

MINISTER'S LETTER



Strange dissident of meekness
And nurse of tangled souls
And so unlike the holy
To end up full of holes
The world is too much with us
Could we not now just elope?
Strange way to hold us closer
Strange way to give us hope
Strange way...

from 'Strange Way' by Martyn Joseph
(written by M Joseph & S&C Henderson)

On the shelf in my study sits a broken pot or rather a once-broken pot that has been lovingly glued back together again. The cracks are still visible and there are holes in those places where pieces have been lost but, even so, it is most recognisably a pot. My father gave this pot to me when I was a little boy. It was a special gift. Dad had been to the Holy Land with some people from church and brought me back this pot as a holiday present. I thought it was wonderful then and still do so now.

I was forever breaking things as a child – anything and everything would become a football either to be kicked or headed around the living room – but I did not break this pot. In fact, it was in pieces when I received it and it was I who put it back together, but then I was meant to.

The gift was purchased near the caves at Qumran where, in 1947, a shepherd searching for a stray goat discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the gift box that I received was a sealed bag that contained sand and grit in which pottery fragments could be “excavated” as well as a tube of glue to help the budding archaeologist re-create this “period” earthenware vessel.

As Easter approaches, I offer you this picture of a much loved, once

broken but now lovingly glued back together again pot but I do so only because its cracks are still visible and precisely because it is still riddled with holes.

With every blessing

Paul

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VISION AID OVERSEAS

Many thanks to everyone who, over the years, has supported the work of Vision Aid Overseas by donating their unwanted spectacles. Another box load is about to be sent off.



However, the collection box in the church vestibule has now been removed and I am unable to accept any more such donations for VAO at the moment. This is because VAO is reappraising its strategy for supplying spectacles to meet the needs of those countries which do not benefit from the same standard of eyecare that we enjoy. Some countries are less in need of secondhand spectacles now that new ones can be produced in-country as a result of VAO's teaching and its establishment of spectacle prescription workshops. VAO is now exploring the benefits of recycling the metal parts of spectacle frames and using the proceeds to manufacture new, standardised, basic frames and lenses. When the future direction of VAO's spectacle supply is clearer I will let you know.

However, the professional expertise of volunteers providing Direct Service Outreach Clinics, the education of national personnel and the teaching of technicians in conjunction with the establishment of optical workshops continues to expand and is deserving of your continued support. You can always discover more on line at vao.org.uk

Roy Ellis

PIN WARNING

In last month's newsletter at the end of the article on mobile phones there was an idea that should you be forced to withdraw money from a cash machine you should enter your PIN in reverse. The machine will still give you money, but the police will immediately be dispatched to help you.



It has been brought to my attention that according to a press release issued by what was then APACS (the body which speaks for the payments industry as a whole on non-competitive issues, including plastic card crime prevention) this is an urban myth and they do not recommend that you try it.

Below is an extract from their release for your information.

Andrew Fox (Editor)

Myth: If you are at a cash machine and you enter your PIN code in reverse it will send a signal to the police to alert them that you are in danger

Fact: This urban myth spread far and wide thanks to the power of the internet. It isn't true, if only because many PINs will be the same when reversed i.e. 6226.

Did you know?

- There are more than 90 cash machine withdrawals per second from the UK's 63,420 cash machines
- Cash machines supply 70% of all cash acquired

Top tip: Stand close to the cash machine and always shield your PIN.

Myth: Your card can only be used fraudulently in a foreign country if you are abroad, in that country, with your cards.

Fact: Chip and PIN has made it harder for fraud to be committed in UK shops and cash machines. Fraudsters have instead had to turn to stealing our magnetic stripe details and PINs in the UK and then making fake cards, for use abroad in shops and cash machines still without chip and PIN protection. That explains how your card can be fraudulently used abroad with a PIN without you. As more countries roll out chip and PIN – European banks have committed to do this by 2010 – opportunities for this type of fraud will start to fall.

Top tip: Regularly check your bank statements, and if you notice anything irregular on your account, contact your bank as soon as possible.

For more information visit the page on their website at

http://www.ukpayments.org.uk/media_centre/press_releases/-/page/691/

or phone the APACS Press Office on 020 7711 6316

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MERTON ART SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Merton Art Society will be holding a special local exhibition next month. The exhibition will run from Monday May 10th until Saturday May 15th at The Wimbledon Library Gallery, Wimbledon Hill, during Library opening hours.

On the Monday evening from 4.30pm until 8.30pm we have a Private Viewing, for those invitees keen to get the first pick of the paintings. Church members are welcome to come along. There will be approximately 100 paintings of varying styles and prices. We are all amateur artists and there is the opportunity to purchase some very nice artwork at reasonable prices.

Julia Griffiths.
Chairman. Merton Art Society

MY VISIT TO CAMBODIA AND MYANMAR



My family expressed no surprise when I announced that I was going on yet another adventure, but were somewhat horrified when I said I was planning to go to Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Later they explained that it was the initial negative images of land mines, killing fields and brutal military regimes that was in their minds that had them wondering if, indeed these places were safe for two lone westerners despite their adventurous free spirits.

It is true that the Khmer Rouge revolution in the 1970s turned Cambodia into a grisly killing field as the Pol Pot regime murdered or starved to death a million and a half of the eight million Cambodians and that, even today land mines are still in evident, as we witnessed. Also a lot of people would associate Myanmar with the Nobel prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi who has spent 14 out of the last 20 years under house arrest. Despite her party the Nation League for Democracy's landslide victory in the 1990 polls, the junta have ignored the results. More recently the plight of the displaced people whose villages has been destroyed by the Burma Army and the harrowing stories from the Karen people heard at the Global Day of Prayer for Burma on 13th March, confirmed that the military regime is still waging war against its own people.

After the first week we soon realised that travelling between these countries was going to present some challenges and so it proved to be difficult to visit Laos. Whilst in Cambodia we experienced various means of travelling from air-conditioned buses, bicycles, taxi cars to the most convenient and cheapest tuk-tuk. As our flight back was from Yangon, we had to fly from Siem Reap, Cambodia via Bangkok to get to Myanmar.

Most tourists visit Cambodia to see the temples but the highlight of our time was undoubtedly a visit to an Orphanage which was run by the

Catholic community in Siem Reap,(the parish of which is twinned with the deanery of Bury Saint Edmunds in East Anglia). Compared to the enormous problems and sufferings in the country, the Catholic community is small in number but the caring and dedication of the staff to the children, most of whom have HIV is worthy of their mission statement (Isaiah 61:1-2). Etched in my memory is one of the teenagers, on noticing the cross on my necklace and realising that we were Christians, seeing his face lit up in joy and singing along with the other children some English choruses for our benefit and with meaning to the words. When we later went to visit the Choung Ek Killing Fields, the museum and massed graves, it was impossible not to be moved and even more frightening to know that this genocide happened in our lifetime. We could not leave Cambodia without seeing one of the archaeological wonders of the world, Angkor Wat built in the 12th century. Antonio da Magdalena a Portugese monk, on seeing this temple for the first time was reported to have said: *“it is of such extraordinary construction that it is not possible to describe it with a pen. It has towers and decoration and all the refinements which the human genius can conceive of”*. We had to agree.

Temple gazers were abound in Myanmar as well but within 5 mins of our hotel in Yangon, my friend and I came across a large brick built semi derelict building which had a church spire. Coincidence or God-incidence? Further investigation led to a women’s fellowship meeting all of whom greeted us enthusiastically and a meeting with Zeykho, who is the Bishop of the Lower Myanmar Methodist Church. Since Cyclone Nargis of May 2008, Bishop Zeykho has been caring for six orphaned teenagers, no small task for a lady in her sixties with several Churches to pastor as well. Another lady named Thinthin, a pastor’s wife is involved with helping the displaced Shan people on the Thai border, many of whom are suffering from starvation, lack of shelter, medicine and sanitation. Thinthin gave me an update that the Bamboo famine victims mentioned on page 52 of our Methodist Prayer handbook are still in need of our prayers. Another highlight was a visit organised by Bishop Zaykho and Thinthin to the Good Samaritan Orphanage home in North Dagon run by U Thet Naing Oo who has rescued many of the children from the streets. These children were so happy to see us, looked well cared-for and, as we came to realise,

it seems natural for them to sing and dance for their visitors. The following Sunday's service at the Methodist English Church was both joyful and inspirational considering that Christians in that city are marginalised and discriminated against. Bishop Zothan Mawia spoke about 'always giving thanks in all circumstances' and recalled his time of imprisonment for preaching on the street, but he and his fellow prisoners used the opportunity, just like Paul and Silas, to sing praises to God in their cells.

We came back with precious memories, made valuable contacts and friends in Christ and many more prayer requests. A real adventure but maybe next time we should consider Saga!

Gwen Wildman



Gwen, Thinthin, Bishop Zeykho and Mary (Sunday school leader) outside Lower Myanmar Methodist Church, Yangon.



WINTERSHALL

the passion of

JESUS

in

Trafalgar Square

on

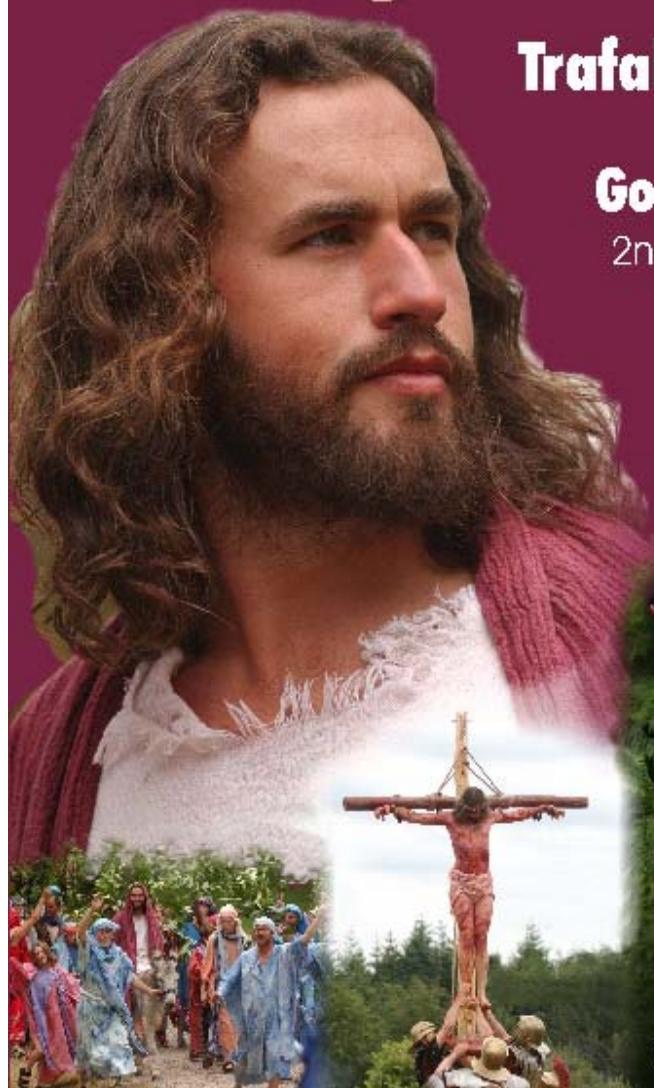
Good Friday

2nd April 2010

at

3.15pm

*COME, WATCH
AND LISTEN*



WWW.WINTERSHALL-ESTATE.COM

A CELEBRATION OF ALL THAT IS GOOD

the BIG CHURCH DAY OUT

HILLSONG UNITED

ISRAEL HOUGHTON

TOBY MAC SWITCHFOOT

BRENTON BROWN TIM HUGHES

(WORSHIP CENTRAL)

GRAHAM KENDRICK // LOU FELLINGHAM // KINGS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA // LZ7 // TOM & OLLY // TRENT // STUART PENDRED // SALTMINE THEATRE CO.

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11AM

TICKETS
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NOW AT
WWW.BIGCHURCHDAYOUT.COM

SAT MAY 29TH
2010

SUN/MON MAY 30TH
& 31ST 2010

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LEICESTERSHIRE

WISTON
HOUSE
WEST SUSSEX

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GROUP BOOKINGS
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ONLY £13

It's the perfect day out; the music, the locations, the people. The BigChurchDayOut, the UK's largest one day event for the church, is a great opportunity for you and yours to join with others from across the country-the family of God celebrating together the faith that's bigger than any one of us. With world renowned worship leaders and artists, fun for the whole family and more besides, the BigChurchDayOut will kick off the summer in the best way possible.

- WORSHIP ARENA
- B-STAGE
- KIDS STAGE & ACTIVITIES
- CLASSICAL PROGRAMME
- PRAYER VENUE
- TEA TENT & ACOUSTIC STAGE
- FOOD & BEAUTIFUL LOCATIONS



WWW.BIGCHURCHDAYOUT.COM

THE LAST POST



We have all heard the haunting tune, ‘The Last Post.’ It’s usually the tune that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story behind the song?

Reportedly, it all began in 1862, during the American Civil War, when the union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison’s Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the light of the lantern, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. With out telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band

members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. This was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The hunting melody, we now know as 'the Last Post' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

Day is done.
Gone the sun.
From the lakes
From the hills.
From the sky.
All is well.
Safely rest.
God is nigh.

Fading light.
Dims the sight.
And a star.
Gems the sky.
Gleaming bright.
From afar.
Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise.
For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh

I too have felt the chills while listening to 'The Last Post' but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse. I also never knew the story behind the song and I didn't know if you had either so I thought I'd pass it along. I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

Remember those lost and harmed while serving their country. Also remember those who have served and returned; and those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

David Atkinson

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EASTER COLOURING



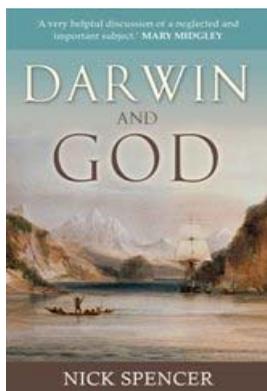
BOOK REVIEWS from RE:FRESH BOOKS

Making the Connection by J. John
64 pages, hardback, 99p

Making the Connection is an attractive new booklet exploring how we can know God, re-connect with him and stay connected. With its emphasis on the Bible, prayer and community with other Christians this makes an ideal gift for people still searching for God, and those who have recently committed their lives to him. In 64 pages J. John has produced a concise, practical and yet comprehensive introduction to a relationship with God.



Sarwin and God by Nick Spencer
160 pages paperback, £9.99



This year marks the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his *Origin of the Species*.

Darwin and God is the first full-length account of Darwin's religious beliefs to be published in the UK. It presents the moving, compelling and tumultuous story of one of the world's greatest scientists.

Nick Spencer draws on Darwin's writings to explore his view of design, purpose, morality, the universe and the human mind. He argues that, although Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection did undermine his Christian convictions, it was the age-old problem of suffering - first in theory, then through the dreadful loss of his favourite child - that caused his faith to break down.

Both of these books are available from re:fresh books & christian resources, 23 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surbiton KT6 7DJ

CHURCH DIARY



Thurs	1	8.00 pm	Maundy Thursday Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Fri	2	10.30 am	Good Friday United Service at Merton Park Baptist Church
		2.00 pm (approx)	Ramble - <i>full details will be in the Notices</i>
Sun	4	6.30 am	Sunrise Communion on Cannon Hill Common followed by Breakfast at Martin Way at 7.45am
		10.30 am	Easter Day Service led by David Eagle
		6.30 pm	Easter Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	6		Spring Harvest (to 11th April)
		10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	9	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	11	10.30 am	Morning Worship led by Valerie Ashcroft
Tue	13	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	14	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Doris Bedborough</i> - Flowers
Sun	19	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Stuart Thomas
Tue	20	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Clive Tullet</i> - Merton Park Scouts in Kenya
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	23	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club

- Sun 25 10.30 am Holy Communion led by Rev Paul Timmis
followed by General Church
Meeting
- Tue 27 10.30am-noon Coffee and Chat
8.00 pm Time for Prayer
- Weds 28 7.45 pm Midways Group - *Peter Grove* –
The Company of Pikemen And Musketeers

*Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk)
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday
in April a very

Happy Birthday
and especially to:



Celia Johnson on 4th April
Rosie Randall on 10th April
Kim Nyota on 16th April
Phoebe Pallister on 29th April

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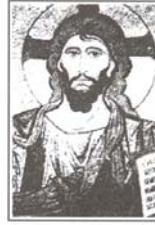
This month Anne Conquest and three friends will be flying off to the far east to participate in the gruelling 'Charity Challenge China'. We will be trekking The Great Wall of China, covering 63kms of the wall over 9 days.



Her chosen charity is 'The Shooting Star Children's Hospice'. If you would like to support Anne on this challenge and make a donation please visit www.justgiving.com/Anne-Conquest-GreatWallDiscovery2010 and pledge your donation.



WINTERSHALL



The Life of Christ

An Open Air Play in Three Acts

The support and enthusiasm of our audiences again this year has encouraged us to continue to perform our open air play 'The Life of Christ' and offer six one day performances this year. The play will run from Tuesday 29th June - Sunday 4th July 2010 starting at 10 a.m. and finishing at 4 p.m. For more information and to book tickets visit our website at www.wintershall-estate.com

In addition this year, for the first time, we will be performing the Passion of Jesus in Trafalgar Square at 3.15pm on Good Friday, 2nd April 2010. We are pleased to announce that BSL interpreters will also be present on the day.

On the next day, Holy Saturday 3rd April, we are delighted that the Very Reverend Christopher Hill, the Bishop of Guildford, will be narrating the Passion in Guildford High Street at 12 noon and at 2.30pm. Both these events are free, so do please come and see.

It is our aim to help strengthen the faith of those who know about Jesus, to bring faith and understanding to those not yet fortunate enough to know about him, especially children, and to refresh ourselves. I believe that this century Christian faith and influence could bring peace to the world and peace brings food, education, healing and joy.

*Peter Hutley MBE KSG
Wintershall*

Items for the **May Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox,
(email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 18th April** at the latest