

Welcome to your Almshouse News

## The CREATIVE Issue

HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS!

Our Creative  
Residents tell  
their stories

End of Year Quiz

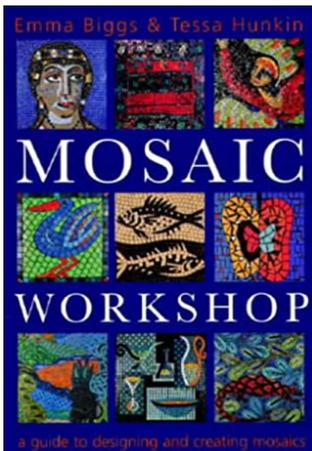
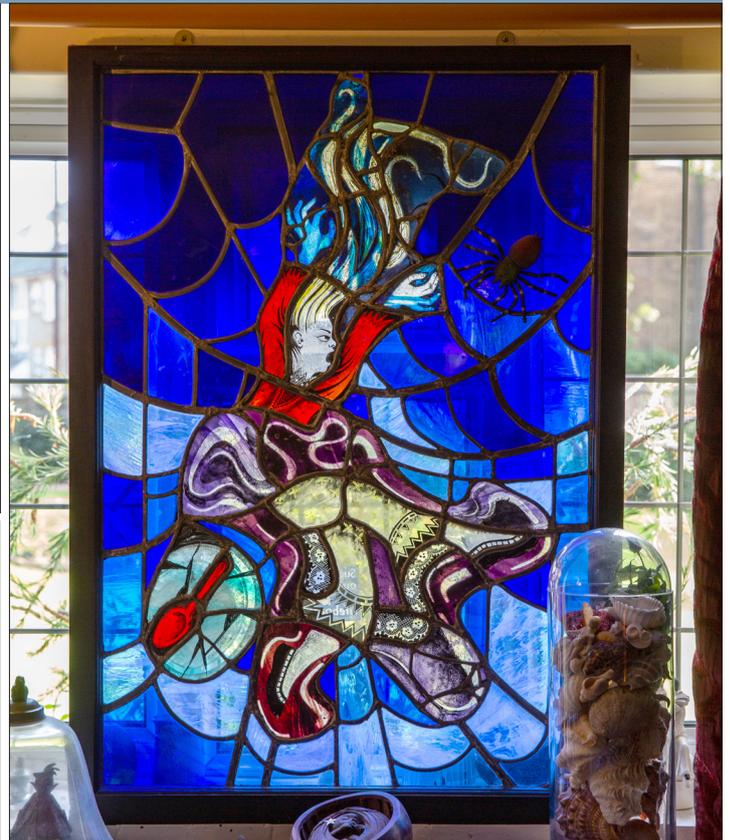
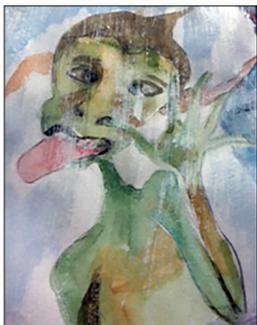
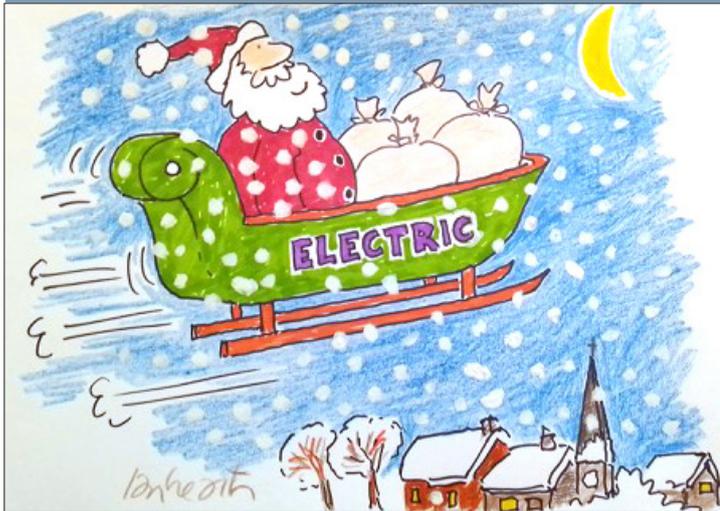
2021 Crossword

Page Turners

Chapel Schedule  
for Christmas

Review of Open  
Forums

Poetry Corner



# ALMSHOUSE NEWS - Contents & Chapel Schedule

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## Contribute to our Next Issue

If you would like to contribute an article for the next issue, the deadline is: Friday 24th December. Email your article to Chantal: [c.richards@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:c.richards@richmondcharities.org.uk) or give to your Scheme Manager. As a guide on word count, a one page article is ideally 340 words.

### Credits:

**Editorial Committee:** Juliet Ames-Lewis, Debbie Flaherty, Chantal Richards, Gennie Thompson & Mike Townsin  
**Design & Photography:** Chantal Richards

## Chapel Schedule for December



by Stuart Lee

<b>Sunday 5th December</b> <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am Eucharist 5pm Evening Prayer
<b>Sunday 12th December</b> <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am Eucharist with hymns
<b>Sunday 19th December</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am Eucharist 5pm Hymn singing
<b>Tuesday 21st December</b>	6pm The Richmond Charities Carol Service
<b>Saturday 25th December</b> <i>Christmas Day</i>	10.30am Eucharist
<b>Sunday 26th December</b> <i>St Stephen's Day</i>	10.30am Eucharist

**Front Page Photo Credits:** Cartoons by Ian Heath; Oratorio Delights (singing with Dorothy Coe, page 19); stained glass window by Eric Cooper (pages 20-21); *Mosaic Workshop* book review (page 27) and illustrations from Maureen Bliss's new childrens book (page 17).



This magazine is recyclable.

## Letter from Mike Townsin, Trustee



Dear All,

Here we are: in the 12th month of the 21st year of the 21st century. A year

in which our community, like the rest of the world, has witnessed a remarkable convergence of events – the COVID-19 roller coaster, mass vaccination, economic reversal, climate change activism, travel disruption and political turmoil, to mention just a few.

Yet such turbulent times can often bring out the best in us through our ability to use creativity – the theme of this month's issue – to counter life's set backs and lift our spirits.

Creativity is not only about Art. We have all – residents and staff – thought of ways of helping each other alleviate the isolation of lock down and get everyone through the last two stressful years of COVID.

And what, after all, is the science behind immunisation but the application of creative thinking and human ingenuity. Don't we all – residents, staff and trustees – spend time thinking creatively about how to maintain and improve the wellbeing of our community.

So as the year draws to a close we can perhaps look forward to better times: the

restoration of events like the forthcoming Christmas lunch and a full calendar of activities and facilities next year, such as the rehabilitation of the library, and more contributions, please, to this magazine!

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas and a highly 'creative' 2022.

*Mike*

### Competition Winners

Thank you to everyone who submitted competition forms for the Crossword and Norman's Quiz. Picked at random, the winners this month are:

Maureen Bliss - Nature Quiz  
Richard Yardley - Crossword  
**Congratulations!**

Answers from last month's competitions are on page 22.

### This Month's Competitions

This month there is a Crossword Competition on pages 24 & 25; and the End of the Year Quiz on page 26.

# Residents' Open Forums



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

In October and early November we held 3 Residents' Open Forums in the Chapel at Hickey's. Across the 3 forums, we had a total of 37 residents attend out of a total of 147 residents currently housed in our almshouses. Staff and Trustees also attended.

The general consensus was that the open forums were very useful for residents to hear about the charity's recent achievements and objectives for the coming years, to share information and to make comments and suggestions about the almshouses, the grounds and the running of the charity.

I gave an overview of the charity's progress in the last 5 years, including information about the goals that the Trustees and I set ourselves in our 5-year plan from 2016-2021, and our objectives which we have just set ourselves for our new 5-year plan. I shared some statistics with residents including the following:

- We set ourselves the target 5 years ago of opening a new almshouse development every 2-3 years. We

have met that target with the opening of Manning Place in 2018 and the opening of Wright's in 2020.

- In the last 5 years we have increased the number of almshouses we have by 22, from 117 to 139.
- We have housed a total of 84 new residents in the last 5 years.
- With the merger with Mortlake (see page 5), and with a new almshouse development also on the horizon, we hope to have increased to 157 almshouses by the end of 2023.
- In the last 5 years we have refurbished 61 existing almshouses.
- We have enhanced and expanded our range of activities and events (Covid-19 notwithstanding!) and our Almshouse News magazine.

A snapshot of the issues raised by residents included discussion about energy suppliers, laundries and opening hours, internal window cleaning (see page 6), communal rooms, the Almshouse News, and gardens and gardening. Some of the most interesting discussions focused on whether and how the charity could care for the communal gardens in a

..continues on page 5

more sustainable way. Some of these issues are general ones and others are estate specific. Staff and I will be working on these issues and will feed back to residents in due course about what changes or alterations might be possible. Thank you to all residents who attended – these forums are enjoyable and useful for residents, staff and Trustees alike, and we will continue to hold them annually.

## Merger with Mortlake Almshouse & Relief Charity



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

I am delighted to let you know that we have recently merged with Mortlake Almshouse & Relief Charity. The Richmond Charities has a long history of taking on smaller, local almshouse charities who want to provide better facilities and a stronger community for their residents and are unable to do so themselves. For example, in 2008 we took on Twickenham United Charities, and Candler Almshouses became part of The Richmond Charities.

In merging with Mortlake, we will be welcoming 6 existing residents; 3 of whom live at Juxon's Almshouses



Top: Colston's Almshouses  
Middle and Bottom: Juxon's Almshouses

in Milton Road, and 3 of whom live in Colston's Almshouses in Christchurch Road. I know that you will all warmly welcome our new Mortlake residents into our community.

## Do You Like Clean Windows?



by James Dorey

You will probably be aware that we have all Almshouse windows cleaned externally

at least 3 times a year by our window contractors.

Some residents at recent forums have requested contact details of our window cleaners so that they can have their windows cleaned on the inside too.

Richmond Charities do not offer this service internally and those residents who are interested should contact the following window cleaners:

### English Cleaning Company

tel: 020 8960 0000

email: [manager@english-cleaning.co.uk](mailto:manager@english-cleaning.co.uk)  
(contact: Catherine Reid).

Charges for internal windows: £25 - £30 per call.

English Cleaning Company looks after  
1 to 44 Hickey's, 1a to 1d & 3c Adelaide Road, 1 - 18 Church Estate, 1 - 9 Houblon Almshouses, 2 - 6 Benn's Walk, Vineyard Estates - 1 - 16, 1A & 9A Michel's, 1 - 10 Bishop Duppa's & 1 - 4 Queen Elizabeth.

### Aquamark

tel: 020 8401 2375

email: [brad@aquamarkcleaning.co.uk](mailto:brad@aquamarkcleaning.co.uk)  
Looks after 1- 9 Wright's Almshouses.

Charges for internal windows - £20 per call.

### Wayne Charles

tel: 07951 242 437

email: [waynecharles1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:waynecharles1@yahoo.co.uk)

Wayne Charles looks after 10 to 18 Manning Place.

Charges for internal windows: £25 per call.

If residents want to use an alternative window cleaner that is fine too, but it would be helpful if you can let your Scheme Manager or Head Office know. tel: 020 8948 4188 or [j.dorey@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:j.dorey@richmondcharities.org.uk)



## New Scheme Manager Team Structure



by Juliet Ames-Lewis

I am delighted to let you know that from 1st December 2021, Claire and Gennie have been promoted from Deputy Scheme Managers to Scheme Managers.

In addition, from this month, the Scheme Manager team has been restructured, as follows:

Jo and Linda will be Co-Scheme Managers for Bishop Duppa's, Candler, Michel's, Mortlake (Juxon's and Colston's), Queen Elizabeth's and Wright's.

Claire and Debbie will be Co-Scheme Managers for Hickey's.

Gennie and Lorraine will be Co-Scheme Managers for Adelaide Road, Benn's Walk, Church Estate, Houblon's and Manning Place.

When Gennie goes on maternity leave, Claire, Debbie and Lorraine will operate in a team of 3 covering the above estates.

The other change which will be made from 2022 is greater flexibility within the Scheme Manager team. The recent 'swap' between Gennie and Claire has

been beneficial for staff and residents and it has enabled them both to get to know residents at all estates and vice versa. It is a positive development for residents to get to know all of our Scheme Managers, especially in a situation where residents need to call the on-call Scheme Manager in an emergency.

We have also taken on board the positive feedback that we received from residents during the first lockdown when we rotated on a fortnightly basis the residents that each Scheme Manager would keep in touch with on the phone. Residents told us that they appreciated hearing from different voices, having different conversations and building new relationships with staff.

So from the New Year we will be implementing other temporary swaps between the teams of Scheme Managers. We will ensure that there is always one Scheme Manager for each estate with whom residents are already familiar, but I am sure that it will not take long for you all to get to know other Scheme Managers with whom you are not yet familiar.



# Careline Monitoring Changes



by Mick Tinson

Over the last few years we have successfully upgraded all the Careline equipment to the latest digital technology, removing the need for a landline phone.

Recently, Richmond Careline joined forces with Wandsworth and moved to a new purpose-built control centre which we hoped would improve the service when using the Careline system. Unfortunately, this has led to some long wait times for calls to be answered after pressing the Careline pendant. Not only has this been frustrating and concerning for any residents using the system, but also to us, as this is not what was intended, and worryingly some residents have been losing faith in our new equipment. By upgrading our system, it seems we have stepped beyond Richmond and Wandsworth capabilities with the new digital system.

We have therefore managed to find an alternative monitoring centre managed by the manufacturer of the new system. This new monitoring centre is more than capable of handling our digital system and we have been reassured of much

quicker answering times and a more detailed and professional call handling system which will hopefully restore any lost faith.

All being well, the change-over to the new monitoring centre will take effect in December. All changes to the system will be completed remotely.

If you have any concerns regarding these changes, please feel free to contact either your Scheme Manager, Roxanne, or me.

On This Day:  
13th Dec 1642

The Dutch explorer Abel Tasmin sights New Zealand.

On This Day:  
3rd Dec 1926

English crime novelist Agatha Christie disappears, possibly in an attempt to get her adulterous husband, Archie, arrested for her 'murder'. Leaving her car abandoned in the countryside she hides in a hotel under a false name for eleven days while the police scour the nation.

On This Day:  
1st Dec 1955

Forty-two-year old African-American seamstress Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She is arrested and fined, but becomes the 'Mother of the Civil Rights Movement'.

On This Day:  
25th Dec 1880

Charlotte, the German-born wife of British King George III, puts up the first decorated Christmas tree at Windsor.

## Getting to Know You



**Janet Hamilton**

**If you were Prime Minister for the day, what would you do?**

I would give men equal paid paternity leave.

**If you could travel back in time, where would you go?**

I wouldn't want to travel back in time. As a woman, it's only now that we can say we are anywhere near to having equal rights to men.

**How do you relax?**

I relax in many different ways. I have to say I love playing croquet, it's fun and we laugh a lot.

**Who is your celebrity crush?**

Hugh Grant

**What is your favourite song and how does it make you feel?**

*Bohemian Rhapsody*, it makes me feel exhilarated.

**What's your all-time favourite movie and why?**

*War & Peace*. I love historical costume dramas.

**What would you choose to be for a day?**

A professional dancer on *Strictly Come Dancing!*

**What book do you currently have on the go?**

*Europe, Century by Century* by Stephen Usherwood.

**What words of wisdom would you pass to the younger generation?**

Don't dismiss the wisdom of the silver surfers.

**What scares you most?** Heights.

## Summer Photos from Rosemary's Summer Garden

To keep summer alive all year long, we have a stock of photos from many of our residents' gardens to cheer you up through winter.



These photos were taken in July in Rosemary Fraser-Thomson's back garden at Candler Almshouses.



All photos ©Chantal Richards

# Combating Condensation at Home

by Gennie Thompson

additional condensation that remains.



## WHAT IS CONDENSATION

Condensation is caused by moisture in the air. Some moisture is always present, whether visible or not. Whether you reside in a new build or a listed building, condensation can have a huge impact. If condensation is not dealt with immediately, it can develop into bigger and further reaching problems. These include damp and mould which can cause damage to your home and also pose risks to your health.

Condensation happens when warmer air collides with cold surfaces, or when there is too much humidity in your home. As well as heating, everyday tasks like showering, cooking and drying clothes can release warm moisture into the air in our homes. This is why condensation mainly becomes problematic in the colder months, as we have central heating on and windows closed.

## TACKLING CONDENSATION

Controlling the amount of condensation in your home is important. It may be worth investing in a squeegee to clean water droplets from windows etc when this starts to build up. You can use a towel to dry up any leftovers or

These four tips can help you better manage and prevent condensation build up in your home.

**1. Produce less water vapour** – whilst lots of everyday activities add to the water vapour level in your home, their effect can be kept to a minimum by implementing the below.

•**Cooking**: Cover pans when cooking and don't leave things boiling longer than necessary (also saving your electric use).

•**Drying clothes**: if you are drying clothes inside try to keep all items in one room with windows open to increase ventilation, ideally the bathroom. Avoid hanging items on radiators all around your home as this is very likely to cause condensation problems.

•**Showering**: keep your bathroom door shut and the room well ventilated.

**2. Prevent spreading of wet air** – bathrooms and kitchens are 'wet rooms'; keeping the doors of these rooms shut will prevent the wet air spreading to the rest of your home, particularly when rooms are in use. Try

to have the windows open when using 'wet' rooms. Also try to keep the doors of unheated rooms shut.

**3. Keep your home ventilated** – adequate ventilation is the most effective way to remove water vapour. Make sure you use all relevant extractor fans fitted in your home and try to open your windows a little at some point in the day to improve air circulation.

**4. Keep your home warm** – in addition to the first three steps mentioned, heating your home adequately can help solve condensation problems. Heating your home at a low level for a long time is the most effective way to keep condensation at bay. The charity has recently undertaken work to improve insulation, which aims to keep your homes warmer.

### **Dehumidifiers, humidity absorbers and moisture collectors**

All of the below is recommended in addition to the above mentioned four tips, not as a substitute!

Dehumidifiers are often perceived as a quick fix for condensation issues which is sadly not true. They are no substitute for the four tips mentioned above. Dehumidifiers, though they only cost a small amount of electricity to run, require frequent emptying. However, they are useful for drying out damp

rooms and combatting leak damage.

The charity has a limited number of dehumidifiers which can be borrowed by residents, should they be required. Please let your Scheme Manager know if you would like to borrow one.

Humidity absorbers and moisture collectors are a more cost-effective option and can be useful in problem areas/those areas prone to dampness.

The following have been recommended by residents, staff and [which.com](http://which.com) and can be purchased from Amazon, Homebase, Robert Dyas or Wilkinson's (prices will vary from retailer):

- UniBond Aero 360 Pure Moisture Absorber Dehumidifier (available from Robert Dyas and Homebase)
- Kontrol mini moisture trap - £1
- Kontrol Streamline Moisture Trap 1L - £6
- Kilrock Spiraflo Moisture Absorber - £7
- Minky Damp Guard - £11
- Kontrol Streamline Moi
- Hanging Wardrobe Dehumidifier (x10) - £16

### Writing For Your Life



by **Stuart Lee**

Beginning on Tuesday, 11th January at 10.30am in the Green Room, Stuart will be leading a Guided Autobiography Group which will last for up 12 weeks.

Using a tried and tested method, developed over 25 years of experiment, Stuart will guide us through a series of exercises (and set homework!) that can help anyone organise and write their own experiences and share them in a group with others on the same journey.

The method is particularly helpful for those who like the idea of writing their own story for family or friends (or simply for yourself) but don't know where to begin. By the end you will have a 'collage' of your life experiences which, if you wanted to, you could further work on to turn into a more polished autobiography. However, experience shows that going through this process together is almost more important than worrying about any finished product.

Numbers will be limited for this course (and there will need to be a minimum of 5 people for the course to run), so please book with your Scheme Manager if you would like to attend. Contact Stuart if you would like further details.

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### Carol singers from Marshgate School



by **Stuart Lee**

Children and teachers from Marshgate School have kindly offered to come and sing some Christmas songs for us again this year. On Tuesday 14th December between 1.30pm and 2.15pm several groups of children will make their way around the Hickey's and Church Estates Almshouses. If you are able, please come to your window or door to enjoy their singing and say 'hello'.

### Bridge Club Christmas Break



by **Margaret Goddard**

Please note that there will be no bridge club over the Christmas break.

The last bridge club session will be on Friday 17th December and will re-start with a beginners class on Tuesday 4th January.

Dates and times will also be printed in the December events leaflet. Merry Christmas to you all!

# December National Days

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**National Grief Awareness Week**  
2nd – 8th December.  
Created by the Good Grief Trust UK, they raise

awareness of the impact of all aspects of grief/ loss, open conversations and normalise grief. To find out more visit: [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/ngaw](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/ngaw)

### Human Rights Day

10th December.

This commemorates the day in 1948 that the General Assembly of the UN adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the most translated document around the globe, available in over 500 languages.

### Illumination Street Week

6th – 12th December.

A nationwide competition giving away £5000 worth of prizes this Christmas! The competition highlights the passion, flair and effort UK citizens invest in their front gardens in the build-up to Christmas. For more information call 01926 641997 or visit [www.illuminationstreet.com](http://www.illuminationstreet.com)

### Winter Solstice

21st December.

Shortest day of the year!

# Residents' Christmas Lunch

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by Alison McAlear

**Thursday 16th November  
at Richmond Hill Hotel**

Thank you for letting us know if you are able to attend this year's Christmas lunch at Richmond's popular venue, The Richmond Hill Hotel. There will be a ladies and gentlemen's 'best dressed Christmas theme' with two prizes to be had! Plus, the fabulous trio singers, The Barn-Ettes, will be performing Christmas songs so please wear your dancing shoes!

If you haven't already told us you would like to join in on the transport we are arranging, please contact your Scheme Manager as soon as possible. The Trustees and Staff look forward to welcoming you to this year's lunch.

# Parkshot Singers at Hickey's Chapel

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**Friday 10th December from 3pm-4:30pm**

We are happy to welcome the fantastic and talented Parkshot Singers, who enjoy singing a range of Christmassy songs. We hope to see you there for some festive cheer and a great performance!

# Outreach: Getting to Know Local Charities

Citizens Advice Richmond is an independent local charity providing information and advice to anyone who lives, works or studies in the Richmond borough. Our service is free, confidential, independent and impartial! We advise on benefits, housing, employment, immigration, debt and many other subjects. The large majority of our teams are local volunteers, trained and dedicated to helping their community.

As well as giving advice we aim to prevent the problems that affect people's lives:

We are currently providing advice under our Energy Advice Project, where we are able to help residents ensure they are not overspending on their energy bills, help with resolving any issues, gaining grants or discounts where applicable, energy efficiency and arming our clients with the tools to better manage their finances generally.

Campaigning for change – we collect evidence of the impact on our clients of practices and policies that cause their problems, and we campaign to get a fairer deal for everyone.

Money education – we offer courses, workshops and one-to-one help to empower people to avoid debt and



increase confidence about personal finances.

In the last 12 months, we have been able to continue to help over 6,000 clients, with financial gains of £2.3 million per year!

If you would like to discuss any issue, you can call our helpline (please note the lines are very busy) or use our online form 24 hours a day, for your query to be passed to one of our advisers (we can call or email you in return – whichever works better for you).

Phone – 080 82 78 78 73

Email Form - <https://www.citizensadvicerrichmond.org/choose-subject/>

# Memorial Service Review

.....  
by David and Heather Shipley

The month of November always brings Remembrance of those who have died and the Memorial Service in the Chapel of St Francis at Hickey's Almshouses on the 14th was especially poignant after over a year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Led by Rev. Stuart Lee, the Chapel overflowed with bereaved families and friends. It was dignified, sombre yet joyful. The overwhelming message in the carefully chosen and pertinent readings, prayers and hymns was one of comfort, God's promise to us that our lives are not lived in vain and that we will attain a life in spirit when our earthly existence is over.

The service was enhanced by the beautiful singing of the hymns, psalms and two of my personal favourites, "In Paradisum," the final Antiphon from the Requiem Mass by Gabriel Faure, and "The Day thou Gavest Lord has ended", all sung by the Choir of St Mary Abbots in Kensington. The organ music before and after the service added to the atmosphere, compositions by Elgar, Parry and Bach.

The Welcome by Juliet Ames-Lewis reiterated the ethos of The Richmond

Charities, that we are a community, knowing and caring for our neighbours, which is also at the heart of Christian belief. A list of names of departed souls was read out and then families were invited to light candles on a table in the chapel which resulted in a glow of light. The memory of this special evening will remain with us for a long time.

# Quiz Night Review



by Maureen Bliss

Steve 'n Eve's Quiz evening on 28th October in the chapel was a great success and so long awaited. The room was full with 8 tables and a lot of competitive people. There were plenty of drinks and nibbles before starting the evening of questions which was finally won by Table 8.

Some questions were serious and some very funny and silly, so generally trying to please everyone. One question was challenged by Table 1 on the book/film *Gone with the Wind*. A few other tables agreed with the challenge giving another answer, whereupon Steve 'n Eve conceded. This event made the evening a little noisier than usual!

However, a lovely evening was enjoyed by all and with a good community spirit. We're just waiting in anticipation for the next Quiz evening in about 6 months time.

# Kelvedon Hatch Review

by Mary Bronks

### The Friends and Neighbours visit to Kelvedon Hatch, Secret Nuclear Bunker.

The damp, cold, misty October morning seemed very appropriate when eleven intrepid pensioners set off for our visit to the Secret Nuclear Bunker.

After a while driving through London suburbs, we drove through sleepy, picturesque Essex villages and beautiful countryside, before arriving at Kelvedon Hatch. It is disguised as a bungalow above ground, but 200 times bigger below ground!

Built in the 1960s, in great secrecy and under military security, local villagers were unaware that this was where Central Government and Army Commanders would have run the country had nuclear war broken out (presumably while the rest of us would be left to die!).

Our host for the day, Mr Parish, welcomed us into the cafe and explained proceedings to us while we had refreshments.

The cold, grim atmosphere and the amazing exhibits were truly a glimpse

into a world that never came to pass, while the audio wands explained everything to us, as we saw the Prime Minister's bedroom, dormitories, sick bay, operating theatre, coffins and even Maggie Thatcher!



The huge communications and operations rooms show how technology has moved on since then, while the BBC studio and Public Information and Advice films playing were a grim and chilling reminder of the threat we lived under then and what might have been.

The lowest floor of all was the beating heart of the bunker, where the plant room showed how water and air were pumped round and frequently changed. The Armoury held a huge variety of weapons, ammunition and uniforms for the hundreds of people inhabiting the place.

When we emerged through a long, dark tunnel at the end of the tour, we learned that this area was designed to facilitate defence of the bunker had desperate civilians tried to get in!

Thankfully, the afternoon sunlight was streaming through the lovely woodland to lighten our spirits, as we made our way to the bus, after a very interesting visit.

## Film Night Review

by Michael Hobbs

The Film Club has been showing afternoon films for many years but until now we've not offered an evening one. Our afternoon shows cater well for those who are around in the afternoons but what about those who aren't? It was suggested that we should consider doing an evening film with perhaps cheese and wine for good measure. We took a chance on an adult Disney movie, *Cruella*, and it proved to be a good choice.

On the evening eighteen residents turned up including some welcomed new faces. With lots of chuckles to be heard it was clear that people were enjoying themselves. The feedback was very positive with encouraging requests to do it again. We learned a lot ourselves. White wine was more popular than red. 6.00pm with a 6.30pm start meant that the film ended at 8.40pm. A pretty reasonable time to end. On reflection perhaps an interval would have helped.

It would not have been possible to host the evening without the help and support of residents, so behalf of the Film Club we offer a big thank you.

## Maureen's New Book

by Maureen Bliss



Lockdown gave me time to be creative. During January and February, when walking almost every day in Richmond Park, I was inspired to write stories on the sprites who lived in the park for my 6 grandchildren. I wrote 5 short stories: a pixie who escaped from his beastly owner and became the first pixie to live in the park; an elf who lived in a big house on the edge of the park and was left on the shelf when the owners moved house; an imp who was very naughty and eventually taught a lesson by his fellow imps; a very pretty fairy who had a nasty experience getting locked in a building without any possibilities of escaping, and finally a goblin who mistook a bottle of gin for water and became very drunk.



I have self published the children's stories and hope to sell them before Christmas for people to buy them as small presents. I will be contributing a percentage of sales towards a charity. If you are interested in purchasing a copy please contact Maureen by email: [blisscentre@hotmail.com](mailto:blisscentre@hotmail.com)

*Above illustration: Mary the Fairy from the book*

### Local News and Events

#### Join Richmond's gyms and pay nothing until 28 January 2022!



Richmond Council operates six sports centres, four pools, five gyms and over 200

fitness classes across the borough both conveniently located and competitively priced for local residents.

#### Listen to Richmond Council's Director of Public Health on COVID-19 and winter health

Listen to the latest Talk Richmond podcast episode to hear the Director of Public Health, Shannon Katiyo, talk about the impact of cold weather on COVID-19, and what we should all be doing to help protect ourselves and those around us from getting sick this winter. Follow this link: [https://www.richmond.gov.uk/listen\\_to\\_talk\\_richmond\\_new\\_podcast\\_for\\_richmond\\_upon\\_thames](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/listen_to_talk_richmond_new_podcast_for_richmond_upon_thames)

#### Loot by Joe Orton at the Teddington Theatre Club

Loot is a riotous slapstick meets dubious morals in Orton's outrageous comic masterpiece running from 7 to 11 December 2021. For more info: <https://www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk/production/loot>

#### Show An Act of Kindness this Christmas



Christmas may be a time to celebrate with family and friends, but for many it is one of

the most isolating and lonely times of the year. If you know someone who will be lonely, reach out to see if there is anything you can do.

#### Friends of Marble Hill seek new Committee members



The Friends of Marble Hill Committee is looking to relaunch to have the right blend

of skills and knowledge to support updated objectives now that the Marble Hill Revived Programme is entering its final stages. More info: <https://friendsofmarblehill.org.uk>

#### Petersham Nurseries shortlisted for award

Local restaurant Petersham Nurseries has been shortlisted for 'Book of the Year' at the Food & Travel Reader Awards with their book 'The Boglione Family'.

#### St John's Christmas Craft Fair

Come along on Saturday 11 December to St John's Church in Hampton Wick for a Christmas Craft Fair.

## Oratorio Delights

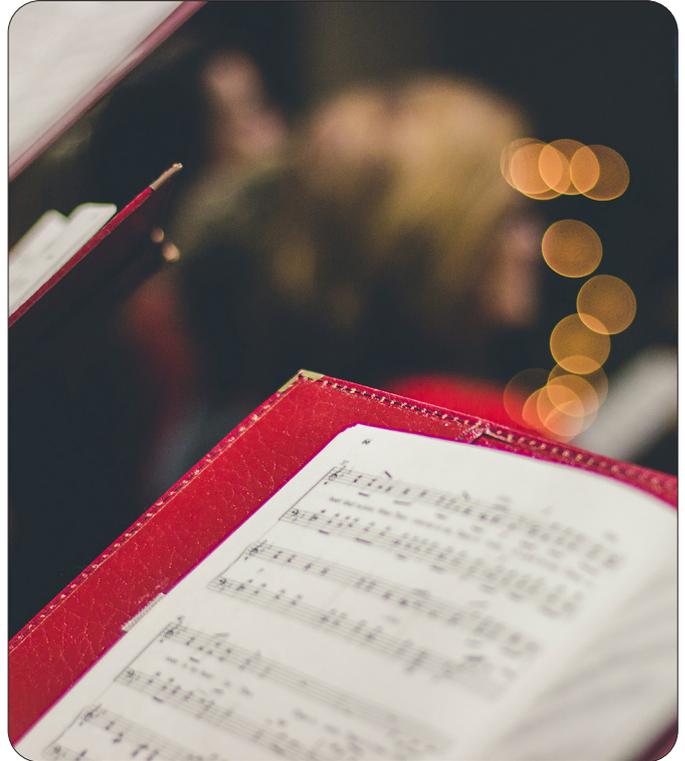


by Dorothy Coe

Music and creative activities have always shaped my life from a very early age. My mother was a dressmaker, floral artist, and avid theatregoer. My father was a beautiful tenor singer, in a male voice choir and quartet, performing every year in music competitions and operatic musicals. I was always part of both scenes, trained in piano from six years old, taking every opportunity to immerse myself in music.

Since I retired, I have taken the time to pursue music again as a personal interest, as a singer, not an active pianist. In recent years I have been encouraged and supported by my daughter to join an oratorio choir and become a participant in this shared artistic activity.

I was very reticent at first as I have never actually liked performing! And I thought I was too old to sing. However, I was pleasantly surprised by my efforts as I drew on my ability to read the music and follow the four-part harmonies. After my initial hesitant involvement, I accepted the challenge and practised and rehearsed as much as possible and, as a result, discovered a new creative connection within myself.



I believe that Oratorios are a form of artistic prayerful worship, of amazing spirituality. I seemed to naturally embrace and connect my voice with the incredible sound delivered by other enthusiastic vocalists which, in turn, has given me personal inner strength of wonder and power.

I was fortunate to have boundless creativity in my life at a young age, and I still embrace the time to pursue artistic crafts, and attend the ballet and shows. I love to absorb personal meaning from artistic performance but music, in this new form, has lit up my life and come into its own in a most moving poignant way.

## A Creative Life - Eric and Jennifer Cooper

by Chantal Richards



I feel honoured to have spent a few hours with two amazingly creative residents this month. Eric and Jennifer Cooper at Candler Almshouses have a home that is full to the brim of amazing artwork and ornamental memories.

Up until recently, in 2018, the couple worked from a studio in Barnes at the Karavan Yard. They designed and made furniture and artwork of all kinds - working mainly with wood and glass. Eric's father was a carpenter and Eric learnt many of his skills from him. Eric grew up in Essex in a house that was partly a dance school, his mother taught over 300 girls and boys in the front room, including Eric (*see photo above*). Young Eric took on the catering to feed the dancers and this led to his career as a chef working in France and Germany.



However, a nagging feeling of wanting to be more artistic, made Eric change his career and come back to London to go to art school. Eric and Jennifer met at Hornsey College of

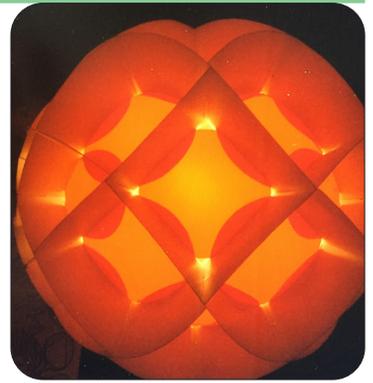


Art (*see photo bottom left*) and then Eric went onto pursue stained glass at the Royal College of Art (*see his work above*).

Having reached the pinnacle of artistic institutions, Eric said "I was completely unsatisfied with what I could do. I was not happy there, and I thought, I've got to go out and get some more substance into me. So I resigned from that course. And I became a lorry driver. The area they gave me was South Kensington". Disappointing maybe, but this is where the magic started to happen.

Eric continues, "One of the companies that I used to pick up from made and marketed paper and there was an awful lot of paper kicking around in the bins. One evening I was driving and I looked through someone's window and they had a paper lampshade hanging up in their house and I found this fascinating. Anyway, this paper

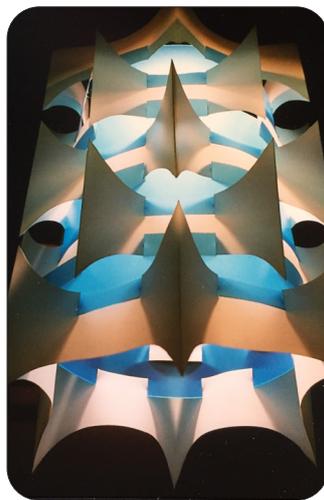
## On Being Creative- ALMSHOUSE NEWS



company always had rolls of cut offs in the bins. So I started playing around and I gradually developed a design for a lampshade made of paper. And it was pretty good actually! I started selling the lampshades in a Kensington shop. Wow! Very soon I was earning more making lampshades than they were paying me for driving the big lorry. The designs kept coming. In one year alone, I was supplying John Lewis, Habitat, Selfridges in Oxford Street and all sorts

***"we raised 6 children on our cottage industry in one of the nicest places in London"***

of stores. We supported our family on these sales. In one year for John Lewis I made 4000, all on the kitchen table. The children used to play under the table. (See top and bottom images of the different designs of lampshades).



All the while, Jennifer raised six children who now live in London, France and Australia. She too kept creative making cushions for sale in Kensington boutiques and later completed courses in appliqué (see photo right) and felting.



The depth and passion of Eric and Jennifer's creative life together is an absolute delight to visualise and fathom. This article is only the icing on the cake of many years of tough grind but with harmonious results. I'm still trying to persuade Eric to write his autobiography!



# Wordsearch: New Dictionary Words in 2021

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

paygap

gigeconomy

defunding

deplatform

longcovid

horchata

airfryer

dadbod

halotherapy

fluffernutter

superspreader

amirite

unconsciousbias

truthiness

quarenteen

PPE

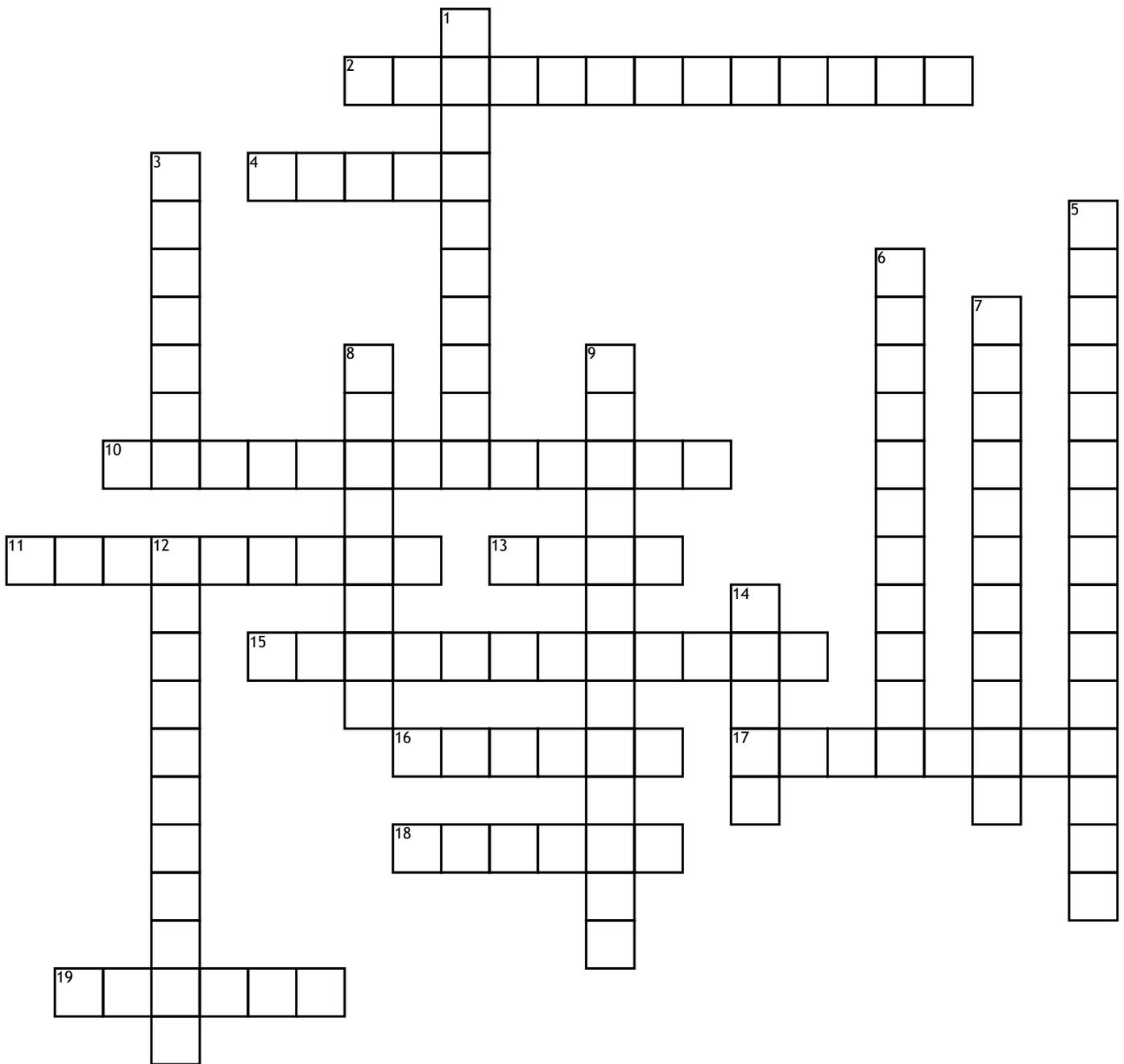
doomscrolling

contactless

awewalk

adulting

# Crossword Competition: A Look Back at 2021



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter your completed crossword into the Prize Draw for a chance to win a £5 M&S voucher.

Give this whole page to your Scheme Manager or place in the suggestion box.

## Crossword Competition: A Look Back at 2021

### ACROSS

2. Part 2 of the season's greeting!  
(1,5,3,4)

4. 2021 BBC Submarine-based thriller starring Suranne Jones (5)

10. Which American singer's 'conservatorship', where her father had control of her fortune, was ended by a court in November? (7,6)

11. The song 'Together in Electric Dreams' features in which retailer's 2021 Christmas advert? (4,5).

13. In October this zone was extended by the London Mayor from central London to the North Circular and South Circular roads (4)

15. Superintendent Ted Hastings added which little animal to 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph'? (3,3,6)

16. American Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tried which Scottish soft drink at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow? (3-3)

17. Hannah \_\_\_\_\_, British wheelchair racer who won two further gold medals at the delayed 2020 Tokyo Paralympics (8)

18. Which famous frog did Boris Johnson quote in a speech to the UN about climate change? (6)

19. Manufacturer of Covid-19 vaccine (6)

### DOWN

1. Twickenham-based rugby union team which won the 2021 Premiership final (10)

3. Which William boldly went where no nonagenarian has gone before? (7)

5. Part 1 of the Season's greeting!  
(1,5,9)

6. Which politician got caught having an affair on his office camera in June? (4,7)

7. Sir \_\_\_\_\_, MP with a second job in the British Virgin Islands! (8,3)

8. US President inaugurated on January 20th (3,5)

9. New sport at the delayed 2020 Tokyo Olympics in which Sky Brown of Team GB won a bronze medal (13)

12. Daniel Craig's last Bond film?  
(2,4,2,3)

14. The Queen hit 'Don't Stop Me Now' features in which supermarket's 2021 Christmas advert? (5)

## End of the Year Quiz Competition



by Heather Keeler

1. In what year did the car seat belt become compulsory?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. The Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, was said to be delighted when a famous actor purchased one of her paintings. Who was he?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the name of the composer of the 8th Unfinished Symphony?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. After murdering Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, on 29th December 1170, on their return the two assassins took refuge and refreshment within these ancient walls. It is also the ancestral home and resting place of MP and author Alan Clark. What is the name of this historical dwelling? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Samuel Butler's novel, published in 1872, is about the lives of families in Victorian rural England. What is the name of this novel?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. The musical film, West Side Story, was said to be a modern take on one of Shakespeare's plays? Which play?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. This beautiful tree grows in Britain but in very few numbers. Native to the forests of south east Europe, it bears yellow/ pink flowers and fruits in green spiky capsules. What tree is it?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. In 1942, actor Cary Grant married Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton. What did the the public nickname them as? \_\_\_\_\_

9. In 1992, after the disastrous fire at Windsor Castle and then the divorce of Princess Royal and Captain Mark Phillips, how did the Queen describe this awful year? \_\_\_\_\_

10. This controversial but powerful Israeli General claimed victory for the Six Day War in 1967, and is credited with the shift in the outcome of the Yom Kippur war in 1973. What was his name?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Enter your completed quiz into the Prize Draw for a chance to win a £5 M&S voucher.**

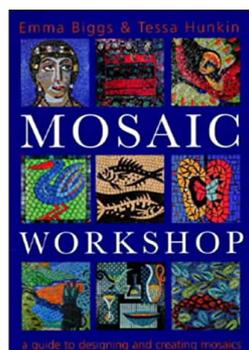
**Give this whole page to your Scheme Manager or place in the suggestion box.**

## Page Turners



by Mike Townsin

*This review of books is a regular feature inviting readers to contribute their own reviews of books they have enjoyed and would recommend. Please send them to your Scheme Manager*



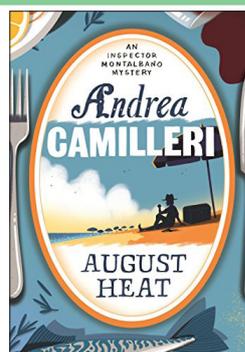
### The Mosaic Workshop: A Practical Guide to Designing and Creating Mosaics

Review by John O'Brien

Mosaic is a forgiving art form. Most people who try it find that their early attempts are surprisingly rewarding and they have little embarrassment in showing them to friends or family. Emma Biggs and Tessa Hunkin (two of the very best contemporary British mosaic artists) provide in this book a brilliant introduction to the art form.

It explores the different elements of mosaic design and technique through a variety of projects which aim to give novices the confidence to start and the more experienced the freedom to progress.

The book looks back at the historical beginnings of the craft, and goes on to show how beginners can learn to transform such items as tables, picture frames and tiles. Twenty four projects featuring birds, fish, animals, figures and fruit provide detailed instruction. The basic techniques of mosaic are comprehensively explained and illustrated. Hunkin was brought up in Kew and together with Biggs they also run a shop in SE27, Norwood and an on-line store selling mosaic materials, co-incidentally called The Mosaic Workshop. If you fancy having a go, their book and store will get you going. (Used copies on Amazon from £3.58; new £58)



### August Heat by Andrea Camilleri

Review by Jenny Ruff

I made my first visit to the island of Sicily in August 2006, the year this book was written. I instantly fell in love with the Island and its very exciting and exotic people. I made friends and was accepted as family and that relationship continues to this day.

Andrea Camilleri, the author of the Inspector Montalbano books, died aged 93 and towards the end of his life was blind but carried on dictating his work to his personal assistant until the very end.

Inspector Montalbano is a typical Sicilian detective, easy going, infuriating and is often happy to bend the rules, especially in August Heat when he discovers a dead body in a trunk underneath a villa where his long-suffering girlfriend Livia (who he is not always faithful to!) is staying with friends. He calls in his colleagues (who are usually out for coffee, or taking long lunches and entertaining their lovers) to investigate. Throw in a few Mafiosi for good measure, but with their clever police work and lots of humour they manage to solve the crimes in Vigata. The proud Sicilians love to be called Italian and have their own dialect and mannerisms. If you make a mistake they will puff themselves up and be very offended and call you an idiot!!

Read this book snuggled up on the settee in our cold winter weather and be transported to this very green and beautiful island in the August Heat. (Used copies on Amazon from 92p) The books have been made into a TV series in Italian and Sicilian, to critical acclaim, and broadcast in 65 countries, including BBC4 in the UK. In 2012, the series generated a spin-off, *The Young Montalbano*. Ed.

### Poetry Corner by Nigel Davis



As this is the Christmas issue of the Almshouse News, let's have a Christmassy poem. This is one with a difference.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) can, as a poet, usually be relied on to draw, simply and directly, a deeper significance out of a single observation or a single thought. Hardy was a very long way indeed from being a religious man. But, as this poem suggests, even in older years the wish to believe in a true meaning of Christmas, and to retain an instinct for its wonder, perhaps may not be totally lost.

**A very Happy Christmas and New Year from Poetry Corner to all in the Almshouse community!**

### The Oxen by Thomas Hardy

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.  
“Now they are all on their knees”,  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years! Yet, I feel,  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
“Come; see the oxen kneel

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,”  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

