

At the last minute!

A little tradition we've kept now for over 10 years, at least on one evening whilst we are away from home on a break, is to play a game of scrabble. It's not something we normally have time for, so makes a change when we're on holiday. Looking back over the scoresheets it is usually I who wins!

During a recent time away, we played our usual game. It was a good one with us covering the whole area of the board well, and with not too much scratching of the heads. We had two words, one each, 'que' and 'ump' which we queried, however according to Google AI both were accepted in the game of scrabble.

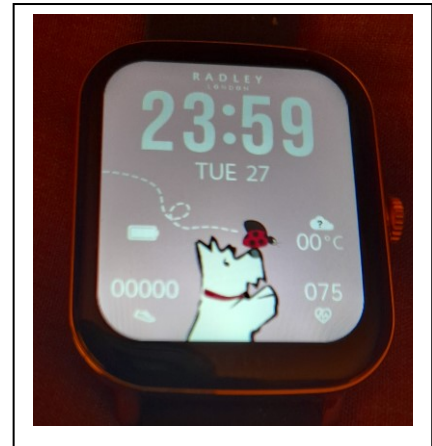
For those of you who play scrabble, you'll know it's always interesting during the last minutes of the game, as each opponent tries to use up every letter.

We were doing ok. I only had the letter 'I' left and had spotted two places where I could attach it to a 'T', so if Charlie chose one, I could use the other. All sorted, I added two points to my score, circled the final number (237) and wrote Eileen wins! I had been in the lead by approximately 30 points for the whole of the game so was convinced I was the winner.

Charlie had 4 letters left and couldn't find any places to use them. So, as we were both getting tired and it was quite late, I offered to help him and get the game finished. His 4 remaining letters were, 'I' 'B' 'H' and 'Y'. Looking at the board, I suggested how he could add the 'B' and 'I' to make 'bin'. Then there was a square for his 'H', on a corner, so he made both the words 'HA' and 'AH' just from the one letter. Finally, I pointed out his 'Y' could be added to his previous 'B' to make 'BY'. The game was over, and every letter used. Amazing! It was only when we began to add the points from Charlie's final words did it dawn on me that he had taken the lead!! Having made the word 'BY' on a triple word square, that little word alone gave him 21 points and with the other words he totalled a grand 239. I couldn't believe it! Leading for the whole of the game I was then pipped at the post in the last minute! There was no doubting it was a Denis Taylor Black Ball moment.

However, it also made me think about the two thieves who were crucified either side of Jesus on the hill at Calvary, and how at the last minute a life can be turned around. Let us recall the occasion. Besides Jesus being crucified at that time, there were two criminals who, unlike Jesus, deserved their fate. One kept ridiculing Jesus, challenging him and saying, "What kind of Messiah are you? Why don't you save yourself and save us as well!" However, the criminal hanging on the other cross rebuked the man, saying, "Don't you fear God, seeing how you are soon to die? We are being punished justly, for we have done wrong and deserve to die. But this man has done no wrong." Then the man turned to Jesus and said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Let us think for a few moments about that thief. He had obviously lived a life of crime, yet here now he receives the forgiveness and salvation of Jesus. The man had never been baptised, attended church, been confirmed, or received communion. He had probably never prayed before. He didn't have time to do 'good works', help others or



love and care for his neighbour. The man had nothing to give to Jesus, only his belief that Jesus was who he said he was. Jesus saw into his heart and knew he was sincere. Here before Christ was a naked man, who couldn't kneel or put his hands together to pray, yet Jesus welcomed him into his kingdom.

Life can be like a game of scrabble. Quite a lot of it is chance but it also depends on choices we make, thinking things through, roads we take, results we achieve. On our own we can never fully predict what will happen, yet at times we may try. There also are some people who leave things to chance, but why? With Christ in our lives, and by trusting him, we can be assured of his promises. We may have surprises, but he will never let us down. If we turn to Him, he will offer us love and forgiveness, even if it is at the last hour. But why wait until then? Why wait and miss out? Let us act now and enjoy the blessings Jesus wants to give us, today.

God bless you,

Eileen

EC. 26.5.25