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The Pinnacle

**A Magazine for the parish of
Kildwick, Cononley and Bradley**

*The Churches of St Andrew's,
St John's and St Mary's*

St John's is a Local Anglican/Methodist Ecumenical Partnership

November 2020

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“All creatures, great and small”

I'm sure that as good Yorkshire folk, you're all familiar with James Herriot's stories of life as a young, newly-qualified vet from Glasgow starting his career in the 1930s in practice in the fictional market town of Darrowby (Thirsk in real life). Whilst on summer holiday with my family in the Yorkshire Dales in the late 1970s, I remember that one day we stumbled across a TV crew shooting a scene with a vintage car driving along a deserted road through stunning scenery. Although we didn't realise it at the time, they were filming for the BBC's adaptation of the books, which went on to become the hugely popular TV series "All Creatures Great and Small". With fond memories of those programmes, I was both surprised and sceptical earlier this year to learn that Channel 5 was planning a remake. It was therefore with some trepidation that I watched the first episode. I needn't have worried. It was a joy from start to finish. I can't wait for the Christmas special, and hopes are high for a second series.

James Herriot's stories are full of charm, encompassing the complete emotional range – from hilarious, to poignant, and even tragic. Watching the new series, I was struck by the thought that every time James encounters a new case – a

pampered Peke, a family's single beloved cow, a valuable horse in great pain – he doesn't know what awaits him. He doesn't know whether what lies ahead is the makings of a hilarious tale (often at his own expense!), or a tragedy, small in the eyes of the world perhaps, but devastating to those caught up in it. He doesn't know whether what he's



“ ... feeling of helplessness in coming across a case ... ”

going to have to deliver to the expectant owner, anxiously awaiting his expert opinion, will be bad news, or good. In the 1930s, before the routine availability of antibiotics and other drugs available today, sometimes there was little of real efficacy that the vet could offer. But what he could offer alongside his diagnostic and surgical skills, was his kindness and compassion.

It's a long time since I read the books, but I remember more than one occasion where James describes his feeling of helplessness in coming across a case where there was nothing he could do, for all his training and skill. He had to learn from his older and (sometimes) wiser boss (and eventually partner) Siegfried how to cope with those cases. Sometimes through creative

thinking, and sometimes through technological innovations, he found new ways of treating previously incurable cases. But sometimes he just had to accept that there would be no happy ending.

The Herriot stories are still much loved, and I'm sure that this latest TV adaptation will introduce them to a whole new audience too. I think that part of the reason is because the people and situations they depict are so recognizable. Life is made up of ups and downs, of high comedy and deep personal tragedy. Like James, most days we don't know what we're going to meet. Like James, we'll all have had that experience of being in a situation where we're left helpless, for all our skills and training. Perhaps that's a feeling we've had more than our fair share of in recent months, whilst a pandemic rages and there's little that we can do individually to turn the

tide. But also like James, we can still offer our kindness and compassion to those we come across who are in distress. We can rejoice with those who are rejoicing, and weep with those who weep (as Paul wrote two thousand years ago in a letter to a young church in Rome).

The continuing popularity of James Herriot's stories is down to many things: their self-deprecating humour, the nostalgia that they evoke, and the delightful characters (animal and human) that they depict. They are heartwarming and hopeful. Like the stories of Christian faith, they don't fight shy of the hardest of life's realities. But at the end of the day, overall, there is a happy ending. They are just what we need at the moment.

With every blessing

Julie

Julie



A pattern of Services and Eucharistic Readings for November

	<i>Sunday 1st All Saints' Day</i>	<i>Sunday 8th Remembrance Sunday</i>	<i>Sunday 15th 2nd Sunday before Advent</i>	<i>Sunday 22nd Christ the King</i>	<i>Sunday 29th Advent Sunday</i>	<i>Monday 30th St Andrew's Day</i>
Kildwick St Andrew	11.00am	10.45am	11.00am	11.00am	2.00pm	6.30pm
	Eucharist <i>Eph. 1.11-end Luke 6.20-31</i>	Service of Remembrance and Eucharist <i>Matt. 5.1-12</i>	Informal Worship	Eucharist <i>Eph. 1.15-end Matt. 25. 31-end</i>	Eucharist <i>Isa. 64.1-9 Mark 13.24-end</i>	Special Eucharist <i>(Bishop Nick presiding)</i>
Cononley St John	11.00am	10.45am	11.00am	11.00am	11.00am	
	Methodist- led service	Service of Remembrance <i>Matt. 5.1-12</i>	Private prayer	Lay-led service	Holy Communion <i>Isa. 64.1-9 Mark 13.24-end</i>	
Bradley St Mary	9.30am	10.45am	9.30am	9.30am	9.30am	
	Morning Prayer	Service of Remembrance <i>(outside village hall)</i>	Holy Communion <i>1 Thess. 5.1-11 Matt. 25.14-30</i>	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer	

Arrangements for Advent and Christmastide are still undecided. "Special" services such as Remembrance disrupt the regular 3-week rota – and it's not often that we celebrate a 700th anniversary! (*Strange. I can't remember it happening here before!!*) I'm sure there will be other alterations next month

St John's Harvest Festival



Photo: Carolyn Scarr

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who donated food items etc & money for Keighley Salvation Army - a lovely load of bags went down to Keighley and they were very grateful.

We also gave them £93 in cash & cheques.

Whilst it appears that they are not open for activities other than the food bank it seems that they are hoping to open on a small scale soon - their volunteers are older folk & so it's not easy.

Hopefully we may have a toy collection for the Salvation Army in

November & there is always a basket in Church for food donations etc & these will be collected & delivered when relevant. They are particularly in need of the following:

- Pasta
- Rice
- Biscuits
- Tinned meats/fish/fruit
- Toilet paper
- Soap and other hygiene products



Some thoughts on Remembrance Day

- War creates no absolutely new situation. It simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it.
– CS Lewis
- War does not determine who is right – only who is left.
– probably Bertrand Russell
- The tragedy of war is that it uses man's best to do man's worst
– Henry Emerson Fosdick

Clearing Leaves and Cleaning Flues

*In autumn time the leaves turn brown and make the trees look pretty
They fall upon the paths and roads and make them... ooooooh so slippery*

So runs some childish doggerel. The car park area at St Andrew's is heavily used (largely by The School Run) and the trees around deposit (literally) tons of leaves which are then ground up into a gruesome soup. We are managing to keep on top of it this year with a powerful blower, some builders' bags and some willing helpers.

As the temperature drops, the lack of heating in the church has become more apparent. The boiler was disconnected, first because of rusting pipework then because there was inadequate ventilation. The good news is that the chimney sweep has removed several birds and their nest material and some simple woodwork has improved the draught so that we have our Gas Safe Certificate and the boiler is running again.

The bad news is that the boiler is still consuming some 144Kw of energy to heat the church by a few degrees. "You could run a small factory on that!" said the gas engineer. We're going to have to address this...



Jigsaw News

After a long wait, we've received a new newsletter from Tim Lee in Manila.
Read it overleaf.

Since sending it out on the parish mailing list, we've had a couple of responses:

Thank you, Chris. Such amazing, uplifting news. Makes one very humble reading it. So glad they are all well. Take care Lorna

and:

I would like to support these missionaries in a small way.. (My parents were CMS missionaries in Pakistan and I was born there.) Would you let me know please how to send money to you, so that it may be passed on to them? Bob Holland

Kate and Tim Lee

Link Letter no. 20 | October 2020

churchmissionsociety.org/kateandtimlee



The call in action

Dear friends,

It is wonderful to be able to write our first link letter since the COVID-19 pandemic started early this year. What a challenging year it is, and we thank you so much for continuing to be part of God's mission in Jigsaw and our lives. We thank you so much for your wonderful support, prayers and love for our family and for Jigsaw, helping to empower and enable the lifesaving and life-changing ministry of Jigsaw.

Jigsaw updates

From March to June Jigsaw responded to over 1500 families in need with food packages, health support, hospital transportation and much more. In June Jigsaw felt called to completely redevelop its community ministries and support services, and God led Jigsaw to develop "jigsaw at home", weekly Bible, education and craft packs, mums' sewing ministry bags, home therapy packs for the children in our disabilities programme and more. Also, Jigsaw has continued to develop its ministry with a community of rubbish-collecting families in Quezon City, Manila. It has also developed at-home literacy classes and is working to build up its education sponsorship ministry to support its students with online learning capability. This is all alongside a health and wellbeing ministry which is responding to individual children's, young people's and families' needs.

Jigsaw wanted to keep its focus on its five main goals: community, creativity, boundaries, significance and security, but this seemed a tall order since we were not able to meet in person. God graciously led us to develop a ministry that met these goals in ways we could never have imagined. Now, each week more than 1500 children, young people and families have hope as they wait eagerly for their Jigsaw at home packs. Children used to come to Jigsaw kids' clubs to hear the Bible stories, play, learn and pray together.

Today, because the kids' club packs are going **into** households, we are hearing of mums, dads, aunts sitting with their children and reading the Bible stories. Whole households are doing the prayer times together, mums are teaching their children to help with the sewing bags they receive, teaching them new skills. We are all shocked and in wonder at what God is doing by bringing the Scriptures right into the heart of homes we had been trying to reach for the last 17 years. The delivery of these packs by the Jigsaw staff has been a ministry in itself, with households grateful to meet someone for a few minutes who will listen to them, bring a smile and refer individuals in need to our support services. Each week more households ask to join and as Jigsaw's philosophy is "all are welcome", we are not turning any households away. Thank you so very much for all your love, care and support. It is bringing Jesus **into** hundreds of the most needy, vulnerable homes at this most difficult time. Praise God.

Continued over the page



Name: Kate and Tim Lee

Location: Malaysia

Our call: To improve the lives of children and families living in poverty in South East Asia by sharing God's love in practical and strategic ways.

Our role: To develop the work of Jigsaw Kids with children and families in the Philippines and to work with Asia-CMS to develop their local partner programme.



Jigsaw staff handing out weekly meal packs to families in need from street, slum and depressed communities

Asia-CMS update

Asia-CMS is a wonderful mission organisation with co-mission (local) partners working to bring the love of Jesus into marginalised people groups throughout South Asia and the Mekong region in South East Asia. My role at the moment is to help develop and implement a safeguarding framework and deliver training. It's a big project as safeguarding is a relatively new initiative in South East Asia and the framework is covering co-mission partners in more than ten countries. The training has now started and is going really well, however it's just beginning and will need a lot of adapting 😊. I look forward to updating more on the work of Asia-CMS in future link letters.

Family update

Thank you all so much for all your prayers over the last year. There have been numerous challenges in moving to Kuala Lumpur but we praise God things are beginning to settle here and life seems less fraught. Grace has started her IGCSEs and is going to a small learning centre three days a week and doing four other subjects online. This has allowed Tim to focus on the mountain of work that is jigsaw and Asia-CMS. James has his Geography A-level exam in October and so is busy revising. Kate is enjoying teaching live again and we pray that this may continue as online teaching was not fun. Rebekah has started back at university with a mixture of online and face-to-face tutorials. The big sadness is that we are not able to come home for Christmas to see Rebekah and the family due to the strict immigration and quarantine rules here, and have had to move our flights to next June! Please pray for God's amazing love to overcome these difficult times and for him to open up good plans for Christmas, especially for Rebekah, despite the family not being able to come together.

Thank you once again for all your love and support. There is so much darkness and suffering across the whole world at the moment but we know God is in control.

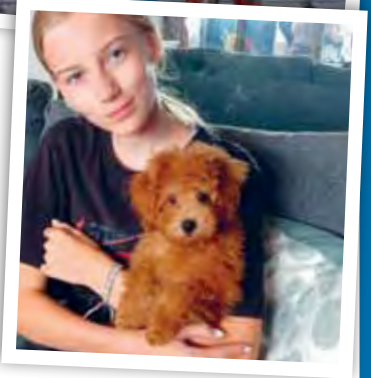
We print out a Bible verse each week and stick it up on our fridge. A few weeks ago it was: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Grace told Tim, "I love that verse, because I do not understand anything which is happening in the world or my life, but I don't need to because it says we don't need to understand, we just need to trust and God will make our paths straight and well and I am able to do that."

Thank you God for being in control and loving us.

Tim, Kate, Rebekah, James and Grace

Photos from top to bottom: jigsaw weekly Bible, education and craft home packs; children eagerly working on their weekly jigsaw at home booklets; Lee family with masks on at the Petronas Towers, Kuala Lumpur; Ezra, our new family member



GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Are you pondering a call to cross-cultural mission? We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at churchmissionsociety.org/explore

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400

You can give to Kate and Tim at: churchmissionsociety.org/kateandtimlee

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Father,
you know our hearts and share our sorrows.
We are hurt by our parting from those whom we
loved:
when we are angry at the loss we have sustained,
when we long for words of comfort,
yet find them hard to hear,
turn our grief to truer living,
our affliction to firmer hope
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Almighty and eternal God,
from whose love in Christ we cannot be
parted,
either by death or life:
hear our prayers and thanksgivings
for all whom we remember this day;
fulfil in them the purpose of your love;
and bring us all, with them, to your
eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



God of love and hope,
you made the world and care for all creation,
but the world feels strange right now.
The news is still full of stories about Coronavirus.
Some people are worried that they might get ill.
Others are anxious for their family and friends.
Be with them and help them to find peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,
and all who are working to discover the right medicines
to help those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these anxious times,
you are with us.
Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.
Amen

Sheffield Carols

In villages around Sheffield there was an amazing revival of singing local carols which started in the 1950s. These carols predate the well-known popular repertoire which was mainly introduced by Victorian men. The Sheffield carols are full-blooded, exuberant celebrations of Christ's birth sung in parts. Most are unknown outside the Sheffield area and, often, they are now sung in pubs – with volume from the men! Many know the tunes and parts by ear; some read music.

Sometimes words we know are sung to totally different tunes. Many of the tunes were composed by village craftsmen such as John Hall of Sheffield Park, a blacksmith "who worked at the anvil and died in the poorhouse in 1794". He wrote a number of carols including "Good News" which is the most widely sung locally:-

"Good News"

Hark, hark what news the angels bring!
Glad Tidings of a new-born King.
Glad Tidings of a new-born King
Born of a maid, a virgin pure,
Born without sin from guilt secure
Born without sin from guilt secure..
Hail mighty Prince, eternal King!
Let heaven and earth rejoice and sing,
Let heaven and earth rejoice and sing;
Angels and men with one accord
Break forth in song to praise the Lord,
Break forth in song to praise the Lord.
Behold, He comes and leaves the skies
Awake ye slumbering mortals rise,
Awake ye slumbering mortals rise
Awake to joy and hail the morn ,
A Saviour of this world was born,
A Saviour of this world was born.

By visiting YouTube you can see and hear some of these carols, sung live in various settings, mainly pubs. Beware! The atmosphere is enthusiasm, fun and good cheer, not musical quality. Everyone is welcome to join in; when we attended one such event there was an easel with the words of carols written by hand for those who were new.

Bob Holland

Bellringers Battle On

Group activities help to shape and maintain our community. Bell ringing is one (rather like bagpipes?) where the "performance" is sometimes, I suspect, rather more public than we'd like!

All group activities have suffered from this pandemic but beyond any personal deprivation from the ringers, the silenced bells have impacted our unique British soundscape. In the early days of lockdown, even the clock was stopped. And people missed it.

In the heady days of summer, when many thought that we were through the worst, some restricted ringing was allowed. Ringers needed to wear masks, sanitise and to stay 2 metres apart. Only one ringer could touch any one bell rope and we could only ring for a short time before a scheduled service. The St Andrew's ringers were quick to take advantage of this and we now try to ring each Sunday when there is a service.

In this, we are well supported by our young teenage ringers. Indeed, without them, the bells would still be silent. From our perspective, Sunday ringing is an important focus. To our listeners (willing or not!) they fill a hole in the soundscape as well as announcing to the world that public worship is about to take place.

Our ringing on the tower bells remains fairly rudimentary. The emphasis is to sound as good as possible rather than to experiment and learn new things. That still happens on our practice night – but not in the tower! A combination of Zoom and an "app" called Ringing Room allows us to practice and experiment with new patterns and methods. It is very different from ringing on real bells. It's more like playing a computer game (and I was never much good at those!). We are, however, stretching our brain cells.

And tonight, for the first time, we are going to try ringing tunes!

Chris Wright



Sundays

A service of Evening Prayer is streamed most Sundays at 4.00pm. This takes place on our Facebook page. www.facebook.com/KCBParish
Morning and Evening Prayer takes place on most weekdays.

Let Nature do the Work

Wow, it's Autumn again. Fears of a COVID winter are temporarily eased by the stunning display of colours. My father, gardening from the 1950's to the 70's, removed every last vestige of spent plant, and cut back anything that could handle it to ground level, leaving lots of bare earth between, not a weed in sight. The vegetable garden would be cleared and double-dug. He would gather horse manure and lay it all over the beds.

I think he used a lot of bonemeal and fish, blood and bone in the early days, but I remember his excitement at the first herbicides. "They're systemic," he enthused, "They kill the weeds right down to their roots." And kill they did. Then pesticides arrived – toxic substances designed to kill. Then the synthetic fertilisers arrived and revolutionised gardening. No-one thought then what the consequences might be.

A walk in the woods should have set us thinking. Who does Nature's autumn gardening? Who rakes up the leaves and gets rid of the rubbish? "It rots," people say, but what makes it rot? All the myriads of living organisms living underground, fungus, bacteria, billions of creatures in a single teaspoon of soil, invisible before, now revealed by powerful modern microscopes. Helped by invertebrates like worms, nature's eco-engineers. There's more life underground than on land, sea or sky.

Despite this knowledge garden centres still sell tons of synthetic fertilisers, weedkillers and pesticides which kill off the life in the soil, where the real gardening is done. Plants take in energy from the sun and feed this through to the bugs in the soil; in return the bugs feed the plants all the nutrients they need that they can't take up directly from the soil or the air. Giving plants massive doses of synthetic nutrients is like giving babies cookies and cream - they'll grow big but not healthy. Digging the soil also wrecks this natural subterranean environment so important for plants.

Don't clear everything away this autumn. Leave the ground covered as much as possible so that creatures can survive through the winter, mulch the ground with organic compost or manure. Worms will drag it down into the soil, letting nature take its course. Lots of creatures will find shelter in the undergrowth so that the whole cycle of life, so vital for plants, will carry through into a wonderful spring. One of the best things to use is your own compost. In the next edition I'll talk about how to make it.

My father took up new ideas in gardening and I think if he was around now he'd embrace the idea of looking after the soil the natural way.

Joan Nicholson

The Thumbnail Chain

We're staying on Crag View this month for a "Thumbnail" from Elsie. I was interested to read about Holy Trinity, Ripon as we'd just recently visited the church to arrange for a national conference ("The Friends of Cathedrals, Abbeys and Greater Churches") that we are hoping to host there next year. In an impressive refurbishment, they have dug out a complete undercroft with meeting rooms, catering facilities and all!

Elsie hasn't designated a "victim" for the December Thumbnail. I'd hate for this chain to be broken – so are there any volunteers? Or will I have to land on somebody?

When we lived in Ripon, we worshipped at Holy Trinity Church, and I was involved with catering at various events. Through these activities, I was asked by the Bishop of Ripon's Chaplain and Youth Worker, Revd Paul Hooper, if I would be involved with a youth event at Ripon Cathedral one Saturday, with roughly two hundred children in attendance from various Diocesan churches. Something hot, followed by a goodies bag of cake and a piece of fruit was requested.

Ripon being a garrison city, I was able to approach the "powers that be" at the army camp for a loan of some hay ovens, and the request was granted. All those attending had to be booked in by their leaders, and the number attending reached four hundred, with only a few days to go. Then a final figure of five hundred was presented to me. With many helpers, baked potatoes were duly cooked and stored in the hay ovens and foodie bags packed. All the children had a wonderful time in the nave of the Cathedral, all the chairs had been cleared to the sides.

Every child was fed and watered, and the evening was a great success. Later, Paul Hooper expressed his thanks and the fact that every child of the seven hundred who attended had been fed. Four coach loads of children had arrived without booking. They had not been catered for but sufficient food was there for them!

A favourite saying of a previous vicar of Holy Trinity at Ripon, always used when he returned to take a funeral at which I was verger, "God moves in a mysterious way" God certainly did so that evening!

Elsie Clarke

The Conundrum Corner

We didn't set a conundrum last month. The solution to the previous one was a bit convoluted! Be assured that the solution to this month's puzzler will be contained in a single line!

Whose Car?

Five cars stand in the church car park; a BMW, an Opel, a Peugeot, a Saab and a Volvo. They are owned by a Bellringer, an Organist, a Preacher, a Sidesman and a Vicar but no one has a car whose make has the same initial as his or her job. The colours of the cars are Blue, Orange, Pink, Silver and Violet but each initial does not correspond with either the car's make or the owner's job.

The Sidesman owns the BMW which is not Violet; the Bellringer has the Orange car and the Blue-coloured Peugeot is nearest the church. The Preacher would never wish to be seen in an Opel.

Who owns the Saab – and what colour is it?

How to solve this conundrum:

Though it looks complicated, a structured approach helps...

Draw a grid with two options:

	Angus	Beryl	Chris
Apple			
Banana			
Cherry			

Blank out the "impossible" options and then write the possible "third" options in the squares. You'll begin to be able to blank out more squares till you reach a solution.



The Sudan Link Calendar

Many thanks to all who have responded to our current appeal for funding, giving the Church in Sudan resources to supply emergency relief at a time of national crisis.

We've received over £65,000 and so far have sent £50,000. Aid is being organised by their MU women workers at archdeaconry level, which means it is being widely distributed across the whole of Sudan.

One small way that you can help is to buy a 2021 Sudan calendar. Janet Wade has ordered a small supply which is available to anyone who wants one. I think they are £3.00 for a small one and £5.00 for the A4 size Contact Janet or Chris Wright to open this small window on a very different world.



Sudan Calendar



(Ed: This month's calendar picture is one that I think I took a few years ago in Omdurman.)

It is of an evening class, young adults gathered in a church compound. Using chalk and talk a variety of subjects are taught. The students come to learn vital knowledge which they have missed out on due to gaps in their school years.

This year although peace has largely come to Sudan, some more pupils are missing education due to the Covid crisis. The opening of schools has currently been delayed for two months, and even when opened there will be children who can't attend because they are expected to work to supplement family funds. In later years, they may well come to this centre, wanting an opportunity to achieve.

It's a life of snakes and ladders – clambering up only to find broken rungs that slide you back down, with ever fresh snakes waiting to drag you further. The present 'snakes' are the worst monsoon floods in 50 years which have mired Sudan's roads, inundated latrines and unleashed diarrhoea, cholera and an outbreak of polio.

Howard Thurman, a forgotten negro American, whose influential teaching of non-violent social change guided the US civil rights movement, wrote a book called *Jesus and the Disinherited*. He said that in times of great transition and turmoil we should look for the 'growing edge'.

"Fruit ripens on the tree: roots silently work in the darkness of the earth against a time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms, green fruit. That's the growing edge. It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung, the one more thing to try when all else has failed, the upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavour. This is the basis of hope in moments of despair, the incentive to carry on when times are out of joint and men have lost their reason. A source of confidence when worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash. The birth of a child — life's most dramatic answer to death — this is the growing edge incarnate. Look well to the growing edge!"

John Poole

Treecreepers

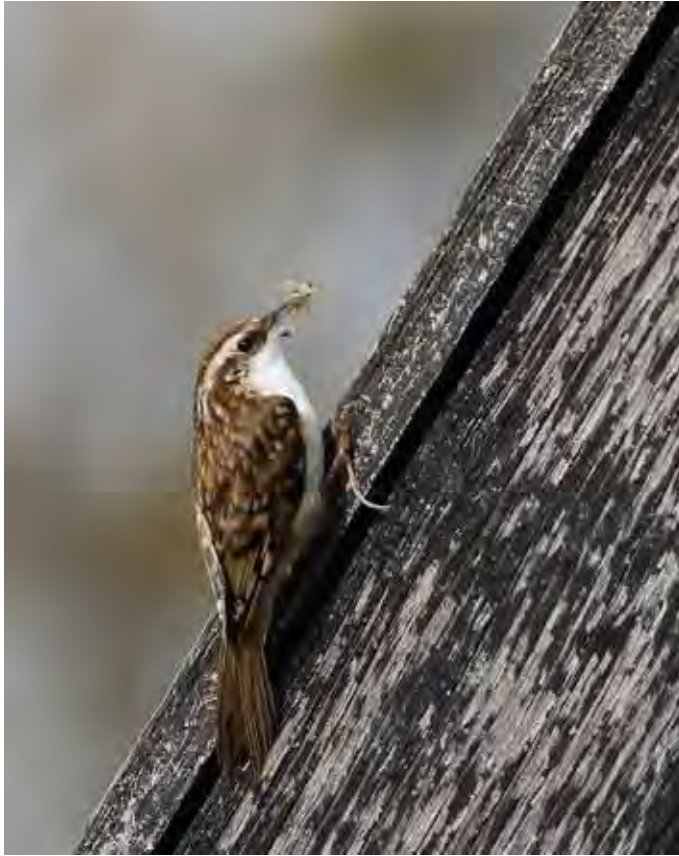


Photo: Liz Cutting/BTO

The tree creeper is an intriguing little bird and a joy to watch. It can be seen in gardens where, as would be expected with such a name, it creeps up and around trees, often being described as mouse-like. Despite it not often being spotted it is a lot more common than you might think, with over 200,000 breeding territories in the U.K.

Although about the same size as a Wren, it looks larger because of its long

down-curved bill and its much longer, stiff tail feathers which it pushes against the tree for extra support. This means that, unlike the Nuthatch, it can't go back down the trunk, it has to fly down. They forage up one tree in a spiral around the trunk, then fly to the next one to repeat the process. A bird seen scuttling down a tree is almost always a Nuthatch.

Treecreepers are vulnerable to cold weather of a particular sort. If wet snow or rain is followed by a hard frost, ice can encase the trees, sealing

in their food, and they can be in trouble. These conditions rarely affect the sheltered interiors of woods, so Treecreepers in such a habitat should be less likely to suffer. However, birds which rely on a network of more exposed trees, often those that typically visit gardens, can be vulnerable. Being so small, they do need to be able to feed during all the available daylight hours in winter.

The Treecreeper's diet is made up of insects, insect larvae and spiders, but they will eat some small seeds, mainly pine and spruce, if they are really hungry in the winter months. They do not usually take supplementary bird food, though in recent years there has been an increasing number of reports of them feeding on peanuts in a mesh feeder.

The population is stable, with no long-term trend up or down, though their numbers do fluctuate from year-to-year, with a negative trend being especially noticeable after cold, wet winters.

They are sedentary birds only leaving their breeding territories in autumn, and even then, usually going no further than a few kilometres. Once a treecreeper establishes a territory, it tends to stay within its boundaries. Although solitary during most of the year, they will join flocks of tits in autumn and winter, roaming woodlands and parks seeking food.

As I said, Treecreepers are quite common, but rather hard to spot. Usually it's a movement that gives them away – look out for them on tree trunks or even fence posts, but approach quietly. When disturbed they freeze, their mottled plumage blending into the pattern of the bark. They also have an annoying habit of avoiding you by moving quickly to the other side of the tree the minute you spot them.

They are more usually seen in gardens between November and April, probably because they are more conspicuous when there are no leaves on the trees. Their song does not help in locating or identifying them either, being a very quiet 'see-see-see' sound easily mistaken for insect noise.

If you find the lives of our garden birds to be of interest, and would like to join in and count the feathered occupants of your garden, please contact the BTO Garden BirdWatch website (www.bto.org/gbw) or email me gbwmike@gmail.com.

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*With proper ceremony, they laid it to rest
with its ancestors*

Deadlines

The next edition will be the winter December/January magazine. We hope it will be published by December 1st though we'll try to have it ready by the weekend before.

The deadline for the Winter edition is

Sunday 22nd November

Please let us have your material at least by then
(but earlier is better!)

Both of our main photos this month are by Chris Wright

***We are still running out of cover photos!
Have you got any pictures of the Pinnacle
– particularly ones suitable for the winter months?***