

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

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## Staying with Friends

THE PENN Club, which has been housing NHS key workers for free during the lockdown, is open again to tourists. Now in its centenary year, it is much loved by *Tablet* readers, who appreciate the competitive prices for a hotel handily placed just around the corner from the British Museum.

Founded a hundred years ago by veterans of the Friends Ambulance Unit, which had provided medical aid to British and French troops during the First World War, it maintains a Quaker ambience: stillness, simplicity, crisp white linen, and no lift.

The writer John Wyndham moved into the Club in 1925, paying £10 a month for a room, and didn't check out till nearly 40 years later. He started writing science fiction after picking up a copy of the American pulp magazine *Wonder Stories* in the reading room, though he only became successful in the 1950s with the publication of *The Day of the Triffids*.

When in 1963 the secretive Wyndham, then 60, announced that he had married a friend called Grace Wilson, his friends were flabbergasted. He had met Wilson, a teacher and



a fellow resident of the club, when they were both 27. Though men and women normally occupied separate floors, Wyndham and Wilson had lived in adjacent rooms for over 30 years.

THE FRENCH-Canadian Jesuit priest Gaston Roberge, author, critic, teacher and pioneering figure in Indian film studies, died in Kolkata on 26 August at the age of 85.

His love affair with Indian cinema began when he chanced upon Satyajit Ray's "Apu Trilogy" in 1961 during a stopover in New

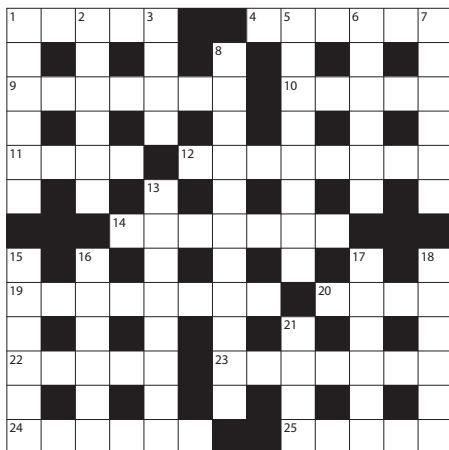
York while on his way to Kolkata. So mesmerised was he by the first of the films – *Pathar Panchali* – that he watched the entire trilogy in one sitting. He went on to create the Chitrabani communications centre in Kolkata with Ray's support and collaboration. It became the main centre in India for the serious study of film and other media.

A friend of Mother Teresa, in 2005 Fr Gaston invited the sociologist Gëzim Alpion to give a series of lectures about his fellow Albanian. "Fr Gaston accompanied me throughout the nine days I stayed in Kolkata to all the homes for the dying run by the Missionaries of Charity," Dr Alpion told us. "There was no place, poor or rich, where he was not recognised and greeted by people who knew him. They were of all ages and religions. We were invited to house parties and meals at restaurants by so many of his friends."

When Dr Alpion suggested to his host that Mother Teresa's decision to become a nun might have been affected by the death of her father, he was surprised by Fr Gaston's response. "He told me he wondered if he too had decided on a vocation to the religious life when as a child, after his father's death, he had said his mother: 'I will be a priest and always stay with you.'"

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 722 Alanus



#### Across

- 1 St Mary -----, Dominican basilica in Rome that is the city's oldest church (5)
- 4 Powder from natural mineral for helping to dry skin (6)
- 9 Where seven 14th-century popes resided whose palace is now a tourist attraction (7)
- 10 Lord ----- commanded the Light Brigade in the Crimean War (5)
- 11 Type of lily, a popular garden feature (4)
- 12 Of commonplace understanding as opposed to that for a select group (8)
- 14 Abbot Columba OSB, great spiritual writer, author of *Christ, the Life of the Soul* (7)
- 19 Member of an order of nuns founded by St Angela Merici (8)
- 20 Term of insult that Jesus warns not to be used against one's brother (Matthew 5) (4)

- 22 Wat, leader of the Peasants' Revolt (1381) against the level of taxation of the poor (5)
- 23 Fr de Malleray's acclaimed 2018 book (*It is I*) on the Holy Eucharist (3,4)
- 24 Name of the "Good Thief" crucified beside Christ (6)
- 25 English composer of *St Paul's Suite* (5)

#### Down

- 1 Daughter of Absalom and mother of Asa, king of Judah (1 Kings) (6)
- 2 Father of 12-year-old girl restored to life by Jesus (Mark 5) (6)
- 3 Guido ----- (d. 1642), Italian painter of many religious works (4)
- 5 The washing in the purification of the sacred vessels during Mass (8)
- 6 Roman statesman and philosopher assassinated 43 BC (6)

- 7 North African saint, mother of St Augustine of Hippo (6)
- 8 One of the earliest Greek philosophers, gave us the word "principle" (11)
- 13 Largest of the Balearic Islands (8)
- 15 *Autobiography of a ----- Priest*, classic work by Fr John Gerard SJ (6)
- 16 Book of the Old Testament (6)
- 17 Book of the OT whose hero saves the reputation of Susanna (6)
- 18 Member of religious order, such as the Bishop of Brentwood, founded by Fr JC Colin (6)
- 21 Saint invoked against plague died caring for Black Death victims in Italy (4)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 5 September, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: [thetablet@thetablet.co.uk](mailto:thetablet@thetablet.co.uk), with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on Saints, Monasticism and Philosophy of Religion – from the OUP's Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We cannot process entries or prizes at present. Please keep entering. Winners will be notified and prizes awarded as soon possible.**

### SUDOKU | Moderate

				9			6	
8		6						
	3			8	2		5	
	6	9		2		3		
								1
	5	3						
6	4						5	
	2						7	8
			8	1				4

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

#### Solution to the 8 August puzzle

8	1	3	2	7	4	6	9	5
5	4	6	9	3	8	1	7	2
7	9	2	6	1	5	8	3	4
9	8	7	1	2	3	5	4	6
1	6	5	4	8	7	3	2	9
2	3	4	5	9	6	7	8	1
3	2	9	7	5	1	4	6	8
4	7	1	8	6	2	9	5	3
6	5	8	3	4	9	2	1	7

#### Solution to the 8 August crossword No. 719

**Across:** 1 Horeb; 4 Litmus; 9 Inferno; 10 Norma; 11 Ulex; 12 Vestiges; 14 Puritan; 19 Unstable; 20 Mite; 22 Jogli; 23 Good Egg; 24 Bon Ami; 25 Tithe. **Down:** 1 Haikus; 2 Reflex; 3 Barn; 5 Ignatian; 6 Mirage; 7 Sparse; 8 Soteriology; 13 Sudarium; 15 Punjab; 16 Isogon; 17 Divest; 18 Beagle; 21 Moot.

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