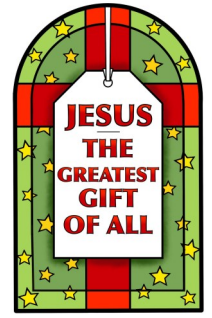


Stockport Sunday School

December 2024 Newsletter 55



Well, here we are again at the beginning of December, having started the 'Annual Festival of Shopping'. Nowadays it seems to kick off on the day known as 'Black Friday' with a cut-price bonanza, or so we are led to believe.

For me, the use of the adjective 'black' has ominous connotations, marking some past or approaching disaster.

Many of you will remember 'Black Monday' in 1987, when the world's stock markets crashed, leading to an extended worldwide economic recession.

Prior to that, the 29th of October 1929 was the day of the Wall Street Crash which resulted in the long-term economic depression of the 1930s, and came to be known as 'Black Thursday'.

So why Black Friday?

As with so many events, it is American in origin. It goes back to when the early settlers arrived in the country and gave thanks for their safe passage by holding a Thanksgiving Day. This became a traditional day of celebration, although the actual holiday was not officially established as the last Thursday in December until 1941.



Black Friday is the following day which many people take as a holiday and start their Christmas shopping.

It's the busiest day of the year for many traders, when they feel their business accounts are moving out of the red and into the black. Hence the name 'Black Friday'. In this case, it is a day of optimism for shopkeepers, not despair.

But in the UK, the rush to seek out bargains seems to me to be another indicator of the ever-growing commercialisation of Christmas in modern times.

I'm not a member of the 'Scrooge' club when it comes to Christmas celebrations. I enjoy having the opportunity to gather together with family and friends over the holiday season, and to exchange presents. It is meant to be the season of good will.

But there is the underlying feeling that in western society the commercial aspect reflects a society which, in general, is becoming more and more committed to pursuing material prosperity, and 'conspicuous consumption'.





Statue of Habakkuk in Rome

On the other hand, we should remember that there are still many people in our country who at this time of year will respond generously to appeals for needy causes, for that we should be thankful .

I have been reading parts of the Old Testament book of Habakkuk recently which addresses this issue, amongst other failings of society.

He was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, and equally as pessimistic as him with the way the people of Judah were moving away from God, pursuing material satisfaction, and a weakened moral code, and warning them of the disasters that would ensue.

It also prompts him to ask God why the innocent, those who are still faithful, should have to suffer for the wrongs of their fellow countrymen and women, "Where is God in these situations?", he asks.

It's a question that we, even in our secure environment may ask ourselves, especially when we see the present day horrors of warfare taking place in the Ukraine, Palestine and Israel.

Habakkuk offers no simple solutions, because probably there are none. Instead, he ultimately puts his trust in God, come what may.

For us - we can perhaps console ourselves by thinking of how the disciples must have felt when Jesus was arrested, condemned and executed. The innocent suffering for the guilty.

They must have felt all hope of the coming of God's righteous rule on earth had gone.

But God's ways are often not our ways. As we know, they overcame their fears and went out to spread the gospel news throughout the world.

God can change a Black Monday of disaster into an Easter Monday of Hope .

As for us, here and now, we are in the church's season of Advent; a time when we are asked to think about where we are with regard to our relationship with God, our Father.

In the coming days, busy though we may be with all the practical requirements for celebrating our Lord's birth, let's try to make time to think about what Jesus means to us in our own lives; to strengthen our trust and commitment to Him whether the road is hard or easy, so that 'our Father's will, will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

And then, once again, we can rejoice together this coming Christmastide for God's love for us shown by the coming of Jesus into our world.

With every good wish for a Happy and Fulfilling Christmas,

From all of us at Compass Point.



The Son came out from the Father to help us to come out from the world; He descended to us to enable us to ascend to Him. - *Anthony of Padua*

Christ became what we are that He might make us what He is. - *Athanasius*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We wish 'Happy Birthday' this month to:-

Judith Higgins on December 4th
and
Don Curry on December 16th
and
Margaret Morley on December 17th
and
Joan Heald on January 10th



CHRISTMAS POST FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERS

Once again, the post box will be out in the entrance hall of Compass Point for members to post their Christmas cards to each other. The post box will be out on Sunday 8th and Sunday 15th December.

STAMPS

As you start to receive your Christmas cards over the following month, please remember to save your stamps for Margaret Forster to send off to raise funds for charity. When cutting the stamps off your envelopes please leave a good border all the way around. They can be put in the box in the entrance hall at School for Margaret to collect. Thank you.



British Heart
Foundation

THANK YOU

At the Special Service to remember Norman, the collection was £229.70 and Joyce sent this to the British Heart Foundation, the charity acknowledged this by letter and this can be seen on the noticeboard in the Lounge.

CORRECTION

In the last newsletter we incorrectly put that Joyce and Norman had been married for 77 years, when in fact, they met 77 years ago and were married for 72 years.





ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Thank you to everyone who collected money in their lanterns throughout the year for Action For Children.

THINKING OF YOU

Several of our members and their families are unwell and we want to let them know that we are thinking of them. Douglas Manley has moved into a temporary nursing home and Don Curry is currently unwell at home. Hilary Wood has had a fall whilst away with family and is in Stepping Hill Hospital. We are thinking of them and their families.



FUTURE SERVICES

The next dates for our services are:-

December 1st	Cath Brown
December 8th	Walter Stead Christmas Lunch Christmas Post
December 15th	Candle and Carol Service run by The Triangle Christmas Post
December 22nd	Officials
December 29th	No service
January 5th	Judith Higgins
January 12th	Garth Higgins





SERVICES



SUNDAY OCTOBER 27TH 2024

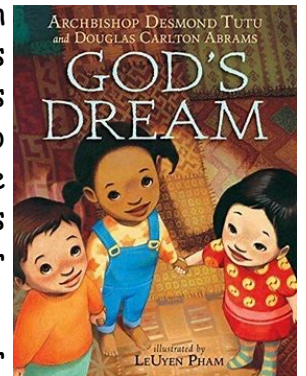
The theme for the afternoon was 'mottoes'. They are defined as a short phrase or sentence chosen as encapsulating the beliefs or ideals of a family, individual or institution.



The motto of the monarch is 'Dieu et mon droit' - God and my right.

Judith Higgins chose this topic after reading an article from a Primary School which reported how well the year four pupils had adapted to their move to the Junior School, benefitting from their school motto 'Learning and caring together - they will flourish in the courts of God'. The second part of the motto comes from Psalm 92 verse 13.

The palm trees and cedars of Lebanon flourished because they had good strong roots which enabled them to grow strong and flourish. The school promotes Christian values at the root of all they do so that they grow children into strong adults who will flourish in the world. The children are also told the story of 'God's Dream' written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carter Abrams, which encourages children to love and care for each other whatever their nationality or background.



Judith read the parable of the Good Samaritan in which the message or motto is 'love your neighbour'. She suggested another motto for a Christian could be, 'Trust in God'.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3RD 2024

St Georges Church,
Poynton



Walter Stead had recently been given a booklet of sermons by David Alcroft, an old friend who attended St George's church and later became a lay reader at St George's parish church, Poynton, and Walter based his service on one of these sermons.

David had once said in a discussion group that it is our work as Christians to help build the Kingdom of God. He was corrected by a clergyman who said, "We are here to do God's will, to accept He is in charge and carry out whatever tasks He calls us to do."

The reading, Mark chapter 4 verses 26-34, the parable of the farmer who plants the seed which mysteriously grows without his help until he cuts it at harvest time. This is how God brings about His Kingdom. We must wait patiently and with faith for God to bring it to fruition.

The second parable about the mustard seed has similarities to the first, a tiny seed planted grows into a large tree but this is also a metaphor for resurrection, a growth of a seed seemingly dead into a tree where birds nest in its branches, a Kingdom of peace and wellbeing. It is not for us to build God's Kingdom, we must open ourselves in faith to the future.

Sadly we can be a hinderance to the work of God. Our society is becoming focused on money and wealth and things we can measure. We must get our priorities right. Is the wealth of our nation more important than those who do not receive a fair reward for their work? Do we hoard our pension in case we need the money in the future or learn to live generously now and let the future look after itself?

As Christians, we put our faith in God. May we always do all we can to live by that faith.

Thank you, Walter.

The tale of the Mustard Seed & the tale of the Yeast

JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

SOME OF HIS STORIES WERE VERY SHORT, BUT THEY MEANT A GREAT DEAL

ONCE JESUS EXPLAINED HOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WAS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

IT IS ONE OF THE SMALLEST OF SEEDS...

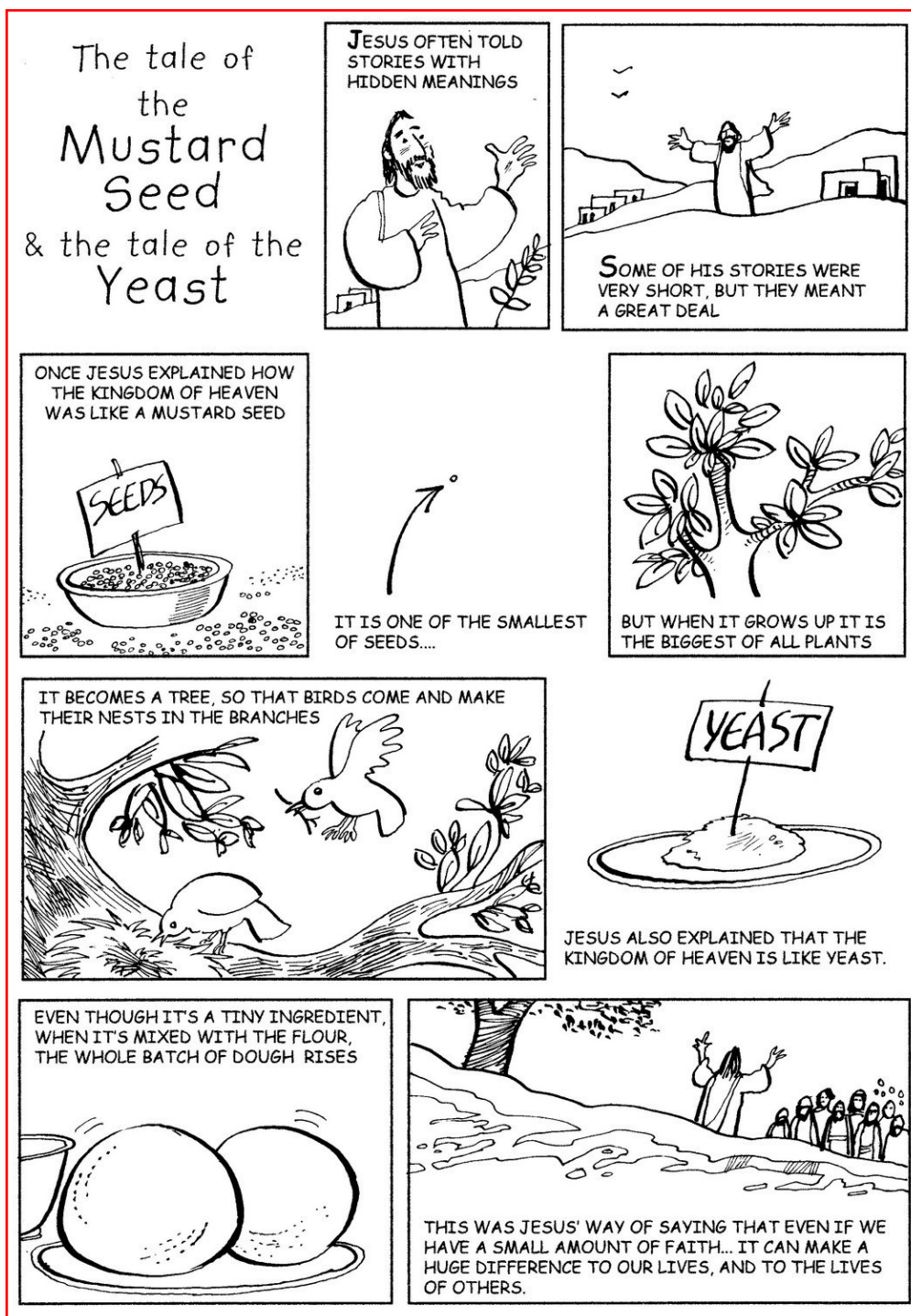
BUT WHEN IT GROWS UP IT IS THE BIGGEST OF ALL PLANTS

IT BECOMES A TREE, SO THAT BIRDS COME AND MAKE THEIR NESTS IN THE BRANCHES

JESUS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE YEAST.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S A TINY INGREDIENT, WHEN IT'S MIXED WITH THE FLOUR, THE WHOLE BATCH OF DOUGH RISES

THIS WAS JESUS' WAY OF SAYING THAT EVEN IF WE HAVE A SMALL AMOUNT OF FAITH... IT CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE TO OUR LIVES, AND TO THE LIVES OF OTHERS.



SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10TH 2024 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Stuart led our Remembrance service.

The second Sunday in November is a day when we remember all those who were killed in action, wounded and maimed in the two World Wars and the conflicts since. They are remembered by a simple poppy. People wear a simple poppy for remembrance. In the past there have been big displays - the large poppies around the Tower of London, poppies on public buildings and parks. Stuart showed us a photograph of the front of St Andrews Church, Cheadle Hulme, that has been decorated this year with knitted and crocheted poppies. Wreaths of poppies are



Poppies around Tower of London



laid at cenotaphs around the world on 11th November. Armistice Day, which marked the end of World War I and two minutes silence observed at 11am.

Stuart mentioned some of the major events of the wars. This year we remember the D Day landings which took place 80 years ago. In 2014, the moat at the Tower of London was filled with large ceramic poppies to mark the centenary of the beginning of World War I.

He recalled the Battle of Monte Cassino and the liberation of Rome, when the Japanese invaded India the British and Indian troops were outnumbered but still managed to defeat the Japanese.

In Operation Market Garden, 30,000 paratroopers and ground forces were used to liberate the bridges and allow our troops access to the German forces.



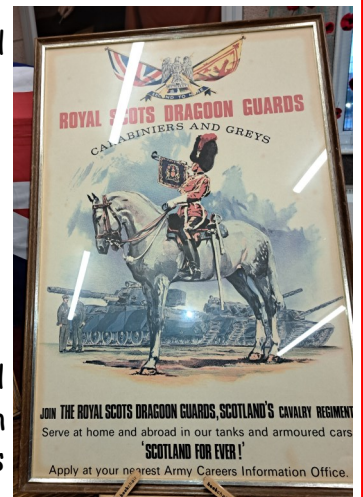
In 2021, Thomas Roberts wrote a poem about the use of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. Stuart showed a video of Thomas reciting his poem to the people gathered in the Royal Albert Hall.

The service concluded with a video of our roll of honour of the members of SSS who lost their lives in World War I and World War II.

Stuart then closed with the verse:

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

Our thanks to Stuart for a very moving service and to Jayne who read the Bible reading, Matthew chapter 15 verses 1-12 and to Alan Bowdon who brought along part of his collection of drums, helmets and cap badges and to Beryl Manley for the display of knitted poppies.





SUNDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2024

Judith Higgins took this service and discussed the reason we give presents at Christmas.



Although ancient Romans exchanged gifts to celebrate their god, Saturn, between December 17th and 23rd. Christians exchange gifts to celebrate the birth of Jesus, when the magi followed the star to find the baby, born to be King of the Jews and took Him precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In the fourth century, a Christian Bishop, St Nicholas became known for his benevolent acts and gifts of money to the poor.



Judith's second reading, Matthew chapter 25 verses 31-40 about feeding and clothing the poor and visiting the sick and prisoners ended with the verse, "whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me."

We may not be able to feed the hungry or clothe the naked, except through donations to charities, but by donating a shoe box to people we do not know and will never meet, we are sending some practical gifts but also sending the message that people across the world are thinking about them and sending them love in a box at Christmas.



We watched two short videos of children receiving their shoe boxes and Margaret Forster told us of her experience of helping in the warehouse where the boxes were checked and prepared for being transported and of her visit to help distribute the boxes to children and families when she saw the poor conditions in which they lived and how much the boxes were appreciated. Judith then blessed the shoe boxes.

Cath Brown had been busy crocheting Christmas trees. The donations she received for them were sent to the Shoe Box appeal.

Thank you to Cath and Margaret and all those who donated to a shoe box.

LANCASHIRE HILL SUNDAY SCHOOL



Season's Greetings

Everyone at The Triangle would like to wish all readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and prosperous New Year.



Kites Group

The Kites Group are busy preparing for their February 2025 show Cinderella 2 to be held at Compass Point. More details and tickets will be available soon on www.kitesgroup.com.



Recipe

Brussels sprout gratin

Serves 4

800g brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved

50g butter

50g plain flour

450ml whole milk

2 tbsp double cream

1 tbsp English mustard

75g smoked streaky bacon, chopped

100g fresh breadcrumbs

25g parmesan, grated

1 tbsp thyme leaves



Bring a large pan of water to the boil and cook the sprouts for 5 minutes before draining well and setting aside to steam-dry.

Melt the butter in a pan then add the flour, stirring and cooking for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat before whisking in the milk a little at a time until the mixture is smooth and all the milk has been added. Return to the heat and cook, stirring continuously, until boiling and thickened. Remove from the heat again and stir in the cream and mustard, seasoning to taste. Put the sprouts in a large bowl and stir in the sauce mixing well, then transfer to a 2.5 litre baking dish.

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Dry fry the bacon in a large frying pan over a medium heat until golden and slightly crisp. Stir the bacon through the breadcrumbs, along with the parmesan and thyme leaves, mixing well. Scatter the mixture over the sprouts and bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden and crisp.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

As we grow older, it is inevitable that our thoughts travel back over time, to events and celebrations which took place many years ago. I've been thinking about my earlier Christmases.



One of the first ones I remember was finding a pillow-case at the bottom of my bed when I woke up on Christmas morning. It was full of a variety of brightly wrapped presents from relatives and friends. I was lucky to have a great variety of grandparents, aunts and uncles, who all sent presents. If there were lots of books inside the pillow-case, I was highly delighted, particularly if they were Enid Blyton ones. One aunt, in particular, always sent me a jigsaw puzzle, which I hated, so, having shaken the parcel, and realised what it was, it was quickly discarded!



My earliest memories of 'big' presents are a lovely doll, whom I called 'Audrey' - (don't know why!), a very smartly dressed golly, and a little black doll whom I called 'Susie Black'. Best of all, I had 2 very kind uncles. One made me a beautiful dolls'



house and furniture and the other made a perfect little sweet shop. The dolls' house lived with me for many years and finished up in my Reception Class at St Paul's Infants in 1960 and I returned my sweet-shop, eventually, to my uncle, for his children, who were 10 years younger than I was, to enjoy.

Various other Christmassy events stand out in my mind. The smell of cigars. My Grandad always seemed to smoke one on Christmas Day evening and they have a special aroma. Then there are Pontefract cakes. I'd had some in my Christmas stocking and ate too many, which gave me toothache. Grandad sorted me out with a hot drink and a sleep on the sofa. I discovered much later that the drink comprised hot water and whisky! No wonder I went to sleep!

Next big Christmas event - a fire in the front room. That made Christmas Day very special, as it was a rare event! Then - my aunt and uncle came for tea and we played games in the front room. I still love party games, but only if they are fun and don't need too much 'brain work'. My auntie was lots of fun and we played a very silly, hilarious game called, 'I, a mystic lady' and which involved sticking matchsticks in your hair if you said the wrong words. I loved it and it still makes me smile after 80 years!



One unusual Christmas Day which stands out in my mind was when Mum, decided that just the two of us would go out to the 'Brocklehurst Arms', in Macclesfield, for a very different kind of Christmas Dinner in the Restaurant. This involved getting a bus and we were waiting at a bus-stop on the A6 (this was about 1950, so the road was very quiet and no buses seemed to be running). Then - a large car, driven by a Roman Catholic priest, who had been conducting a service at Our Lady's Church, stopped and he asked us where we were wanting to go. It must have been Divine

Providence, as it turned out that he was driving to Tytherington and would be delighted to deliver us to the 'Brocklehurst Arms' in time for a very different Christmas Dinner!

I am sure that Heaviley Sunday School figured largely in my Christmas memories, but, sadly, I don't remember my very early services at H.S.S. What I do remember are the Scholars' Parties, with food, games and entertainment, and, of course, the Pantomimes.

The Sunday services in my early teens are very memorable with Mr Swann, Mr Bennison, Mr Marchington and Mr Williamson, but the Pantomimes are a very exciting memory ranging from my first one as a fairy in a pink dress with wings, aged 6, - to an 18 year old Principal boy!

To end my Christmas memories I can still remember the excitement on receiving a tricycle from Father Christmas. It was red with a large painting of Mickey Mouse on the seat. Happy Days.

So many memories locked away in our hearts for ever!



Margaret Morris-Jones



TAI CHI



This class is getting new members slowly. The last class for 2024 is 17th December and classes will start again on January 7th 2025.

Beryl Manley



COFFEE MORNING

We have our regulars. We all miss Ken, he enjoyed doing the coffee morning. We have two new men, Derek and Kevin, who help with putting the tables out. Derek manages to come each week, he does a good job. One or two ladies from the knitting come and bring their lunch, go to Tai Chi and then come in to knitting. They love coming. The last coffee morning will be 17th December, and they have been invited to come to the knitting group Christmas party with there only being a few of us we suggested they stay and bring their lunch.



Beryl Manley



KNIT 'N' NATTER

Autumn Fair went very well. We were still getting donations in after and we raised £900 and the Northwest Military Vehicles trust who raise money for Broughton House Veterans Care

Village had got a fund of £500 and in the next couple of weeks I shall be going with them whilst we present a big cheque. One of our knitting ladies, Brenda and Mike her husband belong to Military Vehicles Trust. He was the one who had his jeep on the front of the road, made all the signs and put them up and on the rails at the bottom of Nangreave Road facing the traffic and when we finished made sure they were all taken down and cleared away. I contacted Broughton to see if any veterans would be able to come, three came with carers, one was the matron. She told me there would have been more but there was an event on at the home. I had a chat with the war veterans, two men were over 100 years of age and one lady, who was in the Wrens. The Knit 'N' Natter group ladies and Tony (the only man we have and who knits and makes some lovely jumpers) are really enjoying doing these fairs. We have a good team who all pull together.



**THE
MILITARY
VEHICLE
TRUST**



Thank you to all those who supported this event and a big thank you to all our group for all their hard work with the setting up and clearing away. I know everyone was shattered when they got home. I thanked the college for allowing us to use their car park, which was a big help.

Now we have our Christmas Tree to put in St George's Tree Festival, I hope you all manage to go and see the lovely displays they have.

Beryl Manley



BOWLING CLUB

On Thursday 4th November, we had our AGM which we held in the club house. This was well-attended. Jean Forrest, our Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. All the reports were read out and the names of cup winners were called out and asked to stand so members could see who they were. Our new committee was elected, but the same committee were re-elected by membership. No-one was interested in coming on to the committee. We have 51 membership made up of bowlers. All our members enjoy coming to the club, the weather has been against us this year, but we have managed to get a few games, plus our friendly matches.



Our president, Ian Phillips, made a speech thanking everyone for all their hard work they put in in keeping the grounds and green well maintained and all those who help with the social events. Ian was given a round of applause and then he announced our new president for 2025 and he read my name out and thanked everyone for voting for me. I have been the secretary of the bowling club for 27 years. Douglas and I did a lot around the club over the years. He used to captain the men's team and he also has been the chairman. Both of us got funding from the council to buy indoor bowling mats to start a new activity in the community which has gone down very well. The bowling club / indoor bowling will finish on the 18th December and restarts the indoor bowling on 8th January through to March 29th 2025 when outdoor bowling starts.

On a personal note, I would like to thank everyone for helping me when I can't get across to the club and appreciate all your enquiries about Douglas. This last 18 months has been very hard for me and I am not too good myself. Doug is doing ok but he is a sick man and it does not get any easier for me when I go to see him in the home, but I know he is being looked after. Thank you for all your kindness and help.

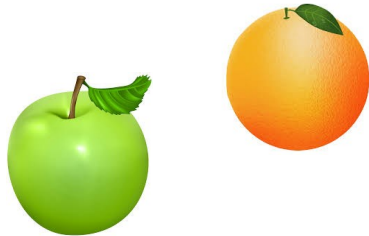
Beryl Manley



SMILE LINES

What would you like for Christmas?

A little girl visited Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and asked what she would like for Christmas. She gasped, and stared at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"



Christmas gifts

Grandfather was talking to his grand-daughter, "When I was a child all we got for Christmas was an apple and an orange." The little girl clapped her hands in joy. "Brilliant! I'd love a new computer and a mobile!"

Father Christmas

Of course, I had expected that by the age of seven it was inevitable that my son would begin to have serious thoughts about Father Christmas. Sure enough, one day near Christmas he suddenly said: "Mum, I know something about Father Christmas, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy." Taking a deep breath, I asked him what that might be. "Easy," he said, "They are all nocturnal."



Christmas play

The Sunday School Christmas play was in full swing when the teacher prompted: "And what was it that guided the Wise Men from the East?" Right on cue, the pre-schoolers turned their large white letters to face the audience. However, the last four children in the lineup had somehow reversed their sequence, and so the answer was: C H R I S T M A S R A T S.



Nativity scene

"Here's a king!" announced the five-year-old as he unwrapped a figurine from the Christmas decorations box. "Here's a donkey!" he added a moment later.

Then he removed the tissue from another figure, finding the infant Jesus moulded permanently into the little manger. The child exclaimed, "And here's Baby Jesus in his car seat!"



PUZZLES

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

Sudoku



FATHER CHRISTMAS is based on St **NICHOLAS**, who was **BORN** in the **THIRD CENTURY** in the **GREEK VILLAGE** of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both **DEVOUT** and **WEALTHY**, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to help people. He gave to the **NEEDY**, the **SICK**, the **SUFFERING**, and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop, he suffered in **PRISON** with other bishops under the **EMPEROR** Diocletian's persecution of Christians.

One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a **POOR FAMILY** with **THREE DAUGHTERS** who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight, and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window - thus saving the girls from a life of misery. The bags of gold landed in **STOCKINGS** or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings - in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas - on Christmas Eve. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols of St Nicholas.



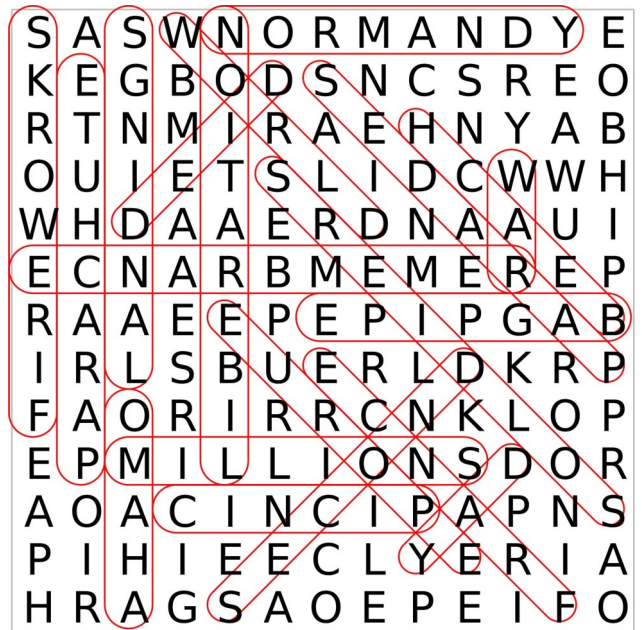
WORDSEARCH

Can you find in the grid below the words shown in **BOLD CAPITALS** in the passage? The words can be found in any direction.

U	G	S	D	C	M	F	A	M	I	L	Y
K	M	G	Y	H	T	L	A	E	W	I	M
P	C	N	N	R	O	R	E	P	M	E	E
O	F	I	O	I	S	T	M	D	L	H	G
O	N	K	S	S	R	E	H	T	A	F	R
R	T	C	I	T	E	E	N	R	T	K	E
A	U	O	R	M	T	G	F	E	E	M	E
I	O	T	P	A	H	R	A	F	E	E	K
G	V	S	T	S	G	E	R	L	U	D	C
C	E	N	T	R	U	R	Y	M	L	S	Y
O	D	G	D	S	A	L	O	H	C	I	N
T	T	H	I	R	D	B	O	R	N	T	V

ANSWERS FROM LAST NEWSLETTER

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



SUDOKU ANSWERS

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

