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Autumn 2024

Price £2 (free to members)



# animalwatch

PUTTING ANIMALS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

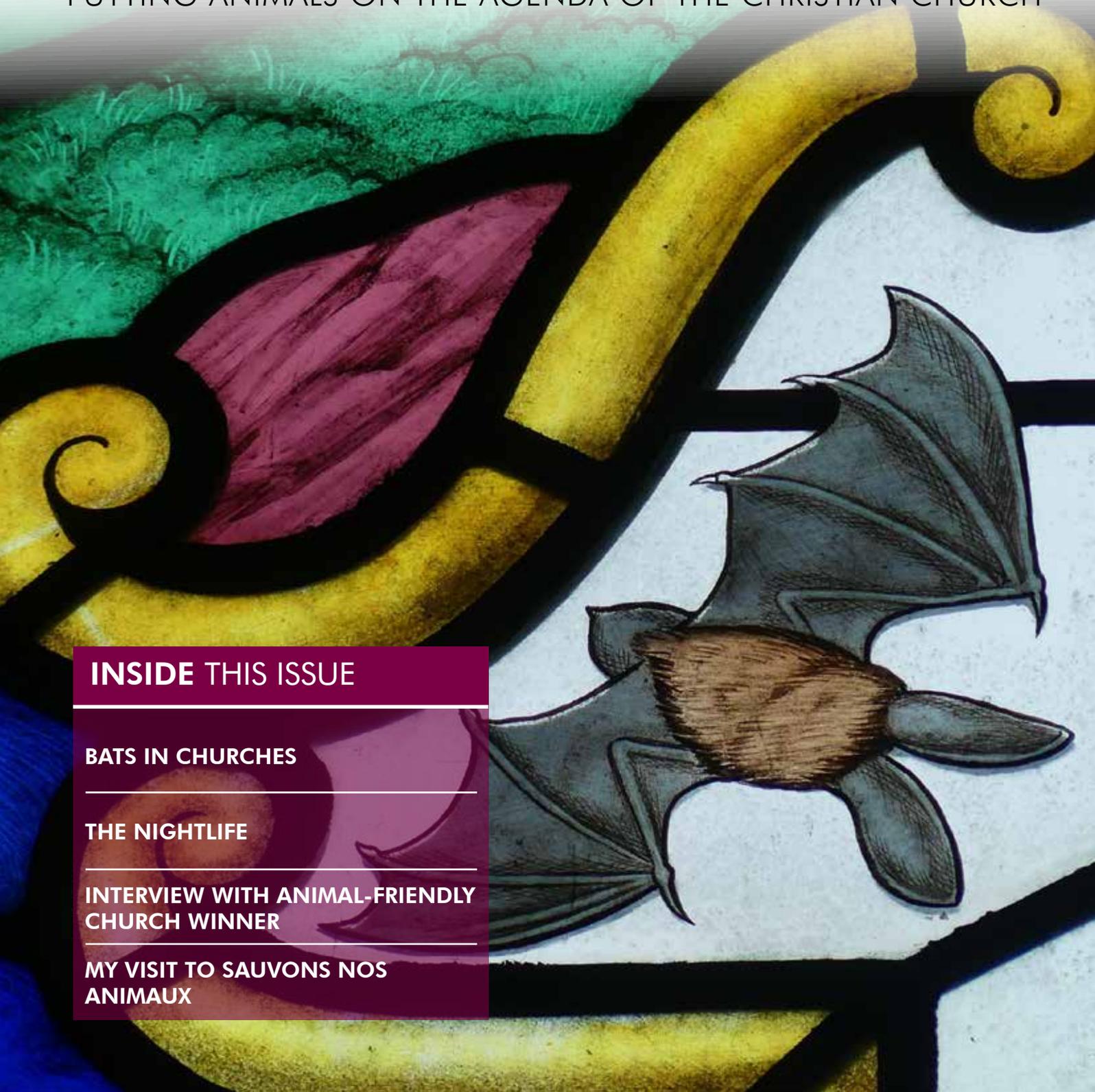
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ANIMAUX



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Cover image: A long-eared bat in a stained-glass window at St Peter's, Netherseal.  
© Bats in Churches Project, used courtesy of Bats in Churches Project.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please make a note of the events happening in the coming months. The diary will be updated in the next issue as we receive information about other events taking place.

### October

#### Saturday, 5th

Animal Blessing and Thanksgiving Service for Pets, 2pm, St Martin's Church, Mortimer Road, Kensal Green, London, NW10 5SN  
Led by the Revd Graham Noyce  
For more information, contact [animalblessinguk@gmail.com](mailto:animalblessinguk@gmail.com)

#### Sunday, 6th

Animal Welfare Sunday

Annual Service, 10.30am, Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, YO16 7BN  
Eucharist with Blessing of Animals.  
Preacher: Revd Neil Bowler, Rector, Bridlington Priory

### November

#### Sunday, 10th

ASWA Remembrance Service for Animals in War, The Animals' War Memorial, Brooke Gate, Park Lane, London, W1K 7QF, 3pm. Speaker from Nowzad.



# HELLO AND WELCOME TO ANIMALWATCH

Welcome to *Animalwatch*. In this issue, we focus on nocturnal animals. We also have an interview with the second of our Animal-Friendly Church winners.

We hope that you enjoy keeping up-to-date with news and information on our website. Do check regularly for resources and information about upcoming events. Please do make a note of the dates in Doris' Diary, especially Animal Welfare Sunday and our Annual Service.

Please send any items for consideration for *Animalwatch* to Revd Jennifer Brown, Editor, PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT. Email is even better – [animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk](mailto:animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk). Please note that, owing to space restrictions, it may not be possible to print all contributions. Please refer to the information about contributions to *Animalwatch* for further details and restrictions on submissions.

**Jennifer Brown, Editor**

The deadline for the Spring magazine is **Monday 20th January 2025**.

## ASWA SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

If you have a group or service that would welcome an ASWA speaker, we would love to hear from you! We often travel a fair distance so please call to discuss it. We usually bring a stall and literature and always liaise with our hosts to ensure the talk is appropriate for their particular audience. Keep the invitations rolling in!

## A WARM WELCOME

**to our new members. We look forward to hearing from you.**

We are pleased to welcome three new members who have joined since the publication of the summer issue.

To all our new members we extend a warm welcome and we would ask that you, along with our existing members, encourage others who share your concern for animal welfare to join. Introductory leaflets are available from the Secretary.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMALWATCH

We very much welcome contributions to *Animalwatch* from our readers. We are interested to hear about the positive things being done for animals in your churches and communities. We also welcome informed pieces on specific areas of animal welfare, such as items relating to animal welfare law, the history of animal welfare, and theology. Articles should be submitted to the Editor

either as typed manuscripts by post or by email as Word documents, with any accompanying photos sent as high-resolution jpg files. Items submitted as pdf files or email text cannot be accepted. Submissions must be the contributor's (sender's) own original work, and (unless otherwise agreed) not published elsewhere. Items may be edited for length, readability, and

appropriateness of content. Publication of submitted items is at the Editor's discretion. In submitting an article, the contributor assigns copyright for the piece to ASWA. For items submitted by email, please assume your item has been received unless you get a delivery failure notice. The Editor is unable to acknowledge receipt of individual submissions.

## ASWA MERCHANDISE

**Available from the ASWA web site**

**ASWA literature:** a range of literature on a variety of animal welfare subjects available.

**PAWS for Prayer cards:** paw shaped cards with a prayer for companion animals printed on one side. £0.20 each.

**Egg Cards:** egg shaped cards with a prayer printed on one side. £0.20 each.

**ASWA bags:** handy cotton shopping bag with the ASWA logo. £4 each.

**ASWA badges:** show your support for ASWA by wearing a lapel badge with the ASWA logo. £1.50 each.

**Sticker sheets & books:** Activity sheet with stickers (ravens or bees), £2.00 each.



**ASWA Christmas cards now available!**

Once again we are offering a mixed pack featuring some of the most popular designs done for us by Thea Olrog. The cards are now available to order, either on-line via our website or by sending a cheque made payable to ASWA. The price for this year's cards is £5.50 for a pack of 6 (including postage). Made from good-quality stiff card with high-quality envelopes, each card is printed with a Bible verse and has ASWA's details on the back. Sending an ASWA Christmas card is a great way to help raise the profile of ASWA and the work that we do.



# GOOD NEWS

## End of badger cull announced

At the end of August, the UK government announced that the annual culling of badgers in England will end within the next five years. The badger cull was introduced as a measure to reduce the spread of bovine tuberculosis among cattle. Unfortunately, while over 230,000 badgers have been killed in the past 10 years, bovine TB remains a problem. The government plans to replace culling with a vaccination programme for badgers and to accelerate the development of a vaccine for cattle.

## NEWS & NOTICES VETERINARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

You can now find us on Facebook by searching Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals. Don't forget, you can also follow ASWA on X (formerly Twitter) – @aswanews.



You can also keep up with what's new via our website – [www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk). Check the web site for the latest resources, including materials for children & youth.

### Animal-Friendly Church award

Is your church animal friendly? ASWA sponsors the Animal-friendly Church award to recognise those churches that take animal welfare seriously as part of their ministry and mission. Churches can apply at any time and those meeting the necessary criteria will be awarded animal-friendly church status. Information is available on the website or from the Secretary.



### ASWA Annual Service

This year's annual service will be on Sunday 6th October at Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, Yorkshire. Please see the Diary for further details.

### Keeping in Touch

Interested in keeping up-to-date with what ASWA is doing? Want to hear about campaigns and activities relating to animal welfare? If so, please make sure we've got your email address so that we can send you occasional updates on what's happening. To join our mailing list, please send your email address to [aswamembership@btinternet.com](mailto:aswamembership@btinternet.com).

The Veterinary Christian Fellowship (VCF) is an association of Christians in the veterinary and allied professions. Members come from all denominations and all areas of the veterinary professions, including vets and vet nurses in practice, teaching at universities, research, industry, and government.

Our mission statement is Serving Christ through Veterinary Medicine, which encapsulates all that the Fellowship is trying to do through the wide range of professional and personal activities in which each of us is involved.

There are currently well over 900 members, spread throughout the UK (from the Outer Hebrides down to the Isle of Wight) and overseas. At a recent online meeting, we had VCF members from 5 continents worshipping together – praise God for Zoom!

We run an annual residential weekend, with teaching, worship, prayer, fun, good food, and usually a muddy walk. In between these weekends, members meet up through various Regional Groups, and at many professional conferences and exhibitions. Over the last few years, we have been hugely blessed by very generous donations which have enabled VCF to have a presence at most of the major professional conferences, and this has become a key way in which we are able to reach out to new members, to non-Christians, as well as providing opportunities for members to connect. In 2023 we gave out over 2000 booklets and bookmarks with scripture verses and information about VCF, and we don't take for granted this incredible platform we have to share the gospel within the veterinary profession.

Students are another large part of the work of VCF. We have connections with the Christian Unions at almost every Vet School in the UK (of which there are now 11) and we provide a database of practices with VCF members where students can apply to do placements. We make sure there are many opportunities for students to get advice, prayer, and support from the more experienced vets at the regional groups and annual VCF weekends, as well as offering a mentoring scheme for new graduates.

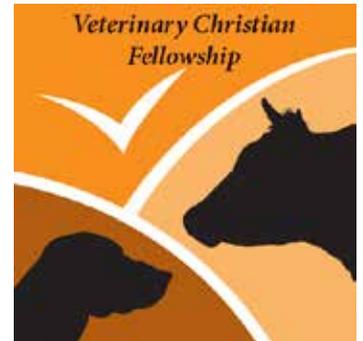
As a Fellowship, we support several missionary families working overseas in veterinary and non-veterinary roles, both financially and through prayer.

All of the above hopefully gives you an idea of what we as VCF do. But more important than that, certainly for me, is who we are. I have been involved with VCF for 17 years now, and in that time have made life-long friends who over the years I have prayed with, worshipped with, cried with, got lost on muddy walks with, laughed with, eaten cake with, and time and time again I find myself thinking what a privilege it is to spend time with people who really get it. People who understand the profession that we are all part of, and people who I am united with in Christ.

To find out more, go to [www.vcf.org.uk](http://www.vcf.org.uk), or email [info@vcf.org.uk](mailto:info@vcf.org.uk)

**Kerry Williams**

**Veterinary Christian Fellowship**



# NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## AUSTRALIA



### A few steps forward and a few steps back for animals (as per usual!)

As I've reported before, live export of sheep to the Middle East will cease on 1st May 2028, but until then the trade will continue, hopefully diminishing over that time. Currently the journey is via the Cape of Good Hope to avoid the dangers in the Red Sea. This is a significantly longer voyage for the animals to endure.

The Australian Alliance for Animals continues to work with stakeholders and the governments, state and federal, to get improvements for animals.

After a delay, Animals Australia will be heading back to the Supreme Court of Victoria in October on the subject of the gassing of pigs, which is a widely used killing method here and elsewhere in the world. It causes immense suffering to these animals, and it will be a huge step forward if it can be successfully challenged in court.

Animal Liberation held a protest in Sydney last weekend against the cruel 'sport' of greyhound racing. I know ASWA Secretary, Samantha Chandler, among others, will be happy to know that there are many ex-racers now enjoying happy lives with rescuers, but of course, not nearly enough homes are available for these gentle dogs.

I live in Newcastle NSW, and our Christ Church Cathedral has a paved memorial walk where people can

purchase a paver with the name and dates of their loved ones inscribed. This has now been extended so that pets can also be remembered in this way. The money raised goes to upkeep of the Cathedral.

Before I sign off, I'll mention an issue which has caused widespread concern. Black Caviar, a dark bay mare, was a famous racehorse who was euthanized on 17th August because of laminitis, immediately after giving birth to her final foal. Her foal died the day after his mother. Black Caviar had won 25 races from 25 starts and was retired in 2013. But no happy retirement in the paddocks for this beautiful horse, where she could have lived out her lifespan of 25–30 years. Instead she produced 9 foals in 11 years. She died on the eve of her 18th birthday. Because of her fame, the publicity surrounding her death has raised public awareness of what can happen to successful racing mares after their retirement.

**Olga Parkes**

## SWEDEN



### Red flag for African Clawed frog and some Hope for Birch Mice

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has issued a statement that it is now illegal in Sweden to possess African Clawed frogs. Some people have them as pets and they may keep them until the frogs die of natural causes but are strictly forbidden to

let them out and the frogs may not reproduce. The frog is also used as a laboratory animal. However, from now on, scientists must apply for special permission to use them in research. The directives to be cautious comes from the European Community. The African Clawed Frog is seen as a threat to the biological diversity of Europe.

The Birch Mouse, *Sicista betulina*, was discovered this summer by a group of scientists up North, and as it is fairly unknown in Sweden, this has caused great delight. The Birch Mouse is mostly active during the night and sleeps in a kind of hibernation most of the year, about eight months. But sometimes during the cooler summers it can doze off into a hibernation-like sleep for an hour or two if it gets too cold. They have only one litter a year, unlike most other mice, due to their general inactivity, and therefore they are not so common. This species is listed in all European Community countries and they need to be reported, every six years. They are rare over here and their presence has caused much delight and interest.

**Sandra Kinley**

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## ASWA NEWS

### Remembering Animals in War

For about 15 years now, ASWA has led a Service of Remembrance for Animals in War at the Animals' War Memorial on Park Lane in London. The service is held on the afternoon of Remembrance Sunday each year. The service has grown over the years, attracting more than 100 attendees in 2023. Animals continue to be part of armed services of many countries, sent into combat to serve and protect humans in war. It is important that we commemorate their lives and their sacrifice, to which they are not able to consent, but which have been of inestimable service to the humans alongside whom they serve. This year's Service of Remembrance for Animals in War will be held on Sunday 10th November at 3pm. See the diary for details.

# BATS IN CHURCHES

Photo © Bats in Churches Project



Bats are fascinating animals – the only true flying mammals. With over 1,400 species of bats worldwide, they play an important role in many habitats around the world. Over 70% of bat species feed on insects, including all British bats, but in the tropics some species feed on nectar and/or fruits, with many tropical plants depending on certain bat species for pollination or seed dispersal; without bats, we wouldn't have dates, vanilla, guavas, balsa wood, Tequila, and chewing gum!

Here in the UK, our 18 resident bat species account for more than a quarter of our mammal species, and they are vital to our ecosystems. Some species are known as 'indicator species'; these bats tell us when there are biodiversity changes and the quality of our environment. For example, all British bats can help control insect populations (a tiny pipistrelle can eat up to 3,000 insects in a night!) and therefore the decline of a particular bat species may indicate a decline in insect populations.

Unfortunately, UK bat populations have declined drastically over the last century. This is a result of unsympathetic development that affects roosts and causes loss of habitat, as well as intensification of agriculture and other threats including cat attacks, flypaper, and some chemical treatments of building materials. UK bats are protected but we still have a lot of work to do to ensure their survival.

## **The importance of churches to bats**

The relationship between bats and churches goes back a long way. Over thousands of years, Britain was gradually deforested to make way for human settlements and bats adapted to use buildings as roosts in addition to natural sites like trees and caves. Parish churches are stable features of the landscape, and some have provided valuable roosting locations for many generations of bats, particularly in areas where alternative roosting places are scarce. We estimate that over 8,000 Anglican churches house bats, with at least twelve of our UK

bat species roosting in churches on a regular basis, demonstrating just how important these buildings are to bats.

Church buildings are not only dependable, but they offer plenty of roosting spaces for bats too; voids and crevices found in traditional church architecture are perfect for roosting, and the large, open areas provide safe flight spaces.

It is not just the building that plays a vital role for these fantastic animals; there are plenty of feeding opportunities too. Churchyards and burial grounds are often havens of wildlife – perfect for a foraging bat! The 'bed and breakfast' role that churches play truly helps in protecting our native bats.

## **Living alongside bats in churches**

Many churches live happily with their bats, and even large bat roosts can almost go unnoticed. Of those we have spoken with, most churches feel positive towards bats, with at least 90% of those with known roosts

reporting that the bats do not affect worship or other activities such as weddings, funerals, and Sunday Schools. However, in some cases, bats roosting or flying within the church can be a challenge. They can create an extra cleaning burden or prevent the church from having services and events. These concerns could still affect many church buildings and those caring for them.

At the Bat Conservation Trust, we are working towards a world where people and bats can thrive together, and churches are a big part of that vision. Therefore, it's essential that churches get the support they need. A huge part of this work is achieved through the National Bat Helpline, a small team devoted to 'helping people, helping bats' supported by dedicated volunteers, and with partial funding through the Natural England Bat Advice Service. The Helpline takes thousands of enquiries every year and can provide help when a bat needs rescuing, provide advice regarding works or pest control, assist where there are roost-related issues in a building, or provide advice regarding bat crimes.

In addition to this, the Bat Conservation Trust was part of a hugely successful five-year project specifically designed to support churches. Natural England, Historic

England, Churches Conservation Trust, The Church of England, and the Bat Conservation Trust came together as the Bats in Churches partnership project. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project was created to work with churches, bat workers, and heritage communities to find sustainable solutions for some of the worst affected churches in England and provide advice for any church that has resident bats. By the end of the project, hundreds of churches across England had received help with their bat populations through mitigation, funding, surveys, cleaning, information and advice, and much more. Although the project has now ended, the Bats in Churches Project website continues to provide information and resources to churches with bats.

### **What can churches do to support these vulnerable animals?**

The good news is, we can all play a role to help bats. One of the biggest things that churches can do to support their bat community is to simply leave them be! Bats will have chosen your church for a variety of reasons, such as good access to food, or the right temperature for their roost, but most importantly, your church makes them feel safe. Providing there are no roost-related issues, the bats will continue to

thrive in your church if left alone.

Aside from leaving bats to live their best lives, it is important that churches contact their Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation, or an ecological consultant, when planning building works or experiencing roost-related issues to guarantee the safety of the roost and to keep on the right side of the law. The National Bat Helpline are always there if you need advice.

An active way for churches to support bats is through bat-inspired events; bats can be a huge engagement asset for churches. Not only do these events raise awareness for bats, but they can also encourage the local community to attend the church. If you volunteer at a church, see if you can organise a bat evening and help spread the word that our nocturnal friends are so much more than their horror stereotype will have us believe!

Further reading: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bats-and-churches>  
<https://batsinchurches.org.uk/>

**Hazel Tock**  
**Bat Conservation Trust**

## TALKING POINT

### **Road Safety**

It is always heartbreaking to see the body of an animal killed by road traffic. Many of these creatures are nocturnal (active at night) or crepuscular (active at dusk and dawn), when they are more difficult for drivers to see. In parts of Spain, underpasses have been created to allow Iberian Lynx to move safely where roads pass through their territory. In some places, squirrel bridges (bridges, often made of rope, suspended from trees on either side of a road) allow squirrels to cross roads safely. As we move towards electric vehicles, which are much quieter than petrol- and diesel-engine vehicles, animals will be less able to hear approaching traffic and it is likely that animal road casualties will increase. Is it time for wildlife safety measures to be included in road building and road maintenance projects? Do animals not have the right to move about their habitats safe from the speeding machines we have brought into their domains?

## THE VEGGIE TRAVELLER

*Travelling has become a regular occurrence for many of us, whether for business or on holiday, but it isn't always easy for the vegetarian or vegan traveller. But, if you know where to look, there's some great food to be had, even in unexpected places.*

### **The Beckford Inn, Beckford, Nr Tewkesbury**

The Beckford Inn is a hotel and pub on the edge of the village of Beckford, about 7 miles from Tewkesbury. They are a dog-friendly establishment, and provision for dogs accompanying human guests has been well thought out. The staff were friendly, extremely helpful, and clearly animal lovers! We had a well-appointed room that was clean and comfortable, although a bit warm on the summer nights that we were there. The food was excellent, and there were plenty of vegetarian and vegan options on the menu (including vegetarian selections for which a vegan option was available). The plant-based breakfast was fantastic! It was an easy journey from Beckford into Tewkesbury, and the village of Beckford has a small but lovely nature reserve that was perfect for a walk with the dog. The only drawback to the Beckford Inn is its situation on the A46, and the inevitable traffic noise on the road side of the hotel.

*Have you found some great veggie friendly restaurants or hotels while travelling, in your home country or abroad? If so, why not write a short review to send to Animalwatch and let others know about them. If you can, send a photo to go with your review.*



## THE WORK OF ANIMALS ASIA

“What can I do?”, the Talking Point “Making a difference” item in the autumn 2023 edition of *Animalwatch* (page 5), was thought provoking. These words might well have been muttered by the priest and the Levite as they passed by on the other side of the road from the man attacked by robbers on the road to Jericho. And indeed many of us, including me, may have said this upon witnessing the ill treatment of animals. If the treatment is legal in the relevant country and there is no organisation already set up to combat it, then helping animals in such bleak situations can appear a totally overwhelming task. We avert our eyes in despair.

But fortunately for bears suffering on bile farms in China and Vietnam, Jill Robinson MBE is a modern-day version of the Good Samaritan. Whilst working for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Jill visited a bear bile farm in 1993. There she discovered bears trapped in cramped cages; one bear stretched out a paw as if pleading for help. Jill held the bear’s paw in her hand, and vowed she would do something to help.

The encounter with the bear prompted Jill to embark on what has become her lifelong mission to end the practice of bear bile farming. This has involved exposing the plight of Asiatic black bears (also known as moon bears) cruelly farmed for their bile, kept in cages for many years without proper food or veterinary care. She has shown people how easily herbs and synthetics can replace bear bile in traditional medicine.

In 1998, Jill founded Animals Asia, a charity which is devoted to ending bear bile farming and improving the welfare

of animals in China and Vietnam by promoting compassion and respect for all animals, and working to bring about long-term change.

In July 2000 Jill signed an agreement with the Chinese authorities to set up a bear sanctuary and rescue bears from the bile industry. This was the first agreement between the Chinese government and an international NGO. Animals Asia is still the only organisation with a bear sanctuary in China.

In 1999 Animals Asia first entered Vietnam and revealed the horrors behind the bear bile trade in that country. In 2005 there were over 4,300 bears on bile farms. But negotiations were begun with the Governmental authorities, and Animals Asia began building its first sanctuary for bears in Vietnam in 2006 and rescued bears began arriving the following year. In July 2017, together with Animals Asia’s Vietnam Director Tuan Bendixsen, Jill signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Vietnam to bring bear bile farming fully to an end. It is now building a second bear sanctuary, with the aim of accommodating the remaining 250 or so bears awaiting rescue from bile farms in that country. (Sadly, many bears on bile farms have already died.)

To date, Animals Asia has rescued nearly 700 bears, caring for them at its sanctuaries in China and Vietnam. It also runs programmes designed to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity (e.g. elephants used in the tourist industry), and to promote the humane treatment of dogs and cats. From its small beginnings in Hong Kong, Animals Asia has grown into a respected international Non-

Governmental Organisation with over 300 staff and offices in countries around the world including Australia, China, Germany, the UK, Italy, and Vietnam.

Animals Asia’s strapline is *Kindness in Action*, and amongst its values is an emphasis on striving for compassionate solutions which benefit people as well as animals. Criticising bear bile farmers could have a very negative impact, especially in a culture where losing face is disastrous, and the charity’s preferred approach is to praise as heroes those farmers who willingly give up their bears to a sanctuary. Pursuing a policy of kindness towards people as well as animals has proved successful.

In 2024 Jill Robinson continues to work towards ending bear bile farming, and rescuing as many bears as possible. I once asked her how she handled the trauma of the cruelty she had witnessed. Her answer was to spend time with the bears whom she had helped to rescue.

We cannot all be as dedicated a Good Samaritan as Jill has been in rescuing animals in distress. But we can draw inspiration from her, and through supporting her charity we can play a part in rescuing these animals. And if you are ever feeling depressed about cruelty to animals, a real tonic for the soul is to watch videos on the Animals Asia website of bears who have been rescued from torture and who are now enjoying to the full their freedom in a sanctuary.

For more information, please visit <https://www.animalsasia.org>.

**Ann Markowe**

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## PET BLESSING SERVICE – A NEW EXPERIENCE

I attended a pet blessing service for the first time. The whole hour was magical and a young man even brought a very large ‘toy’ giraffe (about 5 feet high) which amused everyone there including the vicar. There were children and adults with dogs and one puppy and, because they don’t like being in a carrying cage, I took photos of my two rescue cats mounted on card, which everyone loved. Everyone there with an animal was invited to come up to the pulpit area to speak in the microphone and tell any stories about their treasured animal companion.

The service ended with cups of tea or coffee for the humans and treats for the dogs. I was given a bag of ‘Dreamies’ for my cats.

Altogether, it was a very memorable occasion and something I will definitely do again.

**Penny Arnold**

# THE NIGHTLIFE

When you think of nocturnal wildlife, there are probably a few animals that come to mind. Bats, owls, and moths are likely to be at the top of the list. But there's a whole world of wildlife to be discovered once the sun goes down. Let's meet some of the UK's nocturnal species!

## Birds

Owls are some of our most captivating birds. A lot of their appeal comes from their nocturnal nature. It certainly lends them an air of mystery. An encounter with an owl is always special, whether it's the ghostly sight of a barn owl quartering a field, or the haunting hoot of a tawny owl echoing through a forest. We don't see them often, so when we do it can feel momentous.

When you stop to think about it, it really is incredible that they can hunt small rodents in the dark, homing in on subtle sounds to find their target. They pair exceptional hearing with specially modified feathers, which allow them to fly silently.

Whilst owls are the undisputed face of nocturnal birds, they aren't the only species that are at home in the dark. The nightingale is probably the next most famous example, singing through the night on spring and early summer evenings. The nightingale is a summer visitor to the UK, as is another nocturnal bird, the nightjar. These bizarre birds fill the air with an eerie, churring song, before taking to the wing to hunt down moths and other airborne invertebrates.

Woodcocks, on the other hand, are more abundant in winter when resident birds are joined by migrants from Scandinavia and Russia. These plump waders spend their nights waddling across fields and forest clearings, probing the mud for worms and insects using their long, sensitive beak. They can be found feeding throughout the year, though in summer you can also enjoy their display flights. It's known as roding, where males fly low over the treetops at dusk and dawn, announcing themselves with squeaks and grunts.

## Mammals

Bats are the only mammals to have mastered flight. Thanks to their incredible echolocation abilities, they've also mastered the darkness.

These nocturnal mammals are fairly well represented in the UK. There are 18 species, which is around a fifth of our total mammal list. It's a joy to watch them dance through the darkness on warm evenings, looping and lunging as they pursue flying insects.

Bats are fairly easy to find, but not so easy to identify. They're often seen as shadows and silhouettes, fantastic but featureless in the evening gloom. There are clues to look for, though. The habitat in which you see the bat can narrow down the options, as can the way it flies.

The bats seen flying erratically over parks and gardens are most likely to be pipistrelles, either common or soprano pipistrelles. They emerge at dusk and twist and turn sharply around streetlights, buildings and hedges. A large bat high in the sky, flying early in the evening, might be a noctule. A bat seen flying low over water, sometimes even skimming the surface, could well be a Daubenton's bat.

We usually need a little help from technology to confidently tell them apart. A bat detector will take their high-pitched calls, often beyond human hearing, and translate them into sounds we can register and identify.

Bats as a group are one of only three animals found in the UK that truly hibernate. The other two are hedgehogs and hazel dormice. These small mammals are also nocturnal, preferring to venture out under the cover of darkness. They'll all be spending the autumn fattening up in preparation for their long winter 'snooze'.

## Insects

It's a tough life for an insect, as there are so many things determined to eat you. One way of avoiding some of those potential predators is to come out at night. Some insects emerge at night to feed, others use the cover of darkness to make migrations. Did you know some insects leave the country, heading for southern Europe or Africa? A recent study recorded around 17 million insects migrating through a small pass in the Pyrenees mountains each autumn.

Moths are the most famous nocturnal insects, though many people are surprised to learn that not all moths take flight at night. There are more

than 2,500 species of moth in the UK and many of them fly during the day. However, the majority are most active in the dark.

You can sometimes find them visiting flowers, but the easiest way to see nocturnal moths is to look around external lights. Bright lights attract them like... well, moths to a flame. The reason for this attraction is still a bit of a mystery though! You might find them around security lights or windows. Serious moth fans can even buy or build their own moth trap – attracting moths to a light where they can be recorded, admired and released.

Beetles are another group of insects with a taste for the nightlife. Many of them spend the day hidden beneath bark, under stones or in the soil, only emerging when the sun goes down. Venture out at night and you could find ground beetles and rove beetles wandering across paths in pursuit of prey. Shine a torch on a tree trunk or rotting stump and you could light up a wide variety of wood-loving beetles.

Many of the beetles that roam the night are dark and unobtrusive, but there's one famously flamboyant beetle that likes to be different: the glow-worm. On warm summer evenings, female glow-worms climb a grass stem and begin to glow with a greenish light. This brilliant bioluminescence is the result of a chemical reaction in their body. They glow to attract males, which fly around looking for lights.

With so much nocturnal wildlife to discover, why not wrap up warm, grab a torch and take your own after-dark safari! You can learn about many more of the animals you might find at [wildlifetrusts.org](http://wildlifetrusts.org)

**Tom Hibbert**

**The Wildlife Trusts**



# DEAN FARM TRUST ANIMAL SANCTUARY



Dean Farm Trust is a registered animal charity that provides a home for life to sick, ill-treated, and unwanted animals. The sanctuary started from humble beginnings, rescuing two ponies, Sooty and Pudding, back in 2013. Eleven years on and the sanctuary has grown to its 62-acre site in the Welsh countryside and is home to over 200 rescued animals.

There are nine different species living at the sanctuary, and the charity is passionate about providing each resident with the love and treatment they need, as well as educating the public on animal welfare and helping people to make more compassionate choices.

One of our rescued residents is the loveable Lenny, a woolly sheep.

Lenny came to the sanctuary at just 3-months old, having been saved from the Welsh mountains where he was found cold and wet, having been rejected by his mother. The sanctuary was delighted to offer Lenny a home where he could live with other rescued sheep and enjoy a life of freedom.

Lenny was a tiny bundle of joy when he arrived. He was so trusting of people and would follow volunteers around as they filled up water buckets and tried to clean out stalls. He would even wander into the office for some human companionship and to ask for cuddles. As Lenny grew, he formed strong protective bonds with his flock, particularly Mirella, who was saved after losing her eye to a crow attack. Mirella is quite nervous and relies on the unbreakably upbeat Lenny for reassurance.

Lenny will come bounding over the fields to the sound of his name and will wag his tail wildly when given back scratches. He is such a wonderful example of the bond that is possible between humans and all animal species. He is a delight to be around and it's impossible to resist a Lenny cuddle!

As the sanctuary has faced increased costs over the last few years, they are currently appealing for animal lovers to sign up to support the sanctuary, from just a few pounds a month, to save the home of Lenny and his friends. You can see more of the work the sanctuary does on their website, [www.deanfarmtrust.org.uk](http://www.deanfarmtrust.org.uk).

**Briony Ansell**

**Dean Farm Trust**



## THE BIBLE AND...

### Creatures of the Night.

*This Bible study is designed to help an individual or small group to explore what the Bible says about nocturnal animals.*

#### Psalm 104.19–23

*“You have made the moon to mark the seasons;*

*the sun knows its time for setting.  
You make darkness, and it is night,  
when all the animals of the forest  
come creeping out.*

*The young lions roar for their prey,  
seeking their food from God.*

*When the sun rises, they withdraw  
and lie down in their dens.*

*People go out to their work  
and to their labour until the evening.”*

In our culture, night and darkness are often associated with, or used as symbols for, things that are dangerous or evil. Many nocturnal animals have

also come to be associated with evil or malevolent forces (think bats and vampires, for instance). But this passage in Psalm 104 invites us to reconsider our thinking about night, the hours of darkness, and the animals who are active during those hours. Psalm 104 is a great poem of praise to God for the wonder of creation and God's provision for God's creatures. These verses focus on the importance of night and God's provision for the animals that are active during the hours of darkness. The psalm acknowledges that God makes darkness and nighttime, just as God makes light and day (this is also acknowledged in Psalm 74.16, “Yours is the day, yours also the night.”). The night and the animals of the night are not seen here as bad, they are part of the diversity and goodness of God's whole creation.

### Questions for Groups:

Have you ever come across the use of nocturnal animals to represent evil or danger, perhaps in art or literature or film? What do you think about that?

Christianity puts a great deal of emphasis on light and the goodness of light (for example, Jesus as the light of the world). Do you think this gives us a biased view of the night and nocturnal animals?

How might we celebrate the goodness of all of God's creation, both day and night?

*Bible quotation from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition ©1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

# INTERVIEW WITH ANIMAL-FRIENDLY CHURCH WINNER



## **St Augustine's, Scaynes Hill, Chichester Diocese**

*We invited the two churches who were joint-winners of Animal-Friendly Church 2023 to talk to us about winning the award. Here we share the responses to our interview questions from Ms Maria Brett of St Augustine's Church, Scaynes Hill. (The interview with the other winning Church, St Barnabas, Horton cum Studley, can be found in the Summer 2024 issue -Editor).*

### **Congratulations on winning this year's Animal-friendly Church award. What does it mean to you that your church has received this award?**

Winning the animal-friendly church of the year was a real honour and testament to the hard work and commitment of the whole church to include animals in our daily worship and focus here at St. Augustine's.

### **Is being an animal-friendly church something that is important to a majority of the congregation?**

Being animal-friendly has been welcomed and encouraged by the majority of our church as it is all about God's creation and gift of all animals and recognizing the importance that all animals play in our daily lives from insects to large animals and their welfare is our responsibility and our concern and as Christians we should be leading the way in this.

### **Has winning this award helped to raise the profile of animal welfare in your church? Has it had any impact on how your church is viewed in the community?**

Winning the award has indeed raised the profile of our church not only in our community but wider too as I have been contacted by several other churches about the initiative and what they may be able to do in their own parish. We are a rural church and most residents have a pet of some description. We are also surrounded by farms, rescue centres, kennels so animals play a large part in our community so is a great asset for people to know how much we treasure these precious gifts.

### **Can you tell us about some of the animal-friendly things that your church does?**

Things we do in church are many, well behaved dogs are welcome to our services and we have an annual pet service. Animals are part of our intercessions weekly and dog biscuits are available at coffee for our four-legged friends. We support a local pet rescue centre with food and goods as well as donating money. Obviously, we follow ASWA's principles to maintain our membership. We have a pet memorial garden where people can come and remember their pets by writing on stones and placing them by our statue of St Francis, I am also

an ALM animal chaplain so my role is to help, support and care for those experiencing pet loss either rehoming or the pet has died, bereavement support for animal loss is very unusual in our society but the loss you feel is the same grief you experience for any death of a loved family member and I want to help people understand that they are grieving and should for their beloved pet that they have lost. It is a very unique chaplaincy and I am very honoured to help people in their time of need.

### **What advice would you give to other churches that want to be more animal friendly?**

Any church can be animal friendly and I would encourage all churches to see how they may incorporate it in their church. I would also encourage people to accept dogs at some services or at least assistance dogs as this can mean the difference of a person being able to attend church or not, including them in intercessions especially welfare issues and conservation. Bird boxes, insect hotels, bee and butterfly friendly plants, even if grown in a pot, can be included so I think every church should be more proactive in promoting these things as God has given them to us as gifts and is our responsibility to nurture and care for all creation.

### **Does the church have any plans to expand what they do for animals?**

Plans to expand would be to hold more animal-friendly services where all will be welcomed, we would also like to include a pet memorial service.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your church?**

Our church is very special with a wonderful community who have all encouraged the animal-friendly initiative, my animal chaplaincy role which has spread across our diocese and have helped people from as far away as Wales who saw what we offered. There is such a need for pets and pet loss to be recognised as a bereavement and my hope is that all churches would show the same care and compassion to someone losing a beloved pet as any other member of the family.

# MY VISIT TO SAUVONS NOS ANIMAUX IN EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Torrential rains, flooding, and mudslides, thieves, rebel groups, droughts, and failing infrastructure; our Partner Organization, Sauvons nos Animaux (SnA), has endured all this and more. Yet no matter what new disaster they are faced with, their first concern is the safety and comfort of the rescued dogs and cats at their shelter.

Recently, I was in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on a work trip and when my work was finished, I traveled from Bunia to Bukavu for my second visit to Sauvons nos Animaux (my first was about one year before this one). I carried vet supplies donated by an American vet and educational material for kids that promotes animal kindness, including several copies of ASWA's *Animalwatch*.

Moraba (pictured with Paterne, the founder of Sauvons nos Animaux) is one of the most dedicated SnA volunteers. He no longer goes to school, his parents can't afford the school fees; SnA is his school. He's at the shelter every day, helping out with daily chores. He hopes that one day he'll be a paid staff member at the shelter. Moraba was thrilled when I gave him a few copies of *Animalwatch* magazine and he was 'glued' to the pages for the rest of the day.

Sauvons nos Animaux has a Youth Club, which is a loosely knit group of kids who stop by the shelter after school. On good days, when SnA has enough funds, the kids get a snack, but mainly they come for the dogs and cats and for the safety and serenity of the shelter. They'll also benefit from the humane education material I brought.

SnA's annual Animal Friendly Kids Camp hosts about 250 kids every day for 7 to 8 weeks. It's a huge effort, requiring the help of several volunteers, serving daily lunch for ~250(!), and providing fun and educational activities each day (the kids help bathe, groom, feed, walk, and socialize animals, they draw pictures of animals, play animal-themed games, play football and checkers, and grow vegetables). Looking at picture books about animals and reading animal content in newsletters, books, and magazines (like *Animalwatch*) is a daily and very popular 'quiet time' activity.

As an Animal-Kind International Partner Organization, we help raise money for SnA, the only animal shelter in the entire country, the 2nd poorest country in the world, with an average annual income of only US\$449. SnA's mandate is huge, their

local donor base is tiny. The Covid-19 pandemic, global economic concerns, and Russia's war on Ukraine, have all affected SnA's ability to raise funds.

SnA owns the beautiful spot that houses their sanctuary, which currently holds about 80 dogs and 20 cats (all of whom get quality vet care and are spayed/neutered, thanks to Dr. Aristide, the SnA vet). Given all that eastern DRC has endured – and continues to endure – we try to take some of the burden off the shoulders of SnA. Donations to Animal-Kind International provide cat and dog food, salaries of shelter staff, shelter repairs, vet supplies, and other priority needs to help ensure the SnA animals are healthy, comfortable, safe, and well-cared for, and that their guardians have a little less to worry about.

**Karen Menczer, Director**

**Animal-Kind International**

<https://www.animal-kind.org/sauvons-nos-animaux>



# THE KINDNESS OF ANIMALS

There is an interesting story about the Lithuanian-born French philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95), that has much to teach us about what we might hope to receive from our encounters with animals. Levinas was captured while serving as a soldier during the fall of France in 1940. He was imprisoned at Stalag 11B in Fallingbommel near Magdeburg and was a member of a unit for Jewish prisoners of war. The men's captors treated them with appalling brutality, beating them regularly. Their diet of watery soup and potato peelings was barely enough to sustain them as they laboured all day chopping wood in a nearby forest and they lived under the constant threat of deportation to a death camp.

Levinas later recalled that a stray dog somehow got into the camp. When the prisoners returned each evening, he would bark and jump around with joy at seeing them. The dog's behaviour reminded the philosopher of what it felt like to be acknowledged by another being. It seems that the dog recognised the personhood of the prisoners whereas the guards refused to do so. Levinas went on to make the relation of the Self to the Other the foundation of his philosophy, outlined in his most significant work, *Totality and Infinity* (1961). He emphasised the physical presence involved in meeting the Other in a face-to-face encounter. For Levinas, all ethics derives from concrete interaction with another through whom we gain access to the spiritual world of infinity.

It is hard to say how far the encounter with the dog influenced the development of Levinas' philosophy, but experiences of feeling affirmed by animals are by no means uncommon. Some years ago, my wife and I found ourselves in a very difficult situation when she was often away caring for her elderly parents and my mother was dying of cancer. I recall sitting alone at home one weekend and feeling very sad at the situation. As the tears began to fall, I felt a paw placed gently on my knee before our cat, Ambrose, jumped up on to the sofa beside me. It took some purring and head rubbing, but I felt better after a while. The apparent ability of animals to demonstrate kindness and empathy should not surprise us. In 1 Kings 17.2-6, God sends ravens to bring bread and meat to the fugitive Elijah as he hides in the Kerith Ravine from the wrath of King Ahab. Although the example of scavenging birds behaving in such a way seems inherently unlikely, the story is an instructive one. Ravens were considered unclean according to Jewish law because they feed on carrion (Leviticus 11.13-15), so perhaps the lesson is that all creatures have their place in God's universe, and none should be dismissed.

There are exhortations throughout scripture to care for the needs of animals. In Exodus 23.5, God commands that the injured donkey of an enemy is to be rescued while in Proverbs 12.10 it is noted that those who are righteous look after

their animals properly. In Matthew 10.29, we are reminded that not one sparrow is forgotten by God but perhaps the most interesting example is the one given by the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 12.1-60. He tells King David a story in which a rich man, wishing to feed his guests, stole a poor man's lamb rather than use one from his own flock. However, this lamb was brought up with the poor man's children as a member of the family, sharing his food, drinking from his cup and sleeping on his lap. King David's furious response, calling for the death of the offender, suggests that the notion of a reciprocal relationship between a human and an animal companion is neither a modern preoccupation nor unbiblical. In recent years, Christian thought has moved beyond the notion of dominion over Creation and emphasised the importance of stewardship. Perhaps it is now time to go one step further and recognise that the mutual interdependence that exists between humans and other beings does not depend merely upon our generosity, but sometimes on theirs also.

**Rev Paul Green**

**Parish Deacon at Holy Rood,  
Barnsley & Trust Bank Chaplain at  
Kendray Hospital**

# THE NAME THAT ONLY YOU KNOW

The book of Revelation is rarely read out in church services. And yet, there is one passage in Revelation that appears to have such a significant application for what is popularly known as animal theology that it is perhaps worth considering. With caution.

Revelation 2.17 reads, "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it."

The eminent Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom), loved and respected far beyond his UK flock, commented on this verse in a series of lectures recently published under the title of *Beauty and Meaning*. He writes, "This indicates that in the Kingdom every one of us will relate to God in a way which is absolutely unrepeatable and unique. And this is there, already now; it will not be created of a sudden, but it is veiled, it is distorted. We ourselves cannot see our own face, but God can." The name on the stone will be much more than the combination of sounds by which we are known here in this space and time continuum. It will rather be a name that exactly expresses our nature, that is written by God, who alone sees us as we are – but we will instantly recognise it as authentic, concordant with our innermost sense of self.

And what does it have to do with animal theology? It appears to parallel Adam naming the animals. Genesis 2.19 states, "Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and

whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name." St John Chrysostom, one of the great teachers of the undivided church, draws our attention to the wisdom and the authority that the process of naming the animals would have required of Adam. The names in question are not just arbitrary combinations of sounds which Adam attaches to various animals, they are, according to St John, correct thoughts, correct concepts regarding these animals, something that expresses their very nature.

The fact that the names for the animals in Genesis 2.19 and the names for us humans in Revelation 2.17 express the inner nature of the creature cannot be overestimated. At least since Plato's *Cratylus*, philosophy considers our ordinary language as a system of arbitrary signs. There is no logical reason why the combination of sounds that add up to "table" should stand for a table. It just so happened in history that it does. In other languages the same item of furniture would be known by other sets of sounds. But there are a few words that are logically connected with what they describe. There is a logical reason why "meow" is "meow": it is the sound that a cat makes. The same goes for words such as "buzz", "splash", "screech", etc. This phenomenon is called onomatopoeia, and "onoma", or "onomata" in the plural, is exactly what God gives us in the Revelation verse and what Adam gives the animals in the Genesis verse, i.e. names that precisely expresses who we uniquely are or who the animals uniquely are.

Commenting on Genesis 2.19, St John Chrysostom further points out that, because the names for the animals express exactly who the animals are, and are therefore correct

in the deepest possible sense, they are nothing short of God's own names for the animals. This, according to St John, is indicated by the phrase "and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name" – Adam gives to the animals the names that God predetermined for them and Adam discerned and mediated.

The idea of mediation has a great deal of significance for the theology of creation. Classical theology, notably the thinker known to us as Dionysius the Areopagite, promoted the idea of creation as a hierarchy of angels, humans, animals, plants, and minerals. By means of this hierarchy divine illumination is passed down, and all creatures are uplifted to the divine source of all good things. The two verses considered in this discussion, Revelation 2.17 and Genesis 2.19, can be interpreted in the context of such procession: God gives the unique names to humans, and humans give unique names (but names that are consistent with God's idea of what they should be) to animals.

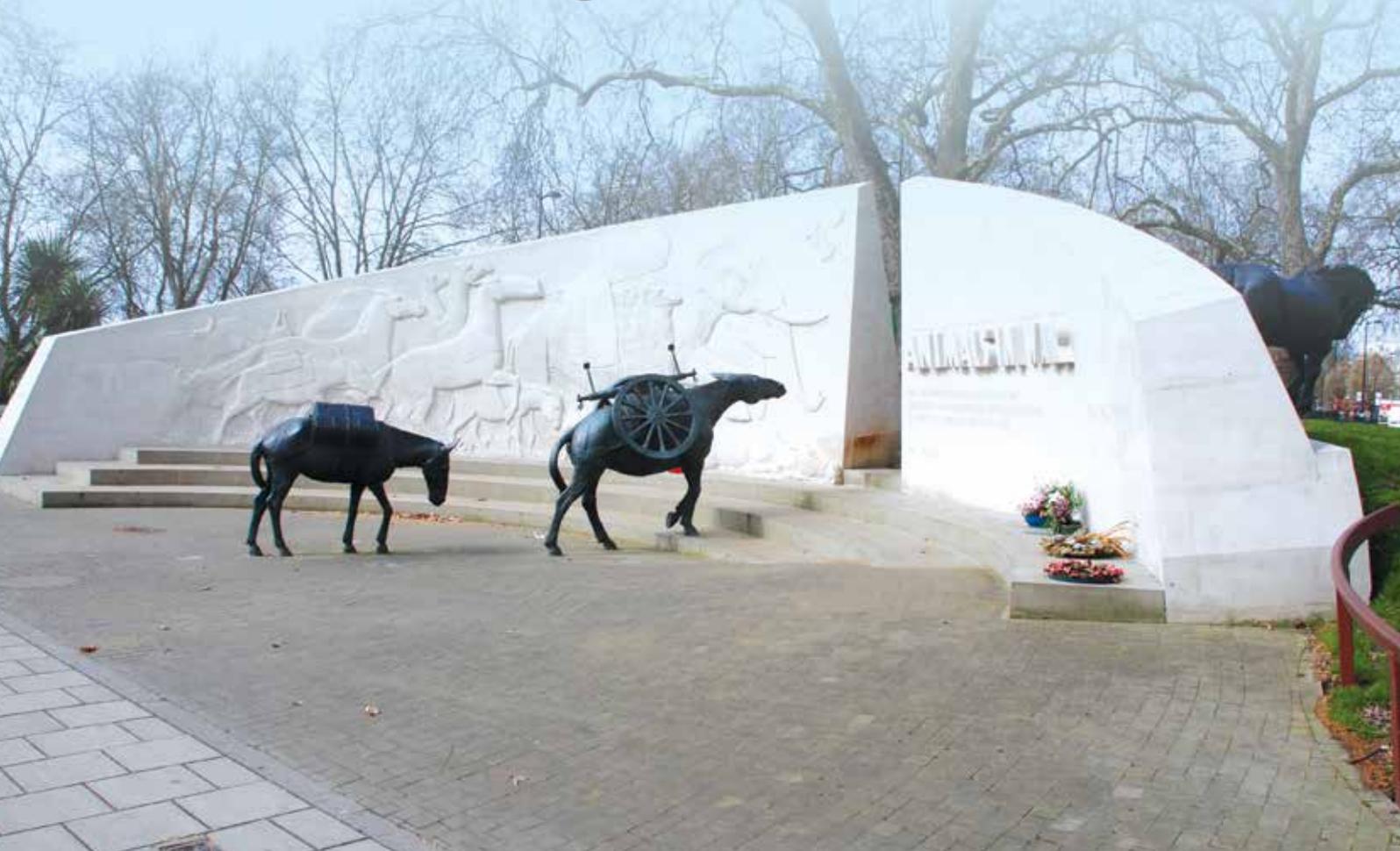
For those of us who are Christians as well as animal lovers, it must be encouraging to meditate on exactly how deep the connections between the various elements of creation run. Animals are not resources to be exploited for human life, or even decorations to make human lives more interesting. They are our fellow creatures towards whom we have a great and mysterious spiritual responsibility.

**Natalie Doran**

**Pan-Orthodox Concern for Animals**

# THEY ALSO SERVED

## Remembering the Animals of War



Join us at the Animals War Memorial,  
Park Lane, London

**Sunday 10th November – 3.00pm**

Speaker from Nowzad

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Further details:

Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals

**Tel:** 01252 843093    **Email:** [secretary@angsocwelanimals.net](mailto:secretary@angsocwelanimals.net)

[www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk)

# ARE YOU AN ANIMAL FRIENDLY CHURCH?



## Christians have a sacred duty to care for God's Creation

The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals is now awarding 'Animal Friendly Church' certificates to churches which practise and promote a compassionate attitude towards God's creatures.

Applicants will also be automatically entered into our annual '**ASWA Animal Friendly Church of the Year Award**'  
The Winner will receive a hamper full of ethical and useful goodies for your Church and a plaque to display on your wall.

For further details visit our website

[www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk)

or apply in writing to: PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT

E: [secretary@angsocwelanimals.net](mailto:secretary@angsocwelanimals.net)

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