

# HEARING EYE

**THE VOICE OF OPEN EARS**

**ISSUE 177**

**SUMMER 2023**



## Welcome from Anthea to the Summer edition of Hearing Eye

Summer tends to be a quieter time for us at Open Ears, but I want to assure you that we are still here for you. You can contact Marilyn if you feel you would like someone to talk to, [pastoral@openears.org.uk](mailto:pastoral@openears.org.uk), and Emily will continue sending weekly emails. If you have any holiday snaps or news that you would like to share, please send them to [together@openears.org.uk](mailto:together@openears.org.uk) and Emily will add them to the e-send, it would be good to see some of the places you visit, and be able to put some faces to names. Please also send in any prayer request to [prayer@openears.org.uk](mailto:prayer@openears.org.uk) and the Team will feel it a privilege to pray for you.

Our next online conference will have the theme of 'Harvest and Firstfruits', and I do hope that many of you will join us on September 8.



I wonder what the word 'summer' conjures up in your imagination? For many of us 'summer' means holidays, seaside, friends and family, and, perhaps ice creams 😊 For me, it is, primarily, sunshine! I was born in June, and, according to my Mum, on the hottest day of the year! I always say that is why I love the sun so much!

I was recently reading through the book of Job: you will remember that Job had been hit by catastrophe after catastrophe, and his friends had come to comfort him; or so they said! In actual fact, they spent most of their time trying to convince Job that his suffering was due to his own sinfulness, and persuading him to confess and accept the consequences of his supposed sin.

Job knows that he is not sinless, and recognises that his misfortunes are not a direct consequence of his actions – we all live in a fallen world – and he maintains his innocence and steadfast faith in God, despite angrily railing at God and pleading with Him to come to his rescue.

As I read my Bible, enjoying the warmth of the sun in my garden, I was particularly challenged by Job's words, in chapter 31:26-28.

*“If I have regarded the sun in its radiance, or the moon moving in splendour, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.”*

This set me thinking about what it means to be faithful to God on high, and to examine my own faithfulness. I think those words, ‘on high’, help; they draw our thoughts upward, up beyond what we see and touch and feel here below, and they encourage us to enter the very Throne room of God Himself.

When the Apostle John did exactly that in his vision, described in the book of Revelation, he saw Jesus (Revelation 1:12-16) and he was so overwhelmed that he ‘fell at His feet as though dead’.

Everything else paled into insignificance as John gazed on ‘the Lamb’. The Throne room of heaven is more amazing and beautiful than anything we have seen or could ever imagine, and yet, to John, all the gold and precious gems, the crystal-clear water and the adoring angels were as nothing, compared to Jesus.

The worshippers in heaven cried out; “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.” (Revelation 4:11)

Yes, He created all things.

In his Gospel, John tells us that through Jesus, 'The Word', "all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." And Genesis affirms that, amongst those 'all things' were the sun and the moon (Genesis 1:16).

So, back to Job. We know that many ancient peoples worshipped the sun as that which enabled life. Job, as the owner of massive flocks and herds, would have known how important the sun was for producing grass and fodder for his animals. No doubt, Job watched the cycles of the moon, calculating times of harvest and sowing; BUT, Job says, the sun is not the giver of life, the sun is created; the moon is not the controller of time, only God is.

Read God's response to Job, in Job 38 - 41, it is beautiful and will fill you with awe as you contemplate the Person of God.

We are so blessed to know the One who gives us everlasting life, Jesus, the Son of God. He alone is worthy of our homage. Think how Jesus used creation to draw us to Himself, ***"I am the Vine", "I am the Light", "I am the Life", "If anyone is thirsty, come to Me and drink"***.

Creation still points us to Him, so enjoy your time in the sun, but remember to share it with The Son! As you take your holiday, take Jesus with you, hear Him whisper, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." As you lick your ice-cream, remember the verse that says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Look for God in everything and everywhere, if you seek Him, you will find Him.

Having met with God, Job said, "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you."

Job's head knowledge had become heart knowledge.

I pray that this summer will give us all opportunities to see Him.

## Precious Saviour, by Pam Butler

Hallelujah precious Saviour, you are everything to me.  
For you bought me and you've kept me, that I might your channel be.  
Though I'm weak and faint and weary, you're my strength and shield.  
You've set my feet upon the rock and now my future's sealed.

So how can I repay you Lord for all your loving care?  
How can I show my thankfulness that you are always there?  
There's nothing I can give to you for everything you've done.  
But offer love and worship through the name of your dear Son.

My highest hopes, my deepest fears, can all be brought to you,  
As I ask for your forgiveness and start each day anew.  
You hear me and you bless me, and you guide me on my way.  
You give me peace and joyfulness with strength for every day.

So thank you, God my Father, and Jesus Christ my Lord.  
All your people worship you and sing with one accord.  
We are unworthy people, yet you've blessed us with your grace.  
Accept our earthly praise, until we see you face to face.

**Puzzle Page**  
**Answers on page 22**

		35			32		
			29	30			
45		41			26		6
	43					12	
	48					13	
54		50			19		3
			64	61			
		58			17		

**Numbrix puzzle**  
The object of the game is to fill in the white squares with the missing numbers, in sequential order, going only horizontally or vertically (diagonal paths are not allowed).

**For those who missed the quiz on July 6, here are some of the questions—how do you think you would have done?**

- 1: What is the collective noun for starlings?
- 2: In which County was the English artist, John Constable born?
- 3: In which year did British Railways run its last steam train?
- 4: How high can an impala jump?
- 5: Which has the bigger area, 4 square feet or 4 foot squared?
- 6: Which of King Henry the VIII's wives was the mother of Queen Elizabeth I?
- 7: What is the currency used in Kenya?
- 8: What green vegetable has varieties called Purple Sprouting, White Sprouting and Calabrese?
- 9: Who built the first Temple at Jerusalem?
- 10: How many moons does Mars have?



## Quiz Night

'Twas Quiz Night with the Open Ears  
To test each others' brains.  
The questions very varied -  
There was even one on trains.

The questions were not really hard  
And there was a laugh or two.  
I scratched my head to answer some  
but I hadn't got a clue.

No actual prize was given  
But the winners names will go  
Into our own great magazine  
So everyone will know.

Although the quiz was held on Zoom  
It was a happy time  
In fact I did enjoy it so  
I had to write this rhyme!!

By Jim Horsnell



**The winners of the Quiz were  
the youngest members:  
Caleb (9) and Elianne (8) Herd.  
Well done to them both.**

## 'The Beauty and Wonder of God's Word.'

How many books are there in the  
Bible, Old Testament and New  
Testament combined?

The answer is 66 and there is an  
easy way to remember this:

How many letters in OLD? = 3

How many letters in TESTAMENT?  
= 9

Put those digits side by side and  
you get **39**

How many letters in NEW? = 3

How many letters in TESTAMENT?  
= 9

Multiply those two digits : **3 x 9 = 27**

The prophet Isaiah has 66  
chapters.

Isaiah has a two fold division :  
chapters 1-39 = Old Testament;  
chapters 40-66 (27 chapters) = New  
Testament.

Half of 66 is 33, and that is the  
number of years our blessed  
Saviour, Jesus Christ, lived on  
earth.

Sent in by Bob Lewington.

## In loving memory

Christine Pitts wishes to inform readers of Hearing Eye that the very lovely, special fun-loving **Brenda Rowley** of Newport, South Wales sadly passed away in January 2023, at the age of 95. She retired as head teacher of a primary school after a teaching career spanning almost 40 years.

Some extracts from an interesting article she wrote for the Open Ears 40th Anniversary commemorative booklet are reprinted below.

*“2008 has been a gentle, peaceful time as befits my advancing years. I went to Brunel for an art holiday in June. It’s a chance to meet up with friends and enjoy the very special atmosphere of this Christian hotel. When I noticed that there was a holiday conference for hard of hearing people at Brunel I decided to book for that also.*

*I joined the society, which is called Open Ears, and what a wonderful time I had. I made new friends and found inspiration in the dedication and achievements of the group. Members of the society travel to Third World countries testing hearing, making ear molds and supplying hearing aids to those in need. They train local helpers to carry on the work.*

*“Creative Communication” was the best way to describe the way we “chatted” to one another and in every corner folk were signing, lip-reading, writing notes and getting to know one another in any and every way possible. I went to the conference at a time when I felt restricted by my deafness and increasing mobility problems. Those lovely people inspired me to concentrate on what I could do, not on my failings”.*



Brenda also contributed several poems for Hearing Eye, one of which is reprinted below (from Hearing Eye No. 124, Autumn 2008).

### **Living Water...**

Living water, a river of blessing, pouring into my life...

My mind conjures up many lovely scenes –  
Paddling in the gentle ripples on a summer day  
The water cool against my feet,  
Cleansing away the dirt,  
Soothing and healing the rough patches.

But then I think of the power of water,  
Pounding and reshaping even the hardest rocks,  
Powerful and irresistible,  
I am afraid, Lord,

Afraid of where I will be swept  
And how you will transform my life.

Yet I know that you will uphold me,  
That I can relax, floating in the stream of your love,  
Until I am carried into a safe harbour  
And know a peace and beauty  
Beyond anything I can now imagine.

Let me drink daily of the living water,  
Let me swim in the tide of your love.



**Brenda Rowley**

# Be Aware of Scammers!

Sadly, there has been an increase in the number of scams we are all susceptible to; the ingenuity and deviousness of the scammers makes it difficult to spot the scam. It is not only 'gullible' or 'careless' people who get scammed, I would imagine that most of us have either been targeted or know someone who has. Research by Ofcom found that around 41 million people received a suspicious phone call or text last summer.

If you suspect a caller is not genuine, they may encourage you to ring the bank/police/insurance company etc, (whoever they are purporting to be) to check. If you decide to do that, RING FROM A DIFFERENT PHONE so that the scammers cannot intercept your call and call a number you know to be genuine. It won't matter if it takes you a few minutes to find the correct number.

Here are some tips Ofcom has produced to help prevent you from becoming a victim of scammers:

## Stay alert and follow three easy steps:

### If you receive a suspicious text:



#### **Stop!**

**The text could be a scam. Read it carefully and look for any details that don't seem right.**



**Don't!**

**Don't click on any links or give out any personal or bank details.**



Report any suspicious texts to 7726  
and make your friends and family aware too.

**If you receive a suspicious phone call:**



**Stop!**

**Do not give out any personal or bank details.**



Hang up, then use a different phone and call the company they claim to be from to check if it is a scam.



Report scam calls to [Action Fraud](#) and make your family aware too.

**Remember: 7726** : a number used by most of the major mobile phone companies to allow their customers to report unwanted texts or mobile calls. You can forward a suspicious text or report a mobile call to 7726 free of charge. When you've done this, your mobile provider can investigate the number.

**Check out technical solutions:** For mobile phone users, measures can be applied either on your handset or on your mobile phone network to reduce the risk posed by scam messages or malware. Some of these might be pre-installed or managed by your network provider, and some you can put in place yourself. To find out if these are available for you or to find out more about how they work, contact your mobile or home phone provider. They should be able to give you more information on what technical measures can be put in place to protect you.

**If you think you've been scammed, report it to** Action Fraud as soon as possible. You can do this by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting the Action Fraud, the reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Reports of fraud and any other financial crime in Scotland should be made to Police Scotland via 101. website at [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

**Spread the word:** If you think you've seen a scam, don't keep it to yourself. By telling people you know, you'll help to make more people aware of scams that are out there, and this could help others to avoid falling victim.

**Jesus says: Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28**



I recently came across an article, written by Michael Dervan in the Irish Times. The article was an interview with the composer Ailis Ni Riain who contracted encephalitis at the age of five and was left

hearing impaired. She hears low frequencies much better than high frequencies, to the point where normal conversation is an issue. She also suffers from both the constant internal disruption caused by tinnitus and the pain that is brought on by everyday sounds because of hyperacusis.

I'm sure that many readers of this magazine will be able to empathise with Ailis when she says, "I find getting out of bed intimidating. I'm full of fear. The whole thing is intimidating."

I wonder what we do with our fears? Do we turn into ourselves and away from others, feeding the fear with a sense of failure, or do we turn to Jesus, and 'cast our burdens on Him', knowing that 'He cares for us'? Do we reach out to others, allowing a small shoot of hope and friendship to blossom? Proverbs tells us that, 'two are better than one...if either of them falls down, one can help the other up.'

Michael and Ailis met over Zoom, and Ailis revealed how this medium - as we, in Open Ears have also found - has been transformative for her.

Ailis told Michael, “My opportunity to communicate has been far greater and of much better quality than it has been for a long, long time. If I met you in public, the room would be too noisy. I particularly struggle with voices.

And there is no place quiet enough, with few enough distractions, in the real world to facilitate good communication, creative communication, anything other than the nuts and bolts of the day-to-day... The opportunity for me to be able to see your face, to read your face, and to have what you say as a written line quite soon after you say it is great.”

However, Ailis also speaks of her own pain and sense of isolation and alienation, which is also experienced by many with hearing loss, and how hearing loss is an “invisible disability”.

Open Ears exists to make our members visible! We don't want you to feel isolated, alienated or afraid. If you haven't yet joined one of our online events, perhaps this article will encourage you to take the plunge, we'd be delighted to welcome you. Upcoming dates can be found on page 23.

If you are au fait with technology, you might like to take a look at one of Ailis' compositions with animation, commenting on hearing loss [The Hearing Test \[2012\] - YouTube](#) I found it very moving.

Anthea



# Launde Abbey

prayer • hospitality • community • sanctuary

by Anthea Owen

Recently, I visited Launde Abbey, the Leicester and Peterborough Diocesan Retreat house. It stands in the peaceful countryside in Leicestershire, serves amazing food, and is well worth a visit. Despite its rather grand title, Launde Abbey today is more like a welcoming manor house.

Founded as an Augustinian priory in 1119 by Richard Basset, a royal official of Henry 1, Launde Abbey's community buildings and cloister were built during its first hundred years, and included an imposing church, of which one side chapel still survives. This chapel is the prayerful and serene heart of the Abbey's life today, and bears witness to centuries of worship and devotion, with its Norman arches, fourteenth century stained glass, sixteenth century monument to Gregory Cromwell, and twentieth century art.

Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister responsible for the dissolution of the monasteries, found Launde's location very desirable. After visiting the priory in April 1540 he wrote in his Remembrances (a kind of personal journal), "Myself for Launde", although he never did occupy the house as he was executed for treason just three months later. His son Gregory, however, had kept royal favour – no doubt helped by his marriage to Elizabeth Seymour, sister to Henry VIII's beloved wife Jane – and lived at Launde Abbey with Elizabeth for ten years; during this time he had some of the dilapidated monastic buildings restored or rebuilt.

Gregory was buried at Launde and a monument erected by his wife remains in the Chapel to this day.

The Cromwell family lived at Launde until the end of the 16th century and then, for the next three centuries, the house passed through the hands of various owners until, in 1957 a prominent Leicestershire businessman, Cecil Coleman, together with his wife Lilian, purchased the abbey and presented it to the Diocese of Leicester. They also paid for the conversion works to make it into a retreat house.

There are many different works of art at Launde, some beautiful, some a little quirky but all designed to draw the viewer into a closer relationship with God, and many inspiring worship.

One such, which I came across on my latest visit, is a photograph of a slice from an agate geode, about 19cm wide, 9cm high and 5mm thick. I had no idea what a geode is, but some helpful notes nearby explained that geodes are nodules found in some volcanic lavas, consisting of silica and other minerals. Each nodule has a complex formation history which results in a wide variety of structures. The beauty of these are revealed when they are cut open, then polished.

This particular geode was purchased in Oberstein, Germany, and probably came from Brazil. The rock has been formed by natural processes in the earth, and yet we can see The Master artist's handiwork...



## At the foot of the cross...



The Cross is empty, Christ's lifeless body lain in a tomb.

You kneel, weeping.

Your life feels empty, meaningless.

Storm clouds linger in the sky, lit by the occasional flash of lightning.

You recognise the storm because it lives inside you.

Rain mingles with your tears.

The crowds have gone. No soldiers remain. Yet, here you are,  
at the foot of the cross.

Silence.

You look up.

Rays of light filter through the cloud.

A voice speaks: "You are my beloved."

## Spotlight on Emily Owen

Hello Emily, many of our readers will know your name, especially since you have been sending the weekly email, 'Open Ears Together', so we thought it would be good to learn a little bit about you.

We'll start with some quick-fire questions...feel free to elaborate!

**Chocolate or cheese?** Chocolate

**Trees or flowers?** Trees

**TV or a book?** Book

**Party or lunch with a friend?** Lunch with a friend

**Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter?** Autumn

Now, moving on to questions that you might need to think about a bit more...



**What brought you into partnership with Open Ears?**

I first became involved with Open Ears when I spoke at one of their weekend conferences.

I grew up hearing, and never came across Open Ears until I lost my hearing. I met Tracy Williamson, who encouraged me to speak at the conference, and the rest is history. I love being part of Open Ears. To be among people who 'truly get it' is a wonderful thing.

**Would you describe yourself as 'disabled'? Why, or why not?**

I would, yes, because I have mobility issues. I can't walk far. I use crutches or a wheelchair. My deafness is certainly debilitating, so perhaps in itself renders me disabled, I don't know. I've never experienced deafness without other issues alongside. It's an interesting question.

**Who, other than Jesus, is your favourite Bible character?**

I am a big fan of Barnabas, for his peace-making, and humility, and straight talking, and gentleness, and encouragement.

**What is your favourite Bible verse and why?**

I have lots of favourites! One I come back to, again and again, is Colossians 3:3: For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

I love the thought of being surrounded by Him, keeping me safe.

**What do you find most amazing about God?**

That He loves me so much that He not only saved me, but He sticks with me every second. No matter what I go through, He never walks out.

**Thank you, Emily**



Emily is an author, speaker and educator. Her books include her memoir, 'Still Emily', devotionals and children's books.

[www.emily-owen.com](http://www.emily-owen.com)

# Open Ears' 50th Anniversary Celebration.

## Saturday, June 15, 2024

We are planning a very special celebration for our 50th anniversary, but we need to be sure that people will come!

There is a lot to do in and around Birmingham, so you could always make a weekend of it, or take a short holiday exploring.

Please let us know if you would like to join us on the day. Obviously, as we are talking about next year, we are not asking you to say definitely at this stage (although it would be an enormous help if you could indicate that you intend to come), but we would appreciate it if you could tell us if this is something that you would consider attending. Please respond by the end of September 2023 so that we can finalise our booking.

Please let Sophie have comments, suggestions for the day and let her know if you would like to come: [info@openears.org.uk](mailto:info@openears.org.uk); text message on 07396236214 or by mail at 6 Westfield Road, Leicester. LE3 6HR



**When:** Saturday, 15 June 2024

**Time:** approx. 11am – 3pm, time to be confirmed.

**Where:** St Martin In The Bullring Church, Birmingham [www.bullring.org](http://www.bullring.org)

## **Fun Facts about Birmingham:**

- Birmingham is the UK's second largest city.
- Iconic brands which started in Birmingham; Birds Custard; Cadbury Chocolate; Bournville Drinking Chocolate; HP Sauce; Typhoo Tea.
- Birmingham has the largest public library in Europe, with more than one million books.
- Birmingham's population is the youngest of any city in Europe, with over 40% being under 30 years old.
- The anchor of the Titanic was made in the Black Country, (on the outskirts of Birmingham).
- 40% of all jewellery produced in the UK is made in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter – the highest concentration in Europe.
- Birmingham has the most Michelin starred restaurants in the UK outside of London.
- You can get to 90% of the UK in under 4 hours from Birmingham.
- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has the world's largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings.
- The first working steam engine was built in the Black Country.
- Birmingham chemist, Joseph Priestley, discovered oxygen in 1774.
- Thomas the Tank Engine was invented in Birmingham, by Rev Wilbert Awdry, vicar of St Nicholas' Church in King's Norton.
- Birmingham has more canals than Venice; there are 35 miles of canals which form part of the larger Birmingham Canals Navigation network, which stretches out over 100miles.

- Tennis was invented on a lawn in Edgbaston in 1859.
- The first ever hole-in-the-heart operation was carried out at Birmingham Children’s Hospital in 1950.
- The FA cup was made in Birmingham and the first football league in the world started here.
- Birmingham has Europe’s largest urban nature reserve.
- Interesting inventions from Birmingham include whistles, smoke detectors, postage stamps and the kettle.
- Birmingham is the farthest city from the sea in the UK.

### Answers to puzzles on page 6

37	36	35	34	33	32	9	8
38	39	40	29	30	31	10	7
45	44	41	28	27	26	11	6
46	43	42	23	24	25	12	5
47	48	49	22	21	20	13	4
54	53	50	63	62	19	14	3
55	52	51	64	61	18	15	2
56	57	58	59	60	17	16	1

**Answer to  
Nubrix puzzle**

### Answers to Quiz questions

1. The collective name for starlings is **MURMURATION.**

2. The English artist, John Constable, was born in **SUFFOLK**.
3. British railways ran its last steam train in **1968**.
4. An impala can jump up to **3 meters**
5. **4 Square feet** is a bigger area than 4 feet squared.
6. **ANNE BOLEYN** was the mother of Queen Elizabeth I.
7. **SHILLING** is the currency used in Kenya.
8. **BROCCOLI** is the green vegetable with varieties called Purple Sprouting, White Sprouting and Calabres.
9. **KING SOLOMON** built the first Temple in Jerusalem.
10. Mars has **TWO MOONS** called Phobus and Deimos.



#### Online Conference

'Harvest and First fruits'

When: 8th September 2023

Time: 2-3.30 PM

Where: Zoom



#### Online Conference

'Approaching Christmas'

When: 15th December 2023

Time: 2-3.30 PM

Where: Zoom



#### 50th Anniversary Celebrations

When: June 8 2024.

Where: St Martin in the Bull Ring, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham. B5 5BB.

More details to follow, but please book the date and tell others about the event. We want as many as possible to celebrate with us!

To sign up and to get the Zoom link, please contact us at  
[info@openears.org.uk](mailto:info@openears.org.uk)

Our online events are fully accessible with Speech to Text.





## **MISSION STATEMENT - OPEN EARS**

Open Ears is a non-denominational Christian charity (Registered charity 1181896) for people who have varying degrees of hearing impairment, mainly, but not exclusively, those who communicate orally, assisted by hearing aids or cochlear implants and lip-reading. It aims to provide accessible fellowship, Bible teaching, prayer support and pastoral care, to produce informative literature and a quarterly magazine, 'Hearing Eye'.

Open Ears may give a proportion of its donated income to specified Christian charities and other organisations involved in supporting people with hearing loss.

### **Hearing Eye is published by Open Ears**

Open Ears is led by a Committee formed of Trustees and Committee Members who meet together quarterly.

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