

The good book prize

“YOU’VE WON a prize.”

These words, in a telephone call from Artemis Cooper a couple of months ago, were the first indication John Barton had that he was even being considered for the coveted Pol Roger Duff Cooper Prize, awarded annually since 1956 for the best work of non-fiction published in the previous year.

Dr Barton, emeritus Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the University of Oxford and a senior research fellow of Campion Hall, took the award for his bestselling book *A History of the Bible*.

“Naturally I am delighted on my own account – who wouldn’t be?” Barton tells us. “But I believe the award also has a wider significance. Anything to do with the Bible comes normally under the heading ‘Religion’. For a book on the Bible that includes theological discussion to win a *history* prize signals that biblical and theological discourse is being allowed a place at the table of the wider humanities. It also affirms my intention in this book to speak also to those whose interest in the Bible is cultural rather than religious, and



to show them how worth their attention the Bible truly is.”

OUR EASTER cover this year is the work of illustrator Catherine Pain, who has brought Laurentia Johns’ Lent reflections to life in recent weeks, and caps the series with a striking image of a dove rising in glory above the abandoned cross. It is inspired by the Gospel of John, which describes how, on Easter evening, Jesus breathes on his disciples and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20: 22-23).

Drawing and painting has been

Catherine’s passion for as long as she can remember. She works in a corner of the family living room, in Graveley, Cambridgeshire. “Next to me sits our cat on the ‘APCC’ (the artist’s pussy-cat’s chair),” she explains. “This way he makes sure he’s accessible to be stroked throughout the day plus he’s in the best possible position to start reminding me that he needs his evening meal from about lunchtime onwards.”

ANN WROE, whose recent verse biography of St Francis enthralled everyone who dips into it, found “this little thing” in an old notebook:

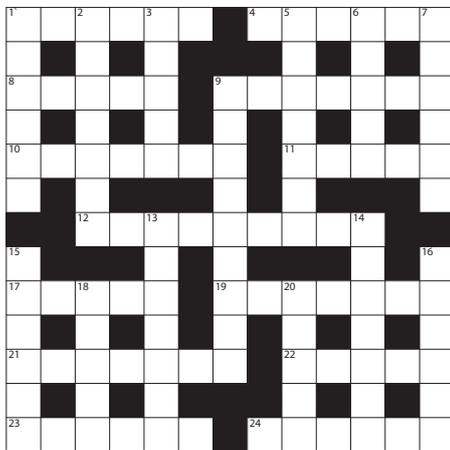
At Friston church

Just where the graveyard ends,
above the napped flint wall
Christ has risen in paper
shapes, bands from burial –
Scissors cut paper.
See how it hangs, blows;
but paper escapes stone,
as every child knows.

The paper shapes are made by local school-children: but sadly not this year, of course. Ann is toying now with a poem “wondering whether Pilate’s hands chapped and bled as badly as mine are doing, after all that washing”.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 702 Axe



Across

- 1 Blaise ----- (1623-62), French mathematician, philosopher and Jansenist (6)
- 4 Eunuch in charge of the household of Holofernes (6)
- 8 Arabia-founded seventh-century monotheistic religion (5)
- 9 One of David’s 30 warriors, brother of Joab (7)
- 10 Heroine, part of Daniel in TJB (7)
- 11 Where Moses defeated the king of Bashan (5)
- 12 One of the Hindu Upavedas (9)
- 17 Son of Carmi, “the troubler of Israel” according to the KJV (5)
- 19 Biblical country, part of modern-day Iraq (7)

- 21 People called 9 Down in the Hebrew Bible ... (7)
- 22 Biblical outcast (5)
- 23 Nicholas -----, Bishop of London, executed in 1551 as one of the Oxford Martyrs (6)
- 24 English saint and King of Northumbria (c. 602-642) (6)

Down

- 1 Member of the second grade of clergy ranking below a bishop but above a deacon (6)
- 2 Palestine lake, as translated from the Hebrew (4,3)
- 3 Biblical region in east Jordan, capital Rabbah ... (5)

- 5 ... and one NW of Damascus whose name was taken by an infamous cattle town in the “Wild West” (7)
- 6 Descendant of Shem, Joktan’s son (5)
- 7 Third person of the Holy Trinity (6)
- 9 (& 21 Acr) ... who also inhabited much of Mesopotamia in the OT (9)
- 13 William ----- (1494-1536), Bible translator burned for heresy (7)
- 14 See 18 Down
- 15 Name taken by Roman emperors of NT times (6)
- 16 Respected, like some cows? (6)
- 18 (& 14 Down) Ruler of Judaea, Galilee and Samaria, accumulatively (5,7)
- 20 Leader of the Jerusalem Church and Paul’s companion (5)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 11 April, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: 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 Jesus, Christian Art and Catholicism – from the OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Wednesday 22 April. The answers to this week’s puzzles and the crossword winner’s name will appear in the 2 May issue.

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SUDOKU | Moderate

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

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

Solution to the 21 March puzzle

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

Solution to the 21 March crossword No. 699

Across: 5 Poor Sisters; 7 Sixtus; 8 Athens; 9 Tipitaka; 11 Amon; 12 Apse; 13 Holiness; 14 Patara; 16 Essene; 17 St Anatolius.
Down: 1 Doctrine; 2 Isis; 3 Ishabaa; 4 Seth; 5 Philipians; 6 Song of Songs; 10 Aphrahat; 11 Agnostic; 15 Anak; 16 Edom.
Winner: Antony Sisley, of Beckenham, of south-east London.