


Lent 2011

Prayer Book  
Society  
JOURNAL

ISSN: 1479-215X



- ✦ Bishop Alan Wilson on the Origins of the BCP
- ✦ Religious Education and the BCP
- ✦ 2012: A Year of Celebration



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Society  
JOURNAL

Issue No 25 · Lent 2011  
ISSN 1479-215X

### THE PBS JOURNAL

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All contributions, including articles, letters for publication, Branch news and notices of forthcoming events, should be sent to 'PBS Journal' at the above address, or by e-mail to [pbsj@pbs.org.uk](mailto:pbsj@pbs.org.uk)

Submission by e-mail is preferred whenever possible. Electronic submission in editable format (such as Word® or RTF) saves the Editor a considerable amount of work. A short style sheet is available from the PBS office, and adherence to this is also very helpful in reducing the need for time consuming subediting

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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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Front cover:

Font at St Mary's Church, Brighton.  
Photograph by Steve Robards

The deadline for contributions for the next issue is:

**Tuesday 26th April 2011**

(preferably typed or electronically submitted)

Publication date:

**Friday 17th June 2011**

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# Contents

<b>Editorial</b>	4
<b>The Queen’s Christmas message—2010</b>	6
The Queen’s address highlights the importance of the King James Bible as a unifying force; Her Majesty also points to sporting activities as a means of building communities and creating harmony.	
<b>The Archbishop of Canterbury’s BBC New Year message</b>	7
His Grace reflects on how the King James Bible can offer a wider picture, helping to put people’s lives into perspective.	
<b>2012: A Year of Celebration</b>	8
PBS Chairman Prudence Dailey outlines the Society’s plans to commemorate the 350th anniversary of 1662 in 2012	
<b>Religious Education and the BCP</b>	9
Dr Brenda Watson argues her case for a wider use of the BCP and links its use to RE, highlighting the inspirational and challenging qualities of the text, for use in today’s world.	
<b>The Origins of the Book of Common Prayer</b>	12
Bishop Alan Wilson reminds us that the BCP has shaped English spirituality for nearly 450 years and draws our attention to some of its enduring qualities?	
<b>Prayer Book in use at . . . Aisholt</b>	14
Dedicated members of the PBS, whose church was under threat of closure, consider they owe their continued existence in large measure to their use of the BCP and corporate membership of the Prayer Book Society.	
<b>The River of Life</b>	16
William Doyle continues his allegory for meditation and discussion, encouraging the use of the Prayer Book, the KJV of the Bible and taking the <i>Waters of Life</i> as a means of developing spirituality.	
<b>ALSO IN THIS ISSUE</b>	
Prayer Books for Africa	13
Book Reviews	18
Letters	20
New PBS Trustees	22
News from the Branches	23
Forthcoming Events	28
Dates of the Annual Conference and AGM	28
Branch Contacts	30



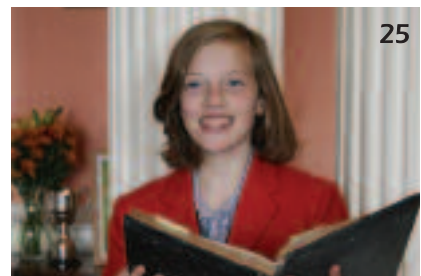
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25



The font at St Mary’s Church in Brighton was a gift kindly donated by a grateful parishioner. It is finely sculptured and depicts a group of children being introduced to the Saviour. Made from Caen stone from northern France, it is supported by a central column carved in granite from the Schreckhorn Mountain in Switzerland and is surrounded by eight smaller columns of bluish sandstone—Editor

# Editorial

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Most Anglicans will have heard that plans are underway to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and in 2012 the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. These important events were being discussed at a Christian forum recently when the conversation turned to discipleship and baptism. I listened with great interest and was surprised to learn of the differing views being expressed about baptism; I am not sure how much the group were influenced by the recent reports that baptism services should be made more interesting to non-churchgoers and ‘expressed in culturally appropriate and accessible language’, if at all. But in the light of this, we do well to remind ourselves of the meaning of our baptism since it is the starting point of the Christian Way; furthermore, the Bible informs us that ‘none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost’.

Baptism is ordained by God and helps us to understand the mission of His Spirit among men. In the service of baptism we are called upon to renounce the devil and all his works. In so doing we recognise the vain pomp and glory of the world. Our Lord’s baptism was a public declaration of His complete association with humanity’s identification with sin. Our own baptism therefore, is a gift of God and is the ‘narrow way’ into the New Covenant between God and His people. It is a sign of new life through Jesus the Christ and unites the one baptised with Christ and His Church.

Baptism binds all Christians together in a Sacrament of love and brings with it spiritual help and its own grace. When certain issues caused division among the Christian Community it was baptism that kept us in unity, even if sometimes it proved to be a fragile unity; that unity is again being threatened and calls for intense, continuous prayer to uphold the common good. The Rite of Baptism is a sign of the Kingdom of God, an invitation extended to all nations and welcomes the day when every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God.

Being baptised into the Christian faith means participating in the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ; the rite of baptism

carries with it the process of ‘conversion, pardoning, cleansing and sanctification’, after which a new disposition is formed in the individual under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. However, this new orientation needs nurturing for the remainder of the person’s life. Through a course of reading, study and prayer the aspirant learns of Christ and the Christian story, all of which is enhanced by participating in a godly, worshipping and sustaining community.

As Christians belonging to the Anglican Church, we need to make greater use of the Prayer Book in baptism, holy matrimony and the common services; not only because the BCP is a treasured possession, is biblically based and proves to be a vital means of encouragement in the spiritual life of the individual, but also because it is a guide to faith and morals as well as liturgy.

It will not have escaped your notice that the Anglican Communion is again embroiled in differences that threaten the historic anchors to our faith. If the Church of England is not to implode, new ways of living out our common life and preserving our historic Community have to be found; I believe it is possible, as long as we remain spiritually tenacious. But as we seek to do so and confront the challenges of living in a pluralistic global community, I would humbly remind those who have differing views that the destiny of God’s children is not confined to this present world, but nestles in the resurrection life of the new heaven and new earth.

In the meantime, even though disasters appear on the horizon ‘our hope is in the Name of the Lord’. Furthermore, if we are to maintain the vision of the Christian faith we need to keep in mind what has been promised: ‘He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ Let this be our fervent prayer; that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement; that we may approve those things which are excellent, such as the BCP, which remains attractive to ‘lovers of perfect beauty’ and has for such a long time proved to be a reliable source of inspiration and guidance. Use it to your comfort on your Christian journey.

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# Extract from the Queen's Christmas Message 2010

Over 400 years ago King James VI of Scotland inherited the throne of England at a time when the Christian church was deeply divided. At Hampton Court in 1604, he convened a conference of churchmen of all shades of opinion to discuss the future of Christianity in this country. The king agreed to commission a new translation of the Bible that was acceptable to all parties. This was to become the King James, or Authorized, Bible, which next year will be exactly four centuries old.

Acknowledged as a masterpiece of English prose and the most vivid translation of the Scriptures, the glorious language of this Bible has survived the turbulence of history and given many of us the most widely recognised and beautiful descriptions of the birth of Jesus Christ which we celebrate today. The King James Bible was a major

co-operative endeavour that required the efforts of dozens of the day's leading scholars. The whole enterprise was guided by an interest in reaching agreement for the wider benefit of the Christian church, and to bring harmony to the kingdoms of England and Scotland . . . .

People are capable of belonging to many communities, including a religious faith. King James may not have anticipated quite how important sport and games were to become in promoting harmony and common interests. But from the scriptures in the Bible which bears his name, we know that nothing is more satisfying than the feeling of belonging to a group who are dedicated to helping each other. . . .

I wish you, and all those whom you love and care for, a very happy Christmas.

## TELL THEM THAT COME AFTER

I should like to draw your attention to a particularly important enclosure with this issue of the Journal. We now have a new version of the leaflet which encourages members to leave a legacy to support the work of the Society. This has been written with two principal aims in mind:

- To indicate some of the ways in which legacy gifts may be used to advance our goals; and
- To provide information about the various types of bequest which can be made and to suggest forms of words which prospective legators and their solicitors might wish to use.

Legacies are the second most important source of income for PBS (after members' subscriptions) and are quite vital for the continuance of our work. If you have already included the Society in your

will, we are grateful. If you have not yet had occasion to do so, let me commend the leaflet to you. I know that we all want our cause to live on, so that our successors may indeed be able to 'tell them that come after' (the words are from the Psalm appointed for the ninth evening). A legacy gift can help ensure this.

We would like to keep in touch with our legators, to let them know from time to time how previous legacies are being spent. If you have left a legacy to the Society, or are intending to do so, I would encourage you to let us know, using the form included in the leaflet. The form also includes a box you can tick if you are considering leaving a legacy to the Society and would like someone to contact you to discuss this further.

Please contact the PBS Office at Copyhold Farm if you require additional copies of the leaflet.



# The Archbishop of Canterbury's BBC New Year Message

Perhaps someone some time has said to you that you shouldn't hide your light under a bushel, or told you to set your house in order. Maybe you only survived a certain situation by the skin of your teeth. Perhaps it's time you listened to the still small voice within.

All those everyday phrases come from one source—a book whose four hundredth anniversary we celebrate this coming year, the King James Bible, or the Authorised Version as it's sometimes called. It wasn't the first Bible in English by any means. But for all sorts of reasons it got into the bloodstream of the people of this country. The language it was written in wasn't ever quite the sort of language people spoke in their daily lives, even four hundred years ago. But its rhythms are exceptionally memorable, and its stories can still move and even shock us.

Things move on but it's good for us to have some long-lasting furniture in our minds, words and images that have something a bit mysterious about them and that carry important experiences for us that we can't find words of our own for. And when we try to make sense of our lives and of who we really are, it helps to have a strongly defined story, a big picture of some kind in the background. As the King James Bible took hold of the imaginations of millions of people in the English-speaking world, it gave them just that—a big picture, a story in which their lives made sense.

It was the story of a world broken and out of control, but still a world God loved fiercely; the story of God promising to be there for the people he had made, in good times and bad; of his promise being kept in the most dramatic way you could think of, when God himself lives a human life in Jesus Christ. And woven into all this were

the records of how individuals, very like us in their confusions and failings, had got caught up in this great story of God's promises, and how it had changed them.

So reading the King James Bible told you that your life story was set within the biggest of pictures, the story of the whole universe. Four hundred years on, that can feel quite remote. You may be the sort of person who feels that you can make sense of your own story in your own terms. Or you may feel that there's only one big story and that's about money and whether I've got a job tomorrow or whether my children can afford higher education. But the trouble is that we so often don't have the kind of big picture that simply tells us that we matter, never mind what happens, that tells us there is something quite outside ourselves that can eventually make sense of things—even if, like some of the writers of the Bible, specially the Psalms, there are moments where all we can do is shout out in protest.

Whether you're a Christian or belong to another religion or whether you have nothing you'd want to call a religion at all, some kind of big picture matters. If we're going to talk about a 'big society', that'll need a big picture, a picture of what human beings are really like and why they're so unique and precious. This year's anniversary is a chance to stop and think about the big picture and to celebrate the astonishing contribution made by that book four hundred years ago.

May the New Year be a time to discover something of this vision in your life; a time to discover more of the meaning of another of the King James Bible's great words—the 'loving kindness' we all need to give and to receive.

A very happy New Year to you all.

# 2012: A Year of Celebration

Prudence Dailey

2012 will be a special year. I am not referring to the London Olympics, or even the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen, but of course the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer—the revision of Cranmer’s book which we still use today.

Only few decades ago, many might have predicted that by 2012 the Church would be commemorating the memorial, rather than the anniversary, of the Book of Common Prayer, and the Prayer Book Society has much to be proud of for its part in ensuring the Prayer Book’s continued survival. We therefore have particular reason to mark the importance of the occasion at international, national, diocesan and local level.

Internationally, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer remains the official doctrinal foundation of most (though alas not all) of the Churches in the global Anglican Communion, and we hope to join forces with our Sister Societies overseas in recognising the anniversary. (Our Canadian friends will also be celebrating the 50th anniversary of their 1962 Book of Common Prayer, giving them a double reason for celebration.)

This year, the Society is taking a stand at the National Christian Resources Exhibition at Sandown Park Exhibition Centre, to celebrate the first 350 years of continuous use of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and to encourage others to commemorate the anniversary. In 2012 itself, the Society’s major event of the year will be a national service of celebration at St Paul’s Cathedral; other planned events include a special reception at the General Synod, a special commemorative Cranmer Awards Final, and an anniversary slant to the Annual Conference. Further details of these events will be available in due course. Many Branches will be holding their own special events, and will be lobbying Bishops to observe the anniversary formally, and Deans and Chapters to hold special events in their Cathedrals.

If you have not yet done so, you are invited to take a look at our special website,

[www.bcp350.org.uk](http://www.bcp350.org.uk), designed to back the celebrations and to encourage others to do so. The ever-growing list of supporters listed on the site includes everyone from Joanna Lumley to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and details of special events will be shown as they become available.

Meanwhile, you can lend your own support by speaking to your own parish clergy about the possibility of having special services in your own church, and by remembering this campaign in your prayers.

Prudence Dailey is Chairman of the Prayer Book Society.

## 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 relies entirely on donations and legacies to build capital from which bursaries can be provided.

### Please give if you can to:

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# Religious Education and the Book of Common Prayer

Brenda Watson

All education, whether in school, church or in the home, should ideally be informative, inspirational, challenging and contributing to students' capacity for discernment. Applied to teaching about the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), it is easy to see how these four attributes of real education can apply.

## 1. Informative

The BCP historically as well as today represents an important part of the way Christianity developed in Britain. As Frank Field has noted, 'The Prayer Book is a vital part of the DNA of the English language and to lose it would be to lose a whole tranche of Englishness.' People should be informed about its origins and development, its contents, its impact on Shakespeare, the controversies surrounding it both in the past and today and why it has been so important in the life of the nation generally and for some Christians today. At the same time its real purpose and reason for it having been beloved by so many over the centuries is because it has provided a wonderful vehicle for worship.

## 2. Inspirational

The Prayer Book is inspirational in itself. Because of the profoundly secular nature of the world in which students are growing up, few in schools may be able to find religious inspiration in it, but they may well find inspiration in the beauty of the language and the sublimity and truthfulness of many of the ideas and concepts thus expressed. It contains some wonderful writing, the product of deep reflection upon the nature of reality. Many of the sentiments expressed can and do ring true today.

## 3. Challenging

(i) The BCP offers opportunities for students to challenge some of the prevailing assumptions of the world in which they are growing up. Work particularly in schools should make possible some real and meaningful discussion precisely on the truth or otherwise of the kind of religious claims

made by the BCP. The crucial factor here for the teacher is to provide a safe atmosphere in which students feel free to say what they really believe and why. Then, by offering a chance for critical openness and concern for truth, the teacher can encourage proper grown-up debate in the classroom.

(ii) It is especially important today to acknowledge the potential for violence found within religions. The Richard Dawkinses of this world have already drawn sustained attention to the failings of religion. What RE needs to do is to point out that these failings are not reflective of true religion. There is a dissonance between the real gospel message and the way in which so many Christians have behaved and do behave. Work on the BCP ought not to fight shy of such difficult questions. Containing as it does in wonderful language the priceless treasure of the message of God's love, which Christians should be sharing with the rest of the world, sadly this message has been used as a pretext for warfare and all manner of other kinds of violence, verbal and psychological, against the people whom, according to the message, God loves. This has provided an unedifying spectacle of Christians fighting each other rather than proclaiming Christ's teachings and values.

Love for a tradition does not mean embracing everything in it, but paying it intelligent and sensitive attention, welcoming all that is good in it and critiquing what is amiss. Commemoration should include awareness and regret for what has been amiss in the tradition. The resources for doing this already exist in the tradition. The BCP has much in it concerning sin. Thus the 4th Sunday in Lent collect reads 'Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.' An arising problem is that it so easy to say these words without really reflecting on them, almost as a matter of rote, and because it quickly moves on to

the forgiveness of God not to weigh, in Anselm's words 'the gravity of sin' especially the sin we ourselves are involved in. Thus work on the BCP should help students to understand what is at the heart of Christianity—not a power-seeking formula but a following of Jesus.

#### 4. Contributing to people's capacity for discernment

The Prayer Book offers significant material for developing discernment because it contains some contradictory notions, many of which need thoughtful interpretation in order to avoid mistaken impressions of religion. It is important to stress the necessity for this because traditionally there has been much suspicion about being critical in the context of worshipping. Yet we are required to love God with all our minds as well as with all our hearts. The either/or split between feeling and thinking has been hugely damaging in every aspect of life, and nowhere more obviously than in religion. It has led to a meek, but in reality naïve, acceptance of a variety of notions which call for critical discernment.

The Prayer Book offers some clear examples. Thus the 9th Sunday after Trinity has a wonderful prayer:

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Yet the readings must be critiqued. The first (1Cor. 10:1 beginning 'Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea . . . .') is largely unintelligible for people today, however beautiful the language aesthetically. The second, Luke 16:1 on the Unjust Steward appears to advocate Jesus' support for the kind of sharp practice which brought about the recent financial crisis! For it finishes 'And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'

To critique such prayers and readings is not to dis-able worship but rather to deepen and enhance it. It leaves the worshipper with the question—what IS the Will of God, and how can I know it and do it? And is it not in this mode of uncertainty

rather than certainty that we become increasingly aware of the complexity involved in both genuine discipleship and genuine worship?

Because of the ease with which worship in church has tended to discourage proper criticism it is particularly important to appreciate the necessity for tension between faith and criticism. The notion that to love a tradition means to be intellectually spineless and emotionally naïve needs to be exposed as fallacious. The distinguished philosopher, Basil Mitchell, in *Looking Back on faith, philosophy and friends* (The Memoir Club Durham 2009 p. 74f.) notes that his lifelong devotion to the Book of Common Prayer stemmed from his experience in the navy during the Second World War. He was 'deeply moved' by the prayer for use at sea which, as it seemed to me then and still does, expresses, in language as splendid as it is memorable, the sentiments and hopes of those who are serving at sea.

O Eternal Lord God who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end; be pleased to receive into thy almighty and gracious protection the persons of us thy servants . . . .

There are two initiatives that may help promote the BCP and are worthy of consideration.

- (i) Reviving the custom of making Christmas puddings on the Sunday before Advent, with its famous 'Stir up' prayer.
- (ii) Supporting the Stamp and Coin campaign in preparation for the 350th anniversary in 2012 of the 1662 BCP.

Dr Brenda Watson is a noted author and has many years' experience in the teaching profession, specialising in Religious Education.



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# The Origins of the Book of Common Prayer

Alan Wilson

*The Book of Common Prayer has shaped English spirituality for nearly 450 years. What are its enduring qualities?*

Steven Sample, the recently departed president of the University of Southern California, used to play a mean trick on his graduate students. He restricted MBA class reading to books that been in print for at least 250 years. Anything that had remained in constant use for that long, he argued, must have something about it. Thus airport bookstall how-to paperbacks yielded to Shakespeare, Milton and Machiavelli, all of whom students had heard of, but seldom read. For many today, including Church of England clergy, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) occupies a similar niche in their consciousness.

Supplemented by newer liturgical compilations, the BCP remains the normative liturgy of the Church of England. It has been translated into over 150 languages. Its words have resonated through almost 450 years of English life and culture. Now it has been placed online, in its entirety, by the Church of England.

The BCP was a bold attempt, on a national level, to bring together a whole community around what was then a new concept of uniformity. This powerful notion was enacted for the Latin Church 21 years later when the Council of Trent delivered the Missal of Pius V. The BCP allowed for celebrations in Latin (indeed there is one termly in Oxford to this day), but required that worship should normally be conducted 'in a language understood of the people'. Vernacular liturgy was a reform for which Roman Catholics had to wait another 400 years.

The BCP's English is not, in fact timeless, although some will disagree. Call it a fortunate historical accident or a blessing from the Lord, but the book is very much a product of its age, pulled together as modern English was being minted. This gives it a vibrancy and resonance like you find in Shakespeare, Marlowe or Webster.

The BCP's vocabulary is characteristically simple and direct; the flow channelled and layered carefully according the principles of classical rhetoric. What of the content? If the world's greatest dramatists have scarcely an original plot between them, much the same is true of western Christian worship books. There was no uniform liturgy before the 16th century. Everything was a variation on a theme.

Thomas Cranmer, evolutionary rather than revolutionary, based his text largely on the traditional 'use' of Sarum, supplemented extensively by Cardinal Quiñones' Breviary, with trimmings from the new missal of Archbishop Hermann von Wied of Cologne, the whole edited and served up as a single compilation for all.

The text of the Psalms is Coverdale's translation of the Psalter, quirky, occasionally excessively literal, but rich and fluent. Collects were largely traditional, and so are the Eucharistic lessons. Mothering Sunday is Mothering Sunday, for example, because the reading is the traditional chapter from Galatians that tells us Jerusalem above is mother of us all, and free.

The BCP was the centrepiece of a reform package that was never completed in its own age. It is generally reformed in flavour, but a doctrinal ragbag in ways that were to fuel a century of legal disputes 300 years later. Its quaint and ambiguous provision, for example, that ornaments of the minster and church should be frozen in time as they were in the second year of King Edward VI, has never quite been understood, let alone enacted. Queen Elizabeth I gave rough provisional guidance about it in 1566, which has not been clarified until the twentieth century.

Its catechism aimed to produce a simple faith based on the Bible, the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The word 'Protestant' does not occur in the BCP, as its first edition predates this term in its usual sense; neither does the word 'Anglican' which was not used as we use it until the 19th century.

The BCP annoyed Progressives and Conservatives alike. Still, in one form or another it has stuck remarkably well. It can still be found in almost daily use in 43 Church of England Cathedrals. Chances are, wherever you live in England, that somewhere within a few miles of where you live someone will be using it this Sunday. It's a sure candidate for Dr Sample's List.

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*Alan Wilson is Bishop of Buckingham. This article is the first of a series which appeared on the Guardian newspaper website, starting on 23rd August 2010, and is reprinted with permission. Further pieces from the series will appear in future issues of the PBS Journal.*

# Prayer Books for Africa

The latest consignment of Prayer Books for Africa paid for from the fund generously established by members of the Society was sent to the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Nativity in Ndola in the Zambian Copper belt. The Cathedral has two services a day and each attracts a congregation of some two hundred, so we sent them two hundred Prayer Books. Delivery to Africa has had its ups and downs in the past and never seems simple, but these found their way to their destination quicker than a first class letter to Cricklewood.

I need add little to this extract from the subsequent letter from the dean, the Very Revd Samuel Zulu. He wrote:

We had the Morning Prayers and Evensong using copies of the BCP we received from you. It will help us to enhance and encourage the participation at these very important prayer times that were affected by the lack of Liturgical books.

May the Good Lord continue to bless and prosper your ministry as we endeavour to keep our Anglican identity through the promotion of the BCP.

A little later he wrote 'You may not know how you have inspired and encouraged the participation at Morning and Evensong by the BCP's we received. Thank you once again.'

The Revd Simbarashi Emmanuel Bashvi wrote from St George's Luanshya, also in Zambia, about his consignment of BCP's.

I am so delighted that we received the Prayer Books yesterday. May the good Lord continue to shower you with his heavenly blessings for the wonderful work you are doing. Our Church will forever appreciate it. Now our worship is going to be meaningful with everyone participating. God bless you.

Alas, after this outburst of good works, the Fund is almost exhausted and we have requests which we cannot fulfil. We hope that members will be sufficiently inspired by the appreciation from African users of the BCP to continue to assist the PRAYER BOOKS FOR AFRICA FUND.

Peter Bolton

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# Prayer Book in use at . . . Aisholt

Michael Cansdale

All Saints' Aisholt is a tiny, 15th-Century church, beautifully situated in a valley of the Quantock Hills a few miles north of Taunton. The church clings to a hillside so steep that the belfry is level with the top of the churchyard. It is an outstanding centre for walks.

It has many historic connections: for example, the old schoolroom next door was the home of the Victorian poet, Sir Henry Newbolt; and Coleridge and Wordsworth knew it well when they lived nearby. A previous vicar of both Aisholt and Over Stowey was the Revd William Holland, and his diary of the period, the early 1800s, is well worth reading—'Paupers and Pig-killers'.

Aisholt is one of the very small number of 'thankful churches' in the country—in which every parishioner serving in the First World War returned safely.

For many years its PCC has chosen to use only the BCP for all services, which are held every Sunday throughout the year, at 11 a.m.—Holy Communion the first Sunday in the month, and otherwise Sung Matins. There is a small but dedicated congregation, albeit mostly elderly, augmented by worshippers from further afield, and visitors.

How has it managed to survive and keep its independence? When asked, members of the congregation had these comments to make:

- 'The BCP is what keeps our services alive. I always know where I am with the words and the form of service. I don't need to follow words in a book or booklet—they are just "part of me" now.'
- 'We have a very varied congregation both in age and in churchmanship, but the common bond





is our love of traditional worship and our respect for different theological and denominational backgrounds.'

- 'We love singing the Canticles. Where else nowadays could I enjoy the Venite and Te Deum or Jubilate at Matins in a tiny village church, as opposed to a cathedral? And even though we don't sing the Psalms, we know that every week there will be the appointed Psalm to read together.'
- 'Our organists coax life out of the small organ, and the hymn singing (from *A & M Revised*) is so enthusiastic!'
- 'The congregation is small but friendly. There is always a warm welcome for visitors or more occasional members. And for special occasions like Harvest or Remembrance.'
- 'It is so peaceful. You are undisturbed by traffic noise; just the clip-clop of riders passing. And in summer the main sound is that of the bees, which unfortunately built their nest in the chancel! My wife and I want to be buried in the churchyard, along with our friends.'

Of course, as a small and elderly congregation, in an isolated church, with few local families, we

have no easy answers for the future. Fortunately our Rector and the other clergy are sympathetic. We are one of six churches, and those wanting a different kind of service can find what they are looking for elsewhere in the benefice.

The fabric of the church is in good order, and there is strong financial and personal support from The Friends of Aisholt Church, a separate registered charity. The church and the Friends have an excellent website ([www.aisholt.org](http://www.aisholt.org)) which attracts visitors. The leader of an American choir recently saw our website and has said that they will come and sing a special service for us in July, 2011, before going on the next day for the Eucharist in Wells Cathedral!

At least we are no longer under threat of closure, as we were some years ago, and we reckon that we owe our continued existence in large measure to our emphasis on the BCP, and our corporate membership of the Prayer Book Society, which we greatly value. If you live nearby, or are down in the West Country on holiday, come and worship with us one Sunday morning, and then have a walk afterwards!

Michael Cansdale is a member of the Bath & Wells Branch of the Prayer Book Society, and Churchwarden of All Saints Church Aisholt.

# The River of Life

continued

William Doyle

**I**t is well documented that the Book of Common Prayer, the sole legal basis for worship of the Church of England, has provided an established pattern of worship, which strikes a responsive chord in the hearts of many brought up on the beauties of the Jacobean language and baroque ‘complexities’ of Cranmer; lovers of the Prayer Book would like to see its services revived and that remains the objective of the PBS. On the other hand there are those (Anglicans) who do not feel bound to the BCP; well, they have their reasons for not doing so. Our task is to remain open to the guidance of the Holy Ghost and extend a welcome to all. But let me take you on a journey, which I hope will show the source and inspiration of the genius and piety of men such as Thomas Cranmer and how they were upheld, inspired and motivated by this singular force, which has been given many names over the centuries. I am content to call it, *The River of Life*, which when taken seriously will fashion the minds of men to conform to the will of God, creating stability in the Church and a spirituality that will bring greater peace and tranquillity into the lives of God’s people.

In the beginning . . . the Book of Genesis informs us that there was a River flowing out of Eden to water a Garden (Genesis 2:10). At that time two people named in scripture as Adam and Eve, were expelled from the Garden and lost access to this important source of comfort. The ‘Tree of Life’ with its very special fruit, would have given them eternal life and the Divine River that watered the Garden, health and vigour to everything in it. Having been deprived of these things—eternal life and wholesome living—Adam and Eve became snared under the curse of sin, suffering and death; in other words, when a person is born he inherits the ‘sin nature’ that originated from Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden. God does not hold us responsible for that, it is dealt with at baptism. No one has to teach a child how to sin; he follows his own natural desires, which may lead to lying, stealing, hating and greed. Thus he is a child of disobedience, until he receives the Spirit

of the Son of God into his own spirit; he may continue to sin, but he now has a choice.

God’s river went underground, as it were, after Adam and Eve had sinned, but it has always been there, flowing beneath the surface of history—from Genesis to Revelation—ready to be used in times of need; even in Jerusalem, a city built on a hill, where there were no natural streams, only wells that provided water and underground conduits/watercourses reaching the lower parts of the city. But the psalmist saw a supernatural River of God and was able to say: ‘There is a river the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the Tabernacles of the Most High’ (Psalm 46:4). This river lost since Eden, offers the people a drink from His ‘river of delights’; it was from this supernatural river that Jesus, our blessed Lord, drew His strength. The River of Eden that once gave life to the primeval garden, will give life to God’s people as He pours out His Spirit from on high. Moreover it is free. The prophet Isaiah observed this long before the coming of the future King who would cause the river to flow in abundance, when mankind would know healing and blessings. ‘For I will pour water on him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessings upon thine offspring . . . everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat . . . without price’ (Isaiah 44:3; 55:1).

The River of God was to flow through the whole land. Zechariah, one of the postexilic prophets confirms it: ‘. . . and it shall be in that day, living waters shall go out from Jerusalem . . . in summer and winter shall it be’ (Zechariah 14:8). The words of the prophet Joel some years earlier adds credence, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh . . . your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions . . .’ (Joel 2:28; 3:17).

These prophetic descriptions of the River of God stand as an eternal monument to the presence of God’s glory, ensuring that His River will not run dry, but continue to flow in a generous abundance

of grace. In John's Gospel we are given an account of the Lord's conversation with a woman at Jacob's well, in Samaria. She was surprised when Jesus asks her for a drink. He replied:

If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water . . . whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water I shall give him shall never thirst; it shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life (John 4:10-14).

The fountain of water prophesied by the Old Testament prophets as flowing from the city of Jerusalem and the temple, which was later destroyed by the Romans, meant that God needed a new temple; to that end He appointed first Christ's body, in which God's glory dwells (John 1:14) and then the bodies of all believers, to become the new temple for the presence of His glory, dwelling in us by the Spirit (1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19).

What we have argued for up to this point is now made clear, that the river of God's living water is the out-flowing of His Spirit. Just as the fountainhead of God's river was at the Temple in Jerusalem, so now it must spring from within those who believe in Jesus as the Saviour and who drink of it from Christ the Lord. The events that followed in Christian history were further stages of the Father's promise to give His people the Holy Spirit, though men were blind to the possibilities as so many are today. But happily it is a story that is far from ended. The River of God continues to flow towards a beautiful and eternal Paradise; 'a pure river . . . clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb' (Revelation 22:1-3 10).

It is this, I suggest, that will help turn the tide of the present troubles facing the Church and will guide our discipleship, our worship; let us not become so wrapped up in liturgical practices that we fail to enter the stream of living waters that God has provided and avoid confining God to books on practice, structures and methodology; the Spirit of God cannot be contained in these things. The Bible, Church, liturgy, are signposts pointing beyond ourselves to the reality of the

Risen Lord; it is also worth bearing in mind, the early Christians had neither liturgy, books nor Tradition as we know them, yet many Christians went out into a hostile world in the confidence of the Resurrection, with the Spirit working among them. God's message has not changed; the water from the River of God is pure.

This short essay began with concerns for the young. We shall end with them in mind. Our young people are the future, they will lead the affairs of church, government, education, health, industry, commerce and the arts, but this present generation will provide the ground on which they will build. Let us be sure that it is firm and reliable, which in many places it is; and in charitable compassion lead our young people to the refreshing waters of the River of God, which can be found by listening to His Holy Word and having a teachable spirit. Invite them to take the free gift of the waters of life and we may yet see a new generation in the making that will reverse the present trends of greed and destruction, which this generation is making for itself.



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# Reviews

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Peter Toon:  
***Foretaste of Heaven amidst Suffering,***  
Wipf and Stock;  
ISBN 978 1 60899 790 9;  
£9.99.  
Available from PBS Trading.

Peter Toon was one of the best minds we had in the Prayer Book societies both sides of the Atlantic, and is much missed. His prolific theological writing included the succinct and clear *Anglican Formularies and Holy Scripture*, and the basic work on why the language of the Prayer Book is, in the book's title, *Neither Archaic nor Obsolete*. Toon was not a man to display his personality gratuitously, and in *Foretaste of Heaven amidst Suffering* he is rather apologetic about recounting personal experience. But when he was diagnosed with amyloidosis, a rare disorder, usually fatal, in which a rogue protein attacks several of the vital organs, it was inevitable that he should consider the Christian questions raised by his own case.

The result is a beautiful, moving and theologically challenging book. I had supposed that the Visitation of the Sick is one of the few Prayer Book services to have been superseded, by a better understanding of illness. Peter Toon shows that it gives the essential Christian understanding of suffering on which any comfort depends. He discusses life-threatening illness as *chastening* and even a mark of divine favour to the sufferer—a position no easier for an actually suffering Christian theologian to accept than anyone else!

Further, there is a most illuminating discussion of when to take no for an answer to intercessory prayer. During Peter's illness a number of people were praying for a miraculous cure. It was very hard to see him being taken away from work we really believed was for the Kingdom of Heaven, and which nobody else was doing in the same way. The book does manage to show why 'in his will is our peace' even when we cannot understand his will. On his deathbed Peter Toon returned to the Methodist hymns of his youth, though he does not quote 'Rejoice in a brother deceas'd / Our loss is his infinite gain.' But it is the Prayer Book, and in particular the daily Psalms, prayed as our Lord prayed them, that he found a very present help in trouble and where, too, mourners can find comfort: for us, as for our Lord, suffering and death as an expression of the love of God. 'Patience, hard thing!' but *Foretaste*

of Heaven is rightly named.

The book doesn't tell us why Peter Toon left Methodism for Anglicanism. Also, I would love to have talked out with him the difference between chastening and punishment, which could have been developed. But Vita Toon, his widow, who prepared the book for the press, was right not to make it too smooth and finished. The closeness to experience adds to its strength. It is, amongst other things, a beautiful picture of a Christian marriage.

Ian Robinson. Mr Robinson is the series editor of *Edgeways Books* and a Trustee of the Prayer Book Society.

Gerald Bray:  
***The Faith We Confess: an Exposition of the 39 Articles,***  
The Latimer Trust;  
ISBN 0946307849;  
£9.99.  
Available from PBS Trading.

Several years ago a friend wrote to his diocesan bishop asking where he might find the doctrine of the Church of England. Addressed to some denominations this sort of letter would have resulted in a wave of literature or at least left him on a lifelong mailing list. But our Church does things differently and his letter seems simply to have been binned. The answer to his question as all readers of *The Journal* will know lies to a considerable extent in the 39 Articles of Religion but there, I suspect, many readers' knowledge will stop. They remain, except in disconsolate moments of the weakest sermons when we tend to flick through the Service Book, a largely unregarded and certainly unstudied corner of the BCP. So Gerald Bray has done a considerable service in treating the Articles with respect and shaking the dust off this under-considered corner of the Faith.

Of course at first sight there is plenty of dust. They were written for a time that is past and for a largely vanished rural society where almost all went to Church and it was easy to keep tabs on your neighbours' morals. It has been a long time since churchgoers have needed advice (Art 33) on avoiding excommunicate persons. The language of the Articles is vigorous and censorious and contrasts, sadly we may think, with today's blander platitudes. We find a thick line drawn between the 'accursed' and the 'saved' (Article 18). The political battles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were religious ones, too, and we may consider the anti-

Catholic tone of some of the Articles decidedly unfashionable. (Yet even here lovers of Cranmerian language may find a phrase to their liking: 'a fond thing vainly invented' says Article 22 condemning the 'Romish' doctrine of purgatory.)

However, even given these problems, there are probably no more than half a dozen Articles which might be described today as thoroughly obsolete. And what a treasure the rest are and what a revelation Professor Bray's discussion of them is! For those whose knowledge of the doctrine of the Church of England stops with the recitation of the Creed, his exploration of the 39 Articles, while at times not comforting, will be challenging and eye-opening. This is an age where many think doctrine is an irrelevance. Some consider we live in an ecumenical world where one denomination is as good as any other as long as we are all nice and subscribe to a few fashionable shibboleths. When doctrinal differences from within do begin to rock the boat we all too often shrug our shoulders and mutter that we are a broad church. Here, guided by Professor Bray, readers may gain a deepening insight into what made their branch of the Christian Church different at its inception and what principles continue to underpin at least much of it today.

Each Article is treated seriously by Professor Bray with a chapter of its own and in every one there are three questions for discussion. Do not be put off by this. In many a book 'discussion points' seem often to have been invented for the use of primary age children but these are grown-up questions and each one of the 117 points might advantageously form the basis of a sermon. There is a good background to the Church's historic formularies. His history is sound and rarely wobbles though when he says that after Cranmer no married man became Archbishop of Canterbury until 1691 he has surely forgotten Matthew Parker whose wife Queen Elizabeth was to insult rather picturesquely. From a modestly sized picture on the back cover the author smiles benignly out at us and indeed we can feel with confidence that we have a sound guide as he negotiates a course through some of the choppy waters that the Articles throw up. We must hope that Professor Bray can keep smiling; he has had a hard life recently for he is an American and a member of that branch of the Anglican Church more misused than our own. The Latimer Trust is a conservative evangelical organisation and members of the liberal wing

of the Prayer Book Society should be warned that they may regard some of the author's views about the lifestyles of some clergy today as unreconstructed.

Canon A5 of the Church of England (1964) says that '[the doctrine of the Church of England] is to be found in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal.' No wonder the go-ahead bishop left my friend's letter unanswered.

Peter Bolton

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# Letters

Dear Sir,

I write as someone who might be described (not by myself) as a liberal member of the Church of England. By that I mean that I have always thought that it was valid and valuable to view the Bible and much of the superstructure of the Church as culturally based and of a time, and thus open to reinterpretation for our own age. For me, nothing about the teachings of Christ is diminished by my holding this view. The core of the teachings, what Christ himself said, are for all time and are timeless.

Holding these views it might be thought that my attachment to the Book of Common Prayer is inconsistent—it was after all created by a group of men writing within a certain political context and from a viewpoint that exemplified the cultural mores of the time. However, for me the Book of Common Prayer is a deep part of my Christian observance and way of thinking. There is a recent view of identity that speaks of the modern self as comprising several aspects. There is the self that is constant and there is the self that changes in response to events that an individual may experience. The selves coexist in an integrated identity. My attachment to the Book of

Common Prayer represents the unchanging nature of my commitment to the Church of England. It represents a quiet core of familiarity and a gracious expression of Christian truth.

I am of an age where my first church-going was invariably associated with the Book of Common Prayer and it has always remained for me the familiar, beautiful and steadfast foundation of my church-based Christian observance and practice. So the Book of Common Prayer represents the constant part of my Christian self. The fact that I mentally replace words in many places during the services because of their current inappropriateness, am agitated by some of the sayings of St Paul and have to tell myself to concentrate on the essence of the truth rather than the peripheral, does not diminish the power the Book of Common Prayer has for me. It allows me to step aside from noise and bustle and to centre myself on God as well as to bring before him the matters that concern me. Thus the Book of Common Prayer may not comprise the totality of my Christian life but it holds an essential place in my identity as a Christian.

Coreen Sears

Parish of St Andrews (Old Church) Hove, East Sussex

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At St Peter's, Racton, we use the Book of Common Prayer at most of our services. Two editions adorn our pews: one dated 1940 of which we have many copies, and the other containing 'Prayer Book (Further Provisions) Measure 1969', of which we lack sufficient copies. The page numbers differ in these two editions, leading to much confusion and page-turning when a page number is helpfully given for those less familiar with the services. We should like to acquire up to 50 copies of the later edition, which is published by Oxford University Press, in 'Bourgeois Bold Face . . . Cum privilegio', and is prefaced with three pages showing 'How to follow the Service' (Morning Prayer, Open at p. 37; Evening Prayer, Open at p. 53; Holy Communion, Open at 'Our Father', p. 294).

Should any of your readers be able to assist us in meeting this need, would they please contact me by telephone on 01243 375862, or email: [hamiltonjanda@btinternet.com](mailto:hamiltonjanda@btinternet.com)

Mrs Audrey Hamilton

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# Welcome to Our Newest Trustees

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the following co-options to fill two vacancies on the Board.



## The Revd Rob Desics, North East Regional Trustee

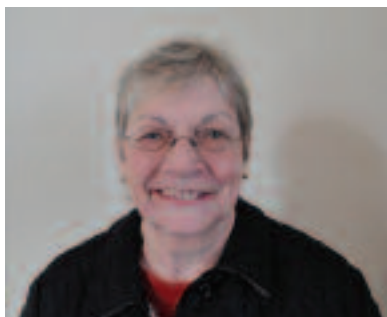
The Revd Rob Desics, 33, has been co-opted Regional Trustee for the North-East Region.

Rob is Vicar of St Timothy's Parish Church, Hemlington, Middlesbrough in the Diocese of York. He is married to Samantha and they have five children. As a teenager Rob was a member of a Prayer Book church in Bedford and has fond memories of being in the choir for sung Matins and Evensong. As a student he was an assistant verger at Lincoln Cathedral and was a keen supporter of the Cathedral's daily service of Evensong. Rob, as a young ordained minister, is keen that the Book of Common Prayer continues to have a central place in the mission of the Church of England, and he has revived the use of the Prayer Book at Hemlington.

'I believe that the Book of Common Prayer has been much neglected by the church in recent years and especially since the introduction of Common Worship', he says. 'The Prayer Book remains the Church of England's standard for liturgy and doctrine, and as such gives the clearest statement of what the church believes. The BCP is a wonderful setting forth of the gospel of Christ—it is realistic and

clear about the state of all human beings as sinners in need of a Saviour, and leads us to see and know deeply the love of God in the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. I believe that the BCP one of the best tools we have to reach out to our nation with the good news of salvation.'

Rob hopes to be able to help promote the use of the BCP in the parishes of the North East Region, and looks forward to working with the various Branches for which he is Trustee.



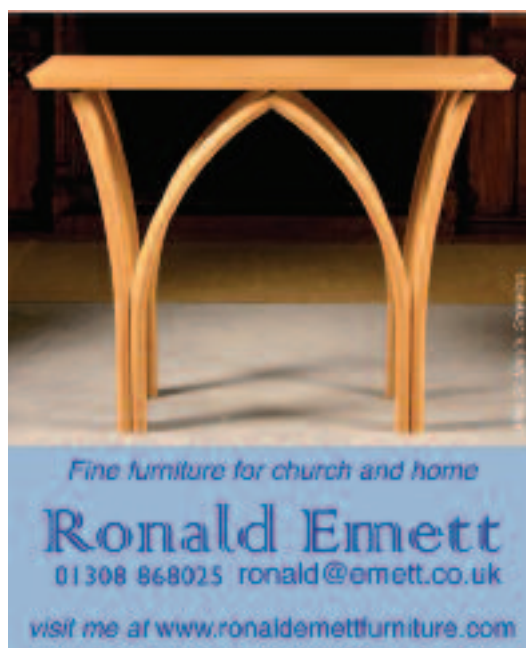
## Hilary Rudge, Company Secretary

Miss Hilary Rudge, 63, has been appointed as the Society's new Company Secretary and has also been co-opted to the Board of Trustees.

After a career at British Airways, with 27 years as cabin crew and subsequently in health and safety, Hilary moved to Aberporth in Mid-Wales to retire with her Siamese cats. She has subsequently acquired a Cardiganshire corgi and re-entered employment, as a part-time tutor at Pembroke College and latterly as training project manager for RWE npower at their new power station in Pembroke. She has been a magistrate since 1996, first in East Berkshire,

and now sitting on the Pembroke Bench.

Hilary has been a regular churchgoer and a staunch lover of the Book of Common Prayer all her life. Prior to her move to Wales, she was a member of the Oxford Branch Committee for several years. She has in her time been a church choir member, PCC member, sacristan and churchwarden, and currently serves as Rector's Warden and Treasurer at her local parish church, St Cynwyl's in Aberporth.



# News from the Branches

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## BLACKBURN

The Blackburn Branch has clocked up its best year for total attendances since records began. Since our annual festival in May (2010) we have joined two of the parishes to which we have recently supplied prayer books for their choral Evensong; at St Paul, Little Marsden and St Saviour, Bamber Bridge. Both churches were pretty full and at the latter the vicar had engaged the Rawstome Singers to sing a Harvest Festival Evensong.

Between these two programme events, we had a supper meeting at Whalley Abbey where Dr Tom Winnfrith spoke to nigh-on 50, on 'The Brontës and the Prayer Book'. It was a happy evening and produced some new members.

Neil Inkley

## CARLISLE

The 2010 Festival was held at Kendal Parish Church on Saturday June 5th. The Choral Eucharist was led by the church choir: the Celebrant was Canon Tom Thompson and the preacher was the Branch President, Mr Arthur Moss. The service was followed by lunch and the AGM. The meeting received news of the retirement from office of the Secretary, Dr John Newbery, and recorded its appreciation of his services over the previous eight years. The other officers were re-elected, and the branch welcomed Mrs Joy Budden as the new Secretary.

Branch members were invited to two special services during October 2010. The first was a Harvest Thanksgiving Evensong, sung by the Thomas Cranmer Choir at Brathay Parish Church on Sunday 3rd. The second was held at St Anthony's Cartmel Fell on Sunday 31st and comprised a service of Holy Communion according to the 1549 Book. Music was provided on period instruments, and refreshments

served afterwards had been prepared from sixteenth-century recipes.

David Richardson  
Branch Vice Chairman

## CHELMSFORD

A hundred copies of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer were presented to the parish church of St Alban, in Romford, from a grant by the Edith Mathias Trust. The Eastern Region's Trustee, Nicholas Hurst, presented the books to the priest and churchwardens of the Romford parish on Sunday 21 November. The books were blessed by the vicar, the Revd Roderick Hingley, before being used for a traditional service of Holy Communion by the 70-strong congregation which included members of the Prayer Book Society's Chelmsford diocese Branch. The service included a procession to mark the feast of Christ the King, and a party for the oldest member of the congregation who was celebrating her 90th birthday.

In his sermon, the Prayer Book Society Trustee, Nicholas Hurst, spoke of the work of the Society not only in the diocese, but nationally and internationally to ensure the continuity of the traditional forms of service. He told the congregation that the 1662 book was the 'jewel in the crown of Christian liturgy today', and urged those present to go home and 'tell your children, and their children, about this remarkable book.'

In October last the Branch AGM was held at the Cathedral Learning Centre. A challenging message was delivered by the Society's Vice President, Dr Roger Beckwith. He presented the fourteen principles approved by GAFCON, the Global Anglican Futures Conference meeting held in Jerusalem in 2008. This asserted their reliance on 'The Word of God, faithfully translated... and their upholding of the Thirty

Nine Articles as the true doctrine of the church; rejoicing in the Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer.' Copies of this talk are available from the Branch Secretary.

David Martin, Branch Secretary

## CHICHESTER

Mrs Valerie Dane is the new Secretary of the Chichester Branch (West). We asked her to provide a short profile of her life and interests. She writes:

On leaving school in London, I trained as a teacher of Classical Ballet at the Royal Academy of Dancing Teachers Training Course. After graduation in 1963 I moved to Bognor Regis and taught at a local Studio as well as visiting numerous private schools to teach general dancing (balletic exercises with national, folk and ballroom dancing). I gave up full-time teaching in 1982 but continued to teach, mostly adults, every evening until I retired in 2002. I also worked part-time, as a clerical assistant for the West Sussex Association for the Blind, then for the West Sussex Association for the Disabled where I edited a magazine for disabled people called Link-Up.

In retirement... I am a volunteer 'door keeper' at Chichester Cathedral where I also help at the Information Desk.

I got to know and love the Prayer Book at school through its use in the daily assembly and at services at our school church, St James's, Piccadilly. Aged 15 I joined an excellent church choir and learnt the liturgy for the Eucharist and Evensong accompanied by all the wonderful service settings from Purcell to Vaughan Williams and Harold Darke; a life-enhancing experience. I look forward to meeting members and to playing a small part in the life of the Prayer Book Society.

## EXETER

A service of Choral Evensong was held to celebrate the Feast Day of St Luke on Monday 18th October 2010 at the Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth. It was conducted by the Branch Chairman, the Revd Preb Paul Hancock, and was attended by members and friends of the Branch. A member from Truro and Exeter read the lessons and the Guest Preacher was the Ven Robin Ellis.

At the beginning of his sermon, the Archdeacon stressed the importance of the Prayer Book in expounding the Doctrine of the Faith and how its incomparable beauty of eloquence gives a depth of expression to the timeless teaching of the Faith by the Church through the years. Members were commended for their tenacity and faithfulness in support and insistence upon its continued use.

The twin themes of his discourse were The Book of Common Prayer and St. Luke's Gospel and how the former was closely influenced by the latter. Three doctrines were highlighted, namely, thankfulness, penitence and healing. In St. Luke's Gospel, we are told of the ten lepers cleansed, but only one—a foreigner—who returned to Our Lord to say thank-you. Similarly, our deficit of gratitude is addressed and remedied by the words of the General Thanksgiving. St. Luke related not just the fact of the forgiveness of sins, but a poignant account of the penitent thief. Surely, tears of relief and joy streamed down his face upon hearing Our Lord's words from The Cross: 'To-day you will be with me in Paradise.' Likewise, in the Prayer Book, the General Confession gives expression to a healthy admission of sin and this is followed by Absolution and the 'lifting up of our hearts so that we can see the Saviour.'

We were then invited to consider a possible new 'alternative liturgy'. Was it possible to eliminate reference to God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son in favour of some non-gender terminology? Far better

surely, to adhere to the Prayer Book: 'Almighty and Everlasting God, who of Thy tender love toward mankind has sent His Son...' (Collect for Palm Sunday).

Archdeacon Ellis emphasised the importance of the Daily Offices and that St. Luke 'spells out the need for clergy and people to join together in Word and Sacrament'. He concluded with a quotation from writer Martin Thornton: 'The Book of Common Prayer, far from being out of date, was conceived before its time. In a time of aridity, lack of fervour and non-religion, the disciplines are more necessary and creative, not less; more expressions of the love of God; a more real response to Grace'.

We are most grateful to the Ven Robin Ellis for his wise and encouraging words and to the choir of St. Andrew's for their lovely rendition of the anthem and liturgy.

Esme Heath

## LICHFIELD

Branch events in 2010 followed our well-established and proven pattern, with a return to Berwick House for our summer event and to Stafford in the autumn.

On a very wet Sunday afternoon in June members gathered at Berwick House, near Shrewsbury for the Annual General Meeting, which was held in the Audit Chamber. Following the AGM we moved to Berwick House Chapel for Evensong and were once again joined by the splendid Thomas Cranmer Choir which led us into the service with the introit, Cherubim Song by D. Boriniansky and later, in that part of the service, where 'In Quires and Places where they sing . . . we heard the choir sing 'Surely the Lord is in this place' by J. Burnell and a setting of the Lord's Prayer by P. Tchaikovsky. We have been fortunate

in having the support of the choir at our summer Evensong services for a number of years and its presence always enhances these occasions; once again we are very grateful to Mr Keith Yearsley, the choirmaster, Mr John Pyatt, the organist and all the choir members for giving their time and travelling from Macclesfield to be with us. Our sincere thanks also go to The Reverend Brian Hayes, the officiant and to The Very Reverend John Petty, Dean Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral, who preached a most pertinent sermon on the history and central significance of the Book of Common Prayer in Anglican worship.

Two Cranmer Awards competitors, Polly Booth and Catriona Woolly, from Moreton Hall School, read the lessons with clarity and understanding and in an altogether delightful manner. Following the service we returned to Berwick House for a splendid supper and some impromptu entertainment by Keith Yearsley on the piano. It was altogether a most enjoyable occasion and our sincere thanks go to the Angel-James family for their kind hospitality and support.

In November members joined members of the regular congregation for a service of Sung Mass, following the Order of the



Winner of the Junior competition - Fabiola Keonig



Winner of the Senior competition - Charlotte Eyre

1549 Book of Common Prayer, at St Chad's Church, Stafford, which is a most interesting church, dating back to around 1150 A.D. and containing some of the finest Norman stone carvings in the Midlands. Perhaps of particular interest to PBS members, there is a service of Matins every Sunday at 10 a. m., which is followed by Sung Mass at 11 a.m. and a service of Choral Evensong every Saturday ay at 4.30 p.m. On the occasion of our visit, the Celebrant was the Priest-in-Charge, Fr. Michael Fisher and the Preacher was The Reverend Deacon Tony Hutchinson; it was a splendid service and our members were made to feel very welcome. Following the celebration we moved to the very conveniently situated Swan Hotel for an excellent lunch, after which Fr Michael Fisher gave a most interesting talk, particularly in respect of church architecture, on which he is an acknowledged expert.

The Cranmer Awards diocesan heats were again held as part of the Shropshire Festival at Moreton Hall School and attracted a very pleasing number of high quality entrants. The winner of the senior competition was Charlotte Eyre, from Moreton Hall School, and the junior competition was won by Fabiola Keonig from Moffats School. It was the first time that Moffats School had entered the competition and another

Shropshire Festival and attracted thirty six competitors. This was judged by the Branch Honorary Secretary, Mr David Doggett, who was assisted by Mrs Celia Jenkins, the sister of the late Sarah Parkes, and daughter of Dr Parkes who very kindly donates the prizes. Phoebe Griffith and Abigale Bunce won the senior and junior section respectively but all who entered are to be congratulated on their very high standard overall. Once again the branch members thank Miss Merriel Halsall-Williams for her tremendous efforts and attention to detail which make both competitions held at Moreton Hall so successful.

#### NORWICH

We are pleased that, once again, a very successful Cranmer Awards Heat for our Diocese with 36 entries was held at St Lawrence Church, Castle Rising on 6th November, kindly arranged by our Branch President, Lord Howard of Rising. The winner in the Senior section was Sandy Ni'Man of Norwich High School for Girls, second was Rose Herbert of Norwich School and third was Marianne Hayes of Norwich High School for Girls. The joint winners in the Junior section were Harley Robson of St Peter's Church, Sheringham and Riddhi Shenoy of Norwich High School for Girls, third

pupil, Emily Englehurst, who is the great-grand-daughter of the founder, was also a junior finalist. Our congratulations and best wishes for success in the finals in London go to both Charlotte and Fabiola. It was a great pleasure for the Branch Chairman to assist the adjudicators and present the prizes.

The Sarah Parkes Book of Common Prayer Reading Competition for pupils from Moreton Hall School was held the week prior to the

was Romy Catmull also of Norwich High School for Girls, with Matas Mackevicius of King Edward VII School, King's Lynn being Highly Commended. Once again we were delighted to welcome Ann Robinson as a judge and to present the prizes which included, for the winners, a presentation copy of the Book of Common Prayer. Ms Robinson expressed her thanks and praised all those who had entered the competition and said how much she had enjoyed the occasion and the invitation to join us once more. The *Watchdog* presenter added that she has been coming along to this event every year for some time now and that she is a great believer in encouraging youngsters to learn to speak aloud and get used to their voices as early as possible.

At Michaelmas, the Branch was pleased to give presentation copies of the Book of Common Prayer to those ordained to the Diaconate. This is a gratifying exercise which we believe is of great benefit to the Society.

#### OXFORD

Members of the Oxford Branch of the Prayer Book Society gathered at St Mary's Church in Reading for their Advent Carol Service. The church is a Corporate Member of the Society.

Led by the Revd Edward Malcolm, the service included seven carols and six collects, as well as six lessons. Two of the lessons were read by the winners of the Oxford Branch heats of the Cranmer Awards, Henry Jenkinson and Bart Jennings. Branch President the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith preached the sermon.

After the service, the congregation enjoyed a sumptuous tea provided by members of the church.

'Our Advent Carol Service is one of the highlights of our year,' commented Branch Chairman Geoffrey Horne. 'It marks the true beginning of the Christmas festival and evokes the real spirit of the season.'

Stuart Constable

## PETERBOROUGH

The following two reports were omitted in the last issue. (Editor)

Peterborough Branch committee members visited the Bishop of Peterborough, The Rt. Revd Donald Allister, in May 2010, to present him with a leather-bound, large print BCP. He was most welcoming and spent an hour chatting to six of us while we drank tea and ate delicious chocolate chip cookies. He is a strong supporter of The Book of Common Prayer and we were delighted when, later in the year, he agreed to be our Branch Patron. The photograph shows the Branch Chairman, Alan Palmer with the bishop.



The Bishop of Peterborough, The Rt. Revd Donald Allister, accepts leather bound copy (in large print) of the Book of Common Prayer, from the Branch Chairman Mr Alan Palmer.

In the Summer, twenty-five members of the Peterborough Branch enjoyed an outing to Weston and Plumpton, near Towcester, in Northamptonshire. We began with lunch in the village pub, The Crown Inn, in Weston, after which we were joined by three members from the Coventry Branch and were treated to a most interesting tour of Weston Hall led by the owner Mrs Susanna Sitwell and her son Mr William Sitwell. Mrs Sitwell had invited us to visit her home and by so doing enabled us to raise funds for the Prayer Book Society and for The Friends of Plumpton—a charity which promotes the preservation of the redundant church of St John the Baptist in Plumpton village—of which Mr Sitwell is chairman. The

hall has been in the same family since it was built over 250 years ago. Its most famous owner in recent times was Sir Sacheverell Sitwell, who wrote most of his poetry and prose in the house. We were shown his study which overlooks the landscaped gardens.

The day ended with a service of Sung Evensong in the tiny Plumpton church, which was packed to capacity (of about 40) by the addition of several members of the charitable trust to our numbers. The service was ably led by Revd Colin Simpson, a local curate and PBS member. We delighted in singing the psalm, canticles, responses and three well known rousing hymns. This

brought the memorable day to a fitting close. We are extremely grateful to Mrs Sitwell and her son and we are now attempting to find a venue and series of events which will equal the high standard set by Weston.

The photograph shows the group about to enter Weston Hall. The current owner, Mrs Sitwell, is standing in the centre of the group.

Mary Stewart Branch Secretary

## ST ALBANS

The spacious grounds and impressive buildings of the co-educational boarding school for 11 to 18 year olds Haileybury College (or to give it its official name Haileybury and Imperial Service College) was the backdrop to the Cranmer Heats in the St Albans diocese on Saturday 30th October 2010. Competitors came from St Albans High School for Girls and from Haileybury itself to participate; there was a very high standard among the entries from both schools. The winner of the junior section was Sophie Sanders. Winner of the senior section was George Barrett from Haileybury's Upper Sixth. Runner-up in the seniors was Lewis Colson. Warm thanks to Mr Peter Blair of Haileybury's English Department (who had made





George Barrett (winner of the senior section) and Sophie Sanders (winner of the junior section) take their photo call.

everyone feel so welcome) were expressed by Mr Anthony Kilmister. The prizes were presented by Miss C. P. Cawood (Branch Secretary).

Anthony Kilmister (Branch President)

### **SALISBURY**

The Salisbury Branch of the Prayer Book Society held its tenth consecutive Advent Carol Service on the day before Advent Sunday. This year, for the third time, it took place at St Catherine's Church, Netherhampton.

The Revd John Staples, a member of the Branch committee, compiled the programme of Advent Carols and Hymns. The bells were rung before the service, the lessons were taken from the King James Bible and the event was well attended, with some members travelling from very long distances to attend it. The service was conducted by the Priest-in-Charge, the Revd Mark Wood and the organist was Mr William Alexander. Afterwards, members adjourned to the Rose and Crown Hotel, Harnham, for lunch.

The Chairman of the Branch, Mr Ian Woodhead, said it was heartening to find that so many people had braved the snow and bitter cold to attend this traditional event.

Joy Rabbetts, Branch Press Officer

### **TRURO**

In August, five of us went to Ruanlanihorne to show our support for Canon Robins' Choral Evensong on the feast of St Rumonus. This was my first visit to this church and I liked it very much, especially the huge tortoise stove still in situ though no longer in use. Then in September our branch visit to the gardens at Tresillian House took place. Around 15 of us, plus Field Marshal Rommel were given a guided tour by John Harris, the estate manager. I should explain that Rommel is a dachshund who accompanied his owner on the visit.

Before the visit we had enjoyed Evensong at St Columb Minor taken by David Watson. I don't think I have ever heard the Exhortation at the beginning of Evening Prayer read with so much depth of feeling and conviction before. Following the service, we enjoyed a splendid tea provided in the church hall. I think that everyone who attended enjoyed

the event and thanks are due to everyone who helped make it a success, especially David Watson for having the idea and then organising it, and also to those of our members who showed their support by attending.

J. St. Brioc Hooper

### **ORSTON NATIVITY PAGEANT**

Prayer Book canticles featured in a hugely popular Nativity Pageant, the 43rd staged on Christmas Eve in the Nottinghamshire village of Orston which is part of the Cranmer Group of Parishes, in the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

Several hundred spectators, including many of the villagers, took part in the evening spectacle which began at the village hall with Mary singing the Magnificat.

'The pageant wends its way through the village to end up outside St Mary's Parish Church,' explained the Cranmer Group's vicar the Revd Karl Przwala, 'and the local hostelry, the Durham Ox pub, features in the enactment when there is no room at the inn.'

For the finale everyone crowded into church for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the Nunc Dimittis was recited by Simeon, and the reading from the first chapter of John's Gospel is read by the Vicar.

'It is so appropriate that the Prayer Book canticles should feature, as Orston is part of the Cranmer Group of parishes, being the area of Nottinghamshire where Archbishop Thomas Cranmer hailed from, where he worshipped as a young man, and where his father is buried,' added Karl.

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# Fortchcoming Events

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## **Blackburn**

Saturday, 21st May: Branch Festival in Blackburn Cathedral. At the choral Eucharist at 11 a.m., the preacher will be The Revd Canon Andrew Clitterow, Vicar of Lytham and Chaplain to HM The Queen. To mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, we are for this year sharing our afternoon lecture with the Diocesan programme for that anniversary. Professor Philip Alexander FBA will speak on the influence of the Authorised Version of the Bible on our language and culture (2.15 p.m.). Choral Evensong is at 3.30 p.m.

## **Carlisle**

Saturday, 11th June: 2011 Branch Festival at Cartmel Priory. The celebrant will be the Revd Robert Bailey, Vicar of Cartmel, and the preacher will be the Branch Chairman, the Revd Eric Robinson.

## **Exeter**

Sunday, 13th March at 3.00 p.m.: Choral Evensong at St. Petrock's Church, Bow, Nr Crediton will be conducted by Preb Paul Hancock who will also preach. Tea will follow at a nearby venue.

Tuesday, 10th May: Visit to and tour of Truro Cathedral together with Truro Branch. 12.45 p.m. Lunch in the Refectory; 2.30 p.m. Talk and Tour of the Cathedral; Free Time; 5.30 p.m. Choral Evensong.

Saturday, 11th June at 2.30 p.m.: Branch AGM at St. Peter's Church Hall, Budleigh Salterton. The Speaker will be The Very Rev Fr. Gregory Carpenter of the Greek Orthodox Church, Plymouth. His address will be on the Coverdale Psalter. After tea, there will be Evensong at St. Peter's Church.

October: Choral Evensong at St. James Church, Avonwick. Date and time to be announced.

In addition, the Branch

Chairman and the Dean of the Cathedral are arranging dramatizations at Exeter Cathedral to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible on the following Sundays: 8th May; 5th June; 3rd July; 11th September and 2nd October. Everyone welcome.

## **Norwich**

Thursday, 7th April: Branch AGM at Wolterton Hall near Aylsham, by kind invitation of Lady Walpole. It will include a tour of the Hall and neighbouring St Andrew's Church, Wickmere, followed by Evensong. Wickmere and Wolterton PCC is a Corporate Member of the Society. For more information please telephone Richard Harrison (01692 580282).

## **Oxford**

Monday, 21st March: Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer. 10.30 a.m. Matins, St Michael at the Northgate, Cornmarket Street, Oxford; preacher Mr John Mitchell. Followed by wreath-laying on the Martyrs' Memorial, then lunch (pre-booked only) at The Mitre. If you would like to book lunch,

please contact Geoffrey Horne on 01491 873117. All warmly welcome at this annual commemoration on the anniversary of Cranmer's Martyrdom.

## **Truro**

Tuesday, 10th May at 12.00 noon: Branch AGM at Truro Cathedral, after which we will join with PBS Exeter Branch for a tour of the Cathedral followed by Evensong. For further details please contact John St Brioc Hooper (telephone 01726 76382).

## **North Wales**

Saturday, 11th June (St Barnabas Day) at 3.00 p.m.: Annual service of Holy Communion (1662) in the Priory Church of St Seiriol, Penmon, near Beaumaris, Anglesey. This 12th century Augustinian Priory is in a stunningly beautiful location and the site has many interests, including the 6th Century well of St Seiriol and the 17th century dovecot. Tea afterwards in the cafe overlooking Puffin Island. Further details from Branch Secretary, Neil Fairlamb (01248 811402).

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM**

This year's Annual Conference will take place from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th September, at Chester College on the fringes of Chester. The full programme and booking form will be enclosed with the next issue of the *PBS Journal*.

It has also been decided that this year's Annual General Meeting will be held during the Conference, rather than as a separate event. The AGM will take place on the afternoon of Saturday, 17th September at Chester College, and will of course be open to all members of the Society, whether or not they have booked for the Conference. The AGM notice will be sent out in due course.

## ADVERTISING IN THE JOURNAL

May I take this opportunity to thank all those readers who have responded to the adverts in our Journal over the past few years?

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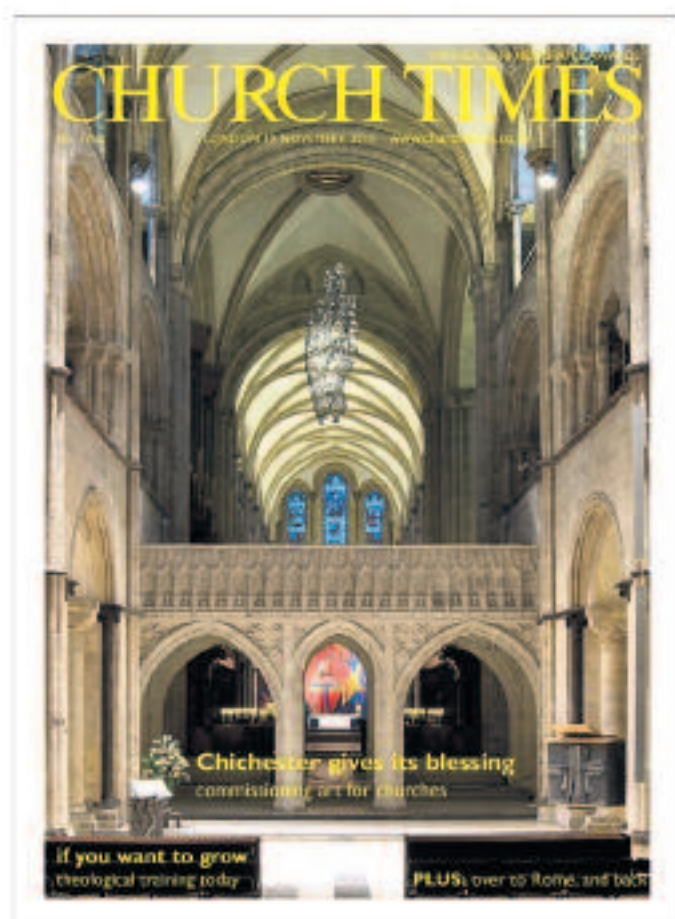
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