

FOREST EDGE NEWS

THE PARISHES OF LEAFIELD WITH WYCHWOOD, FINSTOCK WITH FAWLER,
RAMSDEN AND WILCOTE

November 2020

www.forestedgebenefice.co.uk

Issue 267

“We Will Remember Them” but in a different way this year

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and in light of the risks posed, the annual Remembrance Sunday March Past at The Cenotaph will not take place this year.

Across this benefice too there will be no parades or large gatherings. The church will remember the fallen during their services in Ramsden and Leaffield but these will have to be much smaller gatherings than usual and, alas, will not include any hymn singing.

Even if not led by the church there will however be an unofficial and informal laying of wreaths on the War Memorial at the usual time and two minutes silence will be observed just before 11.00 a.m.

Many people across the country will observe this act of remembrance by simply standing in silence at their front doors or gates, a move encouraged by Witney Council. If you are likely to share the experience please remember ‘social distancing’ and all other means of staying safe and helping others to be safe too.

The church has many restrictions in place and we have to sit 2 metres apart unless you are in a household group in which case 6 can sit together. Hand sanitisers are provided and we make a note of who is present for ‘Track and trace’. We also only go ‘up’ the aisle and return to our seats or leave via The Willoughby Room in Ramsden or the right hand aisle in Leaffield.

The men and women who have died to protect and preserve our freedoms deserve to be remembered, as do those in many walks of life who are still striving for Justice and Liberty across the globe. As the vicar points out, “Perhaps it is particularly when our freedom has been restricted by this virus, we appreciate once more the value of their gift.”



Also Remember, Remember animals on 5th November

Bonfire Night celebrations are also likely to be curtailed this year with far fewer public displays planned. Most injuries occur at smaller, domestic gatherings and whilst most adults enjoy the thrill of bangs, whizzes and flashing lights over 550 children under 16 are taken to A&E in the four weeks surrounding bonfire night alone. Animals both wild and domestic are often terrified during these celebrations. A recent poll found that 62 per cent of dogs show signs of distress during fireworks. Hedgehogs are quite often burnt alive and horses have died in horrific pain after being terrified by all the ‘fun’.

Please check bonfires before lighting. Keep pets indoors and close windows and curtains. Turning up the TV might help although it is important not to behave oddly and treat pets in a normal way.....not too much fuss! Pheromone plug-in diffusers can help, especially cats.

Forest Edge Benefice Church Services

November 2020

Sunday 1st November
10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,
Leaffield
with a reading of the names of departed
loved ones

**Sunday 8th November
Remembrance Sunday**
10.30am, Service of Remembrance in
church, Ramsden
4pm, Service of Remembrance in
church, Leaffield

Sunday 15th November
10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,
Leaffield

Sunday 22nd November
10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,
Ramsden

Sunday 29th November
10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,
Leaffield

Sunday 6th December
10.30am, Holy Communion, CW,
Ramsden

A Prayer for Remembrance

Ever-living God,
We remember those whom you have
gathered from the storm of war
into the peace of your presence;
may that same peace calm our fears,
bring justice to all peoples
and establish harmony among the nations,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Watch Out! Dog Thieves About

One of the many unforeseen side effects of the pandemic has been a huge increase in dog theft. As many readers will know dogs have always been a great source of companionship, fun and even the excuse for some exercise! In recent months sales of puppies have sky-rocketed and whereas a year ago you might expect to pay about £500 for a pedigree pup, you would now be looking at at least three times that price.

Hence the large rise in unscrupulous breeding and thieves targeting healthy and unneutered dogs. The Kennel Club reported a 168% increase in people searching for puppies for sale on its website from the beginning of lockdown until the end of May, compared to the same period in 2019.

Mysterious chalk markings have been appearing on the garden gates, bins and doorsteps of houses belonging to dog owners, the suspicion being that they are put there by dognappers to identify which houses to target.



More than 30 puppies, thought to have been stolen, were found in a van by police in Cheltenham in August

If total strangers approach you and talk about your dog be vigilant and report anything suspicious to the police. A woman in Burford was recently very disturbed by such a person asking how old her dog was, what was its name and, particularly whether or not it had been neutered. Similar occurrences have been reported in Finstock. Female pedigrees and 'working dogs' seem to be a particular target.

The Blue Cross has published useful advice about keeping dogs safe on its website <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/protect-your-dog-against-theft>.

It includes *Think twice before leaving your dog tied up outside a shop. You will make them a vulnerable and tempting target for opportunist thieves.*

Don't leave your dog alone in the car, even for a few minutes. Thieves can easily break into your car to steal your precious pet. Make sure your dog is microchipped and that you keep your contact details up-to-date, especially if you move house or change your telephone number. Dogs and puppies in the UK must be microchipped by eight weeks old, by law. Your dog should always wear a collar and ID tag with your name and address on it. This is a legal requirement when your dog is in a public place. A mobile number is also a good idea, but avoid putting your dog's name on the disc.

Take clear photographs of your dog from various angles, and update them regularly. Make a note of any distinguishing features.

Where The (Little) Wild Things Are

Our children spend less time outside than any previous generation. Little Wild Things is an organisation that wants to change this. They provide outdoor nature play for children in West Oxfordshire because, as they say, "We want children to love being outdoors ... because nature is something that you never grow out of."

Former Ramsden resident Val McMillan takes up the story: "A huge thank-you to everyone in the benefice who responded so warmly when The Little Wild Things had to move out of their wood at Ditchley.

After months of uncertainty the much loved Little Wild Things have kindly been given a woodland on the Cornbury Park Estate and in October Julia Donaldson performed with her family many scenes from her ever popular books whilst a socially distanced audience of children and families watched from the side of an enchanted valley on the Estate in the open air.

A thoroughly joyous day of fundraising for the Little Wild Things was had by all, rounded off by a visit from the Gruffalo in a circle of hay bales surrounded by flying coloured bunting and bubbles. It has been a very difficult time for all of us during the past few months but particularly so for children as their schools were forced to close and many parents were working from home. Now, thanks to the kindness of Cornbury Park the Little Wild Things have found a new home where children can enjoy outdoor nature play, climb trees, make dens and listen to the birds sing. Children are becoming more confident outdoors and will be happier and healthier for it.



Schools and families are once again booking regular slots for all the wonderful activities which happen throughout the week. Children everywhere are singing the songs so thank you Cornbury Park for coming to the rescue and 'Hip Hip Hooray' for Superworm!

You can find out more or book a session by visiting their website

www.littlewildthings.org.uk. or telephone 07855625402. They are also on facebook.

We are grateful to Val McMillan for letting us know about this. *Ed*

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Harvest Around The Benefice

October is traditionally the month for Harvest Festivals and this year was no exception. The pandemic meant we were unable to celebrate in the usual way, with lunches or at least refreshments after the service and Holy Trinity Finstock remains closed because of its physical layout. However we held something recognisably 'Harvesty' in the two other churches and the schools in the benefice also gave thanks for God's bounty in nature and all those who work to give us food. Here the vicar leads a group of children in Leaffield school. Notice the lovely paintings of fruit and vegetables behind him!



Thanks to everyone who decorated Ramsden and Leaffield churches for this special occasion and, of course, those who donated flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Poppy Appeal

For obvious reasons this year it has been very difficult to support the Royal British Legion with their annual Poppy Appeal. However in Ramsden Steve MacLennan has a supply of crosses, poppies and pins and he is happy to deliver them (and collect your donations) Just give him a ring on 07808909521.

In Leaffield there will be poppies and collection boxes in our Village Shop, The Fox and The Pearl.

There are several different ways in which you can donate or buy poppies on line or even by texting :

To donate £2 text POPPY2 to 70545*

To donate £5 text POPPY5 to 70545*

To donate £10 text POPPY10 to 70545* For more information visit their website :www.britishlegion.org.uk



The Church knows what shame is; so should you, Welby tells Government in Lords debate



POLITICS must not be reduced to "raw majority power unleashed" that normalises law-breaking, the Archbishop of Canterbury has warned. The UK "will suffer great harm" and peace between the home nations will be compromised,

he told the House of Lords.

He was contributing to a debate on the Internal Markets Bill which was given its second reading in the Lords. The Bill, which sets up internal arrangements for trading after the Brexit transition period ends, has been heavily criticised for breaking international law, something that the Government has admitted, and reversing the devolution of power in the UK.

"What we are above all called to do in this country, deeply embedded in our Christian culture and history, is to act justly and honestly," the Archbishop told peers. "We cannot do so if we openly speak of breaking a treaty under international law reached at properly, on which peace in part of the UK relies."

"In the Church of England, my Lords, we are all too clearly aware of the shame that comes with failing morally. Let us not make that same mistake at national level. This House exists to amend and improve legislation, not to derail it, and that must be our urgent aim now."

He continued: "The UK negotiated the Northern Ireland Protocol with the EU to 'protect the 1998 Agreement in all its dimensions'. One year on, in this Bill, the UK Government is not only preparing to break the Protocol, but also to breach a fundamental tenet of the Agreement: namely by limiting the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights in Northern Ireland law." Archbishop Welby posted on Twitter a few days later, "As expected there's been lots of 'clergy should stay out of politics' since yesterday. Christians and people of all faiths take part in the national debate. This is democracy and freedom. I have seen the opposite. Treasure what we have."

A fuller version of this article appeared recently in The Church Times *Ed*

Worried about problems with local roads? Oxfordshire County Council Says you can help

Oxfordshire County Council is looking for volunteers to take the role of super users on FixMyStreet. Super Users can go further than the usual app user by speeding up the repair process. The FixMyStreet app and website allow residents to report potholes, damaged kerbing and drains which Oxfordshire County Council then repairs. Super Users are trained in identifying and assessing potholes, blocked drains and damaged signs. They can also order repairs to be carried out after having reported them, which speeds up the process.

If you would like to know more or to become a Super User please contact our local county councillor Liam Walker at: liam.walker2@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Wit and Wisdom

*“Qualifications of a pastor: the mind
of a scholar, the heart of a child, and
the hide of a rhinoceros”*

Stuart Briscoe

*“I’ve been up and down so many
times that I feel as if I’m in a
revolving door.” Cher*

*“In every good marriage it helps
sometimes to be a little deaf” Ruth
Bader Ginsburg*

*“If I were two-faced, would I be
wearing this one?” Abraham Lincoln*

*“What you don’t see with your eyes,
don’t invent with your mouth.”*

Jewish Proverb

*“Religion is like going out to dinner
with friends. Everyone may order
something different, but everyone can
still sit at the same table.” The Dalai
Lama*

*“Greater love has no one than this:
to lay down one’s life for one’s
friends.” John 15 v13*

*“These were His servants, in His
steps they trod,*

*Following through death the
martyred Son of God:*

*Victor, He rose; victorious too shall
rise*

*They who have drunk His cup of
sacrifice.” From ‘O Valiant Hearts’*

Leaffield’s new Headteacher introduces herself and the whole benefice wishes her well!



I wanted to introduce myself to the
local community after starting as
Headteacher at Leaffield C.E. Primary
School at the start of September.
Previously, I worked in London for
approximately 20 years and more
recently in the north of the county at
Bloxham Primary School. I have had a
very warm welcome from the parents
and children here and look forward to
getting to know the community over the
course of this year.

I live in Cheltenham where I am a mum
to two children. As someone who grew
up in rural Derbyshire, my family
enjoy the outdoor life and we are loving
our country life after London.

Faye Dean - Headteacher

FRIENDS OF LEAFIELD SCHOOL

ON LINE AUCTION

For the first time ever FOLS are going
to be running an Online Auction and we
are appealing to the wider community
for help! Are you able to donate an
item, service or promise that will be put
up for auction via our online auction
site?

Please email

[‘friendsofleafieldschool@gmail.com’](mailto:friendsofleafieldschool@gmail.com)
by Wednesday 18th November. We are
very grateful for all offers and to Jo
Rowles (Class 2 Mum) who has kindly
offered to organise this event.

The Vicar writes



So many people have commented on how good it was to have Alister McGrath ministering in our benefice. We all benefited greatly from his wisdom and expertise. He was a huge help, especially when we were preparing weekly online services. With his previous experience of producing videos, Alister could always be relied upon to provide high quality content. This is something he generously supplied each week.

Many of Alister's observations that he made in his online sermons have stayed with me. I keep coming back to one comment, especially when this awful pandemic seems almost overwhelming. It is about how we view our current predicament – do we see it as a hindrance or an opportunity? Is it possible to use this current situation as a means of self-improvement? How can we be better people when this is all over?

It is easy to follow Jesus when life runs smoothly. But, during those trials of life, our true commitment to our faith is revealed. Through the Gospels, Jesus assures his followers their faith would be tested. The very essence of discipleship is sacrifice. Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew's Gospel, chapter sixteen, verse twenty-four, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me". Jesus wasn't talking specifically about a burden we must carry, like a strained relationship, a thankless job or even a physical illness. In acknowledging these burdens, the result can be a self-pitying pride and not what Jesus meant.

Jesus's call was to an absolute surrender. As St Luke puts it in chapter nine of his Gospel, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.

What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?" It seems an unbearable calling. Even in Jesus's time, most people found his commandment impossible. They were not able to sacrifice their own ideas, plans and desires and exchange them for his. But Jesus insisted that discipleship demanded sacrifice and he never hid that cost. How many of us would be willing to lose friends, family, reputation, career, and possibly even our own lives? It is not a good advertisement for Christianity!

In his book "Silence and Honey Cakes", Rowan Williams talks of the distinctiveness of individual calling. He speaks of the sin of inner tension resulting from not being sensitive to the difference in people's callings. Williams is convinced this remains one of the great worries, one of the great corrupting and frustrating factors, in spiritual life. "There are no standardised, generalised forms of holiness", he says. "Each one of us needs to discover what our path is." As we stand before God, what is required of each of us is regulated by our individual capacity. In the light of this, it is impossible to pass judgement on other people. "How do we know", says Williams, "how hard pressure or temptation bore on another person?" A temptation on one person might seem trivial but, on another person, it might seem crushing.

Giving other people room, is one of the most difficult aspects of being a Christian. This is the room to grow as God wills. Allowing or permitting others the space to grow means denying ourselves. It means not burdening others with the vocation we have received from God. It means giving others the space to explore their vocation by putting aside those aspects of our will that seek to judge other people.

With all the changes currently taking place, it is sometimes difficult to know what tomorrow will bring. Anxiety leads to feelings of powerlessness and a lack of control as to where life is going. In seeking to regain some sort of stability, it is easy to kick out at others. If they are not doing what we believe is right and necessary, it seems only reasonable. But Jesus's call is clear: "Those who want to save their life will lose it."

Rowan Williams reminds us to beware of the sin of inner tension resulting from not being sensitive to the difference in other people's callings.

With every blessing,

Paul

Rev'd Paul Mansell

Vicar, Forest Edge Benefice

IN OUR FOUR PARISHES

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From the registers

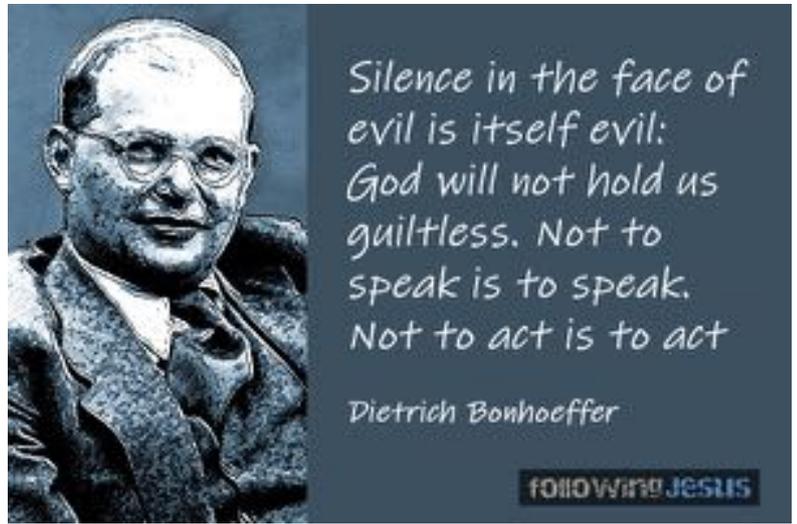
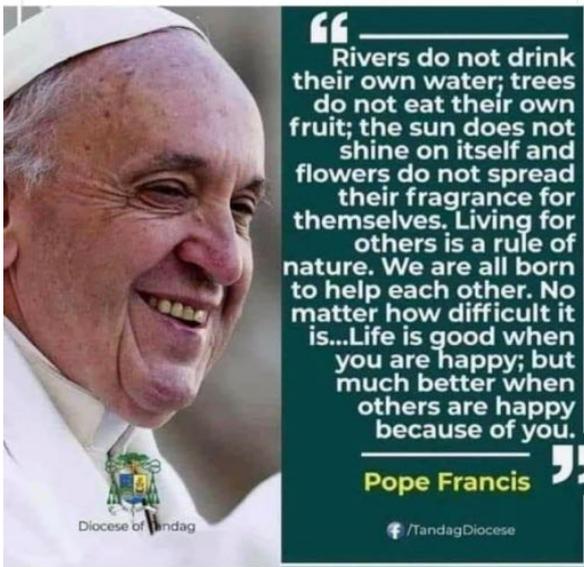
FUNERAL

Janet Beryl Knowles

14th October 2020

St Michael's, Leafield

" Sometimes your mind plays tricks on you. It can tell you you're no good, that it's all hopeless. But remember this; you are loved, and important, and you bring to this world things no one else can. So hold on "



Macmillan coffee week at the Village Shop – Peapell Stores and Tea Room Leafield

Thanks to everyone that donated money to our Macmillan coffee week.

We raised a whopping £452.28!

Winner of guess the sprinkles competition

Well done to Archie for winning the caterpillar cake, there were 937 sprinkles, Archie's guess was 900!

No Christmas Market in Ramsden and no Christmas fayre in Leafield

Sadly plans for both these annual events have had to be abandoned but both sets of organisers are looking at alternative fun ways of raising much needed funds.

Leafield Brownies: for girls aged 7-11

We had an excellent response to a call for help for the Brownies last month and as a result have had a new Unit helper come forward to add to the existing Young Leader. All we need now is one adult willing to take over the lead for the Brownies. This group can't start to meet again regularly until we find that special person. PLEASE get in touch if you feel you could step up to lead this group. The commitment would be at least 3 hours per week. You will be joining 1,000s of volunteers across the country in the largest UK female voluntary organisation. Full training and support are given for free by Girlguiding UK and their local mentors.

There is plenty of information on the Girlguiding website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/> contact me for a conversation: Jane Digby 01993 878585, or 07779 637486, email janedigby@btopenworld.com

After the First World War Germany was on its knees. National humiliation and economic chaos led to the rise of Fascism. Many, even in the church, saw Hitler as an answer to prayer. Hitler is the way of the Spirit and the will of God for the German people to enter the Church of Christ." So spoke German pastor Hermann Gruner. Another pastor put it more succinctly: "Christ has come to us through Adolph Hitler."

One person who took exception to this view was theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was determined not only to refute this idea but also to topple Hitler, even if it meant killing him.

Dietrich was one of eight children and grew up in an Upper Middle class home with liberal, nominally religious parents who encouraged their children in Arts and Literature. The young Dietrich seemed destined for a career in music. However when aged 14, Dietrich announced he intended to become a minister and theologian, the family was not pleased.

Bonhoeffer graduated from the University of Berlin in 1927, and then spent some months in Spain as an assistant pastor to a German congregation. Then it was back to Germany to write a dissertation, which would grant him the right to a university appointment. He then spent a year in America, at New York's Union Theological Seminary, before returning to the post of lecturer at the University of Berlin.

Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and president 18 months later. His anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions intensified—as did his opposition, which included the likes of theologian Karl Barth, pastor Martin Niemoller, and the young Bonhoeffer. Together with other pastors and theologians, they organized the Confessing Church, which announced publicly in its Barmen Declaration (1934) its allegiance first to Jesus Christ: "We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and must recognize yet other happenings and powers, personalities and truths as divine revelation alongside this one Word of God. ..."

In the meantime, Bonhoeffer had written *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), a call to more faithful and radical obedience to Christ and a severe rebuke of comfortable Christianity: "Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession. ... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

As passive opposition to the Nazis became increasingly ineffective Bonhoeffer abandoned his pacifism and joined the German Secret Service as a double agent. Whilst travelling to church conferences around Europe to collect information he was actually helping Jews to escape.

Bonhoeffer, though privy to various plots on Hitler's life, was never at the centre of the plans. Eventually his resistance efforts (mainly his role in rescuing Jews) was discovered. On an April afternoon in 1943, two men arrived in a black Mercedes, put Bonhoeffer in the car, and drove him to prison. On April 9, 1945, one month before Germany surrendered, he was hanged with six other resisters.

"It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the sufferings of God in the secular life." he had written.

The life and teachings of this inspiring man are well worth exploring. *Ed*



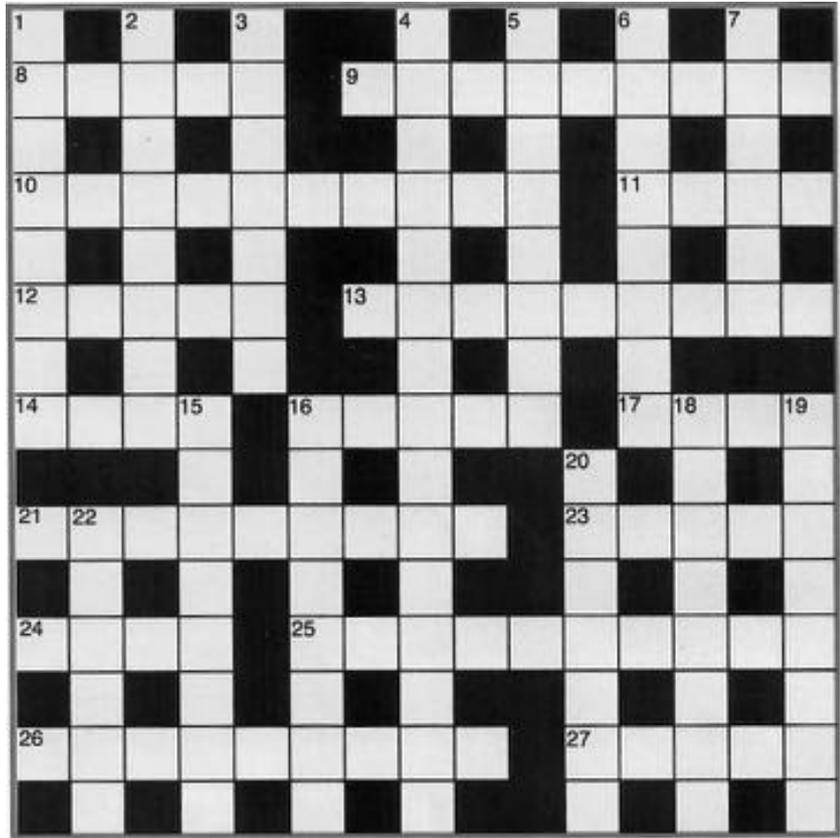
CROSSWORD CORNER

Congratulations to everyone who sent in solutions to last month's puzzle. The first correct answer out of the hat came from Katja Bremer from Woodstock. I am delighted that our little puzzle travels such great distances! Well done Katya. A book token will be with you shortly. The answers were: ACROSS 6. Bridge of Sighs 8. Adders 9. Robinson 10. Him 11. Tiptoe 12. Eurostar 14. Merrily 16. Chemist 20. Battered 23. Ragusa 24. Dan 25. Interval 26. Plazas 27. Redevelopment DOWN 1. Bicester 2. Eggshell 3. Gourmet 4. Isobar 5. Agents 6. Bedside manner 7. Shop Assistant 13. Ode 15. Ike 17. Hornpipe 18. Magdalen 19. Add Lulu 21. Trendy 22. Revive.

Good luck with this month's puzzle on the right. A £15 book token awaits the winner. Please get your answers to me by 20th November. Ed
The Old Vicarage, Wilcote Lane, Ramsden OX7 3BA or johnianrupert@hotmail.com

Clues Across

8. Run away with your loved one, perhaps to Gretna Green, but you might be missing Ant! (5)
9. The Holy City? (9)
10. Sir Respart could bring this to light as it happens (10)
11. Mild yellow Dutch cheese with red wax covering (4)
12. Midnight might be celebrated at this fertile tract in a desert (5)
13. Agreed that two things had happened at the same time (9)
14. English county, feature in King Lear (4)
16. Title Character in a twentieth century play who never appears. The others are left waiting for him. (5)
17. To stare at a seaside structure, we hear (4)
21. A gem of a card game for people alone (9)
23. UK chain of electrical stores closed in 2012. Did they get too close to the sun? (5)
24. A New Zealander, this egg-shaped fuzzy green fruit. (4)
25. Italian composer (1567 - 1643)
26. Christian sacrament commemorating the Last Supper (9)
27. West African country formerly known as The Gold Coast. (5)



Clues Down

1. Students have at least one of these and its name describes a typical, predictable event or answer (8)
2. Make fun of an errornative American footwear! (8)
3. Refuse to stop (7)
4. Joseph Conrad set this novel in the Belgian Congo (5.2.8)
5. Tom Jones asked this creature 'What's new' (8)
6. To mention well known people you are acquainted with in conversation (8)
7. Do this to the Ides of March or The Jaberwocky (6)
15. 'Just a song at- 16. Wordsworth's home in the Lake District (8)
- 18. "....., invisible, God only wise" (8)
- 19. English playwright (The Winslow Boy etc) (8)
- 20. A toll charged of merchant strangers by mayors or towns on goods offered or sold in their districts (14th - 16th centuries) Sounds mostly wild! (7)
- 22. Loathsome or vile. (6)

Prayer Positions

Three preachers sat discussing the best positions for prayer, while a telephone repairman worked nearby.

"Kneeling is definitely best," claimed one.

"No," another contended. "I much prefer standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven."

"You're both wrong," the third insisted. "The most effective prayer position is lying prostrate, face down on the floor."

The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted, "the best prayin' I ever did was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."

