

Left foot in the door of Number 10

THERE WAS a period in the early 1980s when both leaders of the main opposition parties – Charles Kennedy of the Lib Dems and Iain Duncan Smith of the Tories – were Catholics, while the Prime Minister – Tony Blair – was beginning to mull over the idea. But it's the slightly implausible figure of Boris Johnson who will be the United Kingdom's first Catholic PM.

Johnson was born on 19 June 1964 in a hospital on New York's Upper East Side. His mother, Charlotte, was a 22-year-old student; his father, Stanley, 23, in the United States on study leave, was out foraging for pizza. In September, they moved back to Oxford, where Charlotte resumed her studies.

Charlotte's mother Beatrice Fawcett was a Catholic convert of Lithuanian Jewish extraction: Beatrice's father was Elias Avery Lowe (Loew), a professor of paleography at Princeton. Charlotte's father, Sir James Fawcett, the son of an Anglican clergyman, was a legal academic who became president of the European Commission of Human Rights. He was also a convert to Catholicism, and dashed



off the occasional book review for *The Tablet*.

James and Beatrice Fawcett were close friends with Lord and Lady Longford, also Catholic converts; the five Fawcett children and the eight little Pakenhams “pretty much grew up together”, Rachel Billington – one of the Pakenhams – told me. So when Boris was baptised, Charlotte naturally asked her best friend Rachel if she would be his godmother. Charlotte and Stanley divorced when Boris was 14; Charlotte – according to the doctor and writer James LeFanu, “the genius of the family” – is still working as a painter.

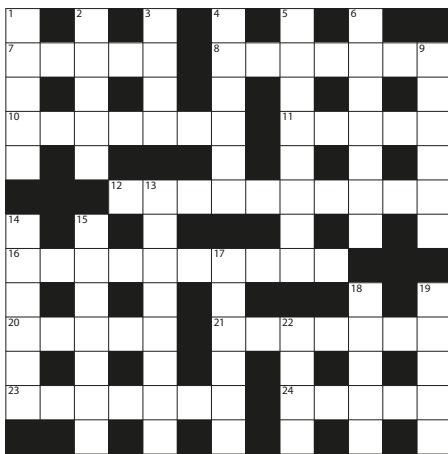
JOHNSON is an avid classicist of course. Apart from insisting he will take the UK out of the EU before Halloween, “do or die”, Johnson has kept his precise policy plans under wraps. Apart from one. Asked if he would make us all do compulsory Greek at school if he became PM he replied, “God! If I could! I can’t understand why people would object”. But that was 15 years ago, and it’s not impossible he has changed his mind.

BUT HANG ON. Is Johnson really a Catholic? Even in a very dim light he’d be hard to mistake for a regular mass-goer. And then there is the racketsky personal life. He might have been baptised into the Catholic Church, giving him the “indelible spiritual mark” that is “the seal of eternal life”, as the Catechism puts it. His confirmation in the C of E as a schoolboy was a public affirmation that he had become an Anglican – that doesn’t mean he isn’t a Catholic but his situation is a little complicated: he couldn’t resume taking communion, for example, without a further public act of reconciliation. And there might be other canonical treacle he’d have to swim through before he’d have his paperwork in good order.

But, as someone put it in *The Tablet* office this morning, “He’s Catholic enough.”

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 668 | Alanus



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 27 July, *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 Paul, Theology and Christian Ethics – from the OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 9 August. The answers to this week’s puzzles and the crossword winner’s name will appear in the 17 August issue.

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Across:

- 7 William ----- English Georgian composer, set Shakespeare and Dryden to music (5)
 8 Philosophically, the power of something to satisfy people’s wants (7)
 10 Practice of marriage where spouse is from outside a particular social group (7)
 11 “O clemens, o pia, o dulcis ----- Maria”, *Salve Regina* (5)
 12 Coastal town that hosts the Open Golf Championship, in R.C. Diocese of Dunkeld (10)
 16 The holding of beliefs contrary to the official teaching of the Church (10)
 20 Remnant of court jester Yorick’s body, addressed by Hamlet (5)
 21 One who philosophically seeks to resolve matters of conscience (7)

- 23 They elicit action and response (7)
 24 Old, small, three-masted Mediterranean sailing ship (5)

Down

- 1 See 5 Down
 2 Romantic poet whose works include *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (5)
 3 Roman town that became Chester (4)
 4 John -----, poet famous for *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (6)
 5 & 1 Down: First monastery established by Cistercians [1132] in the north of England (8,5)
 6 Throbbing effect in singing or playing an instrument (7)
 9 Royal household gentlemen or soldiers inspiring Gilbert and Sullivan (6)

- 13 Marcus -----, Roman emperor, writer and philosopher (8)
 14 Blood group named after a type of monkey (6)
 15 Region of ancient central Italy giving name to a language replaced by Latin (7)
 17 Early Italian painter who championed the Sieneese School, where he lived and died (6)
 18 Rain clouds or halos (5)
 19 St Simon -----, Carmelite monk to whom Our Lady gave the brown scapular (5)
 22 One of the Divine Offices and an organ stop (4)

SUDOKU | Hard

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

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

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

Solution to the 6 July puzzle

Solution to the 6 July crossword No. 665

Across: 7 Iolite; 8 Salver; 10 Kampala; 11 Cotta; 12 Ouse; 13 Danae; 17 Caleb; 18 Zone; 22 Credo; 23 Toenail; 24 Lentil; 25 Beacon. Down: 1 Milk-sop; 2 Flemish; 3 Stoa; 4 Paschal; 5 Evita; 6 Priam; 9 Canaletto; 14 Jacobin; 15 Nolasco; 16 Bellini; 19 Scull; 20 Beans; 21 Peter. Winner: Fr John Thackray, Ipswich, Suffolk.