

WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

The sage of Aquarius

IN SEPTEMBER 1969 Eddie Linden – “This wild eyed scrubby Catholic communist working class Glaswegian Irish peacenik”, as the late Oliver Bernard described him – launched *Aquarius*, perhaps the farthest-fetched invention of a year of improbabilities.

Linden’s journal of poetry, fiction and criticism was retired several years ago but fifty years after its birth it is still warmly remembered by those he cajoled into writing for it – who include pretty much every poet of the last sixty or seventy years you have heard of. Among the contributors to *Eddie’s Own Aquarius*, the special issue of the magazine published to celebrate Linden’s seventieth birthday, were Seamus Heaney, Elizabeth Smart, George Barker, Alan Brownjohn, Andrew Motion, Blake Morrison and Peter Porter.

His friend the poet Hilary Davies wrote of “the time Eddie has devoted to friends who have themselves been disadvantaged, ill or disabled; hierarchies of persons do not exist for Eddie. Nor, having known himself the difficulties of being an outsider, does he ever sit in judgement on others unless it be



that he catches a whiff of humbug.”

The religious bigotry and violence Linden saw as a young man in Glasgow in the 1950s inspired his most celebrated poem, “City of Razors”:

A woman roars from the upper window
 “They’re at it again, Maggie!
 Five stitches in our Tommy’s face, Lizzie!
 Eddie’s in the Royal wi’ a sword in his stomach
 and the razor’s floating in the River Clyde.”

Eddie is 84 now, and no longer writes poetry. “I feel I’ve done it all,” he says.

WELL, FANCY. It turns out the first editor of *The Tablet*, Frederick Lucas, is related to the American country singer Johnny Cash. For this revelation I am grateful – unless he is pulling my leg – to William Cash, the writer and journalist turned publisher who recently took over as chairman of *The Catholic Herald*.

Cash has just published a touching and entertaining memoir that traces the twin-track restoration of a broken heart and a dilapidated Shropshire manor. There are cowboy builders and a long struggle to improve TripAdvisor ratings from visitors to his beleaguered pile, parties and hangovers, affairs, weddings and two painful divorces. It all ends happily with marriage, the christening of a daughter, and a narrow escape from the wreckers’ ball.

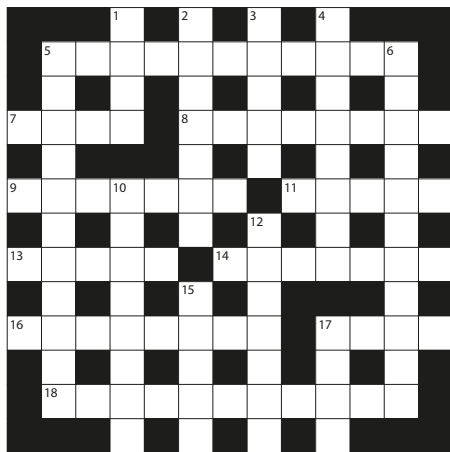
As well as the Cashes who settled in New England in the seventeenth century, and from whom Johnny was descended, William’s Quaker forebears include Frederick Lucas, who converted to Catholicism and founded *The Tablet* in 1840.

“A rather forbidding oil portrait of Frederick’s father Samuel Lucas hangs in our dining room,” Cash tells me.

Restoration Heart is handsomely published this week by Constable at £20. Good value.

PUZZLES

PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 675 | Axe



Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 21 September, *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 God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – from the OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random on Friday 4 October. The answers to this week’s puzzles and the crossword winner’s name will appear in the 12 October issue.

Prizes kindly donated by

www.oup.com

Across

- 5 Goal a stopper reversed after some play in Iraqi territory early on (11)
- 7 Do they make a play book? (4)
- 8 Dan’s mate, Persian leader, acquires a club, for instance, that’s in recession (8)
- 9 He built the Tabernacle by taking a line through a sloping face (7)
- 11 Martyr writer provided little substance (2,3)
- 13 Not the first rag-bag ascendant king, legend has it, to ask Jesus for help (5)
- 14 Avoid last leg after one crusade (7)
- 16 Pope that’s worked in Latvia (8)
- 17 In the opening bits of Judges, on every level, you’ll find a prophet (4)

- 18 US agent – “Suit”, that is – worried to see boss in Canterbury (2,9)

Down

- 1 Horus’ mum lives alongside extreme Islamists (4)
- 2 Oedipus complex that’s under scrutiny in *The Da Vinci Code*? (4,3)
- 3 Philistine is sitting among misfit tailors (5)
- 4 Old people talk of love rituals (8)
- 5 Mile out, church engaged first-class transport to carry Trent dissenter (6,5)
- 6 See Westminster as one? (11)
- 10 Rest of Mac’s band is elevated by getting a note in old Damascus script (8)

- 12 Israelite identified spot in which to rebuild Sion (7)
- 15 Royalty for books? (5)
- 17 Incantation’s beginning comes during the first month to a Buddhist ascetic (4)

SUDOKU | Hard

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

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

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

Solution to the 31 August crossword No. 672

Across: 7 Carpus; 8 Adalia; 9 Anah; 10 Beeliada; 11 Benaiah; 13 Psalm; 15 Kings; 17 Galatia; 20 Chelubai; 21 Moab; 23 Anaiah; 24 Elnaam.

Down: 1 Maon; 2 Apphia; 3 Eshbaal; 4 Gazez; 5 Darius; 6 Giddalti; 12 Epiphany; 14 Gadites; 16 Gallio; 18 Armoni; 19 Abihu; 22 Akan.

Winner: Jack Martyn Verblow, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.