

October - November 2025

Number 709

The Messenger

The magazine of the Bridge Church, Otley



The Bridge Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH IN OTLEY

The official Magazine of the
Bridge United Reformed Church, Otley
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Messenger letter

Dear Friends,

In April I fulfilled an ambition that I have had since I was at Secondary School. Whilst on a visit to Paris the friend I was travelling with surprised me with a trip to the Palace of Versailles. Versailles has a long history, not least, with the Sun King, Louis XIV, who expanded the palace well beyond the Hunting Lodge of Louis XIII. It is a glorious building but for me there was just one room I longed to visit, The Hall of Mirrors. In this room the leaders of the victorious Allied Powers gathered after the First World War to create a treaty that would punish Germany and make a future war impossible. On 28th June 1919 the German government signed the treaty that Woodrow Wilson, of the United States, Georges Clemenceau of France and David Lloyd-George of the United Kingdom, had spent five months crafting. The 440 clauses were harsh and whilst, at the time it was signed, many cheered the conclusion of a war that had left Europe devastated the treaty sowed seeds of resentment in Germany and from those seeds a future, more global conflict, would grow.

We now approach a solemn moment in our liturgical and national calendar, Remembrance. We are invited to take time out of the busy routine of our lives to remember the cost of the conflicts of the 20th century, conflicts that left such deep scars across the world. This remembrance will be focused on a two-minute silence held at 11am on Remembrance Sunday and, then again, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. We will remember those who lives were sacrificed in war and that remembrance also invites us to commit to honoring those lives by striving for peace.

What is peace? Is it merely the absence of conflict, the silence of the guns of war? The legacy of Versailles tells us it must be more than that, peace must go hand in hand with justice. Justice that the Prophet Amos describes as rolling down like waters with righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Peace and justice cannot be separated.

As I write this there is a negotiation in Egypt seeking to bring an end to the genocide in Gaza. It will not be peace if the guns fall silent, but the occupation continues and the attacks on Israel continue. Peace, with justice, can only be achieved when human beings on opposing sides sit down together and see each other as human beings; decide to work together as human beings; chose to live together as human beings. When we pause on Remembrance Sunday and, then again, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month we are not only pausing to remember the past, but we are also pausing to honour the past with a commitment to building a better future.

A future world living together in a just peace is possible if we pray for it, demand it and strive for it. If we honour the past and truly remember them!

With love,

Jason



THE BRIDGE CHURCH
PREACHING PLAN
19th October – 14th December 2025

Sunday 19th October – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Morning Service

Jason is leading Junior Church

The Service will be conducted by Mr John Eveleigh

Evening Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

2 Timothy 3.14 – 4.5

Sunday 26th October – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Taste and See Service - Homelessness

Mr Gordon Justham

Luke 17.5-6

Sunday 2nd November – Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

2 Thessalonians 1.1-4, 11-12

Sunday 9th November – Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

Remembrance Sunday Parade

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

2 Thessalonians 2. 13-17

Sunday 16th November – Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Jason is preaching elsewhere in the Yorkshire Synod.

The Service will be conducted by The Reverend Alan Griffiths

Sunday 23rd November – Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Taste and See Service - Leadership

Mr John Eveleigh -Jason is on holiday

Sunday 30th November – Advent Sunday

Sacrament of Baptism

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

**Sunday 7th December – Second Sunday in Advent
Sacrament of Holy Communion**

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

**Sunday 14th December – Third Sunday in Advent
Gift Service Parade**

The Reverend Jason McCullagh

MINISTER'S REGISTER
31st July – 5th October 2025

BAPTISMS

24th August Aurelia Grace Spivey

FUNERALS

5th August Mrs Claire Taylor Rawdon Crematorium

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

For a few days, at the end of November, I will spend time in a Monastery, where silence is observed. Whilst there I will plan the Services that will help us celebrate Christmas.

If you would like to read in any of these Services you will find a sign-up sheet in the usual place from Sunday 2nd November, it will be removed after the Service on Sunday 16th November. Then, with these names to hand I will shape the worship!

Jason

CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

The Bridge Church will be offering Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day.

We have forty places available, and the doors will open at 11:30am and dinner will be served at 12 Noon.

If you would like to attend, please let Enid Taylor know by Saturday 15th November. After that date the invitation will be extended to the wider community.

Enid is the only person dealing with the bookings this year.

News of the Family

News of the Family

Baptism

On Sunday the 24th of August 2025, Aurelia Grace Spivey was baptised. Aurelia is the baby daughter of Jessica and Rob Spivey, and she was supported by a good number of her friends and families, including of course Grandparents Alison & Dean Finlay, and Great Grandparents Angela & Michael Rhodes. It was good to welcome you all and we hope you will remember Aurelia's special day with love and thanksgiving.

Further Education

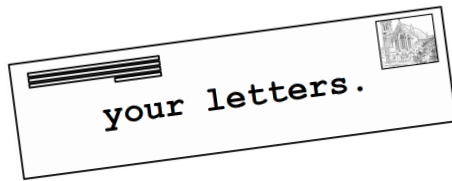
Two former Junior Church members have successfully attained their A-Levels and are starting student life at Durham University, having left Prince Henry's Grammar School. Olivia Cummins, Jennifer and Wes Kennedy's Granddaughter, is going to be studying Chemistry, and Jack Hartis, Dorothy Heelas's Grandson, will be studying Pure Mathematics. Our prayers will be with you as you start a new chapter in your lives.

New Job

Congratulations go to Tina Johnson who has taken semi-retirement. Tina worked for the NHS for 40 years but has been offered and accepted a part time role working as an assistant at the breakfast club at Pool in Wharfedale Primary School. A big change for you Tina, and we hope you enjoy every minute of your new venture.

Do please pass on any good news you would like to share to one of the Pastoral Elders.

Margaret Armitage.



Dear Friends,

I would like to say a very big thank you for the care and concern shown to me after I fell on holiday recently and injured my leg. Thank you also for the prayers and beautiful flowers.

Noah enjoyed being back at church whilst he was at home for the summer holidays and is grateful for the welcome and friendship shown to him.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Love from,

Sue Dockar.

Dear Friends

I would like to say thank you very much for the beautiful flowers I have received.

Thank you again

Joan Wiseman

Dear Friends

A heartfelt thank you all for your support, kind messages, encouragement and flowers over the past twelve months.

Thank you to the 'Bramhope team' for all the transport!

I am great now! Thank you all and God Bless.

Gwen Hughes



We continue to enjoy our monthly meetings with a slight difference this time as we decided to have an August meeting this year. We had a buffet lunch rather than a cooked meal and put the emphasis on the FRIENDS giving people the opportunity to just relax and chat. Jason was a great help as we didn't have a speaker so he played host!!

The September meeting was musical with the Ukulele band and singers. The music was a trip down Memory Lane for us with songs from the forties right through to the nineties. We will definitely invite them again as we all enjoyed both listening and singing along.



For our October meeting we had a talk about the Washburn Valley with accompanying slides showing the differing seasons and places. It is always interesting to see our local area. David Alred is an excellent photographer and has great knowledge of local wildlife.

On November 5th we will be having Sarah Ward's 'Family language and adventures abroad' talk.

The speaker for the December 3rd meeting has yet to be arranged.

Enid Taylor

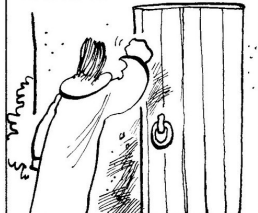
Young Peoples Pages

Words and Actions

JESUS HAD MANY FRIENDS - AND HE OFTEN WENT WALKING WITH THEM.



ONCE, ON A JOURNEY, JESUS CALLED AT THE HOME OF MARTHA AND MARY



MARTHA WAS VERY PLEASED TO MEET WITH JESUS, AND SHE MADE HIM WELCOME



MARY WAS VERY EXCITED TOO AND WANTED TO LISTEN TO EVERYTHING JESUS HAD TO SAY



BUT MARTHA WAS NOT VERY IMPRESSED WITH MARY! SHE THOUGHT HER SISTER SHOULD BE HARD AT WORK. NOT SITTING AROUND - JUST LISTENING



LORD, DON'T YOU CARE THAT MARY HAS LEFT ME TO DO ALL THE WORK BY MYSELF?!



MARTHA, YOU ARE WORRIED AND TROUBLED OVER SO MANY THINGS



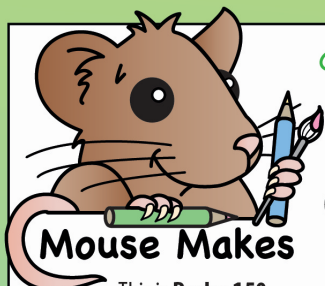
JESUS TOLD MARTHA THAT THERE ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE THAN JUST FUSSING OVER A CLEAN HOUSE!



PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN LEARN, LIKE MARTHA, IS TO MAKE TIME TO LISTEN TO JESUS.



See Luke 10:38-42



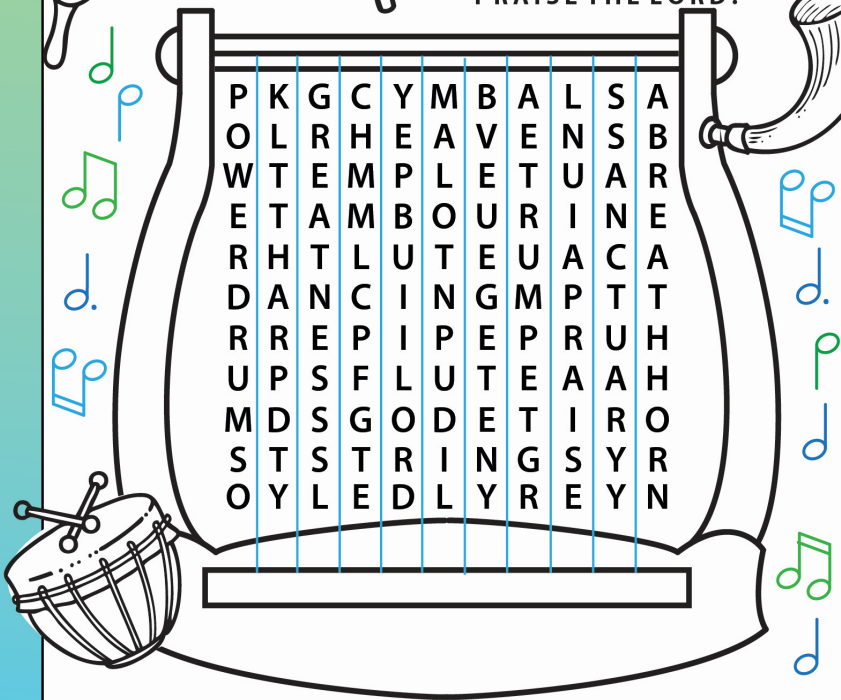
Mouse Makes

This is **Psalm 150**,
a song of praise to God,
it tells us why and how
to worship God.
*How do you praise and
worship God?*



Praise God in His Temple,
Praise Him in His mighty heavens.
Praise Him for His acts of power,
Praise Him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise Him
with the sounding trumpet,
Praise Him
with the harp and lyre,
Praise Him
with tambourine and dancing,
Praise Him
with the clash of cymbals,
Praise Him
with the resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath
PRAISE THE LORD!



PRAISE • GOD • TEMPLE • HEAVENS • SANCTUARY • POWER • GREATNESS
TRUMPET • HORN • PIPE • FLUTE • HARP • LYRE • LUTE • STRINGS
TAMBOURINE • DANCING • CYMBALS • DRUMS • BREATH • LORD

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:5-13

To teach about praying, and God's good gifts, Jesus told this story - 'If you have a visitor arrive in the middle of the night..'

Oh no! I have no bread to feed him! I am so ashamed! What can I do?... I know!



'You would go round to a friend's house.'



I really, really need some bread for a visitor.



I need that bread!



Jesus concluded...

So keep on asking and it will be given, seeking and you will find, knocking and it will be opened... And parents, if your hungry child asks for bread,



'...would you give them a stone?'



'And if they asked for a fish...'



'...would you give them a snake?'



'Or if they asked for an egg...'



'you'd give a scorpion?'



If you, who aren't perfect parents, give good gifts to your children, then don't you think that gifts from your perfect Father, God, will be even better?



WORDSEARCH

St Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, though his only connection with the country is that some of his bones were reputedly transported in the 8th century to Fife and preserved at a church in a place now named St Andrews.

Andrew was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and the very first to bring someone else to Christ - his own brother. Like many fervent Jews at the time Andrew and an unnamed companion had been drawn to the prophet John the Baptist. When one day John pointed out Jesus to Andrew and his friend, and described him as the 'Lamb of God', the two young men assumed that the next stage of their spiritual search was about to unfold. So as Jesus made off, they followed him.

When Jesus turned and asked them what they were 'seeking', all they could come up with was a lame enquiry about his current place of residence: 'where are you staying?'

The reply of Jesus was the most straight-forward invitation anyone can receive: 'Come and see'. So they did, and the results of their response were life changing. For Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus, and soon the little apostolic band who would carry the message of Jesus to the whole world was formed. And right at the front of the column, as it were, was Andrew, the first disciple of Jesus.

Andrew
Patron
Saint
Scotland
Fife

First
Disciple
John
Baptist
Lamb

God
followed
Jesus
Come
See

Peter
Apostolic
Band
Message
world

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

N.O.W. MISSION AND CARE GROUP

When, towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the United Reformed Church voted in favour of abolishing District Councils Synods and were invited to reimagine how churches could work together. The Yorkshire Synod created Mission and Care Groups.

Our Mission and Care Group has recently decided to change its name to the N.O.W. Mission and Care Group – the Nidd, Ouse and Wharfe. The Group consists of eight churches: The Bridge; Salem; Dacre; Bilton Grange, Harrogate; Knaresborough, West Park, Harrogate; St Paul's, Harrogate; and St Columba's, York.

The purpose of this group is to deepen the relationships between the churches in our area. Currently I serve this group as Convener and John Eveleigh serves as Secretary. Gill Chapman sits on the Pastoral Committee as the Synod Pastoral Elder to these churches.

Recently, we have completed our plan for events in 2026. Each event is designed to help us share together; some seek to develop our faith, some allow us to socialise, some invite us to worship, and others to discuss issues relevant to our churches. These meetings are open to every member of the eight United Reformed Churches who make up this Mission and Care Group. So, when you see these events advertised, the invitation is for you!

Jason

Programme for 2026.

Jan 29th (Thurs) 10.30am	- M & C Group Meeting - St Paul's, Harrogate (Centenary Room).
Feb 14th (Sat) afternoon	- Social Afternoon - The Bridge Church, Otley.
Apr 25th (Sat) 10.30 - 15.00	- NOW Conference - Bilton Grange, Harrogate.
May 12th (Tues) 7pm	- M & C Group Meeting - Dacre
July 12th (Sun) 2.30pm	- Joint M & C Group service - West Park, Harrogate
Aug 14th (Fri) Noon	- Ministers/Secretaries/ Treasurers Lunch - St Columba's, York.
Sept 15th (Tues) 7pm	- M & C Group Meeting - Salem URC Burley in Wharfedale.
Nov 19th (Thurs) 10.30am	- M & C Group Meeting - Knaresborough URC.
Early December	- M & C Group Christmas Dinner - TBA

The Hollybush Project

This is a transcript of the talk given by Carrie, one of the support staff at the Hollybush project who have been our church charity for the last two years.

The Hollybush Project has been running at the Hollybush Conservation Centre since 2003. The scheme is open to people over eighteen who have learning disabilities and are eligible to receive day care from Leeds City Council Adult Services.



They are based in the building erected by Joseph Whitwell who pioneered forcing rhubarb in the 1860's and there is a blue plaque on the building to commemorate this. The 'farm' was ideally located between the canal and the railway line.

The project aims to develop and facilitate engaging group activities for the participants. There are lots of gardening opportunities on site, there is a polytunnel, which as well as providing place to grow plants, also provides shelter from the sun on hot days and a place to keep warm when it is cold. There are several courtyard containers and several beds and a sales space which is kept well stocked.

Cooking takes place in the classroom using products grown mostly on site, cakes are baked and chutneys and soups made, sometimes being consumed by the group members or for sale at the summer plant sale of the Christmas Fair.

In recent times, Asda at Adel have been donating plants which have not been sold, these can be nursed back to health and are planted into the gardens or sold in the sales area.

Many of the team work in the woodwork area. There is nothing that they cannot make, and items include seats, potting benches, planters, bird boxes and Christmas trees. Some of the artwork is amazingly detailed. They are a resilient lot and work through all weathers.

There are some talented musicians in the group. Abba is a particular favourite and dancing and singing can go on for several hours. The group have also been known to engage

in 'bridge singing' along the canal which is a nice place to walk and easy to access with it being adjacent to Hollybush – the faces of passing pedestrians are a picture.

The Project entered the Harrogate Flower show in April 2024 and gained a three-star certificate for their efforts. The group had enjoyed making mood boards, mock ups and growing the plants and making the woodwork items.

In the autumn of 2024, the group were pleased to be involved with the Leeds International Piano Competition. Besprode Pianos donated pianos that were no longer playable, and they were planted up with plants and placed around the Leeds area. The Hollybush Piano found pride of place right outside Leeds City Museum. The piano made its way back to the Hollybush garden at the end of the event.

A stone mason visited during the autumn of 2024 and everyone ended up looking like ghosts, but had a lot of fun – even the sweepings up were used in the Hollybush garden. Kate from Bee Inspired offered some workshops in March 2025 to explain why bees are so important and there was an opportunity to dress up, taste some honey and do some craftwork.

The summer Plant Sale in May 2025 attracted over four hundred visitors and many plants grown by the groups and items of woodwork were sold.

Future projects include a Natural Dye and Medicinal Herb Garden, the herb spiral is already complete and various farmhouse bathroom items are to be used as planters. Plants are being grown in the gardening sessions and resources are being accumulated from other groups at Sunnybank Mills and Armley Mills. We are also learning about dyeing.

The donations which have been received by the Hollybush Project have transformed the experience for the group members. Things which have been purchased include a new wheelbarrow, secateurs, trugs, gardening gloves, woodwork supplies including stains, screws, drill and bits, sandpaper, craft and card making supplies as well as contributing to the overall running of the project.

"Thank you for your support in raising money for the project – we all appreciate it."

GETTING TO KNOW CLAIRE WILKINSON

What first brought you to the Bridge Church?

As a child I went to church with my mum and sisters and we attended Sunday school, my friend's father was the minister of the local church so I was used to being around religion from a young age. I have always had a belief in God but lost this a bit as I got older. I was looking for a church to go to on a Sunday as I wanted religion to be part of my life again. My mum had been coming to Bridge Church for a while and suggested I go along with her one Sunday to see what I thought. and now I am a member and love the services every week.



Please share a favourite memory of the Bridge Church?

My first visit is such a lovely memory, everyone was so welcoming and I immediately felt I had made the right choice to accompany my mum. The church has a lovely atmosphere and I really enjoyed my first service.

What is your favourite hymn and why?

My all time favourite hymn is Ave Maria, it is so beautiful and there are many different versions of it to listen to.

How would you like to see the Bridge Church develop?

I feel the church is already welcoming to all and would like to see it continuing to reach out into the community.

What can you tell us about your working career?

Early on in my career I worked a mortgage advisor for a building society, from there I moved on to a role as a letting agent for a local rental property company. For many years I worked in recruitment as an Account Manager and now I work in the conveyancing department of a solicitors.

practice. I do also run my own online shop where I design and sell accessories (mainly handbags) and home items. I work full time and then come home and work on my business so it can be very busy, especially in the run up to Christmas!

What hobbies do you have?

Too many! I paint folk art birds and animals and have sold a few original paintings. I love pottering in the garden, visiting historical places, jigsaw puzzles, journalling and designing the products for my shop.

Where is your favourite place in this country?

Definitely Holy Island in Northumberland, if I could live there I would go tomorrow! The history of the priory and castle are so interesting. I just love that it can be cut off from the mainland and the peacefulness of the place. I especially love it on an overcast day when it looks bleak and atmospheric.

Where in the world would you like to visit?

I would like to visit various places in New England in Autumn when all the trees are in full glory, especially Stowe and Woodstock in Vermont and Camden in Maine.

If you could invite 3 people to dinner (dead or alive) who would they be and why?

My first is a personal one, my dad, because there is so much I want to talk to him about and I would love for him to see how settled I have become in my life. I would also love for him to meet his great grandchildren as he would be so proud to be a great grandad.

My second would be Audrey Hepburn as I respect her so much for all her charity work as an ambassador for UNICEF and the way she advocated for the well-being of children and animals.

My third would be three in one if I could! The Bronte Sisters, I would love to discuss their literary works and learn about their lives and inspirations and how hard it must have been as a female writer in those times.

Women's Meeting

WOMEN'S MEETING IS BACK! It was lovely to be back **on Monday 8th September** and welcoming old and new members! Jason presided over this new season of meetings and our first meeting was entitled "The New Start". Our opening hymn was Morning has Broken, all hymns and prayers were on the appropriate theme. Jason spoke about new beginnings, birth, school, marriage and, of course, his own ordination. It was lovely to be back!

On Monday 22nd September, our meeting was led by our Vice President, Jackie Blackburn. After a hymn and prayers she introduced our speaker, Malcom Johnson. His theme was "Captive on the Carousel of Time" (charting the 70s). We had music, board games, special events (including the Queen's Silver Jubilee), strikes including rail strikes, fire strikes and even the bread strike and lots of music groups we had forgotten, except of course Abba and the Bee Gees! It was a very interesting afternoon, bringing back lots of memories!

Pam Bradley

NEW CHURCH CHARITY - MERCY SHIPS

Mercy Ships is a faith-based international development organisation that deploys hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need.

Conditions requiring surgical treatment kill more people in [low-income countries](#) than HIV/Aids, TB and malaria combined. Globally, five billion people have no access to safe, affordable surgery when they need it.

Fortunately, more than 44% of the world's population lives within 100 miles of a coast — which is why Mercy Ships uses modern hospital ships to bring world-class volunteer medical professionals directly to the places they're needed most.



CHURCH DIARY - OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2025

Weekly events

The Bridge Cafe - Every Thursday at 2p.m.

Parents & Toddlers - Every Thursday and Friday at 9.30 a.m.

Quiet Communion - Every Wednesday at 10 a.m.

Regular Events

Women's Meeting

October 20th - Music on the move, in the Army - Jane McKeon

November 3rd - Wartime love lost and found - Margaret Thompson

November 17th - Model Villages - from Saltaire to Bournville
Eric Jackson

December 1st - Seasonal Posies - Margaret Crossfield

Food and Friends 1st Wednesday of each month at 10.30 a.m.

November 5th and December 3rd.

Supper Club—3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30 p.m.

November 21st - Insights into Bermuda - Michelle Howard.

Singing for Fun - alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

20th October, 3rd November, 17th November, 9th December

Messy Church - 29th November.

NEXT MESSENGER

Material for the next edition of the Messenger should be in the hands of the Editor by Sunday, 23rd November and should be available for collection on Sunday, 7th December, 2025.

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