

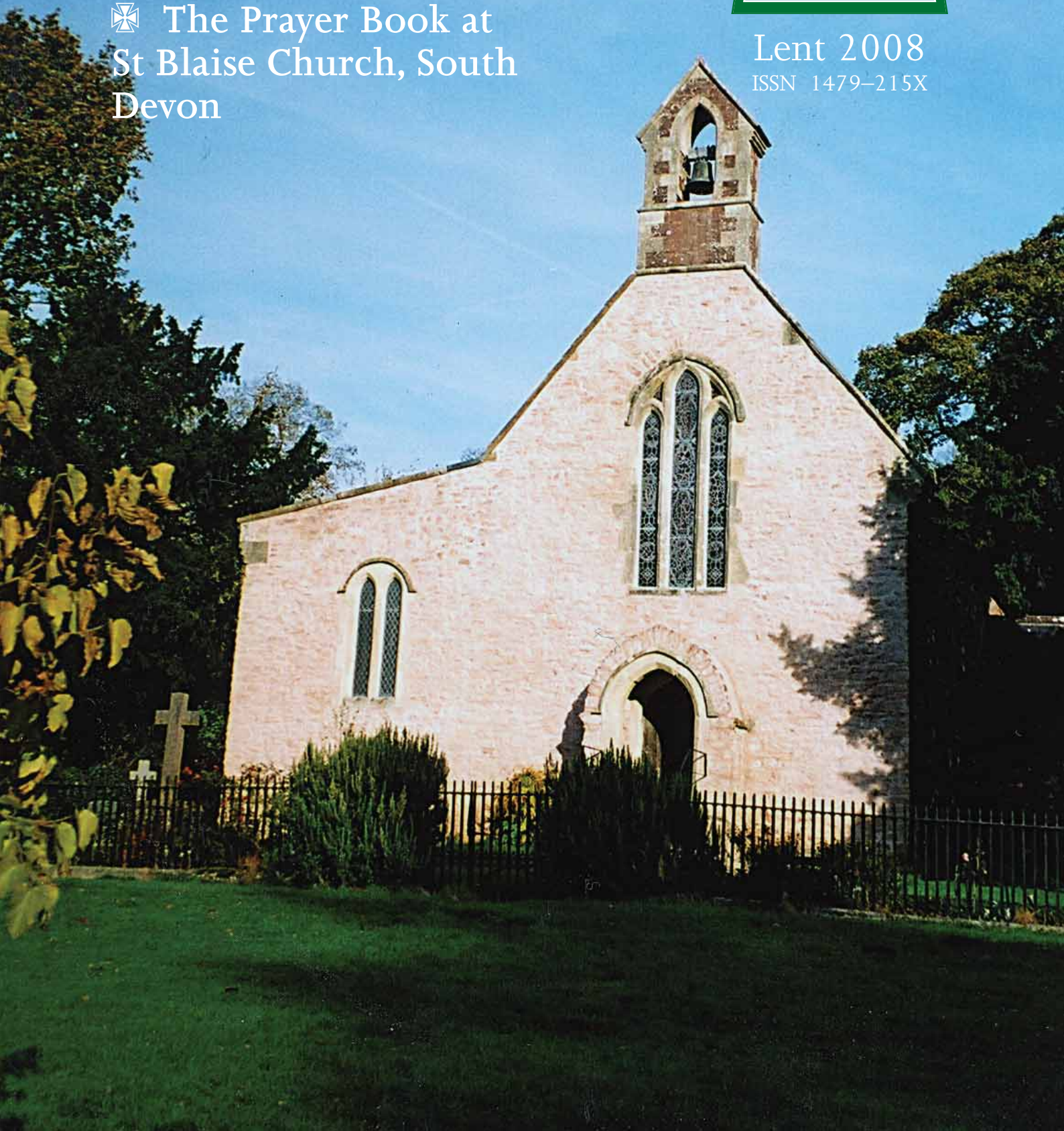
✠ Anthony Kilmister on  
the Early History of the  
Prayer Book Society

✠ How to Sing the  
Psalms

✠ The Prayer Book at  
St Blaise Church, South  
Devon

Prayer Book  
Society  
JOURNAL

Lent 2008  
ISSN 1479-215X





Issue No 16 · Lent 2008

ISSN 1479-215X

### THE PBS JOURNAL

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(Submission by e-mail is preferred wherever possible)

Produced on behalf of the Prayer Book Society by Nigel Lynn Publishing and Marketing Ltd

E-mail: sales@nigellynnpublishing.com

Printed in the United Kingdom

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### THE COLLECT OF THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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the next issue is  
MONDAY, 14 APRIL 2008  
Publication date  
28 JUNE 2008

The cover picture shows St Blaise Church,  
Hacombe, South Devon

# Immovable Feast

There are some things the liturgical revisionists dare not touch. Christmas was a reminder of this.

Every year the churches and cathedrals are packed with people of all ages happily singing ‘God rest ye merry, gentlemen’, ‘Hail! Lord, we greet thee’, and ‘O little town of Bethlehem/How still we see thee lie/Above thy deep and dreamless sleep...’ – and I never hear anyone in the pews complaining that they can’t relate to ‘archaic’ words or ‘outdated’ forms of expression.

Indeed, on the occasions when the words on the service sheet differ from the traditional words, members of the congregation either blissfully ignore them and sing the words they know, or else sing the new version reluctantly with a look of confusion, embarrassment or irritation on their faces.

In places where the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols still includes Eric Milner-White’s Bidding Prayer, it truly is ‘our delight’ to go ‘even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass’.

(The relatively young tradition of ‘Nine Lessons’ shows that it is possible to compose a new service that is in the spirit of the Prayer Book – something which can sit alongside existing liturgies and even develop them, but does not stray too far outside the tradition.)

And when we come to the prayer ‘which Christ himself hath taught us’, you know which version we instinctively recite. Nevertheless, even to Prayer Book Society members it can be surprising that people who come to church only once a year seem to show no difficulty in talking about Our Father ‘which’ art in Heaven, and asking for his will to be done ‘in’ earth.

It has come as a similarly nice surprise to many PBS people that we have in our midst a member such as fourteen-year-old Nicholas Dixon, whose essay in the last *Journal*, ‘Why I Love The Prayer Book’, has been a huge fillip and source of hope for us

all (see the letters page in this issue!).

Ministers complain about the commercial aspects of Christmas, but they should rejoice that there is at least this one festival which has mass appeal. The people’s love for traditional carol services cannot be explained merely by nostalgia or a secular liking for a sing-song. We come to church to be led away from the mundane, to have our spirits lifted – and we want the words we use to carry us towards something glorious.

This is where the BCP comes in. Its prayers show just what is possible. It is language for grown-ups, for people who want to be led, by the highest of human achievements, towards God.

Our supplications will always be

found wanting, and PBS members do not take any delight in noting how the words from modern-language prayer books pale in comparison with THE Prayer Book, but it is a fact.

At the end of non-BCP intercessions during Epiphany Evensong, the vicar made an inspired decision and launched into the General Thanksgiving: ‘Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks...’ Instantly the tone changed. We were praying properly.

Tim Nixon  
Editor

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# When Pandora's Box Was Opened

Anthony Kilmister looks at the battle for the BCP

I find it hard to believe that the Prayer Book Society (including its forerunners) is now over thirty-five years old. Almost as old as I was when this story began. But, be all that as it may, it is true enough.

Have we been successful in that time? In part the answer must be 'Yes' in that today the BCP is still legal tender, so to speak, and happily it continues to be used in many parts of the country. One could wish it was used more and that the Church of England, too, was in a healthier state than it is.

But as the nineteen-seventies began there was, in the wake of a Commission on Church and State, the possibility that the Book of Common Prayer could face elimination. This is not some far-fetched claim. At that time there were two drafts of a Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure on the stocks. One would make the BCP optional and the other would outlaw it. Either version would open Pandora's Box.

Already there had been the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure that had passed through every legislative hoop in 1965 and had come into force in May 1966. Now the Acts of Uniformity of 1548, 1552, 1559 and 1662 were to be supplanted by what would effectively be an act of dis-unity – and the very reverse of uniformity. What then did the Church House mandarins have up their sleeves? How ghastly might new services become? The first 'You' type service was the proposed Series 3 Communion service, published as a booklet, that went through its various stages in 1972.

This made the blood boil. So when I read a small news item in the Peterborough column of the *Daily Telegraph* on 19 June that the wife of an elderly Air Marshal (who belonged to the Church of Scotland) was calling a protest meeting at the Kensington home of the late Commander and Mrs Charles Drage, my vicar (Prebendary Richard Nevill Hetherington) and I determined to be there – heat-wave or no.

Thus it was that we arrived at 38 Sheffield Terrace, Kensington on 29 June 1972 on a particularly warm evening. As that evening 'ticked by' and a long talk by a clergyman on church history droned on (and on), it seemed as though this meeting was going to get us nowhere. In

frustration I felt that it was time to take some drastic action. Cheekily I therefore proposed and Mr Theo Pike seconded a motion which the meeting carried (with Miss Daphne Fraser of the Liturgical Commission being the only dissentient) that a new Society be formed as 'The Society for the Defence of the 1662 Prayer Book and Authorized Version'. Naturally we all realised that the title was too long and cumbersome – but for simple usage and publicity purposes that could be tidied up later. We knew little or nothing about church politics and would be facing experts in manipulating the liturgical debate and in driving a liturgical steamroller.

However we took the same attitude as Queen Victoria who in 1899 when referring to the Boer War told Arthur Balfour 'We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist.'

Before I left home for the meeting I had been warned by Sheila, my wife, not to get too involved in some new enterprise! But, of course, in the event I got carried away by enthusiasm and was unanimously elected as the Honorary Secretary – with Theo Pike becoming both Chairman and Honorary Treasurer. Mrs Drage and her daughter Margaret and a few others were elected members of the Steering Committee. The next days and weeks were full of feverish activity. Hardly a week went by when the *Church Times* did not publish an argumentative letter from me complaining about liturgical fidget of one sort or another. Letters generated by interest taken in all this by the *Daily Telegraph* and other media absolutely poured in. Advice also started to flow in from influential quarters that too much was being attempted and that so wide-ranging a society could not successfully continue. Archbishop Lord Fisher of Lambeth (who had crowned The Queen at her coronation in 1953) sent me a thoughtful, handwritten letter from Trent Rectory in Dorset, only weeks before his death, in which he gave me his views – saying in part 'I think the Authorized Version can be trusted to look after itself; but I agree that the 1662 Prayer Book needs active protection.'

Within a relatively short time a decision was reached that this society with a long title should have a short life. It therefore wound up and

immediately re-formed as the Book of Common Prayer Action Group. New people came forward to help. Among these were Commander Sir Peter Agnew (a former MP and Church Commissioner who lived in Smith Square, SW1), the legendary and wholly splendid Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh, Sir John Betjeman (the then brand-new Poet Laureate), Miss Betty Young and numerous others. Mrs Enid Drage was hospitality itself and 'the wheels' of our group were 'well oiled'.

In the autumn of that year I invited a stranger to join the committee named Jack Trefusis. He attended his first meeting in October and early in 1973 he succeeded Fr Hetherington as Chairman. I concentrated (as Vice or Deputy Chairman) on publicity and lobbying (of Synod and of Parliament) while Jack with great enthusiasm and persuasiveness set about building a network of regional branches. It was on these that the network of branches as we know them today began.

In the early nineteen-seventies alarm had grown over the proposed Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure designed to give to an unrepresentative General Synod *carte blanche* in deciding how we should pray and what we should believe. It was seen for the danger it represented and the BCP Action Group resisted this legislation in every way it knew how, making the General Synod fully aware of its concerns.

Put simply the Measure conferred upon the General Synod wide powers for the interpretation of doctrine or, as many would claim, the power to *change* doctrine by interpretation. The Measure would make the Synod Advocate, Judge and Jury on what did or did not depart from previous norms. The same was true in matters of liturgy and the Synod would, over the years, embark upon liturgies of the most banal kind and agreeable only to those with cloth ears. Radical change was of course suited to a period that closely followed on after 'the swinging sixties'. The BCP Action Group fearlessly spoke out against this trend and, once the Measure cleared the Synod, undertook extensive lobbying of both Houses of Parliament to which the Measure would be passed for approval.

On 14 November 1974 a shameful exhibition of quasi arm-twisting took place in the House of Lords for on that day not only was the Measure to be debated in the House but it was also the last day in office as Archbishop of Canterbury of Dr Michael Ramsey. Peers wanted to wish him well and did not want to spoil his desire to see the Measure passed without a division. On 4 December a debate on the Measure of exceptionally high quality took

place in the House of Commons, as anyone who has read *Hansard* for that day would agree. Concern for the Book of Common Prayer loomed large and, because the large majority of speeches were of our persuasion, sitting in the gallery I thought we were in with a chance. However on hearing the division bell a substantial number of MPs from the left-wing Tribune Group (who had not heard the debate) suddenly appeared and supported Mr Terry Walker MP, the Labour Government's recently appointed Second Church Commissioner in the division – and passed the Measure.

Only a few days later – on 7 December 1974 – a BCP Action Group 'Convention' was held at the Royal Commonwealth Society in Northumberland Avenue when the decision was made to reconstitute the Action Group as a society. Three representatives felt we should merge with another organisation but thirty-four were in favour of us continuing as an independent body. Lord Sudeley and Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh would get in touch with their contacts on the *Daily Telegraph* as the need for publicity was universally recognized. Extended discussion of what we should now call ourselves was clinched when Sheila, my wife, proposed that we call ourselves The Prayer Book Society and on a show of hands this commanded warm and general assent – and it was also agreed that a new constitution be drawn up.

This drafting was completed in time for a further 'Convention' at the Royal Commonwealth Society which was held on 15 March 1975. As I had proposed the formation of the earlier organization I was accorded the privilege of formally proposing the formation of the Prayer Book Society and the adoption of the draft Constitution and Rules for our branches. It was then agreed that the BCP Action Group be wound up and its funds transferred to the new society. Jack Trefusis and I continued in our leadership roles with Margaret Drage being Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. Amongst other decisions was one to invite the Earl of Onslow (a youngish peer who had championed our cause the previous November) to be President. In July 1975 the first national newsletter (edited by Jack and typed by Shirley Trefusis) made its appearance. All systems were set to 'Go'.

Here it was that the story began. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge!

*Anthony Kilmister is a former Chairman of the Prayer Book Society and is now a Vice President*

# Cranmer Awards: Branch Heats

## Bath and Wells

On 13 November Bruton School for Girls, Somerset, hosted this year's competition for the Cranmer Awards, when junior children, aged fourteen and under, and seniors above that age recite Cranmer's phrases. The competition was held in their magnificent new theatre, so appropriately called the Hobhouse Theatre.

A large audience sat round the spotlit stage; competitors from the two participating schools, Sexeys School and Bruton School for Girls itself, apprehensively waiting their turns, parents bravely supporting daughters, staff agonising over pupils' performances, members of the Prayer Book Society, hoping to be moved by the recitations, and seated in the very middle presiding over all, the benign figure of this year's examiner, Bishop Neville Chamberlain.

It was a wonderful competition, of an especially high standard. It was clear immediately how well competitors had been prepared. It showed in the confidence with which nearly all delivered their passages faultlessly, word perfect. The audience received not just the sense of the words, but also, as Bishop Neville remarked, the emotion behind the words as well.

St Leonard's will be delighted with the winner of the Juniors, Mair Mills. She sang in the choir at our Patronal Festival service; her father is Harry Mills, the choirmaster of the choir of St Mary's Bruton.

It was a mystery to me how Bishop Neville found the winner of the Senior competition. I had made six of the seven competitors equal! But nothing is beyond an examiner, and Cordelia Francis was a really worthy winner.

Thank you all who were involved, the schools who nurtured such talented girls, the parents who encouraged them and the girls themselves who took so much trouble to memorize their pieces. We, their fortunate audience, left afterwards truly nourished and with feelings of awe and wonderment.

## Oxford

On Thursday 8 November 2007, young people from schools in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire travelled to St Edward's School in

Oxford to participate in the Oxford Diocesan Heat for the 2008 Cranmer Awards.

Candidates were drawn from: Thorpe House School, Gerrards Cross; Reading Blue Coat School; St Andrew's School, Pangbourne; Abingdon School; Magdalen College School, Oxford.

After refreshments generously provided by St Edward's, the candidates, their supporters and the Diocesan Branch Committee moved to the school Chapel for the heat. This provided the perfect setting for the candidates to declaim their selected passages in a calm and reverent atmosphere.

The texts chosen from the Book of Common Prayer ranged widely and included selections from Orders of Service, the Psalter, Collects, Epistles and Gospels, Prayers and Thanksgivings and Prayers to be used at Sea; all reflecting the beauty and majesty of BCP language.

Standards were high and it was only after much deliberation that the judges were able to select the winners – Nicholas Acutt (Junior Section) and Joe Ridley (Senior), both of Abingdon School. They will now go forward to represent the Diocese at the National Final in February.



The picture shows heat winners Joe Ridley (left) and Nicholas Acutt in front of the chancel steps in St Edward's Chapel., Oxford

In addition to their certificates, the two winners were each presented with a cash prize and a Prayer Book. Each winner will also be invited to read a Lesson at the Oxford Branch's annual Carol Service in early December.

The judges also selected two Highly Commended candidates from each group. These were: Juniors – Alex Brunwin (St Andrew's) and William Dent (Thorpe House); Seniors – Tim West and William Lloyd (both Abingdon).

The Branch Organizers, Stan and Marian Hope, said that the success of the heat had, in no small measure, been due to the enthusiasm of the candidates and their schools, the generosity of St Edward's and the support of the Oxford Branch members.

### Sodor and Man

Sodor and Man held their fourteenth heat for the Cranmer Awards on 13 October. This well-established Island event attracts about forty children every year. This number includes children under eleven who are invited to compete and their enthusiasm and the high standard reached are very heartening. Pictured below are two first-equal under-elevens from two Island primary schools.



Many under-eleven candidates enter in following years, thus boosting the numbers in the eleven to fourteen age group.

Handsome trophies, designed by an Island artist, are engraved with the winners' names and held for a year by their church or school. Every child receives a certificate signed by our bishop, and first and second prize winners in the three age groups also receive money. This year prizes were presented by our First Deemster, the Island's senior judge, who is also deputy Governor.

Alexandra Ferrier and Sarah Qualtrough will compete in the finals in London on 23 February.

For the Norwich branch Cranmer Awards, see News From the Branches.

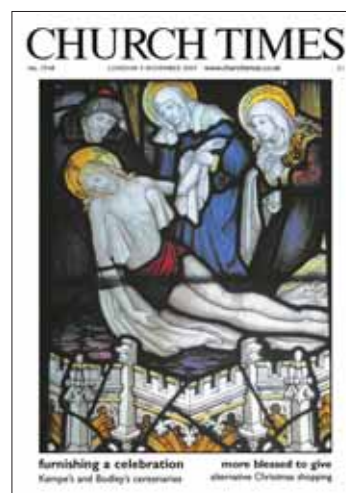
The annual finals of the Cranmer Awards will take place on Saturday 23 February, 2008 at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, Westminster, London SW1. Coffee from 10.15a.m. Senior and junior competitions start at 11.00a.m. Presentation of awards follows a buffet lunch.

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# A Letter to the Churchwardens

Dear Churchwarden,

A humble yet firm submission concerning the selection of a new vicar

There are those who worship in this parish who know that:

1. The Book of Common Prayer is true to the word of God in scripture.
2. It has been preserved by the Lord as the mainstay of the Church of England for over 300 years.
3. By its adherence to doctrine through its structure and the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Prayer Book has satisfied the needs of people and provided unity under God, in our Church and land.
4. The nonconformist churches have been greatly influenced by the Book of Common Prayer. John Wesley, for example, declared that it is the most Godly expression of worship ever given to Christendom.
5. Its words are memorable, based as they are on scripture, particularly the King James Version. Those words permeate the well-known hymns of our land and give comfort in the aspirations and hopes of all people in all walks of life, throughout the Anglican Communion here and overseas.
6. The very fabric of salvation in Christ Jesus is set forth clearly, without fear or favour, denying not the truths of judgement of God, and His grace to all those who truly repent and believe.
7. In the prevailing spiritual confusion through liturgical change, the Prayer Book, alone, stands as a beacon of worship of "The Faith once delivered to the Saints".
8. The Prayer Book was compiled under the wisdom given to the Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. While embracing the Reformation, the submission to Scripture alone, the book has retained the very essence of Godly worship from within the early Christian Church, thereby forging links with God's people over the centuries.
9. The Prayer Book remains our anchor in worship which prevents the disintegration of the one, true faith of salvation through Jesus Christ alone, attacked as it is by atheism, godless evolution and human values as well as the intrusion of other faiths within our legal system.
10. There is a need, not only for the benefit of the considerable proportion of the congregation and of the Electoral Roll who attend Prayer Book services, that an incumbent is appointed who has a loving and Godly respect for the Book of Common Prayer.

The Prayer Book remains preserved within the law of this land as the acceptable declaration of the Anglican faith. It has been richly and mightily used by God in blessing our people as well as the Anglican Communion throughout the world. We cannot allow this blessing to be removed from this parish.

*A letter sent to churchwardens in a parish in Chelmsford diocese prior to the appointment of a new vicar*

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# Learning to Love the Book of Common Prayer

by Ruth Cooper

I am a member of the Prayer Book Society. When I joined my present church, St Paul's, I was rather daunted by the fact that all the services were BCP. However, as I've worshipped there over the years I've found that the language and way the worship develops through the service does allow me to worship even if, as a Reader, I am leading the service. This wasn't always the case in my previous church where I felt I was a director allowing the congregation to worship while I stood apart at the front.

Also my congregation, my family of God, my church are passionate about the BCP. By joining them I am walking alongside them in their journey of faith in a concrete noticeable way, a way that is appreciated by them.

Does it really matter what our worship is like as long as it fulfils the functions; as long as our worship is of a high quality worthy of God and as long as it draws together the family of God? Some will say that outsiders may not like the antiquated language and old-fashioned ritual, preferring more 'audience participation'. Well that may have been true ten years ago, but these days almost all church language is foreign to outsiders. It doesn't matter which version of 'Our Father' we use; to the outsider it is new.

Far more interesting is that because Birmingham has so many different faiths and cultures people are looking for ways to express where they came from – a service that has been around for centuries harks back to our roots. Also, because the people in church are happy with the worship, they are far more friendly to strangers that come into the church. There is none of the muttering that I used to hear 'I hate those modern choruses, but you have to have them to get the young people in'. In fact singing is alien to most people who come into our churches.

Our worship, our liturgy – the work of the people – is of the highest quality that we can offer. Our services follow a pattern that is repeated and easy to learn. The love of the church for the BCP comes through and newcomers recognize that and are impressed by it.

And the result is a congregation that is united, which frees them up to allow them to take God's gospel message to those outside the church, which is our ultimate task. It allows them time to get to know people and to feel confident to invite them to

services. It allows the minister to spend a minimum time on preparing the services, unlike some of the modern mix and match services, which require an awful lot of preparation to run smoothly, and this again gives him or her more time to spend on pastoral work, freeing him or her from the chaplaincy role of supporting the congregation already in the building.

When we get to know our neighbours and invite them in to church we have found that they more often than not continue to come. Young couples coming for banns to be read have stayed after their marriages. The number of young couples in our church is a sure sign that something is right.

I am not deriding modern worship; I enjoy the diversity that Anglican worship offers. But whatever goes on in our churches must be of high quality and St Paul's has achieved that.

Long live BCP!

Ruth Cooper is a member of the Birmingham Branch and a Reader at St Paul's Church, Birmingham



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# Caring for Carers – A Service of Thanksgiving for All Who Care for the Sick

by the Revd Robert Beaken

**T**hey have long memories in the countryside! Until the time of my predecessor but three, there was a tradition in the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Great Bardfield, of holding a service of thanksgiving for all who care for the sick on the Sunday nearest St Luke's day (18 October), St Luke being the patron saint of physicians. A doctor in the parish mentioned this to me several times and I began to wonder whether it might be revived? I ought to add that we have at least four doctors regularly in the congregation and others from time to time, as well as assorted nurses, physiotherapists and other people who work in the National Health Service. Like all congregations, we also have parishioners who are caring for sick and sometimes bedbound family members at home.

I began to take soundings and it soon became clear that the service for those who care for the sick had been missed and would be much appreciated again. A small committee was formed consisting of three doctors, a musician, a nurse, members of the congregation and me. It was decided to hold afternoon tea in church followed by Choral Evensong, which we thought might appeal to people who were not regular churchgoers. Members of Chelmsford Prayer Book Society helped with publicity and invitations were sent to neighbouring parishes, local hospitals, surgeries, dentists, opticians, the East Anglian Ambulance Service, Essex Air Ambulance, St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross. Parishioners and a member of the Prayer Book Society rallied round to bake cakes for the afternoon tea; indeed, so great was the abundance of cake that we ended up giving away 'doggy bags' after the service.

The choir of St Barnabas's Church, Woodford Green, whose singing is of cathedral standard, volunteered to come and sing Evensong. They took my insistence that we had the Psalms appointed in their stride. They sang the setting of the responses by William Smith, a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Orlando Gibbons, and the anthem 'Rejoice in the Lord always' by John Redford. We also had a couple of old chestnut hymns, 'Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven' and 'O Worship the King'. The husband of a GP produced and printed an admirably clear order of service. The Lessons

and some special prayers were read by local GPs, nurses, a physiotherapist, a medical researcher and the Roman Catholic parish priest of Great Bardfield. The Revd Graham Crook, Anglican chaplain of Southend Healthcare Trust, preached a warm and most moving sermon about the day to day realities of caring for the sick. A retiring collection raised a significant sum for the work of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

I think our service was significant for several reasons. Firstly, it provided an opportunity for us to thank God for all who care for us when we are sick, and reminded us that caring for the sick is a divine vocation. Secondly, it reminded us that Christ is to be encountered and served in the sick-room as well as in the church. Thirdly, all of our communities contain many people whose lives consist of sleepless nights listening out for sick family members, taking meals upstairs on trays, getting prescriptions made up, arranging visits from the doctor, and cheering-up the sick. Often, they do all these things whilst going out to work and looking after a family. Their work and many sacrifices usually go unseen and unacknowledged. Our afternoon tea and service was a small way of expressing our appreciation, admiration and support.

'Please do this again next year, Robert', said one local priest to me in the church porch after the service, 'the word will spread'. Our special service was enjoyed and appreciated by a large congregation and I suspect I have now successfully revived the tradition in Great Bardfield. I hope, too, that other parishes may hear of our very positive experience and be led next St Luke's day to hold their own services of thanksgiving for all who care for the sick. It was very well worth doing.



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# A Parable for Today

by Frank Rogers

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Luke 8.8

In the days of Queen Victoria there was a successful football club. They played to a set of rules called 'Association Football' or soccer. For many years they were content with these rules, winning many matches and trophies.

About fifty years ago a few of the younger members became bored with the game as then played. They began to agitate for big changes, amounting to a new set of rules very close to those of rugby football, which had never been played by that particular club.

Nearly all the ordinary club members did not realize what was going on. At several special meetings, poorly attended but carefully stage-managed by the pro-rugger minority's crafty leaders, the rules were more and more altered, so that the game now being played was no longer recognizable as traditional soccer. The belated

protests of the outwitted soccer players and their supporters were at first simply ignored.

Eventually the new pro-rugger officers and committee decided that those who still preferred the old soccer rules could no longer play for them and so must leave the club. The pro-soccer members complained bitterly that they and their soccer predecessors had founded and financed the club and that it was wrong for its resources to be taken over for the playing of an altogether different game. They were thrown out all the same, unless they gave in and submitted to the new rules.

Some folks said it was unfair, indeed disgraceful, that those deprived of membership were those who upheld the club's original rules and game. But it happened, and the vast majority of the sporting public was not interested.

Frank Rogers is Reader Emeritus in the combined parishes of Alston Moor and South Tynedale, in the Diocese of Newcastle



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# ‘A Catechism’ for Today and Tomorrow?

by the Revd Andrew Montgomerie

**T**he Curate of every Parish shall diligently upon Sundays and Holy-days, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many Children of his Parish sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of this Catechism.

This rubric is to be found at the end of the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer. It is, however, a matter of conjecture as to the degree to which it was ever commonly observed, and this for at least two reasons.

First, the Catechism has the explicit purpose of preparing people for Confirmation. Now in 1661, the new Prayer Book was being introduced after the Interregnum, during which public worship had been conducted according to the ‘Directory’ issued by the Westminster Assembly in the 1640s. During the intervening twenty years, Confirmations had ceased (except perhaps the odd illegal and clandestine occasions). This meant that the conduct of Confirmations could not be taken for granted – the restoration of the order of the Church of England was not purely a legal task but a pastoral one. There were, no doubt, many communicants who had not been confirmed, hence the additional phrase at the end of the rubric appended to the Confirmation service:

And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

The Puritan opposition to Confirmation had therefore weakened, no doubt unintentionally, the ability of the restored Church of England to catechize its members (it would be a mistake to think that in the 1660s catechizing was necessarily restricted to the young). There is evidence too, that though there was an anxiety on the part of some Bishops that the clergy be faithful in the role of catechizing, there was a common neglect of this important aspect of Church life. In the following century (the eighteenth), Confirmations were increasingly rare, in an age of increasing religious indifference. By the nineteenth century, a second reason had arisen which tended to diminish the observance of the Prayer Book scheme for catechizing.

The second reason why we may doubt how

successful the scheme for the use of the Catechism was is the rise of the Sunday school movement. This arose from the influence of the religious awakening brought about under the ministry of John Wesley on Robert Raikes and others. Sunday schools were phenomena of both non-conformity and the Church. But the Church Sunday schools were not a vehicle for Catechizing in the Prayer Book sense, and it is for this very reason that the Church of England Sunday School Institute was founded in 1841. Sunday schools undoubtedly have a lot to be said in their favour, but what they also all too often achieved was a separation of the teaching of the Church from its worship – faith and worship were divided. In my experience the ‘Family Service’ movement, which began in my youth, has singularly failed to rectify this problem, and the take-up of new worshippers from such services into the daily and weekly liturgical life of the Church has been pitifully small. The issue of the division between worship and the teaching of the Christian faith is an important one.

I would be interested to know if there are any parishes in the Church of England today where anything like the Prayer Book’s intentions are still pursued!

At the beginning of 2007, I began to systematically expound the Catechism in place of a sermon at Evensong. I now do this almost every week in either of the two parish churches for which I have responsibility. I have found the congregations most appreciative, regularly looking up the text in their Prayer Books. For some, it is a reminder of childhood and youth preparing for Confirmation. For others, it is a novel experience. For myself, preparation for what I call ‘Exposition of the Catechism’ is enormously rewarding.

The Catechism covers the very basics of Christian life. It begins with a recalling and explanation of the Baptismal promises, and then focuses on Christian belief (the Apostles’ Creed), Christian behaviour (the Ten Commandments) and Christian belonging – prayer and worship in the context of the Church and the Sacraments which ‘Christ ordained in his Church’. It is not too long, nor too complicated, but it is comprehensive. These features remind me of Izaak Walton’s words in *The Compleat Angler* that ‘God does not lead us to heaven by many, nor by hard questions’. Remember that these words were written

at a time when some (not all) of the Puritans spoke at such length and complexity that it must have seemed to their hearers that God asked many and hard questions!

When the Church of England was restored in 1661, it was in a generation which had used the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which is much lengthier and much more particular in its Calvinistic theology than that of the Prayer Book. The Prayer Book Catechism, in contrast, focuses on the essentials of the Catholic faith – the Creed, the Commandments and the two ‘Sacraments ordained of Christ’ (Article XXV). It is more easily learned and understood.

Sunday evenings are an excellent time for catechizing and for instruction in the Christian faith. Most teenagers and young people are very busy during the week, but for both young and old, Sunday evenings seem to be convenient. I have been leading Confirmation courses on Sunday evenings for many years. But the difference with the Catechism is that it is set within the context of the Church’s worship.

Clearly times have changed in society and also in the Church. But the content of the Catechism is hardly in need of great revision to make it thoroughly applicable to life today. And whilst I am not advocating strict adherence to the Prayer Book rubric in this matter, it seems to me appropriate that sound and simple Christian instruction replace our sometimes less than sound and unpractical speculative sermons!

There is a further and serious principle here to which I have already alluded. It is that Christian truth is best communicated in the context of Christian worship. Too many of our worldly-wise congregations are sadly lacking in basic Christian understanding – not only of vital doctrines but also

### New Recruits

Question: How can we double the membership of the Prayer Book Society? Answer: It’s easy – we just need every member to find one new recruit! All right, that’s easier said than done, but just think what a boost to morale it would be if we could swell our ranks. Potential new members might be closer to home than you think. How many times do you hear people bemoaning the loss of traditional church services? How often do you hear them say they love the ‘old’ words and that they prefer the King James Bible to modern translations? And isn’t it usually the case that when someone encounters a BCP service for the first time, they remark on how inspiring they find it? We just need to let these people know that they can find a home in the PBS, and that together we can ensure that the Prayer Book not only survives, but prospers.

of Christian morals and the nature of the Church ‘in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance’ (Article XIX). Christian truth and moral standards are not best communicated at a small group dinner party, or in other such contexts – they are matters which need to be re-connected with the living tradition of faithful worship *in spirit and in truth* (John 4.24 – my italics). The Prayer Book contains ‘A Catechism’ which by the very plan envisaged for its use asserts a relationship between Christian truth and Christian worship. That the separation of these two aspects of Christian life has become so normal is, I think, to be regretted.

One final observation is that it is now most uncommon for Christians to be taught or encouraged to memorize. Not only is the memorizing of the words of Holy Scripture a most profitable exercise, so also the simple truths of the Catechism – the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer – once memorized, are taken into our very souls, learned and inwardly digested to our spiritual health. The question and answer method of catechizing has, I suspect, a much neglected value.

The Revd Andrew Montgomerie is Rector of Eyam and Vicar of Baslow in Derbyshire

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# Former President's Banner Dedicated

Anthony Kilmister reports

**T**ombstones, plaques, banners and the like that are so often to be seen in English parish churches often reveal fascinating stories of yesteryear. In some cases they tell a story of generation succeeding generation. In other instances regimental colours or formation flags hanging quietly in a parish church can have fascinating stories to tell.

Recently I witnessed the dedication of a magnificent banner in the 800-year-old church of St Peter's at Stanway in Gloucestershire. It was the banner of Martin Charteris, a devoted servant of his Sovereign – a man of honour and of honours. To have known him over the years and to have counted him an especial friend and mentor had been an especial privilege. It was therefore a particular pleasure for me to be able to join his family at the dedication of his banner (as a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath) that now hangs here in the church at Stanway where Martin had been churchwarden.

He succeeded Sir John Colville (another former PBS President) as Private Secretary in the Royal Household in 1950 following a distinguished Army career as a Lt-Colonel in the KRRC (now part of 'The Rifles') and in military intelligence – and a war-time wedding in Jerusalem.

Martin Charteris received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath when he retired as Private Secretary to The Queen in 1977. He had joined the first rung of Order in 1958 but reached its top less than twenty years later. At more or less the same time he joined the House of Lords as Lord Charteris of Amisfield and remained a permanent Lord in Waiting to The Queen for the rest of his life. Of course he was actively engaged in chairing the National Heritage Memorial Fund and serving as Provost of Eton as well as being President of the Prayer Book Society. Indeed he was 'in office' as our PBS President when he died in December 1999. This is neither the place nor the time to record all the honours Lord Charteris received during his career since it was the Order of the Bath that focussed our minds in Stanway church during Evensong on Sunday 7 October 2007.

Situated in a hollow beneath a long spur of the Cotswold escarpment the church faces the beautiful Manor House that for so long has been associated



with the Tracy, Wemyss and Charteris families. Martin's widow Gay, his two sons Andrew and Harry, his daughter Mary Pearson (the Cranmer Awards champion) and their families led the congregation. Also there, filling the church, were Martin's elder brother the Earl of Wemyss, his nephew Lord Neidpath together with their wives and a large number of well-wishers. Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer was led by the Team Vicar, the Revd N. M. Arthy and John, Bishop of Tewkesbury (the one-time curate of a Northwood church). After the Opening Sentences we sang 'I vow to thee my country' with 'The Lord is my Shepherd' before the sermon and 'Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven' following the dedication of the banner. The last hymn was 'Now thank we

all our God'. As Lady Charteris explained in the booklet containing the Order of Service, a knight's plaque remains in place in Westminster Abbey forever but his banner is taken down when he dies – hence the service at Stanway where it was erected and dedicated anew.

From at least the eleventh century those to be knighted purified their inner souls by fasting and prayer and cleansed their bodies by immersing themselves in a bath. In 1128 Geoffrey, son of the Count of Anjou in William the Conqueror's time, bathed before being robed in crimson and a sword girded round him. When the rules and regulations were rewritten in 1815 the rites of bathing and so on (which had not been fully followed since the reign of Charles II) were abolished. The magnificence of the Order and its religious connotation remain undiminished.

A knight's banner bears his family's coat-of-arms and as Lady Charteris explained 'Martin's has the blue band within a double border decorated with fleur-de-lys for Charteris, the lions rampant for Wemyss and in the centre a small black crescent indicating the second son.'

The banner is a happy reminder of a splendid President of the Prayer Book Society and a wonderful friend – the memory of whom is evergreen.



### PBS Online

You may have noticed that we now have a new website address – [www.pbs.org.uk](http://www.pbs.org.uk). If you type in the old address ([www.prayerbook.org.uk](http://www.prayerbook.org.uk)) it will, however, automatically redirect you, so leaflets and other printed materials bearing the old address can continue to be used.

For those who prefer this method, it is now also possible to join the Society as a new member or to renew your existing membership online, as we are now able to process secure credit card payments via our website.

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## The Prayer Book in use at...

### St Blaise Church, Haccombe, South Devon

This little church lies at the head of a tributary valley of the River Teign, and was built in 1233 when Sir Stephen de Haccombe returned from the fifth Crusade.

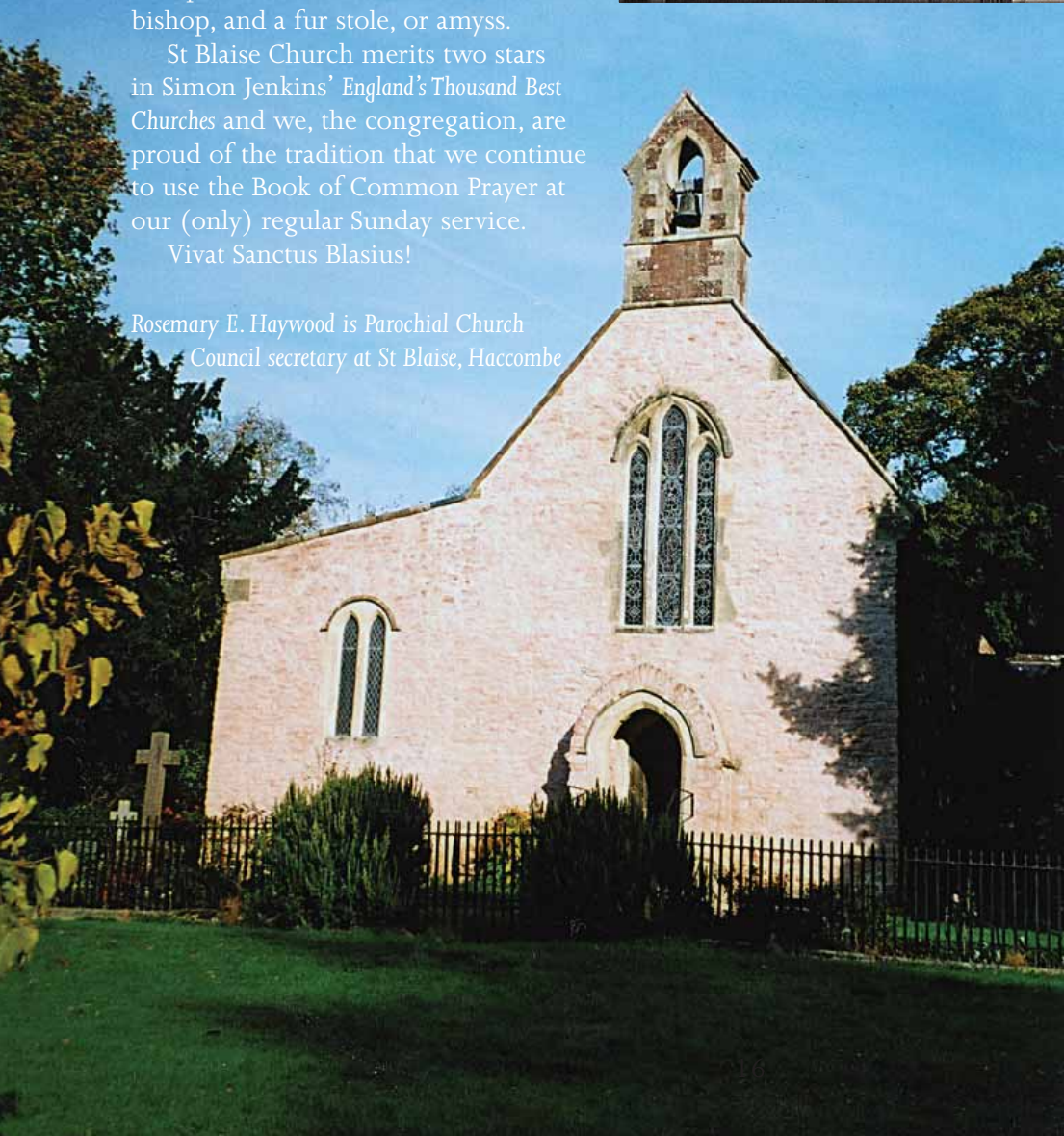
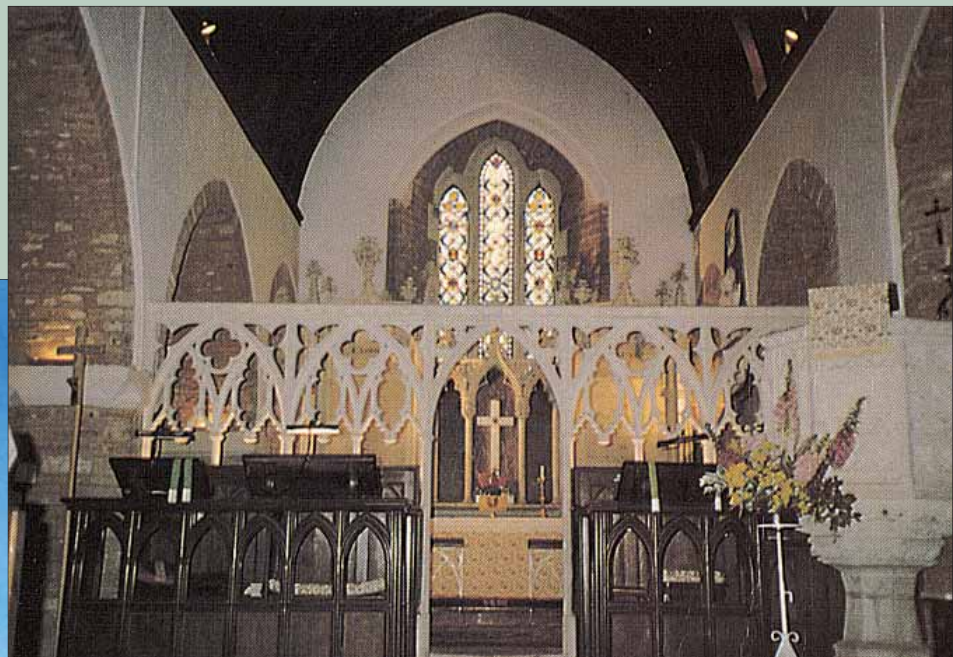
It is dedicated to St Blaise, who is the patron saint of woolcombers and clothworkers, and is also invoked against all disorders of the throat. Did Sir Stephen choose this saint because he had prayed for a safe return before sailing off from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) where the relics of St Blaise are still kept?

The Rector of Haccombe holds the title of Archpriest, a title which was established in 1337 when it was a collegiate church, and this privilege was ratified by George V in 1913. The Archpriest wears lawn sleeves like a bishop, and a fur stole, or amys.

St Blaise Church merits two stars in Simon Jenkins' *England's Thousand Best Churches* and we, the congregation, are proud of the tradition that we continue to use the Book of Common Prayer at our (only) regular Sunday service.

Vivat Sanctus Blasius!

Rosemary E. Haywood is Parochial Church Council secretary at St Blaise, Haccombe



# Singing the Psalms

## Notes for Choirs

Over long service of sixty years as a village organist and choirmaster, I have proved that, with use, any congregation will learn to sing and value the Psalms and canticles in the Book of Common Prayer. They will find that the words and tunes become part of their life, and of their walk with the Lord. The following are some notes I made for our choir, and which I commend to all.

The joint singing of choir and congregation in the Psalms and canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer is a special treasure of the Church of England and it is your privilege to lead the singing.

The Psalms were, no doubt, the 'hymn book' of our Saviour and he would have known them well. They convey the whole experience, hopes, fears and aspirations of the soul. Down the years they have been the comfort and joy of countless godly people. Remember though that they were also written to instruct, caution and warn us. Yet to sing them well together presents more difficulty than many think, though the effort is rewarding indeed.

Here are a few instructions:

1. Do not hurry; sing slowly and as near to speaking as possible.
2. Let the words be clear, and get the notes to fit in, not vice versa.
3. Do not, normally, let short words take up unnatural space.
4. Be sure that every consonant is clearly pronounced; don't be careless here.
5. Practise slight pressure on important words, and preserve the rhythm of phrases. Get a 'feeling' for words.
6. Some verses need more volume than others: follow the organist, if he is any guide. e.g, God's power over wickedness – loud. Grace, mercy and repentance – soft. Praise and joy – strong, etc. Let the emotion be conveyed, but not forced.
7. Do not be afraid of pauses, but these need preparation and understanding.
8. Don't hurry anything, and don't worry! God is patient; give time to consider the words; allow them to sink in.
9. Do not underrate the Gloria: it is a glorious end to noble words, not just a sigh of relief!

Sing slowly, majestically and with joyful confidence. Why not rallentando, with a lovely ending? Many of the chants are little masterpieces of their own.

10. Lastly, and most of all, ask the Holy Spirit to grip you with God's inner meaning. You will find the reward in your own life.

Stanley Ward is an organist and choirmaster in Braintree, Essex

### Howlers from church magazines

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

This evening at 7.00p.m. there will be hymn singing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

## Traditional Choir Trust

The Traditional Choir Trust was started in 2002 by Dr John Sanders in Gloucester who formed a group of Trustees to run the charity whose objects were:

*"To give grants, bursaries and scholarships to boys otherwise unable to attend recognised choir schools. To encourage and financially assist choir schools, cathedrals, Chapels Royal, collegiate churches, university chapels, parish churches and other choral foundations to maintain the ancient tradition of the all-male choir."*

Upon Dr Sanders' death in 2003, the Trusteeship was handed over to the Dean & Chapter of Chichester Cathedral who have instigated boy chorister scholarships. More funds are urgently needed to support other scholarships to ensure the continuing survival of the boy chorister in service. The Trust only relies on donations and legacies to build capital from which bursaries can be provided.

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# Christian Culture and Secular Pluralism

by Norman Russell

*A sermon preached at the Prayer Book Society Conference 2007*

I would like to begin by saying thank you for the kind invitations to join you at Lady Margaret Hall both for this year's conference and also for that of last year. I am grateful, for I am sympathetic to the many concerns for the future of our church and our nation which I know to be widely shared by those attending this conference.

Last year, the Prince of Wales, speaking as your Patron, drew attention very helpfully both to the spiritual heritage which the Book of Common Prayer has given to the English people and also to the wider cultural heritage of a shared language which has shaped the English-speaking world. He further observed that today's generation, more than any other, is aware of 'the now', and less than any other, aware of the history of what has shaped today's world, so that grandparents and grandchildren often have little in common to share in a conversation.

Since this time last year, there has been a whole series of highly publicized incidents involving children and violence. These are increasingly seen as a wake-up call to the nation about the state of family life and the related failure within our society to pass on what are in truth necessary Christian virtues and values, the wisdom of the ages, from one generation to the next. It is hard to see that a society characterized by increasingly anarchic lifestyles, fuelled by drink and drugs, will prove to be either contented or stable. I cannot myself see a solution without a renewal in the life of the nation and I cannot see a renewal in the life of the nation without a renewal in the life of the church, particularly in the life of the Church of England.

So where do we start? Niels Bohr, the Danish Nobel Prize winner and one of the founding fathers of quantum theory in the twentieth century, famously said to one of his protégés 'You're not thinking: you're just being logical'. The physicists among you will know that the move from Newtonian mechanics to modern physics required not merely the exercise of logic, but a different conceptual framework. The conceptual framework of both Isaac Newton and Niels Bohr did of course have their own logic, yet

they thought differently. Let me come at it with another anecdote; this time a story told about William Temple when still a precocious schoolboy at Rugby. It is said that he asked his father the question 'Why do the philosophers not rule the world?' To which the answer is said to have been 'they do, but not until they are dead'.

What has happened is that the default ways of thinking which were once shaped by Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer and the hymns of Charles Wesley, as they mediated God's revelation of himself and his ways in Jesus Christ, have been replaced with thinking shaped by a combination of what Descartes thought of as 'pure reason' and the scientific method which has uncovered many truths about the nature of the universe. Now you will not expect a Cambridge man to question the value of scientific method and I don't, though I do think that the results of its application to the social sciences can be less secure than is sometimes claimed. With St Paul, who writes about this in the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, I prize highly the rationality of minds renewed in Christ. But neither Cartesian rationality, nor scientific method is able to provide a foundation for those virtues and values without which there can be no human flourishing.

Most helpfully, the present Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, has tirelessly reminded us that Western civilisation rests on two cultural pillars, the Greek and the Hebrew. In no way does he attack the intellectual tradition which has its roots in ancient Athens, but he is right to insist that the marginalization of the Wisdom tradition, which has its roots in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel, has deprived contemporary Western culture of the spiritual and moral resources – I would say truths – necessary for a healthy society. What has been lost here in England through the erosion of the nation's Christian identity, is that principled culture of agreed virtues and values which used to be part and parcel of our public life, virtues and values which include tolerance within boundaries, restraint, courtesy and good manners. These were widespread in English life, rooted in centuries of Christian culture and a Christian way of thinking. Today's epistle provides a good example of two ways of life, the Christian way

drawing on the inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit, contrasted with what St John would call the way of 'the world' and St Paul speaks of as the way of 'the flesh'. The fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance are contrasted with (in the words of the Authorized Version) adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. There are other similar lists to be found in the New Testament alongside the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer and the background teaching of the Hebrew bible which together have shaped our consciousness of right and wrong.

I need hardly say, but probably ought to, that these virtues and values have very close parallels in the other great religious traditions now represented in this country. I have certainly talked, as no doubt have many of you, with Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus who are no less worried about the disappearance, in the ideology of secular pluralism, of those virtues and values which enshrine the wisdom of the ages.

The distinguished educationalist Professor Terrence Copley, recently appointed to a personal chair here in Oxford, towards the end of his biography of Dr Thomas Arnold, has written:

In many schools in the UK and the USA, children are being encultured via a secular curriculum into a secular world view. Current debates about indoctrination via religious teaching or religious schools often mask an almost total lack of debate about secular indoctrination via non-religious teaching in non-religious schools. In the UK many members of the secularist lobby are not even aware that they are programmed in a secular manner; they see themselves as religion free or value-neutral or 'balanced'.

So, in practical terms, where does all this take us? First, for members of the Prayer Book Society, a reminder that there is more to the Book of Common Prayer than the incomparable language which it shares with the Authorized Version of the Bible and Shakespeare. Its memorable words convey truly the depth and riches of the Christian faith. In its pages are set out, without equivocation, (to use the pre-politically correct terminology) the sinfulness of man and our need of redemption in Christ 'who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full,

perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world'.

Here we have 'the means of grace and the hope of glory'. Isn't this the heart of the Gospel? The good news of the transforming power of God in Jesus Christ, mediated through the Holy Spirit at work within us?

In conclusion, I think we need to be clear that there is a major ideological battle with which we are called to engage. It is almost ten years since I was a parish priest. Were I to become a parish priest again I would, more than I did in the past, try to uncover for those who profess commitment to Christ, an understanding of the ideological roots of contemporary ways of thinking along the lines I have tried to set out briefly this morning. For it helps to explain the default ways of thinking we commonly encounter, and common knee-jerk reactions. Alongside that, I would seek to help members of the congregation grow into a sustaining depth of understanding of scripture and the Christian faith. Taken together, my aim would be to foster a Christian mind, by which I mean the ability to reflect Christianly about the ordinary issues of daily life – essential to a proper confidence when talking appropriately with those who do not share our faith.

I take encouragement from the fact that in the Dark Ages and against all the odds of a hostile culture, the monasteries were able to conserve Christian faith, learning and devotion in Western Europe. It is likewise essential that we foster a real depth of Christian understanding alongside an understanding of contemporary culture in our parishes. In particular, local churches need to put many more resources into reaching out relationally to young people with the good news of Jesus Christ if they are to have access to that precious wisdom of the ages which has done so much to shape our lives and understanding. Thank God a growing number of churches is taking this seriously and employing properly trained Christian youth workers. In small rural parishes, it usually needs the imagination and leadership to address the opportunities collaboratively over a wider area. That too is beginning to happen and there is no reason why we cannot, starting where we are, begin to be effective in reclaiming our culture for Christ.

*The Ven. Norman Russell is Archdeacon of Berkshire and Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury*

# Thirty years ago...

This is a genuine extract from the diary of a PBS member in the 1970s

Saturday 1 December dawned bright and clear. Time being short, I had planned it in detail, and, after my chores, set off to the parish church for the Advent Carol Service of our branch of the Prayer Book Society.

The church is old, and long and thin, with two extensive transepts just beyond the halfway point. Below the tower hang six bell ropes, and from them depend six aged men, taking it in turns to pull them; at first, rhythmically, but gradually less and less so, till, as though in despair at their ineptitude, they disperse to their seats in the congregation.

A small pipe organ is placed at the west end of the nave, supporting the congregation surprisingly well despite its occasional lapses in tuning. Nearby is a furnace, which can be heard roaring quietly at intervals; but its ministrations are scarcely more than aural, for the temperature in the church is so low that my hands, which are habitually warm, turn from tepid to sharply cold, despite my two vests (one, long-sleeved), my waistcoat, my jacket, my Gannex raincoat, and my woollen scarf. This is surprising, because, after my last visit two years ago, I was assured that heating was going to be put in next year. Perhaps it is characteristic of occasional instances of the Church of England that, furnished with a source of warmth, that source should prove so inadequate as effectively scarcely to exist.

I sit at the back, and watch as the church nearly fills; as far as I can see, with old men and women entirely. The organ pipes up with an amateurish performance of Bach's chorale-prelude on 'Sleepers, wake' – skilfully wrought, but neither melodious nor euphonic in substance: before that, the vicar welcomes us matily, speaking so quietly and indistinctly that not all can hear – he cannot have been a teacher, and neither can six of the seven Bible-readers who succeed him, who share the common delusion that relative inaudibility is the sign of reverence (mind you, if they came forward from beneath the tower, into the nave, they would be heard distinctly better).

After the third lesson and hymn, the organ plays Bach's chorale-prelude, 'My God, I will not leave Thee'. After the fifth lesson, the hymns go from ancient to modern, and so do the tunes, and the singing waxes distinctly more hearty. The seventh lesson, of course, is the most wondrous fourteen

verses in the Bible, and the vicar seeks to do it justice.

Collect; blessing; 'Hark, the herald angels sing', omitting the most poetic verse, and we sit through the first movement of Mendelssohn's fourth organ sonata.

The chill was so appalling that one had to brace oneself to endure it. The use of the human voice was worthy in song, but in only one instance in speech. Would one attend a future service?

Yes; albeit with long johns in addition to one's fortifications; because these are dear people. The service itself is really well planned: it needs no sermon as bush, telling its lovely tale in Writ and song with elegance and precision – outstandingly so – and, of course, it is followed by a superb lunch in an attractive inn, sharing a table with the solitary young couple in the company; only the noise level, and the half-hour wait between courses, lessening one's pleasure.

Steeped in the faith, one is glad to go for its sake and the sense of fellowship; but one can certainly see why others stay away.

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## Book Reviews

ROBERT BEAKEN: *Reverence My Sanctuary*; Taverner Publications; 2007 ISBN 978 1 901470 11 6; £8.00

Much of the strength and beauty of Anglican devotion has lain in the small country parish churches. This guide to the Church of St Katharine, Little Bardfield, Essex, tells the story of continuous worship from the eleventh century to the present day. There was restoration by the celebrated architect G.F. Bodley in the nineteenth century, and again more recently, but many of the ancient features of the church remain. The present incumbent has written this comprehensive guide to the church and its history. It is richly illustrated with colour photographs, including some of services being performed and sacraments administered: this is not a museum, but a lively working church. What makes this little book particularly interesting is an account of the Brotherhood of St Paul which found its home there from 1910 to 1940. This was the enterprise of the then Rector, Edward Mears, to provide ordination training for men unable to afford the required time at the regular theological colleges. Despite some acrimonious wrangles with bishops, Mears continued to prepare men for the sacred ministry until the college moved to another place and eventually closed. It is a fascinating story of how one man's vision could meet a need which had been neglected by the Establishment. This is clearly a parish church to be visited, and remembered in prayer.

The book can be obtained from the Revd Robert Beaken, The Vicarage, Braintree Road, Great Bardfield, Braintree, CM7 4RN; cheques payable to Little Bardfield PCC.

Raymond Chapman

R. T. BECKWITH: *Praying with Understanding: Explanations of Words and Passages in the Book of Common Prayer*; The Latimer Trust; ISBN 978 0 946307 91 3; £2.00. PBS Trading code 217

The commonest objection to the present use of the Book of Common Prayer is that its language is incomprehensible especially to the younger generation. Explanation of the words, phrases and

assumptions that really are no longer current is obviously necessary for those unfamiliar with the Prayer Book, and desirable even for those who use it all the time.

Dr Beckwith is very inclusive in his judgement of what should have a note, and I don't think that anybody is likely to find a difficult word omitted from the index. As is not always the case with scholarly commentary, the explanations themselves are all admirably clear. The first remarkable thing, then, is how short the booklet is. Dr Beckwith explains, amply, everything necessary, in thirty-one pages of text in nice big type, for as he observes, only 'a sprinkling of words and phrases' present any difficulty. (Sociological research by Peter Nicholas Davies reported in his *Alien Rites?* has tended to confirm this: see a review in *Faith & Worship* 59.)

*Praying with Understanding* is, though, more than a word-list. It is laid out not alphabetically by word but as a progress through the whole Prayer Book with difficulties explained as they are encountered. This has the dual advantage of making it easy both for the reader to consult the explanations in the course of using the Prayer Book, and for the commentary to be devotional as well as explanatory. The comments are on whole passages as well as on individual words. For instance the introductory comment on Marriage amounts to a strong (and Scriptural) exposition of Prayer Book doctrine. The spirit of all the notes is rightly, as Dr Beckwith says, 'If we are to be edified by our worship, we need to think about the words we are using, so that we can make them our own.' The booklet is edifying as well as informative.

*Praying with Understanding* ought to be much used both inside and outside the Prayer Book Society. It is the Society's custom to present ordinands with a copy of the Book of Common Prayer. I suggest a copy of *Praying with Understanding* should be part of the gift.

Ian Robinson

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PETER TOON: *The Anglican Formularies and Holy Scripture: Reformed Catholicism and Biblical Doctrine*; The Brynmill Press; ISBN 978 0 907839 92 7; £2.40

Peter Toon goes right to the heart of the Anglican Communion's problems with his diagnosis of what has gone wrong for the Church – liberals in the West have erred and strayed from the 'Anglican Way'.

The Anglican Way is the distinctive tradition of Reformed Catholicism that sustained the Church from the Reformation until the 1960s, when a change of direction, led by the Episcopal Church of the USA, was taken which has led to the crisis for worldwide Anglicanism today.

The solution, says Toon, is to return to the Formularies – the Prayer Book, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Ordinal – which define Anglicanism and ensure that it remains orthodox. They do this chiefly because they are so thoroughly grounded in Holy Scripture: 'The Church engages with the Scriptures daily in the Offices and weekly in the Order for Holy Communion to learn first of all the way of salvation and everlasting life in Jesus Christ, and then the doctrine and morals which flow from this spring of life.'

The Church today, says Toon, is infected with

'chronolatry' – the worship of the present, the assumption that modern opinions about religious matters are better than those of the past. New liturgies displaced the BCP, and the traditional bonds of unity were loosened. Now we are left with 'instruments of unity' and 'bonds of affection' – and the lack of authority which is causing so much unhappiness in relations between and within provinces.

Analysed like this – and few Prayer Book Society members would find much wrong with Toon's analysis – it's easy to see why a restoration of the Formularies would be an answer, indeed the only answer, to the Church's problems: 'Let us be honest. The Anglican Way without its classic Formularies is not the Anglican Way but some other way! The Anglican Way cannot be the Anglican Way only with its post-1970s Books of Alternative Services, whatever names they are given.'

The author also addresses some of the arguments deployed by opponents of the BCP about 'outdated' language.

This is a short book which is a good, quick-to-read summary of Toon's thought.

(Available from PBS Trading)

Tim Nixon

### **The March and The Muster**

For just over ten years Frank McManus, Prayer Book Society Wakefield branch Honorary Secretary, has been compiling a 'book of days' – a collection of thoughts on religious, political, literary, musical, historical and countless other themes, set out to be read a page a day over a year, or dipped into in a more random way.

For the last few years he has sent the work-in-progress to friends at Christmas, but now it is complete, the book is published and available to everyone. *The March and The Muster: A Day-book, Commonplace Book, Muchness, Omnium Gatherum, Nightcap and Cornucopia* is split into six sections with seasonal themes. That overused word 'eclectic' really does apply to this volume, for Frank is a fount of knowledge on a very wide range of topics. Anyone who reads a page once every twenty-four hours will certainly find that they 'learn something every day.'

The author's brand of avuncular Christian Socialism runs through the work as a sort of unifying theme, but he is at his best writing about music and hymns, poetry and literature – Tennyson

is a special interest for Frank and 'The March and The Muster' is a quotation from Walter Scott. The book, illustrated with drawings, cartoons and cuttings from all kinds of publications, has the feel of a Victorian curiosity. And Frank has some very surprising things to say about the National Anthem (he likes it!).

Of course, The Book of Common Prayer makes an appearance too (on 13 November) – it is a 'treasure' which, when used 'zestfully' is 'rich in diction as in doctrine; and its Litany, brief Communion, Lenten Communion, and Psalms remain priceless.'

Perhaps PBS members would have hoped for a stronger endorsement, but at least non-PBS readers will think about the BCP in a new way if they see that a radical like Frank loves it.

*The March and The Muster* is published by, and available from (send £9.00 cheque payable to F. McManus): Mardale Books, 97 Longfield Road, Todmorden, Lancashire, OL14 6ND

Tim Nixon

# Letters

From K.G. Bamford

It was most encouraging to read in the Advent 2007 issue of the Prayer Book Society *Journal* the appeal of Charles Cleall for intelligent interpretation in the public reading of scripture.

Some years ago I encountered the following comments by Alan Bennett in his *Diaries*: 'Never read the Bible as if it means something, or at any rate, don't try and mean it, or prayer. The liturgy is best treated and read as if it's somebody announcing the departure of trains.'

People who agree with Alan Bennett (and, as Mr Cleall points out, the adjudicators for the Cranmer Awards) that scripture should be read in an impersonal and detached way usually do so for one of two reasons. The first derives from the idea that the word of God should be allowed to speak for itself, and that the reader is merely a vehicle for transmitting the words to the hearer. The hearer will then be helped by God to arrive at an understanding appropriate to his own situation.

The second reason for favouring this style is that it is less disturbing for the indifferent and thoughtless. They can ignore the reading comfortably, as they can ignore announcements of trains to other people's destinations.

It was with the aim of encouraging a more thoughtful approach to reading in church that the London College of Music initiated a series of examinations in 'Spoken English in Religion', copies of the syllabus of which are obtainable from LCM Publications, Thames Valley University, St Mary's Road, London, W5 5RF.

K.G. Bamford  
45 Blackhall Croft, Kendal, Westmorland, LA9 4UU.

From Richard M. Parker

Many congratulations to fourteen-year-old Nicholas Dixon on his excellent article, 'Why I Love the Book of Common Prayer.'

Nicholas makes the important point that there is a loss of reverence in the modern services.

I liked his reference to the Queen and how one would show proper respect in her presence. How much more in the divine presence to 'show great reverence and deepest respect when we enter into his house'.

The Prayer Book is easy to understand when one compares it to Shakespeare's work. We don't abandon Shakespeare because his work is too difficult. In fact, thousands of people of all ages study it throughout the world. Here in Cambridge many young students gladly study and perform his plays.

The Prayer Book's most beautiful language is timeless. It represents stability which people need in this rapidly changing world. The Church itself should be stable, and by frequent changes erodes its authority.

Well done, Nicholas. You give me hope for the future.

Richard M. Parker  
41 Comberton Road, Barton, Cambridge.

From Frank J. Peachey

I respectfully beg to differ with Mr A.L. Minter's statements about transubstantiation in his letter on different versions of the Prayer Book.

My BCP includes the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. They are not an optional extra but an integral and essential part of the historic formularies of the C of E which were agreed at the 1562 Convocation 'for the avoiding of diversities of opinions...'. Article 28 is absolutely unambiguous in its rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

In 1548 Cranmer had already expressed the view of Holy Communion identical with that now found in the Articles. In 1563, Archbishop Parker, a disciple of Cranmer's, changed none of the wording of Article 28 from that of 1553. Parker was opposed to the Lutheran view of the 'real and bodily presence' or consubstantiation.

The New Testament Greek for 'remembrance' – *anamnesis* – means a mental act of recalling, never an objective memorial.

I fully realize that I am out of step with the WCC and the ARCIC Agreed Statement on the doctrine of the Eucharist, which declare that the consecrated bread and wine are really changed, but my conscience is clear. The Thirty-nine Articles contain the true doctrine of the C of E agreeable to God's word. It is that inspired word which is paramount.

Frank J. Peachey  
Flat 7, Holy Trinity Hospital, Church Walk, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk.

From Mrs C.E.W. Douglas

I read the Prayer Book Society Journal for Advent 2007 with more than keen interest, as I found at least three links to both my distant and recent past therein. Enjoying the great variety of views in all the articles, I was so heartened by the reports of the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the length and breadth of the country.

First of all, the reference to Lichfield and Nancy, Lady Bagor of Blithfield. I went to school at St Mary and St Anne at Abbots Bromley, nor far from Blithfield and its famous herd of goats. Ascension Days at school were famous for picnics, and I recall one or two in the vicinity of Blithfield, that lovely countryside.

Strangely enough, my association with the Bagor family continues with my Kendal optician, Mr S. Bagor, who tells me he is connected to that family.

Reading on, I came to the report of the Salisbury branch, and the meeting at West Parley. From 1989–2006 I lived in Dorset and worshipped for some of that time at St Michael and All Angels, Hinton Admiral, near Christchurch. In 1995 the curate was the Revd Charles Booth, whom we were sorry eventually to lose, but proud of his appointment as Rector of West Parley. A great delight was the fact that St Michael's embraced the Book of Common Prayer, entirely, and still does.

I then read with appreciation the account of my own branch Carlisle's annual festival. The service at Arnside was indeed memorable for the singing of the Thomas Cranmer Choir, and the thought-provoking sermon, given by the Revd Stephen McCann, curate of Kendal Parish Church, Holy Trinity, where I worship.

Finally, in 'Forthcoming Events' I spotted a reference to the church of Whissendine, in Rutland. My eldest sister, also at school at Abbots Bromley before me, became a great friend of the daughter of the owner of the Manor House in Whissendine, a family called Manton. Eighty years ago, as a child of six, I was sole bridesmaid to my sister's friend in that very church at Whissendine.

Thank you to the Prayer Book Society for recalling these happy memories.

Elaine Douglas

5 The Meadows, Abbeyfield, 39 Castle Road, Kendal, Westmorland, LA9 7AU

From Canon G. and Mrs Dodson

We hope it might be of interest to Prayer Book Society members to hear about the Luther Tour



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organized by the Revd Robert Hampson of South Woodford, Essex. Last September we joined his party and visited most of the main Luther sites in Germany. We stayed at the Helfta Kloster, where there is a guest house run by a small community of fifteen Cistercian nuns.

Our reason for telling you this is that during the week we were kindly invited to hold a Communion Service in the convent chapel. I was honoured to be invited to lead the service, and we had the full 1662 Prayer Book service. This meant a great deal to all of us who took part. It was also thrilling to hear the praises of God, as expressed in the timeless and well-loved prayers of Cranmer's liturgy, resonating in the heartland of the Reformation. (We were just a mile or two down the road from Luther's birthplace in Eisleben).

There is also a small window commemorating Thomas Cranmer in the north aisle of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, near to where Martin Luther and Philipp Melancthon are buried in the chancel.

Gordon and Pat Dodson,  
Poppygate, 2 The Loke, Cromer, Norfolk,  
NR 27 9DH.

From Gareth Hardwick

Mr Inkley makes a good point (Advent 2007) on the pronunciation of 'saith'. To make it a little clearer for readers who may be unfamiliar with the correct pronunciation, the vowel sound '-ai-' in 'saith' is the same as the '-ai-' in 'said', or the '-e-' in 'Beth'.

Even for those not brought up on the Prayer Book one would have thought that the pronunciation of older spellings was fairly intuitive. However I was rather startled in our Cranmer Awards heats to hear a young person pronounce 'shew' to rhyme with 'blew' as opposed to rhyming with 'sew' (it is, of course, the same as 'show').

Perhaps we must face the fact that some archaic spellings found in the BCP now need a pronunciation guide.

Gareth Hardwick  
(Former Honorary Secretary of The Queen's English Society)  
The Clergy House, Hide Place, London, SW1P 4NJ.

From Ian Woodhead

The design featured in Rod Dawson's article 'If it Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It' prompts me to quote part

of a letter I received from the Revd Norman Taylor, Salisbury Branch, when he returned to his former Cambridgeshire parish and went to the 8.00a.m. Holy Communion, labelled BCP, which he says it was for the most part, though with the usual Common Worship Collect, Epistle and Gospel.

'At the administration, the only words were "The Body of Christ". I wrote to the woman Rector and chided her on this. She replied that unfortunately saying the full words of Administration, even when shared between two, made her dizzy! Only a woman could get away with that, and I grow more and more regretting the ordination of women, tho' firm that it is not PBS business as such.'

I write to you not to discuss the question of women priests, but to highlight the fact that many clergy now coming out of theological college seem so lacking in the basic skills for conducting a service from the Book of Common Prayer. If the priest is there to conduct a Prayer Book Holy Communion he owes it to his congregation to do just that. In my view there are no 'ifs or buts'.

Ian Woodhead,  
Chairman, Salisbury Branch.

From Michael H. Perkins

Nicholas Dixon's article should be reprinted and sent to every Anglican clergyman in the country.

Michael H. Perkins  
39 Lindhurst Drive, Hockley Heath, Solihull, West Midlands, B95 6QD.

### Contributions wanted

The Prayer Book Society *Journal* needs your help! We are always on the lookout for contributions, so if you feel you could put pen to paper and write something for our pages, why not give it a go? As you can see from this issue, the aim is to publish a mixture of articles on subjects of interest to PBS members, and reports of Society events – however big or small. Members want to know what is happening across the country, and we want to keep everyone informed of everything that the PBS does. And remember – a picture paints a thousand words, so photographs are always gratefully received.

As a rough guide, main articles need to be 800 to 3000 words in length, but all contributions will be considered. Contributions should be sent by e-mail or post to the address shown on the inside cover.

# News from the Branches

## Coventry

The AGM was held on the evening of 3 October at Aston Cantlow Village Hall, and was preceded by an excellent meal prepared by members of the branch. Roger Fifield stepped down as Branch Chairman, a post he had held since the formation of the Branch: Peter Bolton, Branch Secretary, thanked him for all his work for the Branch and Society over the years. Sheila Cole was elected as the new Chairman. After the AGM Peter Bolton gave a talk entitled 'Are you being had – when is a BCP service not a BCP service?'. Twenty-seven members, about a third of the branch, attended.

The Branch held its annual Advent Service on Saturday 1 December in the Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon with a congregation of about fifty. The service, devised and conducted by the Revd Dr Tony Upton, included all the Advent collects. The congregational singing was led by Ensemble 1685 who also sang an introit and an anthem. Members took tea together afterwards at a nearby hotel.

## Ely

A meeting of the Ely branch on 13 October paid tribute to Harold Barkley and Stephen Tweedale, respectively the past Chairman and Secretary, for their work over recent years, and sent best wishes to Harold who has not been in the best of health.

Nicholas Hurst, the Trustee for the area, gave a positive and encouraging presentation about the current state of the Society, and urged Branch members to look forward to an active future.

After some lively discussion over a 'verre d'amitié', the delegates strolled over to the magnificent cathedral (the ship of the Fens) for choral evensong in the BCP tradition, led by the superb cathedral choir under the direction of Paul Trepte. A most inspiring conclusion to the afternoon, which had also been blessed by balmy autumnal weather.

A Chairman and a Secretary are now being sought, and anyone interested in taking on either of these roles should contact Nicholas or Philip White, the Branch Treasurer.

## Lichfield

On 21 October members attended Matins at the Berwick House Chapel, on the Berwick House Estate, near Shrewsbury. The chapelry is an extra-parochial district and services, all in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, are held every Sunday at 11.00 a.m. On the first Sunday in the month there is a sung Holy Communion service with Matins on all the other Sundays. Branch members were made most welcome by the regular congregation and enjoyed the opportunity to take part in a service, which in many parts has fallen out of use.



Following the service members retired to the nearby Albrighton Hall Hotel for an excellent

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luncheon in very pleasant surroundings. It being Trafalgar Day, in addition to the loyal toast which was proposed by the Branch Chairman, who also spoke about the Society and the Book of Common Prayer, the toast to 'The Immortal Memory' was proposed by Commander Brian Gresham, who in true naval fashion, also reminded fellow members of the importance of the Battle of Trafalgar in British history. In all it was a most enjoyable occasion, which also resulted in the recruitment of a number of new members to the Prayer Book Society.

FE Hewitt

## Norwich

### Shropham Hall

On a beautiful Sunday in September, the Branch enjoyed a lovely afternoon out at Shropham Hall, near Attleborough, by kind invitation of two members, Mr and Mrs G.H. Lynne, who generously provided a delicious tea, including some sumptuous cakes. Not only were members shown around the garden, but they were also given a guided tour of the most interesting and historic house, where the top two floors are occupied by a remarkable and varied collection of toys and baby clothes, put together by Mrs Lynne over many years.

To conclude this happy visit, members repaired to the Parish Church of St Peter, a BCP stronghold, for Choral Evensong, where our singing was led by the Eye Church Choir. Mr Lynne, a Reader, delivered a sermon on the Bible as a literary giant, saying that we should all study it, if we are to take our faith forward. An ideal way for a society such as ours to spend an afternoon.

### Cranmer Awards

Once again a very successful Cranmer Awards heat of 2007 for the diocese was held at St Lawrence Church, Castle Rising, on 16 November, kindly arranged by its patron and branch president Lord Howard of Rising.

The winner in the senior section (15–18 years) was Jonathan Wilde from Norwich School. Second prize was awarded to both Kim Richardson of King Edward VII School, King's Lynn, and Benjamin Evans of Norwich School, with third prize to Rosie Potter of Norwich School.

The winner in the junior section (11–14 years) was Francesca Ward of Taverham Hall School. Second prize was awarded to Sam Miller and third prize to Renah Dikki, both of King Edward VII School, King's Lynn.



Once again, members were delighted to welcome Anne Robinson (pictured above with Renah Dikki) as a judge and to present the prizes, and the president presented her with an engraved goblet. Anne expressed her thanks and praised all those who had entered the competition and said how much she had enjoyed the occasion. The winners will go on to the national finals in London on February 23 2008.



### Stanta visit

Pictured above are members of Norwich branch on their visit to Stanta HQ – the MoD Stanford Training Area – in West Tofts in April (for the full report, see PBS *Journal Advent 2007* issue). The group visited two of the churches within Stanta. Also pictured (left) is one of the highlights of the visit – a monument at St Andrew's Church at Langford. It commemorates three generations of the Garrard family, who sculptor Christopher



Horsenaile senior has portrayed as life-size figures in Roman attire.

### Peterborough

On Sunday 18 November 2007 the Peterborough Branch held a Songs of Praise service in Whissendine Church. The event was a commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the

birth of Charles Wesley. There were fourteen Wesley hymns and five readings from the King James Bible. Each reading was on the theme of the following hymn. Seven of the hymns were accompanied by the instrumentalists from The William East Quire whose members, dressed in period costume, specialize in West Gallery music of the eighteenth century. The Quire was joined by choir members from Whissendine and Market Overton churches together with additional singers from the area. Seven other hymns had organ accompaniment. Thirty singers and a congregation of approximately seventy filled the church with sound.

After the service the Branch provided refreshments and a stall selling PBS books and Christmas cards. The evening was voted a great success.



The photograph above shows the joint choirs at their rehearsal.

The branch would like to thank the Revd James Saunders and the Revd Heather Walker for their co-operation.

Mary Stewart  
Branch Secretary

## Salisbury

### Advent Carol Service

The branch held its seventh consecutive Advent Carol Service at the Church of St Martin, Barford St Martin, near Wilton. The varied programme of Advent carols and hymns, with readings from the King James Bible, was as usual compiled by the Vice-Chairman, Miss Sheila Houliston, aided by her sister, Miss Eileen Houliston.

The bells were rung by Branch members before the service, conducted by the Vicar the Revd John Staples. The resident organist Mr. David Davies played for the service and also performed chorale preludes by Bach.

After the service members joined a party for lunch at the nearby Barford Inn. After lunch, the Chairman of the Branch presented gifts to the Revd John Staples and Mrs Staples, in recognition of their help and support for this event.

The Chairman of the Branch Mr. Ian Woodhead said: 'The Advent Carol Service is a wonderful tradition. The church was full and the event is enthusiastically supported every year'.

The committee of the Salisbury Branch of the Prayer Book Society recently held a celebratory lunch for their President Mrs. Lettice Miller of Donhead who has reached her 100th birthday. Mrs. Miller was Secretary of the Salisbury Branch from 1983 until 2001 when she retired from that post and was asked to become its President.

Born Lettice Talbot in 1907, Mrs Miller grew up in Gloucestershire. After her marriage in 1934 she and her husband lived in Hampshire, then after the war went to live in Ireland. In 1937 her horse Mid Day Sun won the Derby. This distinction has made her the first lady and both the youngest and the oldest owner of a Derby winner.

After her husband's death in 1958 the family returned to England and settled in Donhead where Mrs Miller became President of the Women's Institute and enjoyed painting again. She became immersed in the work of the Prayer Book Society, often representing the Branch at Executive meetings in London as well as working tirelessly at local level, as she still does. She finds it very rewarding work and is extremely pleased that the Branch is growing steadily.

The photograph (right) of the Branch Committee shows (from top left) Mrs Jane Smith (Catering), Col John Jago (Logistics), Mrs. Lucy Pearson (Membership Secretary), Miss Sheila Houliston (Vice-Chairman), Miss Joy Rabbetts (Publicity Officer), (seated) Mr. Ian Woodhead (Chairman) and Mrs Lettice Miller (President of the Branch).



Prayer Book Day for the Salisbury Branch of the Prayer Book Society began with Matins and the Litany conducted by Branch Chaplain the Revd Derek Frost, Vicar of Christchurch, Derry Hill.

The anthem 'A Song of Peace' by Charles Villiers Stanford was sung by Susan Coates, the well-known

Bath/Wiltshire soprano, and the organist was Dr Christopher Kent.

Lunch was taken at the Lansdowne Hall and the speaker in the afternoon was Mr Peter Bolton, Secretary of the Coventry Branch of the Society.

In his talk entitled 'Are We Being Short-Changed', Mr Bolton regretted the disappearance of words like 'wickedness' and 'damnation' and the current man-centred approach to Holy Communion which was formerly God-centred. If members wish to keep Prayer Book Services then we must all insist on them.

A lively question time was followed by a home-going tea at the end of a very successful day.

### Sheffield

Our small group of active members spent an interesting day at Great Heck, near Pontefract, Yorkshire, on 21 April last year. We were welcomed into the newly refurbished church of St John the Baptist by our Chairman, the Revd Canon Cyril Roberts, Team Rector of Great Snaith, who gave us a short history of this tiny church, which was built for a breakaway high church group from the nearby village of Hensall in 1893.

By the present century the building had almost sunk into decay, and risked closure. But Cyril, hating the thought of this, had the idea of restoring it and adding modern amenities, so that it could be used for quiet days, meetings, scriptural classes and midweek services. The transformation has been a wonderful success.

We admired the arched ceiling echoing the green and deep pink of the glowing east window, the plain white walls and the magnificent regilded altar canopy with its tabernacle. Chairs have been chosen for seating to give flexibility for the varied uses to which the church will be put. Accompaniment to singing is provided by a small electronic organ, there is excellent hi-fi and, new on the north side, a superb cloakroom and kitchen.

Our day began with an inspection of the improvements, then continued with Holy Communion (BCP) including three hymns played by Cyril in the intervals of officiating and preaching on one of his favourite saints – St Anselm. We were all aware of a very special atmosphere in this little church, once so cherished, and ready now to fulfil new needs.

After a companionable lunch at The Bay Horse further down the village, we returned to the church for our business meeting (the chairs now arranged in a small circle) and a talk by our guest speaker, the Revd Canon Trevor Page, former Rector of Bradfield, near Sheffield, and previously Director of Ordinands

in the Diocese., who was spending the day with us. His thoughtful address on aspects of the Holy Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer gave rise to an interesting discussion.

It was noticeable that the reverent atmosphere in the church was not dispelled by the informality of question and answer, or even by the exuberant entry of the sheepdog belonging to one of our members: Bess, thirsty after a long wait in the car, was now served with a bowl of water from the new kitchen.

Finally we drove the short distance to the scene of the Great Heck rail disaster of February 2001, where there is now a memorial garden overlooking the field in which the carriages from the southbound express had piled up. The field has been grassed over and left as a permanent reminder, and a garden, now mature, planted along the rising ground at its edge. As we walked along the brick path that threads through it, past the places where individual plaques remember each of the dead, Cyril, who had been one of the very first rescuers on the scene, recalled some of his experiences. Those quiet moments, as we looked across the field to the railway embankment, made a fitting and moving end to a memorable day.

Rosemary Littlewood, Branch Secretary



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# Forthcoming Events

## Cranmer Commemoration

Oxford Branch's commemoration of the martyrdom of Archbishop Cranmer takes place on Saturday 15 March. There will be a service of Matins at 11.00 a.m. in the church of St Michael at the North Gate, Cornmarket, Oxford, followed by a procession to the Martyrs' Memorial in St Giles where a wreath will be laid. Following this there will be a lunch at the Mitre Inn in Oxford High Street. Members of the Oxford Branch will have been sent a booking form for the lunch, but all PBS members are welcome to this event and those from other Branches who wish to take lunch should contact Geoffrey Horne (tel. 01491 873117) for a booking form.

## Cranmer Awards

The annual finals of the Cranmer Awards will take place on Saturday 23 February 2008 at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, Westminster, London SW1. Coffee from 10.15 a.m. Senior and junior competitions start at 11.00 a.m. Presentation of awards follows a buffet lunch.

## Bath & Wells

See Salisbury, 9 August 2008.

## Gloucester

Saturday 8 March 2008  
The Parish Church, Elkstone.

12.00 noon Matins followed by a 'Bring your own Lunch' in the Village Hall followed by the AGM.

## North Wales

Saturday 7 June 2008.  
Annual Meeting and Service of Holy Communion (1662) at St Collen's Church, Llangollen, Denbighshire, at 3.00 p.m.

This ancient foundation on the river Dee is in the centre of the delightful town of Llangollen, home of the famous international eisteddfod, with many attractions for a day visit.

Sunday 14 September 2008.  
Choral Evensong (1662) at St Mary & St Nicholas Church, Beaumaris, Anglesey at 4.00 p.m.  
Beaumaris is a lovely small town on the Menai Straits with a world-famous castle, and the medieval parish church has a splendid and rare organ of 1806.

## Ripon & Leeds

Thursday 7 February 2008.  
6.00 p.m. Evensong, The Rt Revd John Packer, Bishop of Ripon & Leeds

Saturday 8 March 2008.  
11.00 a.m. Sung Matins, Canon Michael Glanville-Smith and the Choir of St Columba's Church, Topcliffe.

Thursday 20 March (Maundy Thursday).  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion, the Revd Jim Thom

Thursday 17 April 2008.  
6.00 p.m. Evensong, Canon Ronald MacFadden.

Thursday 8 May 2008.  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion, the Revd Stephen Brown

Thursday 26 June 2008.  
6.00 p.m. Evensong, the Revd David Eyles

All Services are BCP

## Salisbury

Saturday 19 April 2008.  
12.30 p.m. Newhouse, Redlynch, lunch followed by AGM 2.30 p.m.

Speaker, the Revd Stephen Trott, Church Commissioner. Tea, followed by Evensong at St Mary's Church.

Saturday 7 June 2008.  
2.15 p.m. Silton Village Hall, speaker, the Hon. Diana Makgill CVO. Tea, followed by Evensong at St Nicholas' Church.

Saturday 9 August 2008.  
2.15 p.m. Joint meeting with Bath & Wells at Sherborne Abbey. Details to be announced.

Saturday 4 October 2008.  
2.15 p.m. Newton Village Hall, speaker Mr Richard Seal, Organist Emeritus, Salisbury Cathedral. Tea, followed by Evensong at St Andrew's Church.

Saturday 29 November 2008.  
11.15 a.m. Advent carol service, followed by lunch. Venue to be arranged.

## Howlers from church magazines

Weight Watchers will meet at 7.00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours'.

PBS Exeter member Mrs Jane Robertson is trying to raise funds for the restoration of St Peter's church, Buckland-in-the-Moor, Devon and is selling tea towels as shown in the picture on the right. They are a generous size and 100% cotton with charming verse. Over 400 hundred have been sold already.

The price is £3.50 per tea towel plus £1.00 postage and packing per order (regardless of how many are bought).

Please telephone Mrs Robertson on 01364 652574 if you are interested.



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