a leader raised in

Egypt. As the gospel spread westward to Europe, the Coptic, Ethiopian and Armenian Orthodox churches were set up, surviving to this day in the millions.

Coming into the modern era, Christianity didn't stick to the old world. Catholicism sailed to Latin America where it would blend with indigenous religion, creating figures like Mexico's Santa Muerte – Our Lady of Holy Death. It would come alive in the States with the birth of Pentecostalism and the Black American church. In Brazil, Liberation Theology would rise with theologians like Leonardo Boff. All this (these histories, cultures and faiths) from a street preacher who died at 33.

There's an old adage that names have power. In many ancient cultures, knowing a demon or angel's 'true name' gave you unimaginable power over them; and while we can shrug these ideas off as old-world superstition, there's still a truth to the power of names. Names are how we define ourselves. They're how we categorise and recognise one another as human beings. Knowing the historical name of Christ might help us remember his origin, and by proxy, the origin of our faith. We're children of a Jewish religion, a small sect from Palestine, that grew to every corner of the world: all of that in a name.

Rue Knox
St Peter & St Paul

Half an hour in the parish church



I was sitting at the 'DENS' table in St Peter & St Paul's one Tuesday afternoon in September, fiddling with TRingers' paperwork while the Craft and a Cuppa group were in full voice nearby.

A man called Peter came in saying he was checking out the venue for the event that coming Thursday, a talk by Professor Nick Maynard called 'Gaza – a war on healthcare', organised by the Justice & Peace Group. Nick is a Consultant Surgeon in Oxford and Chair of Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

He first visited Gaza in 2010 and has returned multiple times to teach medical students and volunteer with MAP. Nick was recently awarded the Humanitarian Medal by the UK Government for his humanitarian work in Gaza, receiving his award from King Charles at Buckingham Palace in February 2025 (see page 5).

I showed Peter the fold-out tables (for displaying literature) and answered questions about the location of toilets, first aid, defibrillators etc. He tried out two little sum-up machines. One didn't work so I offered the loan of ours for the event, if needed.

About the same time a young man of Mediterranean looks and language came in, hardly able to speak English. I invited him to look around. A few

minutes later he was standing on the chancel steps singing operatic arias in the most impressive baritone voice. I managed to gather that he was just passing and wanted to practise his singing. I told him the choir has vacancies! The craft ladies and I clapped him as he left.

A couple peeped in, afraid to step beyond the threshold. Glass doors would make our historic building so much less intimidating.

I was really heartened by these encounters; our church presence has an uplifting impact in so many ways.

John Whiteman
St Peter & St Paul



We are up and running – thanks to you!

We launched the Save Our Walls appeal in February this year aiming for the very distant target of £150,000 over the next two years. Thanks to our generous Tring community, we are now moving towards £40,000 and one or two donations are still coming in. We still have a very long way to go and we always knew this would be marathon – not a sprint. Donation forms are in the dispensers in St Peter & St Paul's Church – please do join us and help us go the distance.

It's our Heritage Heart – now it's our turn to help it stay healthy for all future generations in Tring.

Please help us finish the race!

The trouble with running marathons is that they just go on and on and on and you always feel like you are running uphill. It can seem as if you are never going to get there but the track record of determined human beings is that, eventually, somehow, we do. Right now we are at a stage in the race where we need to gather our thoughts together, generate some new energy and keep on running!

What comes next?

Now we are working on plans to find new ways of fundraising after the very successful 'Extravagant Evening' in the summer and the initial appeal for donations. We also need to ensure that our appeal campaign is more widely known throughout the whole community of Tring. There are many new residents in Tring and they all moved here because

they value the particular character of our town and our community. The medieval masterpiece at Tring's heart is important to them as it always has been for long-term Tring-ers.

The Family Fun Day in early May attracted record numbers of newcomers and young families and also raised a record amount of almost £6,000 – every penny donated to the Fund.

We are looking at ways to increase our profile in the town as well as reaching out to every household and business to pitch and support this initiative to preserve the unique nature of our town centre for the benefit of all.

To do this effectively, we need your help, ideas and energy. If you can think of new ways in which we can engage with the whole community, please let us know. From Town Council to every business and every household, we all share a common purpose in maintaining the historic open and welcoming centre of our town as a green space and a welcoming building for all to use and enjoy. It is as important and valuable for everyday relaxation and refreshment as it is for big events and celebratory occasions.

Please do write to us or telephone and tell us what you think and how you can help keep us moving the appeal uphill until eventually we reach the target and all the repairs can be commissioned.

All are welcome in this place!

In September we shall be having the AGM of the Friends of Tring Church Heritage and welcoming some new trustees as well as re-electing those who still have the energy to keep on running. This long race is not only a marathon but it has to be a relay one. The Friends started out more than thirty-five years ago and our fundamental purpose of preserving the heart of Tring for all future

generations to enjoy is going to be relevant long into the future. Everybody is welcome at that meeting and fresh ideas and energy are vital to keep our initiative vigorous and strong. Do come along and pick up the baton to help us keep on running. Please write with your ideas either to me or to the Secretary at: **info@fotch.co.uk**.

Make a date for 27 September and join us as we review how the appeal is doing and how we plan to keep it going all the way to the finish. You will be very welcome.

'It's our town, it's our heritage, and it's our choice'

That slogan appears on the new banner which will be going up shortly in front of the church and if you live, work or just love it here – those words apply to you.



Finally, let me express the profound thanks from the Trustees and the Society for all the generous donations and encouragement you have given in the race so far to help us keep on running. I should also pay tribute to the Trustees and officers (especially Richard Abel who will be stepping down at the AGM as chairman after many years of effective leadership) with all the passionately committed activists who have created the momentum thus far.

Together we are stronger!
Grahame Senior
FOTCH Hon President on behalf of the Trustees

Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal



After sharing the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said, 'Go and do likewise'. That is the mission of Samaritan's Purse: to follow the example of Christ, working

with local churches to demonstrate the love of God to people in need around the world.

Whether it's providing emergency aid for victims of conflict or natural disaster, clean water for a family in Africa, care and training to lift a family out of crippling

poverty, or practical care for new mothers, Samaritan's Purse works to transform the lives of the people with whom they work. Any gift will help equip them with resources including personnel, materials and supporting services to meet needs in Jesus' name around the world.

This November, Akeman Street Baptist Church will once again be taking part in the Samaritan's Shoebox Appeal and serving as a collection centre for our local community.

You need a shoebox, and different supplies inside for your chosen child. Choose boy or girl and an age range from 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14. The supplies would include a face cloth, comb, toothbrush,

crayons or colouring pencils, pencil case and a colouring book or notebook, which are luxuries for many children in need. Then you can add

two toys appropriate for the particular age group. These might be soft toys to bring comfort, a wind-up torch to provide safety, a skipping rope or ball, a vehicle, a musical instrument, a unicorn or dinosaur... Wrap the box in Christmas paper with the lid and box separately wrapped and attach a label to say what age it's for and whether more suitable for a boy or a girl.

If you would like to drop off a shoebox, the side hall at Akeman Street Baptist Church will be staffed and open on the following dates and times:

- Tuesday 11 Nov – 1.00-4.00pm
- Thursday 13 Nov – 5.00-7.00pm
- Friday 14 Nov – 10.00am-2.00pm
- Saturday 15 Nov – 11.00am-2.00pm
- Sunday 16 Nov – During the church services
- Monday 17 Nov – 10.00am-2.00pm

We'd love to encourage you to join us in supporting this wonderful initiative, helping to bring joy and hope to children across the world this Christmas.

For more information, please visit: www.samaritans-purse.org.uk.

Tom Copperwheat
Akeman Street Baptist Church



CECILIA TEA ROOMS.

Cecilia Hall, Puttenham

Friday 24th October, 3-5pm

Full afternoon tea with homemade sandwiches and selection of cakes.

£7.50 per head. Booking is essential

- Phone Christine on 07514 548289



Harvest Festival

Sunday 12th October

Service at 10am Tring Parish Church

Service for all ages collecting foodbank items for DENS from their high-needs list

Harvest Lunch at 12.30pm in the hall

Come and enjoy a two-course Harvest Lunch as we celebrate the harvest

Booking is needed to help us cater, byo drinks.

www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news

Collecting donations at the service and surplus money

from the lunch to go to the Bishop's appeal,

Working with Mission Direct to improve education for children in Uganda and Zambia

www.tringteamparish.org.uk

Nobody does it better...



If you want a spend a late summer Sunday afternoon listening to the sounds of Emeritus Brass and enjoying a delicious cream tea among friends,

nobody does it better than Puttenham. Cecilia Hall is set in the beautiful grounds of St Mary's Church, Puttenham. It's where the Quiet Days are held but also hosts many other events.

Tirelessly, Christine, Liz and Ernestina served tea, whipped cream and served scores of home-baked scones with homemade strawberry jam to groups of friends from the church,

the village and further afield (well Tring, not quite a field) who bought raffle tickets for an array of prizes, browsed the bookstall and other table top goods for sale and chatted to each other.

A good time was had by all! Many thanks to all who baked, served, washed up and cleared away and made it a lovely occasion.

The Editor



Orders of the church



Pope Leo XIV is the first Augustinian Pope – but few people know about the various 'orders' of the early church. Around AD600, St Benedict recognised four in his Rules.

'There are clearly four kinds of monks. First, there are the cenobites, that is to say, those who belong to a monastery, where they serve under a rule and an abbot. Second, there are the anchorites or hermits, who have come through the test of living in a monastery for a long time, and have passed beyond the first fervour of monastic life... and they are ready with God's help to grapple single-handed with the vices of body and mind. Third, there are the sarabaites, the most detestable kind of monks, who with no experience to guide them, no rule to try them as gold is tried in a furnace, have a character as soft as lead. Fourth and finally, there are the monks called landlopers, who spend their entire lives drifting from region to region, staying as guests for three or four days in different monasteries.'

Nowadays we would call them Monks, Hermits, Friars (or Mendicants) and wandering monks. Hermits can belong to one of the other orders so that there are, for example, Franciscan Hermits. Wandering monks can belong

originally to any order. We are left with three main distinctions which still apply today: Monastics, who live in a monastery, Hermits, who live on their own and Mendicants, who travel without staying permanently in one place, although they may have temporary buildings.

The main monastic orders are Benedictines (founded 529), Cistercians (founded 1098) and Carthusians (founded 1084). The main mendicant orders are Augustinians (founded 1244), Franciscans, including Poor Clares, (founded 1209), Carmelites (founded around 1150) and Dominicans (founded 1216). The main orders of hermits are Pauline Fathers (founded 1250) and orders of hermits based on Augustinians, Benedictines and Carmelites.

There are many other orders of which possibly the most well-known are the Jesuits – who are effectively mendicants (founded 1540) and Trappists – who were a branch of Cistercians (founded 1892).

Only the Jesuits and the Trappists were founded after the Reformation.

Some of these orders follow the Rule of St Benedict either completely, or to some extent. Some orders have lay members – I am a Benedictine Oblate.

Each category saw their role differently. Monastics stayed mainly inside their monastery in worship and prayer, although the monastery was a centre offering teaching, medicine and worship to those living locally. King David I



of Scotland established monasteries throughout Scotland to 'civilize' the Scots. Mendicants were missionaries to evangelize, and serve the poor, whether locally or abroad. Hermits lived a life of prayer.

Most of these orders had, and still have, male and female members, usually monks and nuns. The Jesuits are male only. These orders are mainly, but not exclusively, Catholic. There are Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Ecumenical monasteries living by the Rule of St Benedict, but not very many! Oblates of monasteries do not have to be Catholics. Two of the Oblates at Turvey Benedictine Monastery that I knew were Quakers.

A year ago I wrote an article on Hermits and three years ago an article on Monks and Nuns, so I intend to write an article each on Monastics and Mendicants in due course.

John Allan
High Street Baptist Church

Monastic Quiet Day



Saturday 16 August saw our third Monastic Quiet Day in Puttenham – a day based around the daily monastic offices. It is amazing for us to consider that this was our third annual Monastic Quiet Day and that we have a programme of quiet days stretching into our fourth and fifth years in 2026 and 2027. Linzi and I have already started planning the Monastic Quiet Day in 2026 which will be on the theme of listening and hearing.

An important part of the Monastic Offices is the Psalms, and it was therefore quite right and proper that



we had the Psalms as the basis of our reflections in this year's Monastic Quiet Day. In the morning, we had short reflections on the very popular and comforting Psalm 23 and the less popular and far less comforting Psalm 88, around the theme of emotional dialogues with God – there will be more about Psalm 23 and, in particular, Psalm 88 in a future edition of *Comment*.

After lunch, sandwiching our usual walk, was an opportunity to reflect artistically on the Psalms, inspirationally led by Revd Michelle Grace. After the initial 'I can't do this because I can't draw / I'm no good at art', everyone participated wholeheartedly, and an amazing piece of art was created which is on display in St Peter & St Paul's Church. We truly were inspired.

After the walk, where we braved the 'Puttenham cows' (Janet may not have been quite so brave in taking photographs if she had known that one of the cows was quite so close behind her!), Linzi led an equally inspirational session inviting us to reflect poetically on the poetry of the Psalms by writing our own poetry (you may also see more of that in a future edition of *Comment*).



After dinner, in the gathering gloom, we gathered for the final office of the day, Compline; and with the Salve Regina sung by the monks of Pluscarden Abbey, the day descended into silence as we left St Mary's Church. The Great Silence had begun.

Tim James, St Peter & St Paul



Can you see the light?

You are invited to join us on a quiet Study Day at St Mary's Puttenham on Saturday 15 November to explore some familiar territory and visit events from the scriptures as seen through different eyes.

Join us for a relaxed journey of discovery and exploration as we look at things through different eyes and reflect on how the same events can become different experiences as we look at them from the viewpoints of some of the greatest artists and thinkers.

Great minds and visionary thoughts have created a rich landscape for us to explore as we consider together alternative interpretations of the milestone events described within the scriptures.

NB: This will not be an 'academic lecture' but rather an occasion for us to share and reflect on the rich tapestry of images which together make up our cultural heritage and shine different lights on the events which underpin Christian faith.

Provisional Programme:

- 10.30 Welcome Coffee and Opening remarks
- 10.45 Introductory session on Seeing/Seeing Differently
- 11.00 Browsing references
- 11.30 Second Session on Familiar Events seen through different Eyes
- 12.00 Break
- 12.30 Service of the Light
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.00 Third Session on the Role of Art and Artists in Religious Control
- 2.45 Break for tea/coffee
- 3.00 Fourth Session on the use of Art in Worship
- 3.30 Open Discussion
- 3.45 Closing Prayers (Taizé Evening Prayer)
- 4.00 Depart

Interested?

If you find this subject interesting, do come and join us for an interactive day of discussion and discovery as we see where our eyes can lead us...



Please reserve your place by contacting either Linzi or Grahame for your ticket.

There is no fee but donations would be much appreciated to cover the costs of lunch and the development of graphic reference materials.

Tim & Linzi James, St Peter & St Paul Grahame Senior, Tring Team

The Nora Grace Hall

Several newcomers to the town have wanted to know why the hall in Faversham Close, Tring, is called the Nora Grace Hall. We thought that now would be a good time to remind everyone of this remarkable lady and what she did for the town.

Many of us were in the Red Cross and remember her with great affection and respect; we were known as 'Nora's

Girls' and there was no end to the various activities Nora got us involved in. It was a good way to meet other people, learn new skills and become part of the town. So, 'Thank you, Nora' for all you did for us; we are very proud to have the



hall named after you.
**Erica Guy
St Peter & St Paul**

A woman who inspired others



This is the story of Nora Grace who lived all her life in Tring. Nora Dell was under 2 years old when her father was killed in WWI. She couldn't remember him, lived with her mother and, eventually, when her mother married again after the war, there was a stepfather and three half-brothers, who were Ron, Bob and Peter Metcalfe (father to David who owns Metcalfe's Home Hardware in Tring High Street).

Nora went to Berkhamsted School, often cycling to the station and travelling by train as so many girls did. After school she trained as a nurse in Luton and Watford and was fully trained by 1940. She nursed in the district during the war years, married a local farmer, Tom Grace, and they set up their family of three children at Miswell Farm, Miswell, Tring.

In 1945, Nora joined the Red Cross which had been flourishing in the town since 1939. She worked hard and at various times held many different posts in the organisation, ran the annual Flag Week, was Centre Organiser and became Hertfordshire Deputy President.

Other groups also needed this lady and she served St Peter & St Paul, the British Legion, Hertfordshire Handicapped, Help the Aged and others. She was on their committees, ran Whist Drives and sold thousands of

raffle tickets. Although she was a busy farmer's wife and mother, in 1950 she recognised the need for a club for the elderly and began the Good Companions Club for the over 70s, a club she was still running at the time of her death fifty-three years later. By 1970 this flourishing club had outgrown its premises and Nora set about getting new ones. Fired by the promise of a gift of land, she set up a huge fundraising project (there was a large fund thermometer on the side wall of Brown and Merry) and, using great powers of persuasion, gained the backing of architects, builders, gardeners and the citizens of Tring. The fundraising included all the normal appeals: concerts, walks and barbecues and even the Red Cross members manning the dodgems at the local fair for several hours' takings. In just twelve months, a massive £20,000 had been raised (equal to £500,000, a complete house in today's money).

The Red Cross Hall was built and opened with due ceremony on 26 October 1971. This huge achievement was marked by Nora being awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List. The Good Companions and the Red Cross moved in, a Valiant Club was started for the young disabled, and the people of Tring began to use the hall. Nora was so delighted that she offered day trip hospitality including lunch and tea in such delightful country surroundings to senior citizens in Inner London boroughs – and they came... by the coach load!



For the next thirty-two years Nora, with the help of a committee, ran the hall for the Red Cross. She was chairman, housekeeper, fundraiser and a stringent guardian! Under her guidance so many things came to pass. When she died in 2003, we discovered that over the years she had taken on more and more roles as

her original committee members had aged and faded away. She was, in fact, a committee of one.

At that point a new committee was formed to take the hall forward for her sake and all went well for nine years until the Red Cross changed their policy and decided to get rid of all their property, thus saving on maintenance to finance Care in Crisis. Now, here is the clever bit: the donation of the land had not been given to the Red Cross but to the town; the Red Cross leased the land for a peppercorn rent (nominally a penny a year) so the town of Tring still owned the land. Nora had an astute legal adviser! The building belonged to the Red Cross BUT a very clever clause in the deeds said that if the Red Cross didn't want it or didn't use it, it had to be given to the town. In other words, unlike so many of their other buildings, the Red Cross were not allowed to sell the Tring Centre.

This caused tremendous storms at the time, but it had to happen. In 2013 the hall possession came to the town, to the people who had raised all that money forty-two years earlier. A new group called Tring Together took over the running of the building, initially for five years to see if they could make it pay its way. Then came the question of a name. It was no longer the Red Cross Hall, as it had been known for years, but those of us who could fought long and hard and lobbied anyone who might help so that I am so pleased to tell you that the building is now the Nora Grace Hall.

Nora would be delighted to know that her hall is now hosting so many different activities and is so often used by the people of the town she loved so well. I feel that the Nora Grace Hall is a permanent tribute to the lady who worked so hard and inspired others to achieve so much for their community.

**Shirley Blake
Former Centre Organiser
Tring Red Cross**

Times of inspiration, challenge and healing



Way back at the beginning of Spring 2025, Mike Watkin gave an open Parish invitation for folks to join him in early July at Lee Abbey, the Christian

Retreat Centre in North Devon, for a week focused on prayer. (You may have read about this in the September edition of *Comment*.) This seemed an ideal opportunity for me to stay in a beautiful place in my beloved Devon and be driven there and back too! Prayer seemed a good theme: can't we always benefit from some help with our prayer life?

If you don't know Lee Abbey, it has an interesting history as its name suggests. It has been used for many purposes over the years and as a centre for prayer and retreat since 1948. Its setting, overlooking the sea towards Wales, and extensive grounds on the South West Coast Path, surrounded by woods and sheep grazing in meadows with stunning views, makes it a peaceful and calm oasis from normal daily life and our frenetic and unhappy world.

The days which our little band of five from Tring Parish spent at Lee Abbey were for me times of inspiration, challenge, healing and embracing the joy of spirit-led music played by one of the younger Abbey Community.

The Jesuit theme of 'God being in everything' permeated the talks and prayers given and led by Emma, our leader. As director of the Pray-as-you-Go app, she has a sensitive, gentle but strong, mature approach to prayer in many forms and an excellent speaking voice. She gave us thoughtful and meditative words from the Bible and from well-regarded Christians with time personally to reflect upon these whatever our life stage, as individually, we sought to deepen and enrich our own relationship with God.

The first session began with this beautiful prayer attributed to St Ignatius of Loyola:

*'Keep your soul in peace.
Let God work in you.
Welcome thoughts that raise your
heart to God.
Open wide the window of your soul.'*

Emma suggested different ways of

praying: Lecto Divina; Meditation; Imaginative Contemplation; Colloquy – informal, spontaneous conversation with God; Examen at the end of the day. Yes, I do use some of these and am challenged to try others.

The theme of consolation and desolation often arose. We were encouraged to use thoughts of consolation through our times of desolation – to think proactively and recall those nuggets of consolation which each of us has been given; to think of those times in our lives when we knew our Heavenly Father was 'on the case' and when we knew without doubt that he was with us; to recall and repeat words from Scripture which we find reassuring and positive – I am sure we all have our favourites.

Emma asked us to think of a title for our notes and thoughts from the week. The words which came to me are: 'The Lord is my Shepherd; He walks with me in green pastures', probably inspired by the sheep grazing around us in the meadows and, of course, the 23rd Psalm, but the reminder of Jesus as the gentle Shepherd of my life, not demanding more than I can give but urging me, with compassion, to be the best I, myself, can be, is a thought to hold on to in the good times and during the harsh days which come to each of us.

There were many beautiful passages and verses to treasure of which Mike Watkin now has copies, so we can look back at those in our own homes and in our own space. I find this to be very important, as in just a few days, we received a wealth of words and thinking, so it will take time to process these and hopefully, apply those which speak most directly to us.

I confess that this, for me, is work in progress.

Most evenings offered entertainment and social activities, which you could opt in to or not, as you chose. On one evening, four of us joined with others to make a quiz team. This was great fun and we slowly rose to the challenge, with the Pictogram round being particularly so. Janet was given the impossible



task of Albert Einstein as her subject to draw, which she did amazingly well, but we failed to guess the correct answer. However, in other rounds such as Famous Statues, we got the hang of it but our star player was Mike, who we discovered, was absolutely ace at Dingbats. From trailing last to coming first transformed us from humble Christians into assertive Olympian competitors! No prize but the glory of winning!

We all enjoyed meeting different people across the ages and at different stages of life but each with faith and a desire for that to grow and mature in common. There were plentiful opportunities for good conversations which often felt as though God's hand was there, too. Amongst the many interesting people I chatted with were a gentleman with twenty-five grandchildren, an Army padre still settling into her role after a major career change and a fellow Open University graduate who, like me, combined her History studies with raising a family and working – how did we do that, I wonder?

The Lee Abbey website lists the programme from now into 2026 – a varied and interesting choice of opportunities for either a five-day week or weekend retreat; spiritually based, there's craft, art, creative writing, specific times for parents and children, walks, nature and coping with different life experiences and stages. Do have a look!

And finally, Emma invited us to try some creative writing, so I'm sharing these words written during our stay at Lee Abbey. Usually, I don't think too much about making a poem rhyme but for this, it seemed to be appropriate. Maybe the words will speak to you too and perhaps even encourage you to try writing down your own thoughts.

Inspired by the Ignatian thought of God being in everything:

*I am in the wind that blows
I am in the sun which glows
I am with the birds which fly and sing
I am in everything.*

*I am here in this place
I am the smile of a friend's face
I am in the calm and storm
I am in the dusk and dawn.*

*I am in the slow and speed
I am whatever you need
I am in the hands which hold
I am in the years of young and old.*

*I am the thought which brings
you hope
I am there as you strive to cope
I am here amongst your fears
I am in your sighs and tears.*

*I am the hug which holds you
tight
I am in the dark shadows of the
night
and in the light
I am in everything.*

Sue Yeomans
St John the Baptist, Aldbury



Light, love and hope



hope and love during the period 25 October to 2 November.

'Streets of Light' was originally set up in 2017 by one church in Sheffield. Since then, hundreds of individuals and families, as well as churches have chosen to decorate their windows at that time of year. By putting a light on behind the decorations between 5.00pm till 9.00pm for that week means the streets look bright and cheerful.

Let me give you some info straight from their website:

'The idea behind it was very simple. We seek to bring change and transformation to neighbourhoods and communities through window displays that convey a message of Light, Love and Hope as an alternative to Halloween.

'For one week, at the end of October, people create a design for their

home, their place of work, a school, a church, a shop... in fact, anywhere where there is a window! The windows are then lit up every evening for people to spot and find.

'It's that simple! Each display includes one of the key words: Light, Love or Hope – the rest is up to you and your imagination!'

If you would like to join in, then you can learn more about what to do on the Streets of Light website <https://www.streetsoflight.co.uk/>. There is even a video to watch if you need some ideas.

By signing up to say you are going to join in they will put your address onto a map of the country that shows all the homes and churches that are involved. They then produce a map of each town by the 23 October so that others can download it and walk or drive around

to enjoy the creative and colourful displays.

At New Mill Baptist Church we have rather a lot of windows and would love for you to come and help us decorate! You don't need to be massively creative (I'm not!!). We will provide the coloured paper, scissors and glue to make them. Come along on one of the sessions, or all three if you are really keen. The final session will involve a lot of sticking the decorations up.

I hope to see you there. Children are welcome if they can use scissors and glue!

Jackie Buie, New Mill Baptist Church



A stepping stone



I'm glad that I had the opportunity to go to Lee Abbey this summer as it seemed like a stepping stone to leading a new life. I was a bit apprehensive

about going as I'm a bit of a traditionalist but it was a revelation for me. The deep feeling of peace in that secluded valley, the kindness of all the people who cared for us, and the often rousing but sincere worship, showed me that worshipping God can be a fun thing to do.

I sought quiet places with gentle, like-minded souls and we shared our stories

and discovered what suffering people are able to share.

Lee Abbey is in the area that my late wife Ann and I loved; and I know now that I can return and enjoy that part of the West Country and remember her in peace and tranquility.

Jeremy Buckman
St Mary's, Puttenham

Tweet of the month



As promised last month, I am going to talk about a Tanager from Brazil. Tanagers are only found in the Americas and there are currently 390 species of Tanagers according to the latest globally recognised list of birds. They are often brightly coloured.

The bird in question is the stunning Gilt-edged Tanager (*Tanagra cyanoventris*), which is only found in eastern Brazil and so is endemic to the country. It is so named because of the golden-yellow edges to feathers on its head and upperparts. In this case, gilt means covered thinly with gold leaf or gold paint and that is certainly a fair description of the bird's upperparts, even if it isn't gold leaf or paint and doesn't wear off with time.

When I visited the Atlantic Forest of Brazil in 2004, I failed to see this amazing, brilliantly coloured bird. I was hopeful I would see it this time. In the first few days of the holiday, I was able to get excellent views of one Gilt-edged Tanager on a bird table. This versatile species eats both seeds and insects and so was happy to join the melee and allowed me to get some lovely photos.

The scientific name is derived from

three words. *Tanagra* was derived from the word *tangara* from Tupi, an extinct Brazilian language. It was adopted into Latin as *Tanagra* and is likely to mean 'brightly coloured bird,' which is appropriate. It might also mean dancer and these birds are certainly highly active as they move through forests. *Cyanoventris* comes from the Greek word *kuanos* (kyanos -> cyan) meaning dark blue, although cyan is blue mixed with green these days, and the Latin word *ventris* meaning belly. Ignoring minor anatomical quibbles, the bird certainly has underparts that change from blue to green.

There is currently a move in some parts of the world to have the names of some birds changed, either because they were named after people who weren't particularly nice or place names that aren't particularly appropriate or descriptive of the bird. In Britain this would mean the names of birds like Dartford Warbler, so called because the species was first described from individuals found on Bexley Heath, which isn't really part of Dartford anyway. I must admit I would suggest that Gilt-edged Tanager be renamed for positive reasons, because gilt is a thin layer of gold leaf or gold paint covering a cheaper material to make it look better. A better name might be Gold-edged Tanager as it doesn't really



lose its lustre over time and is always beautiful.

Gilt took my mind off to thoughts of false prophets that Jesus warned of in Matthew 7:15-20 and others warned of elsewhere in The Bible. Gilt is a way of deceiving people into thinking something is more valuable that it really is; false prophets deceive people into thinking they are something they are not. Fortunately, in the case of the Gilt-edged Tanager, it is the beautiful bird it appears to be, but in our daily lives we should remember to watch out for people who aren't. Try to see the cheap material that lies under their shiny exterior.

Roy Hargreaves
St Peter & St Paul

News from the Bell Tower



Tring Bell Tower hosted the district monthly meeting on 9 August – we had twenty-one attendees at various stages of ringing: new learners, intermediate and experts.

They rang call changes Plain Hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire. The latter three are the names of 'methods' of ringing that were significantly shaped by Fabian Stedman in Cambridge in the 1670s. He wrote two books about them: 'Tintinnalogia' and 'Campanalogia' and gave his name to a method.

After the first session of ringing, we had Evensong followed by a lavish afternoon tea for everyone, supplied by Tring Tower members. These teas are

always happy social occasions where news and bell stories are swapped. Then, of course, came the district business meeting which keeps us all abreast of what ringing has happened and what is planned to happen in terms of special ringing and teaching courses.

The day ended with a second session of ringing which included Cambridge Surprise Major and Stedman Triples.

Church bells have a rich history filled with fascinating details. In the Middle Ages they were believed to possess supernatural powers capable of warding off evil spirits in much the same way as were the churchyard yew trees growing nearby. They were also thought to heal the sick... maybe their loud rousing sounds assisted by relieving those suffering from melancholia (the Dark Ages term for depressive mental health).

Church bells were silenced in WWII

and were only to be rung if there was an invasion. The ban was lifted in 1943 as a sign that the immediate threat of invasion had passed and it was met with great relief and celebration. Those who learned to ring in 1943 are called 1943'ers.

A Tring band was called together to ring prior to the VJ Day 80th anniversary on 15 August 2025, just one of the special occasions for which we are pleased to ring and mark.

Perhaps you'd like to learn to ring and be able to join in with service and commemoration ringing (as well as decoding the names allocated to methods!)? Come along at 7.00pm on a Tuesday, but let us know to expect you on tringbells@gmail.com. We cater for those in school who need a skill for their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Johanna Morgan
Tring Bell Tower

Oh, what a night!



As you can see from the poster, a lavish occasion was promised and, as you can see from the photographs, a lavish occasion was delivered!

Thursday
12 June 2025 at Tring Market Auctions was not a date to be missed if you have an appetite for Fun and FUNdraising. It was the second event in our first year of running the Save our Walls appeal after the Family Fun Day in May and it was planned to be quite a party.

The perfect venue

The extensive space of the Auction Rooms at Tring Market Auctions was the perfect place for a party and Stephen Hearn and his whole team did a marvellous job of turning it into a real Party Palace for the evening. Stephen is one of our founder Trustees at FOTCH and his whole extensive team pitched in with enthusiasm and huge generosity to make it all happen. There was a lavish buffet and a copious amount of wine and other drinks and it didn't take long to get the party started!

The perfect piano player

Beth Townsend took on the job of providing the musical entertainment for the evening and she did it with great style and panache. Whether it was background music during drinks or her special set at the heart of the evening, it was all delivered with perfect pitch. Many thanks to Beth for doing a superb job.

The showman's showman

Being a dedicated Fundraiser, this event needed a perfect performer at centre stage and Stephen did just that. His presentation of the history and pedigree of a whole range of surprising objects representing Tring's unique history, held the audience in rapt attention. When it came to the auction itself, he spun a magical web around the whole company which captured hearts and minds and loosened the tightest wallet. Stephen and Sara are consummate professionals and they wielded the gavel mercilessly as lot after lot was snapped up.

One very interesting lot was the original painting of the church by celebrated local artist Brenda Hurley

(see article in the September edition of *Comment*) which was used as the theme image for the launch of the Friends thirty-five years ago and was then bought at a similar auction and has been displayed in pride of place in our hall ever since. This was donated for auction again to see if it could raise further funds for the cause and it was enthusiastically snapped up by Beth and Christopher Townsend (after an exciting bidding war). It now has pride of place on their walls. Brenda and Roy Hurley were both present at the event and I am sure they were delighted to see their generous gift working even harder for the cause.



Attractive experiences to be enjoyed

As well as a wide range of artefacts to bid for, there were a number of events and experiences to be had. These ranged from fly-fishing on the finest Wiltshire rivers to a chance to enjoy a Taste of Puglia with an expert wine tasting for up to six people in your own home. Perhaps the star prize was the chance to enjoy a private conversation with John Bly over champagne in his secret Treasure Trove of exciting objects followed by a delicious lunch at the celebrated Chequers restaurant in Weston Turville. All these events and experiences were enthusiastically bid for.

An extravagant evening and a suitably extravagant result

With a record result on Family Fun Day (see separate article on page 11) and a truly extravagant outcome from the Auction Evening, the funds raised for SoW since we launched in February, with donations still coming in, have now reached almost £40,000. That is a great start to the appeal and indicates just how generous-hearted our Tring Community can be even in these challenging economic times.



Watch this space

The question now is 'What comes next?' You can rest assured that we have some big plans to keep the party going and deliver events and activities which will generate significant revenues. It always was and is a team effort and, for the reasons described below, there is a bit of a hiatus in the planning of the next events. We will be launching the next fundraiser very soon and, as ever YOUR input, energy and ideas are warmly welcomed. This is Tring, a town and a community that knows how to make things happen and knows how to do big things together as a team effort.

Together we are stronger – teamwork gets it done!

A tragic footnote

After the excitement and euphoria of the Extravagant Evening an awful event happened which struck at the heart of the Hearn family and TMA team. On Friday 28 June, in a shocking accident, Jolyon Hearn, Stephen and Penny's son, died at the cricket club. As anyone who attended the Thanksgiving Service for Jolyon on 8 August will know, this led to a huge outpouring of grief and support from the whole community for Stephen and Penny and Hannah and the children and their whole family. Tring Market Auctions is a family business at the very heart of our community and Jolyon was a very big character and a big force for the future. It will take some time to accept that the future is now different before they can move forward. In the meantime, our love, thoughts and prayers are with them all.

Grahame Senior
FOTCH Honorary President

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No set prices, just donations

TRING CHARITIES
(Registered Charity No 1077157)

MILLENIUM EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2026, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements?

Are you under the age of 22? Have you lived in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone for at least three years?

To see if you would be eligible for a grant, apply to Tring Charities' Millennium Education Foundation for information and an application form.

Website details: www.tringcharities.co.uk/education
Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees
01442 827913 Email: info@tringcharities.co.uk



Please note that the closing date is 15 November 2025 to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2026.

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A spare room and a soft heart?



You know they are desperate when the phone call, at 4.30 on a Friday afternoon in the school term, begins: 'We know you only look after babies but...'

The phone call continued: 'We have a 12-year-old girl who has nowhere else to go – and we have tried everywhere else.' It takes a different kind of person to say 'Absolutely not!'

What happened next? We foster babies so we have a nursery, a Moses basket, two cots – different sizes – every size of nappy, changing bag and mat, baby clothes galore, baby toys, a baby monitor, baby milk, bottles... you get the picture. We also have a room that I think of as 'Tom's room' even though he is married and lives in Spain! In the hour that followed our 'Of course we will', while social workers collaborated and one prepared to bring the aforementioned young lady to stay with us 'just for the weekend while we sort out something more long-term', I flew about the house.

Anyone who knows me well also knows that I flourish on order, planning, routine and certainty. Suddenly I had to prepare a room that still contained drawers full of 'stuff' left by our young adult male some time ago (which I knew I wasn't allowed to recycle), books on the bookshelves, clothes in the wardrobe... Some of this was bundled into bags and put in the bottom of another wardrobe *pro-tem*. I tried to 'feminise' the room to make it feel more welcoming. (I had had four sons and no teenage girls EVER since I was myself 12 – and anyone who has their eyes open knows there are a few differences between a girl of that age now and one from the late 1960s.) I had to do all those routine things that carers of small babies don't have to do (yet) but all foster carers must as standard. The bathroom was cleared of any medication or sharp objects and kitchen knives hidden. I had to hope she was not vegan or vegetarian and would eat the meal we already had planned for that evening (she did).

When she arrived, she didn't look 12, of course, but much older. I began to think of all the questions I had not asked – and asked the social worker. We were left to our new house guest and another of our adult sons became the

star of the show as he found it easy to talk about gaming, music and film while I glazed over, listened and cooked! As the evening drew on, I began to panic less and practised listening. Unlike my monosyllabic teenage sons, this young lady barely stopped for breath. She agreed though to come with me on my planned Saturday activity which was to help at the Children's Society Garden Party – and she did. I took her on a walk around College Lake (my walking was better than hers!) and we both took her to Tring Museum which she found fascinating. These were all completely new experiences for her.

Eight days later (of course she didn't just stay for the weekend!) she left us. In that time we had become friends and we have heard from her since to say she missed us and our home... My husband had sacrificed celebrating his 70th birthday which happened while she was with us and our son Tom let her have his second-best guitar, which I had not removed from her room. Our son Jo had sacrificed all his chosen TV/film viewing to allow for the tastes of a teenage girl. The whirlwind of change was over – till the next time.

Why did they call us, a now older, even elderly, couple to take care of this young lady? There was nowhere else for her to go. The sad fact is that there are far more children in need of care than there are homes and families prepared to take care of them. What did she need? Somewhere safe, someone to listen to her, a different perspective, routine, stability.

We know foster carers who are looking after not just sibling groups of three or four children (if you have room, that at least makes sense) but four children from different households. Think of the complications that gives rise

to! Caring for the needs of one child – perhaps suffering from trauma of one kind or another – is demanding enough, but four children from different homes and situations? It's not best practice but it's better than the alternative...

Social workers talk about having 'capacity' and that doesn't mean a spare room in your house, it means the mental energy and flexibility to deal with all the different needs of those children – and to 'deny yourself' to use the words of Jesus, to put them first.

Do you know someone who just needs to know about fostering to consider being a carer? Could you prompt another who may be able to help? Could you support someone who IS a carer? Could you do it yourself? Helping babies, young children, teenagers, NOW can have a huge impact on the person they become later; and that in turn can change the society we live in. Some of the young people who are helped by foster carers go on to become social workers, teachers, prison warders – and foster carers – because they know how help early on can transform lives.

**Annette Reynolds
St Peter & St Paul**

Fancy a bit of peace and quiet?



Quiet reflective services at St Peter & St Paul, Tring

Find peace, comfort and a deeper connection in a world that's often too loud, a breathing space in the week and a way to connect with God.

Reflective services without hymns, using Holy Communion liturgy, lasting 30-40 minutes

Sunday 8am, Holy Communion in traditional language

Tuesday 9.15am, Holy Communion in modern language

Thursday 10am, Holy Communion in traditional language

Fairtrade Fortnight



This Fairtrade Fortnight will be taking place from 22 September - 5 October 2025 with the theme of 'Do it Fair'. Fairtrade is the most recognised and trusted sustainability label working to make trade fairer for the people who grow our food. Fairtrade is more than a label on your coffee or bananas – it's a way to make trade work better for the people behind our favourite products. Fairtrade works with small-scale farmers and workers around the world to build a fairer trade system – one where they can earn a decent income, work in safe conditions, and invest in their futures as they see fit. With the world in a tailspin, fairness isn't a given; but the power to get there is in our hands. Together, our actions can have a positive impact on real people's lives. Fairer pay, fairer treatment, fairer futures: that's Fairtrade. It's not just a label – it's a movement. So, whatever you do, and however you do it: Do it Fair. Opting for Fairtrade products is the assurance that the

product has been certified to offer a better deal to the farmers and workers involved. Tring is a Fairtrade Community, which means you can opt for Fairtrade tea and coffee in our many cafés and restaurants as well as purchase Fairtrade goods in our local independent shops. Visit Tring's Justice & Peace Group's page (www.justiceandpeacetring.org) to download the 'Guide to local, Fairtrade and plastic-free shopping and dining' or visit their Fairtrade Stall at Tring's Apple Day on Sunday 5 October 10.00am - 4.00pm, at Jeacock's Orchard, Cow Lane, HP23 5NS. **Polly Eaton**
High Street Baptist Church

Fairtrade Fortnight 2025
22 September – 05 October

Shopping and Eating out

Tring and surrounding district

SCAN ME

Download the latest Guide to local, Fairtrade and plastic-free shopping and dining

Justice & Peace Group, Tring

Fairtrade Fortnight 2025
22 September – 05 October

What's the Fairtrade Mark?

It shows that the product has been certified to offer a better deal to the farmers and workers involved.

A seasonal community celebration of food, environment and culture throughout October

TRING'S OWN APPLE FAYRE

Apple Day
Sunday 5 October

Apple Parade
Saturday 11 October

Full Programme

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(Registered Charity No 207805)

ALMSHOUSES IN TRING

From time to time, one and two-bedroom bungalows become available to let, for people who currently live in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone.

Applicants, one of whom must be aged 55 or over, must not own their own home or have significant savings.

Applicants will be asked to supply personal financial information to prove their beneficial status.

The average weekly maintenance contribution (equivalent to "rent" for housing benefit purposes) is £107 for a one bedroom property and £126 for a two bedroom property.

If you would like to be considered for the Waiting List, please telephone Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees, on **01442 827913** (weekday office hours only), for an application form or email info@tringcharities.co.uk

The Trigge Chain Library, St Wulfram's



In June this year the editor and I went on pilgrimage to Grantham, the former home both of the great Natural Philosopher (mathematician and physicist) Isaac Newton and also Margaret Thatcher. It's now home to Brian and Chris Impey, formerly of St Peter & St Paul's and Ann's Close in Tring. On the second day I went with Chris and Brian to the sacred site of Trent Bridge, home of Nottinghamshire CCC and a famous Test Match venue. Here, in the wonderful 2015 Test Match Series against our good friends, the Australians, home boy Stuart Broad took eight Australian wickets for only fifteen runs. While we were there, we also visited Brian and Chris' new church, St Wulfram's, Grantham. St Wulfram of Sens lived around AD640-703 and was the Archbishop of Sens, about 75 miles southeast of Paris. His life was recorded eleven years after he died by the monk Jonas of Fontenelle. There is a second church dedicated to him in England, at Ovingdean, Sussex, as well as two in France.

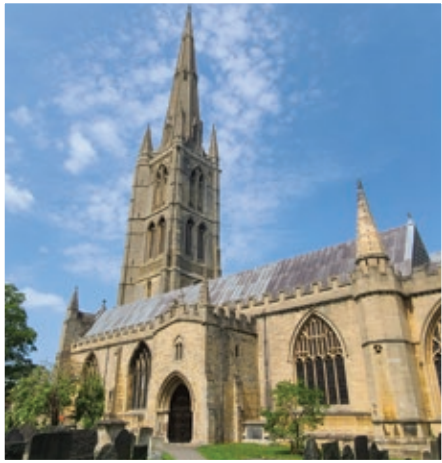


St Wulfram's, Grantham, is cathedral-like in size. In his book 'England's Thousand Best Churches', Simon Jenkins begins his description of St Wulfram's by saying 'Here is the finest steeple in England'. I would say that Salisbury Cathedral is the best that I have seen; but in 2020 an online contest run by the poet Jay Hulme, named it as the finest non-cathedral English church. The spire, at 274 feet (84m), is the sixth highest in the country

and third highest of any parish church. The current parish is lively, with a Sunday lunch group, a Tuesday lunch group, a Harvest Barn Dance and a 'Baby Clothes Carousel'. The chain library is a great treasure of the church though not as large as the chain library at Hereford Cathedral. It was established in 1598, towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign, when Reverend Francis Trigge, Rector of Welbourn, just north of Grantham, gave £100 for the purchase of books to set up the library. (According to the Bank of England's calculator, that is worth at least £22,500 today.) There are 356 separate items including a book printed in Venice in 1472, four years before Caxton introduced printing into England. Over eighty volumes are still attached by chain to the shelves, preventing their loan or theft. When we visited the library, which is up a set of stairs that proved a good morning work-out, we were surprised to see that the spines were pointing inwards and the titles written in ink on the opposite edge of the book. It is standard for chained libraries to have the chain fitted to the corner or cover of a book. This is because if the chain were to be placed on the spine the book would suffer greater wear from the stress of moving it on and off the shelf. Because of the location of the chain attached to the book (via a ringlet) the books are housed with their spine facing away from the reader, with only the pages' fore-edges visible. This is so that each book can be removed and opened without needing to be turned



around, hence avoiding tangling its chain and putting stress on the spine. To remove the book from the chain, the librarian would use a key. One additional key holder was the Headmaster of the Boys Grammar School, Newton's old school, so perhaps the young Isaac read books there. Frances Trigge was born about 1547. He attended University College, Oxford, in 1564, graduating B.A. in 1569 and M.A. in 1572. After taking priest's orders he was appointed rector of Welbourn. While in Lincolnshire, Trigge devoted considerable attention to the economic state of the country. In 1594 he published 'A Godly and Fruitfull Sermon preached at Grantham in 1592 by Francis Trigge' in which he criticised the commercial morality of the time. The rich were getting richer while the poor were getting poorer. The treatise contains interesting particulars of the condition of agriculture and commerce in Lincolnshire. He was against the enclosure of common lands and against the conversion of arable land into pasture. Trigge not only denounced the wickedness of such proceedings, but pointed out forcefully the detriment inflicted on the state by the diminution and impoverishment of the country population. Trigge died in 1606 at Welbourn and was buried in the chancel of the church. **Jon Reynolds**
Tring Team



Eco-Church 'Count on Nature' results 2025



What a long, hot summer we had this year! Now, as we head into autumn, the scything and raking behind St Peter & St Paul's Church is all completed, and

the wet and windy weather is bringing down the leaves. There are areas of longer grass that have been left as a refuge for mini-beasts as they prepare for winter, and the seeds from the wild flowers and grasses will be nestling into the soil, ready to emerge next spring.

Back in June a number of people around the parish took part in our 'Churches Count on Nature' project. This was the third year when we teamed up with the charity 'Caring for God's Acre' (CfGA) and iNaturalist (an online wildlife database and verification tool) to observe species in the five churches in Tring Team Parish. Collating all the records onto a single spreadsheet and adding binomials (scientific classification names) to the myriad common names we give to different species is quite a task – and an education! After that, we do a simple analysis of who found what and where. Then all the results are sent to CfGA to be included in official national records.

Initial results this year suggest that – thanks largely to Jill Timms in Aldbury and members of the Sunday Club there – young people made up nearly half of all those who recorded species in our churchyards and they managed to make just under sixty records. All schools in the area were invited to take part and helped us to publicise the event in advance.



In all, over 200 records were made, representing around 170 different species. St Peter & St Paul visitors recorded just under half of these; the remainder were spotted in the village churches. Of course, many were the type of plants, birds and insects that we see every day, but we know how important it is to note their presence. Some species that are now rare were once considered commonplace!

On Saturday 7 June, as part of our 'Count on Nature' project, we had an excellent talk from local naturalist, Nick Bowles. Aimed at children and young people, it was equally fascinating for the adults. There is always something new to learn and Nick's slides underlined – and important – right down to the tiniest creatures living in our soil and those who pollinate our crops – many of which are moths.

The other part of Nick's presentation was to show us all the moths he had caught the previous night. We were

able to look at each one closely, and we helped him record what he'd found before setting them free. There were about sixty moths in total and we recorded twenty different species. They had some wonderful names, such as 'Smoky Wainscot', 'Heart and Dart', 'Elephant Hawkmoth' and 'Clouded Bordered Brindle'.

The afternoon was, for this year, a very rare wet one. The rain was torrential so we did not go out to find mini-beasts for ourselves as planned. It was very interesting to see that, when we released the first moth under a tree, hoping to afford it some shelter, it flew straight out into the rain, to land on a grass flower for sustenance. We let them find their own way after that. Nature knows best!

Thank you to all those who took part in this citizen science project with us. The event was part of our church's response to Great Big Green Week.

Anne Nobbs
St Peter & St Paul



A denominational rollercoaster



Before moving to Tring, I had alternated between several Methodist (two varieties) and Anglican churches. I was baptised into the Church of England at

St John's Church on the edge of Roundhay Park in Leeds. Unfortunately, it has now been closed. Needless to say, I have no memories of being there.

By the time I was 6, we had moved to Morley, five miles south of Leeds, and I was enrolled in Queen Street Methodist Church Sunday School. The church comprised two large buildings, the front one on Queen Street being the Sunday School with the chapel behind it. This was Wesleyan Methodist as opposed to the Ebenezer Chapel, 500 yards away, which was Primitive Methodist. Although the divisions in Methodism, which had occurred following the death of John Wesley in 1791, had come together in 1932, the two chapels in Morley had maintained their own identities. During the mid-1950s, they were combined to form the Central Methodist Church, which is still in existence today. Whilst the former Wesleyan chapel was being modified, services were held in the Primitive chapel, hence the 'two varieties'. The Sunday School was later demolished and replaced by a supermarket, and when the modifications were complete, we moved back to the former Wesleyan chapel, and the Primitive chapel became a carpet warehouse. I became a member of the Methodist church, which allowed me to receive Holy Communion, and also a Sunday School teacher.

When I met my wife, Margaret, and

moved to Birkenhead, we were married in All Saints Church where we worshipped, a daughter church to St Saviours and not dissimilar to St Martha's here in Tring in size. Sadly, it no longer exists.

When we moved to Barrow in Furness, Margaret became an assistant Brownie leader attached to the Methodist church, and we worshipped there. One Sunday in each month, they had a Parade Sunday where all the uniformed organisations attended with their banners. It was here that our son was baptised.

When we moved south and settled in Over, a village northwest of Cambridge, we reverted to the parish church. I became involved in periodically reading the first lesson at Evensong (the second lesson was always read by the older of the two church wardens). After about a year, I was invited to join the PCC and was duly elected at the Annual Meeting. Later in the meeting, somebody asked me where I had been confirmed, and I admitted that I hadn't. Shock horror! I was rapidly removed from the PCC. Shortly afterwards, I undertook one-to-one confirmation classes with the vicar, who had been a missionary in China. I was subsequently confirmed in Great Shelford. I was told that my membership of the Methodist church would continue.

After around four years in Over, we moved to Tring in 1976 and joined the congregation of St Peter & St Paul where we currently worship. We initially led the



Infants Sunday School, with the help of Susan, daughter of Paul and Bea Van As. Paul was Headmaster of Bishop Wood School and served as a church warden; Bea was the leader of the Tring Mothers Union. When we retired, Sue Tarbox and Mary Hayward took over our part of the Sunday School.

As we have been in Tring for nearly half a century, the above is history. I rejoice in the fact that the different denominations here now work together in organisations such as Churches Together in Tring.

Ted Oram
St Peter & St Paul

Piano & more series

An hour of music on Sunday afternoons

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Sunday 12th October
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A flight path towards a more sustainable future

We are part of a global community of aviation workers and enthusiasts called Safe Landing – one of us with roots in Tring. We want to live in a world where aviation flourishes in harmony with nature, and the beauty of flying can be enjoyed by all for generations to come. We love flying, and want a sustainable future for our industry that can bring prosperity to the people of Britain. We have invited Luton Airport to reconsider their current expansion plans and instead commit to building the infrastructure needed for zero carbon aircraft.

Our industry is at a crossroads. Our current flightpath involves more conventional growth: more flights, bigger airports and rising emissions. We are flying towards environmental limits that will prove extremely difficult to navigate. On another route lies a bold transformation toward alternative ways of flying. As Luton is publicly owned, it can do things differently. Electric, hydrogen and hybrid aircraft are our

ticket to greener, cleaner and quieter flights. They can reduce carbon, air and noise pollution for communities living under flight paths. By opening up a more regional network of smaller airports, they can also improve local access to air travel and distribute the benefits to those living across the country.

Recently we visited the hangars of a UK-based start-up developing this technology. There are also plans in the pipeline for a first zero carbon British airline. However, we face a classic chicken-and-egg scenario: without suitable airport infrastructure we currently lack a clear route to market for the first aircraft.

Luton Airport sits in a prime location to support the UK's ambition to create 'Europe's Silicon Valley' between Oxford and Cambridge. This vision for the region to become the epicentre of technological progress could be supported by Luton becoming a hub for zero carbon aircraft. This would provide a clear signal for start-ups and talent

to base their companies in the UK. It would also supercharge innovation, with spill-over benefits to other areas of the economy. This is how we can back British manufacturing, boost the economy and create jobs – within environmental limits. It just means flying differently: with new types of aircraft and alternative airport designs. There is huge potential for employment in designing and developing this technology, operating the aircraft and upgrading our airports.

We were arguably too slow to capitalise on the transition to electric cars, but Britain's rich aerospace heritage puts us in pole position for aviation. We pioneered the last revolution in air travel: the jet age. We can now pioneer the future of flight.

Luton Airport can provide the runway for this to truly take-off. The skies are calling for change. Let's seize the opportunity to lead.

Finlay Asher & Tom Reynolds (former Tring School student)

A one-of-a-kind experience to help the homeless



Hertfordshire-based homelessness charity, DENS, has announced the return of its popular Sponsored

Sleepout on Friday 21 November, with free places available for everyone in the community.

Taking place at the new venue of Hammond Academy in Hemel Hempstead, the fundraising event promises an inspiring night under the stars, packed full of community spirit and entertainment.

Open to adults and children aged 8 and over, the evening will include activities for all ages, an informative Q&A session about the charity's work and live music performances.

When it's time to bed down, participants can experience just a small glimpse of the challenges faced by rough sleepers during the harsh winter months. At dawn, they can wake up feeling a huge sense of achievement, knowing the sponsorship they have raised will make a life-changing impact for local people facing homelessness each night.

The event is proudly sponsored by Safran Electrical & Power UK, a leading

aerospace company based in Pitstone, committed to supporting local causes.

Last year's edition saw a record-breaking attendance – raising an astonishing £33,000 to help rebuild the lives of local people facing homelessness.

Charlotte McCarthy, Community Fundraiser at DENS, said: 'We're determined to make this our biggest Sponsored Sleepout ever. It's a truly eye-opening experience, and an inspiring way to come together as a community. By raising sponsorship on the night, every participant helps us make an even greater difference to local people in need.'

Free places for the DENS Sponsored Sleepout are available now at www.dens.org.uk/sleepout25.

**Alex Copley
DENS**



Pope Leo – what's in a name?



When the next Archbishop of Canterbury is appointed, or indeed the Bishop of St Albans, we do not expect him or her to choose a different name

by which he or she is to be known. Yet, when a new Bishop of Rome is elected, he chooses a new name. As readers know, the present pope chose the name Leo (Latin for 'lion'), and he is the 14th pope to be known by that name. We may wonder why he chose it.

As one might expect, the thirteen previous popes called Leo present us with a variety of characters reflecting the ups and downs of church history. The first pope called Leo is one of only two popes known as 'the Great', the other being Pope Gregory who sent Augustine to Canterbury. This first Leo was much involved in the theological controversies of the early church concerning the nature of Jesus as both God and Man. He sent a letter, known as the Tome of Leo, to a Council held at Ephesus and it became the basis of the Council of Chalcedon's promulgations affirming that Christ is one person in two natures. The end product of these deliberations is the Nicene Creed which we proclaim in the Sunday Eucharist. Leo was also concerned with the status of the Bishop of Rome as Peter's successor and, as such, in authority over other bishops. Indeed, as we know well, the history of the papacy is the history of power struggles both ecclesiastical and secular. The various Leos (one to thirteen) exemplify this.

Leo II was a competent musician, concerning himself with church music. Leo III crowned Charlemagne but was judged to be harsh and divisive. Leo IV is said to have blessed an English boy in Rome – who later became King Alfred. The next Leo was only pope for a few days before he was murdered. Leo VI was a stop-gap with a short reign. We don't know much about Leo VII except that one chronicler was impressed by his wisdom and character. Leo VIII was chosen in a time of violence, while still a layman, and was hastily ordained. Indeed, church history shows some interesting cases of worthy laymen elected to important bishoprics and made deacon, priest and bishop in a very short time. Two particular examples are St Ambrose who was chosen to

be Archbishop of Milan before he was even baptised and St Thomas Becket who had a long political career before being ordained priest just the day before becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. One doubts that any lay people are being considered for our next Archbishop!

Another issue of great significance to some Christians is celibacy. Should married men be considered for the priesthood or should priests be allowed to marry? I mention this because in 1049 Leo IX enforced celibacy on all clergy. Also, at this time occurred the break between the Eastern and Western churches, between the Latin West and Greek East, between Catholic and Orthodox.

The next Leo, the X, came in the 16th century and was a member of the famous Medici family in Florence. He became a cardinal at the age of 13! He has been described as a polished Renaissance Prince who was a 'devious and double-tongued politician'! He was one of the popes involved in the on-going rebuilding of St Peter's in Rome, for the funding of which he sold indulgences. This was what so annoyed the German monk, Martin Luther, and drove him to nail the ninety-five Theses of Protest to the door of the church at Wittenburg and so to kick-start the Reformation. Leo excommunicated him, but to no avail. It was in this Leo's time that Henry VIII wrote his defence of the Seven Sacraments against Luther, thereby earning for himself the title Defender of the Faith. This title, Fid. Def. (FD) has been retained, notably on our coinage, to this day, in spite of the break with Rome. Leo X died of malaria in 1521 leaving religious and political turmoil in Europe.

The next Pope Leo was elderly and frail and only lasted a month before dying of a chill; and so we come to Leo XII. He has been portrayed as 'a simple, devout man, morally strong but lacking the flair of leadership'. Yet he was concerned to raise standards and to awaken a religious spirit in the people. He was hampered in this by his own narrowly clerical outlook and, by the time he died, he was unpopular. He was, however, concerned about the emancipation of Roman Catholicism in Great Britain.

Finally, in 1878, we come to Leo XIII, elected at the age of 68, apparently as a stop-gap. In fact, he reigned for over a quarter of a century, reputedly longer than any Bishop of Rome since St Peter. In our time, several have exceeded this time.

For centuries popes were not only Bishops of Rome but also secular rulers of the Papal States, large and independent domains in parts of Italy and France. The creation of the modern state of Italy put an end to this political power. Leo XIII was obsessed with the recovery of the Papal States and the temporal power of the Holy See. He was, in this sense, a political pope, but this was a time of great political changes in relations between church and state, of dialogue between church and society. So it was that this pope gave a grudging recognition to democracy. Accordingly in his time we find him attacking socialism, communism, nihilism, Free Masonry and so on, but he also upheld the right to private property. In one document he promotes this right, and the rights of workers and trade unions and so on. Indeed, as an advocate of social justice, he was known as 'the workers' pope'. When it comes to the church at large rather than just in Europe, Leo XIII saw a vast expansion with nearly 250 bishoprics being created.

Under previous popes named Leo there had been fractures in church unity between Rome and Constantinople and, later, between Lutheran and other Protestants. This Leo was the first to speak of 'separated brethren' and this attitude to ecumenism has continued under successive popes; we shall see how things develop under Leo XIV. One of his letters 'Ad Angelos' showed his concern for the conversion of England, but his commission into the validity of Anglican Orders pronounced them invalid.

A long reign means that much more can be said. Leo XIII was a pope aware of contemporary trends but also a man of deep conservative piety as exemplified by a number of letters about devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, so much so that some called him the Rosary Pope. He was also in favour of censorship and a new Index (list of prohibited books). One summary of his reign states 'he transformed the international prestige of the papacy and won for it a recognition it had lacked for centuries'.

We look forward to the ministry of Leo XIV.

**Martin Banister
St Albans Cathedral**

The 'J' in VJ80



VJ80, on 15 August this year, marked the 80th anniversary of Japan surrendering at the end of WWII. I say that because you would be surprised how many people asked me in the

lead-up to the event what the J stood for. I shouldn't have been surprised as, thinking about it, I can't remember any previous VJ commemorations in Tring. This made it hard to plan for. Would anyone come? Would anyone care? (The answer was yes and yes.) And even harder, what tone to take? Was it a commemoration or a celebration? (The answer was yes and yes.)

The commemoration and celebration of peace started with a service in St Peter & St Paul's Church at 3.00pm. Huw Bellis and Jane Banister did a superb job of getting the tone just right. I know I'm a fan, but their words, choice of prayers and material from the Royal British Legion gave a rounded, humane, Christian perspective. I was crying, as were many others, when we heard the voices of both Japanese survivors from Hiroshima as well as American GI prisoners of war. Thanks should also go to the ATC and the RBL standard bearer who brought polish and professionalism



to their part of the proceedings; and to Cliff Brown who chose some great music before, during and afterwards. But most of all, thank you to Huw and Jane for helping us remember why we were all there.

At 4.00pm came the part of the day that Tring does so well. When we came out from church, as if by magic, everything was ready in the churchyard. (Thank you to Ben and Phil Cartwright, Tring Together's Trish, Phil, Steffi, Lucy and Ian for setting up and clearing down; and all the scouts, ATC, RBL, cake makers, brewers, musicians, the Town Crier, the church welcomers and to Tring Town Council for providing the funding and encouragement.)

Tina, Aidan and assorted scouts were selling burgers. The T5 was ready for action (that's Trish's Tring Together Tea Tent) and the Tring Brewery Bar was pulling its first pint of the afternoon. Erica, Lucy and Sylvia ran the Stepping Stones final-ever craft corner where anyone (even me) could make a gold crown and wear it with pride. Then the musicians arrived with a wide range of styles from Patricia's excellent soulful singing, Orphic Lavender's crowd-pleasing set and finally Fiona Harrison's rousing finale, complete with Union Flag waving and sing-a-long lyrics. Our town crier, Mike Code, had written his own proclamation for the event.

I'm sorry if you weren't there. Which leads me to the last question. What next? We've had a ten-year run of Tring coming together; all ages, all faiths, simply because we enjoy being together. 2015 was Tring 700 and I think there's been something pretty much every year since. What could be our next town commemoration and celebration event? Answers on a postcard, please.

Vivianne Child, St Peter & St Paul



Town Crier's proclamation Oyez, Oyez, Oyez

Eighty years ago today Imperial Japan surrendered, thus officially ending World War II. Today, as we come together to commemorate what came to be known as VJ Day, our thoughts turn to thanksgiving and remembrance of those millions that gave so much to achieve the freedom we all enjoy today.

We remember those we lost, those who were wounded or scarred, those whose lives were forever changed by war. Nobody was immune from the impact of that terrible conflict.

We reflect, too, upon the words of our late and glorious Queen, Elizabeth II. 'Never give up, never despair.'

And so, we offer thanksgiving for the selflessness of those who gave up so much in order that future generations should enjoy the blessings of freedom, democracy and peace.

God save the king.

In memory of Godfrey William Orrell

Godfrey Orrell was born in Breaston, Derbyshire on 15 April 1937 where he was the son of the headmaster of the village school and his teacher wife and loved the calm security of village life with his sister Janet. He joined the youth club and the choir and enjoyed watching the village cricket team from the vantage point of the car roof. He learned all about gardening and looking after livestock as he tended the vegetables and fed the chickens, ducks and geese. He progressed in a straight and diligent line through Nottingham High School to Nottingham University and passed the Civil Service exam before moving away from his roots to Officer Cadet School and then to Berlin, which he very much enjoyed despite the Wall... and he ventured far afield in Europe in his old Mercedes. He always loved cars.

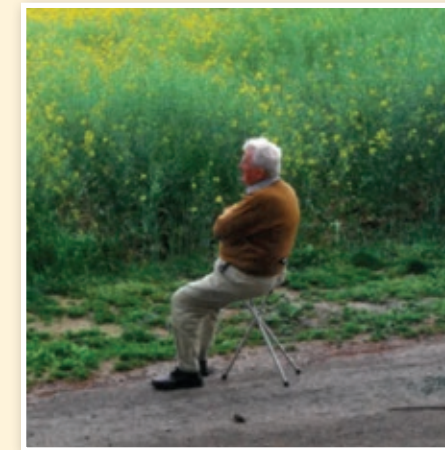
He would in some ways have enjoyed continuing the Armed Services life but parental guidance was strong and he entered into a different division of Her Majesty's Services and took up a role with HMRC. It was to become a lifelong commitment which lasted until his retirement (as indeed was his continued enthusiasm for the military and care for those who have served). Work was important to Godfrey and getting everything 'just so' with meticulous attention to detail was Godfrey's way of approaching every task.

Frequent moves to different offices from north to south and back again were followed by a three-line whip to move to London where Godfrey endured weeknights in Swiss Cottage whilst looking for a new home in and around Berkhamsted at weekends. Like most sensible people who start out looking in Berko, he found the perfect solution in Tring on Mortimer Hill where he and his wife Judith rebuilt their ideal home to the exacting specifications of Judith's father. A diet of hot cross buns from Atkins failed to daunt the growing family as they created the perfect nest in Tring and finally said goodbye to the builders after almost a year. A new chapter of family life began.

The very centre of Godfrey's world was family life with Judith and daughters, Victoria and Katy. Living

in Tring with his growing family made Godfrey very happy and contented. Those years of weeknights moving from office to office – but never to 'Deadly Dirty Dudley' as Judith described it – paid off. Marriage and family were Godfrey's proudest achievements.

With retirement from the day job came bonuses; not only did he have some wonderful new hobbies like counting the collection money from St Peter & St Paul on Mondays with Phil Lawrence or mowing the churchyard with John Luddington, but he also had the time and energy to enjoy family life – which now included sons-in-law Alastair and Simon and grandchildren Bronty and William – to the full.



Godfrey was a man for all seasons; he loved the rhythms of nature; he relished life in all its wonderful variety, season by season. He loved the familiarity of everyday life with a place for everything and everything in its place. A deep sense of order gave him comfort in familiar rhythms, day by day, week by week, season by season; and he made the most of every aspect: the working week and the family weekend; his ardent reading of the Telegraph and the passionate tending of his garden; tall tales and noisy reunions with his army pals and perfect, peaceful holidays in 'La France profonde...'

He was a quiet unassuming man, yet made the most of every moment; and in every aspect of that life, he was gentle, kind and considerate – a very particular Christian gentleman. From each stage of his life he accrued those precious assets of lifelong friends and deep memories – and sometimes new hobbies and habits.

The Orrell household was not a

closed unit; rather it was a centre of enjoyment, hospitality and fellowship with many good friends... old friends like best man John Lacy or new friends made on trips to Godfrey's beloved battlefields. Godfrey became quite the expert tour guide! Judith and Godfrey were excellent hosts and they participated enthusiastically in many fundraising events in support of causes such as the Friends of Tring Church Heritage of which they were energetic founder members and supporters.

The other love of his life was his Triumph Stag, supercar superstar of so many Tring Carnival parades, hero of so many trips to France and beloved reminder of a more elegant era of motoring. Godfrey loved cars and motoring and his regular trips to Le Mans were as much a part of the fabric of his full, rich life as his quiet habit of helping those in need.

In recent years Godfrey and Judith moved to Romsey in Hampshire but always maintained their very strong links with their many friends in Tring. Godfrey died on 30 June this year aged 88 and we held his memorial service in St Peter & St Paul's Church on 4 September.

God gives each of us a human spirit and God gives us the strength to make our choices and let that spirit soar or sink into gloom. Godfrey was a very big man in spirit with a heart as big as a mountain. He was in every respect a very particular Christian gentleman. He knew the right thing to do and he did it... with meticulous attention to detail.

Back in 1870 another rare gentleman called Adam Lindsay Gordon wrote these words:

Question not, but live and labour,
Till yon goal be won,
Helping every feeble neighbour,
Seeking help from none;
Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone;
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in your own.

Kindness and courage – the hallmarks of a true Christian gentleman. Godfrey Orrell truly lived and relished life in all its fullness and truly cared for those around him.

Grahame Senior, Tring Team

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Please contact Barbara
Anscombe if you would
like to take a subscription
to *Comment*: £20.00 for
10 issues each year. The
magazine can be posted to
you with an additional cost for
postage at current rates.

Articles, photos and publicity
adverts for the next edition
should arrive with the Editor
no later than the 1st of the
previous month.

COMMENT DEADLINES

1 January
1 February
1 March
1 April
1 May
1 June
1 August
1 September
1 October
1 November

NB There is no magazine for
January or August

Biblical connections

Answers from page 4

Psalm 23 (King James Version)
SHEPHERD, GREEN PASTURES, STILL WATERS, SHADOW OF DEATH
The Lord is my shepherd, He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Nature miracles of Jesus
WINE, FISH, STORM, LOAVES
Water changed into wine at the wedding in Cana, the huge catch of fish by Simon Peter before he responds to the call of Jesus to be his disciple, the calming of the storm on Lake Galilee, the feeding of the 5000 with '5 loaves and two fishes'.

People who were baptised
JESUS, ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH, PHILIPPIAN JAILER, LYDIA
Jesus baptised by John the Baptist, the Ethiopian Eunuch baptised by Philip, the Philippian jailer baptised by Paul and Silas, Lydia baptised by Paul.

Caves
ELIJAH, DAVID, SAUL, OBADIAH
Elijah hid in a cave after fleeing from an angry Queen Jezebel, David hid from King Saul in the cave of Adullam in the wilderness, Saul went into a cave for a comfort break, Obadiah hid 100 prophets in a cave to protect them from Queen Jezebel's persecution.



What's on in October in Tring Church

Services at Tring Church

Sunday 5th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Holy Communion with craft activity **

Sunday 12th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language**
10am Harvest Festival Worship for all

Sunday 19th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Holy Communion with craft activity **

Sunday 26th October

8am Holy Communion traditional language
10am Holy Communion with craft activity **

** Streamed service on our website and YouTube

Mid-week Services in Tring

9.15am Tuesdays
Holy Communion

10am Thursdays
Holy Communion in traditional language

Lots more going on



Mondays 3.15pm - 4.30pm
Youth Café in term time - toast,
chat etc for secondary school kids

Food Bank

Monday to Friday
10am - 12noon.
Drop-off donations and
collect food



Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm

Craft and a Cuppa

Drop in for chat, cuppa and bring
a craft to do if you would like to

Social Coffee

Fridays, Saturdays
10am - 12 noon,
and after Sunday, Tuesday
& Thursday services



Piano & more series



Sunday October 12th
3pm for an hour's concert
of music followed by
refreshments.
Free but collection for
church and piano expenses

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our church services and activities.

www.tringteamparish.org.uk



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