

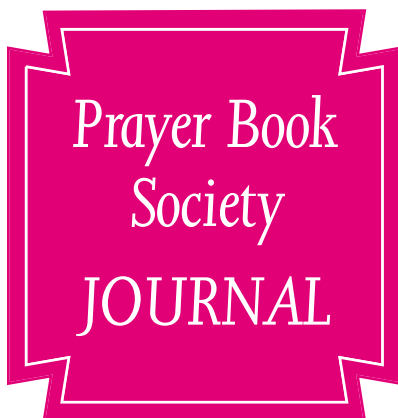
Prayer Book
Society
JOURNAL

Trinity 2008

ISSN 1479-215X



- ✠ Cranmer Awards – 2008 National Finals
- ✠ A Telling Question: Does Your Church Use the BCP?
- ✠ The Prayer Book In Use at St Mary and All Saints, Ellingham



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Members of the Society are encouraged to join together in saying the following Collect at the same time in their own homes, at 10.00 p.m. each Sunday evening.

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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MONDAY, 25 AUGUST 2008
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7 NOVEMBER 2008**

The picture on the front cover is of the parish church of St Mary and All Saints, Ellingham, Hampshire, which is the featured church in this issue of the Journal

History Lessons

Prayer Book Society members are united in the view that the Church of England has, in some sense, lost its way. Doctrinally and liturgically, it has been greatly harmed by being cast adrift from its traditions. We feel that the church's problems can be solved largely by restoring something that it once had but which has somehow been lost.

It's not that we look to the past out of nostalgia, or that we are just old-fashioned and conservative, wishing to retain the old ways because of a fear of change. It's that we know that the church's history makes it what it is. We got where we are because of what happened in the past.

Without this sense of something being handed down, we are indeed lost. In this issue of the *Journal*, Peter Bolton's article shows us this. His survey of church services in his diocese reveals that there are church wardens who have not even heard of the Prayer Book. Laymen with no knowledge of the past are easy prey for unscrupulous revisionists – those tyrants who want to make the church exactly what they would like it to be.

Also in this issue, Michael Cullup reminds us that the language of liturgy is shared language, one that has been handed down, not imposed from above in this generation. The prayers in the BCP helped to shape us as a church, and so we are harmed by their demise.

The use of the Prayer Book for private devotion – the subject of Neil Hitt's essay – points us to the way in which we are in fellowship with Christians of the past when we say its prayers. The church's true congregation is made up of more than just those of us who happen to be alive today. We are lost when we forget this.

Scotland's particular history has left it with a liturgy distinct from England's, but Scottish PBS Chairman Stuart G. Hall's invitation for people to make a rule of saying Morning and Evening Prayer – prescribed by the BCP because that was such an important principle for the

Reformers – reinforces the notion that the past can define us as a church. The Prayer Book was forged at a time when disunity led to persecution and martyrdom (a report of the Cranmer Martyrdom Commemoration in Oxford is in this issue). Necessity being the mother of invention, Cranmer's liturgy had to build unity and stability on the foundations of true doctrine. It stood the test of time – so why would we discard it now?

Christians will often struggle to find the right words for prayer, because it is always an impossible task to grasp fully the mystery of God. This

is true but, as Andy Hawes reminds us, no liturgical words reach higher than those of the Prayer Book, with its 'language of piercing intensity' which 'penetrates the mind and imagination'.

Sometimes our generation gives the impression that it believes it needs to start afresh in its struggle to 'find the right words'. It doesn't. Much of the work has been done by great men of previous generations. We can find the fruit of their labours in the Book of Common Prayer.

Tim Nixon
Editor

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Cranmer Awards – National Finals 2008

By Trevor Butler

By a remarkable coincidence both the senior and junior winners of this year's Cranmer Awards chose the same passage from the Book of Common Prayer – the collect, epistle and Gospel for St Thomas the Apostle.

The Prayer Book Society organizes the nationwide awards each year as part of its remit to uphold the traditions of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and promote its use in churches across the country. The national finals follow a series of regional heats in many of the Church of England dioceses where junior and senior winners are picked to be sent to the national final. For the final, the young people learn their passage by heart and recite it aloud relying only on their memory.

The 2008 national finals were staged in Mary Sumner House, Westminster. The headquarters building of the Mothers' Union is a very central and easily accessible location in the heart of London, and one which has reasonably quiet surroundings at the weekend. Thus on Saturday 23 February the dozens of young contestants made their way, accompanied by families and friends, to do battle for the coveted title which brings with it not only the honour of winning, but also a lucrative cash prize by way of an incentive to take part.

The day began with the senior finalists reciting to their judges in the ground floor chapel, while the juniors (11–14 year olds) were in front of their judges in the basement. After a delicious buffet lunch, and the chance for contestants in the two age groups to mingle, everyone gathered downstairs to hear the judges' verdicts.



There was a very strong field of young contestants from across the country this year, in fact the 'strongest ever' according to Lesley Cook, chairman of the judges for the senior awards (15–18 years), requiring an extra

Junior First Prize winner William Bishop receives his prize from the Dean of Westminster Abbey, the Very Revd John Hall



The Senior judges deliberate

half an hour of deliberation to decide the winner.

The contest was not new to senior winner Zoe Hallam – the seventeen-year-old from Walsall had taken part three years earlier when she won the junior section. That section's winner this year, William Bishop, had his elder brother Joseph for company as he won through to the finals of the senior section where he came a commendable third. They are sons of Middlewich vicar Ian Bishop so should perhaps be conversant with the way in which prayers and Scripture should be read.

Zoe was said, by the judges, to have exemplary 'connection' – connection with the text and connection with the audience. This made her the senior winner. Young William, the judges said, produced a wonderfully 'prayerful' performance which was well conveyed – 'he lived up to his surname', said chairman of the junior judges, the Revd Dr Stephen Young.

Speaking to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust's magazine *CF Today* Zoe said how delighted she was to have won, and talked about all the practice she had put in. There are now sections of Ephesians chapter 2 and St John chapter 20 which she is likely to remember for a very long time. After the result was announced, Zoe agreed to recite her passages again to the audience which she did immaculately from her wheelchair before having her photograph taken for use by the media.

Back in Cheshire, William Bishop's local newspaper the *Nantwich Guardian* headlined its story about the victorious twelve-year-old 'Will is word perfect'. The young man admitted that there were some difficult words to master in the texts, but felt it was his faith which helped him win. The Middlewich High School student practised for several months with Christine Malkin, a member of the congregation at St Michael's.

After agreeing to read his passage again to the audience after the result was announced, no sooner had he got home William volunteered to read out the passage once more, this time to a packed congregation at the Sunday service of his local church. 'That was even more nerve wracking', he said, 'because they were all people I knew.'

The prizes were presented this year by the Dean of Westminster, the Very Revd Dr John Hall. He pointed out that Westminster Abbey relies on the Prayer Book for many of its services including early morning Communion, weekly Matins, and daily Evensong. The Dean remarked what a wonderfully rich source of spiritual inspiration the Book of Common Prayer is, and how fortunate the young people present were to have learned their passages, as they will doubtless find them of comfort at future points in their lives. Indeed, he went on to say he had been brought up on its content and urged the learning of further parts of the book by the audience.

All the participants were congratulated on their performances and went home with a certificate to show that they were 2008 finalists. It is hoped that those eligible will consider entering again, including twelve-year-old William who has the chance to regain the junior title next year.

Prudence Dailey, PBS Chairman, said: 'It was moving to hear these young people declaiming the words of the Book of Common Prayer so articulately and with such conviction. The continued success of the Cranmer Awards gives the lie to the myth that young people and the Prayer Book don't mix.'

Planning of the Awards is down to the PBS committee which oversees the arrangements, chaired by Trustee Stephen Evans; while the success of the event was thanks to the Awards' national organizer Merriel Halsall-Williams who works tirelessly to ensure everything runs smoothly. This is far from an easy task, bringing with it, as it does, the need to liaise with branches and all the finalists, their parents and, often, their schools. All this Merriel does with boundless enthusiasm and extreme efficiency while being chairman of the English Speaking Board as well.

The Prayer Book Society now invites the two Cranmer Awards winners to its Annual Conference and to read a lesson at one of our five services. 'Immediately following the announcement of the results I asked the winners if they would be prepared to come to the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and read', says trustee Nicolas Hurst. 'I am delighted to say that both accepted with alacrity.'

PBS members who were not able to get to Mary Sumner House will have the opportunity to hear the young readers as William Bishop will read from the

Old Testament at said evensong on Friday 12 September, and Zoe Hallam will read from the Old Testament at choral matins on Sunday 14 September.

Plans are already under way for the 2009 Awards, and it is a very special year being the twentieth final since the Awards were initiated.

Those interested in taking part should contact the Awards' national organizer Merriel Halsall-Williams. E-mail cranmerawards@pbs.org.uk or telephone 01691 690 483. Details are also on the Prayer Book Society website at www.pbs.org.uk

Trevor Butler is Press Officer of the Prayer Book Society



Senior First Prize winner Zoe Hallam recites her passage

The Results

Junior National Final

Highly Commended Francesca Ward (13) from Taverham, Norfolk whose recital was the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the fourth Sunday in Lent.

Third Place Kuran Rati (12) from Worcester whose recital included Psalms 123 and 124.

Second place Lucia Prinsloo (14) from Southend-on-Sea whose recital included Psalm 46.

First place William Bishop (12) from Middlewich in Cheshire whose older brother Joseph was placed third in the Senior Section.

Senior National Final

Highly Commended Alexandra Ferrier (17) from Castletown, Isle of Man, and Polly Booth (14) from Tilson, Cheshire.

Third Place Joseph Bishop (17) from Middlewich in Cheshire, who recited the Collect, Epistle and Gospel appointed for St Peter's Day.

Second Place Laura Turpin (16) from Nantwich in Cheshire who selected the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the first Sunday after Epiphany.

First Place Zoe Hallam (17) from Walsall who recited the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for St Thomas the Apostle.

Does Your Church Use the Book of Common Prayer?

By Peter Bolton

Every five years or so I try to ring up the churchwardens or clergy of our diocese to see what sort of services they are having. It is a useful exercise. I discover unknown friends as well as gaining insights into the grimmer goings on in some parishes. My straightforward question produces a wide range of telling replies with lessons for the Prayer Book Society and its members. The quotations were jotted down at the time. Only the names have been withheld.

First there are the churchwardens and PCC officials who labour under the most serious misconception of all – that they have no say in what sort of services are held in the church. ‘There’s talk of altering it. It’s up to the vicar’ or ‘There’s a new vicar so I am not sure what the future will hold.’ Or simply ‘The vicar doesn’t like it.’

It is of course untrue that the incumbent decides the services. The PCC has its right to express its opinion and, in the event of a dispute, to keep the *status quo ante*. Church officials like these I spoke to were being kept in ignorance of their rights by their incumbents; in other words they are manipulated. A telling pair of responses came from two churchwardens in the same benefice where a new incumbent has not been universally popular. At the first church a warden’s wife answered the phone and gave me a conspiratorial low-down on parish life. Her husband was then brought to the phone. He had a soft-centred approach and said ‘We’re not allowed to [have the BCP]. Our vicar doesn’t like it and we are trying not to shout down everything she says.’ The warden I rang in the neighbouring parish replied firmly ‘We hang on to it.’ In a group of hitherto BCP parishes a new broom had swept like an arctic gale. A warden replied bleakly ‘All that has now gone.’ He then must have reported me to the new incumbent who rang me up to explain that the BCP was his predecessor’s personal thing – as if he had suffered from a nasty disease for which a cure had been found.

There was another group of people the Prayer Book Society should be very concerned about. A fair number had no idea what the Prayer Book was and I had to explain my question

to them occasionally, as if dealing with the bottom stream of school children. For them ‘Prayer Book’, ‘Common Prayer’, ‘1662’ or ‘Cranmer’ held no meaning at all and I had to reduce my question to the very lowest common denominator asking, eventually, if they had the service book with the beautiful old words in it. One PCC officer said bizarrely ‘We don’t do it any more. We have *Mission Praise*.’ Another had the grace to feel embarrassed and told me ‘This is dreadful. I can’t say whether we do or don’t.’ Another got down to the reason for her ignorance and told me ‘I don’t know; they keep changing them [the services].’ It has to be borne in mind that I was asking the senior members of the parish laity. It was a modishly and over-optimistically titled ‘Church Information Officer’ in one parish who said ‘I don’t know which service we have.’ If this is the reaction of parochial leaders we must pity the ordinary folk in the pews. The sense of liturgical dizziness is widespread. Someone who revealed himself as being on our side said despairingly ‘Sometimes it is [the BCP]; sometimes it isn’t. The chap who takes it does his own thing.’ I suppose we should feel for some of these poor people pushed from pillar to post, being put on the spot. For them liturgy is here today, gone tomorrow; it has no roots and, without any taught history, churchgoing must be for many a shallow experience. I did, however, warm to the inner-city warden who tried to be helpful and whose mellow West Indian tones said ‘We has all the services, man.’ Alas, not quite all.

Of course if you do theoretically get what is described as the BCP there are many traps for the unwary. Lucky the churchgoer who gets, for example, the appropriate BCP collects; luckier still if the reading is from a version which has dignity and is not embarrassing. ‘... based very much on the BCP,’ said an official encouragingly before adding ‘Some of the words have been changed.’ ‘We have our own service,’ said one arrogant voice at the end of the line. One thinks of the clergyman today with umpteen parishes with the additional burden of having to think up not just a sermon for Sunday but a liturgy.

Then there are the sad but all-knowing people whose views on the education of children are fixed in the 1960s, the days of the great British cultural revolution, 'We have a lot of children so of course we use modern language.'

Perhaps the most telling comment from any clergyman came from a pleasant man – an innocent in church politics. He told me about his largish village and his use of *Common Worship* and congregations which were disappointing. I mentioned another place of worship notionally in his parish. His immediate reply had not been sifted by spin doctors. 'They only have the Prayer Book there so consequently they have bigger congregations although it is such a small place.' He was coming to understand what many readers of this account will have known for years.

Annual General Meeting

This year, the Board of Trustees has decided to hold the Annual General Meeting during the Annual Conference, rather than as a separate event in July. The AGM will, therefore, take place on the afternoon of Saturday 13 September 2008 at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

Members are, of course, entitled to attend the AGM even if they are not coming to the Conference. Tea and coffee following the meeting will be available without charge, and those attending the AGM are invited to join conference-goers for Evensong afterwards. If you also require lunch before the AGM, this should be booked using the Conference booking form.

Please note that the Conference booking form is enclosed with this magazine, but the AGM Notice is NOT enclosed and will be circulated separately.

Advertising

May I ask members that if they respond to any of the advertisements displayed in the *Journal* they tell the company or organization that they saw the advert in our magazine. Advertisers are currently becoming much more cost conscious at a time when there is a down-turn in the economy. They want a return on their investment. If you compare this edition with the Lent edition you will see a number of adverts have disappeared for the reason I have stated. To get companies and organizations to advertise with us is not the easiest of tasks and takes time and effort. If any of you have sons, daughters, relatives or close friends who own or run companies whom you think might benefit by advertising with us, please let me know.

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Advertising Manager



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Liturgical Language

By Michael Cullup

The history of the Church of England since the sixties has been one of continuous liturgical change and experiment, both of which have failed to improve church attendances. But there has been little recognition of this fact in clerical circles. I recall the words of the late C. S. Lewis: 'Experience beats in vain upon a congenital progressive'. His reference to modern liturgiologists as 'liturgical fidgets' is, again, both apt and pertinent.

Liturgical language is 'experienced' language. Something in me wants to say language 'hallowed by tradition' but the phrase seems a cliché. The whole point about such language is that it is normally restricted to liturgical contexts. I don't think it would go down too well if we were to greet a neighbour in the local supermarket with the words 'Peace be with you'. Language has, as the linguists keep telling us, its own 'registers' and these are appropriate to particular contexts.

Certain kinds of language in a liturgical context would, surely, be inappropriate. So, of course, would certain gestures. A liturgical response like, 'You too, mate', followed by a thumbs-up sign would be lacking in appropriate reverence. All this seems obvious enough to all of us yet, although many of us have felt distinctly uncomfortable with some of the language in modern liturgies, intelligent and sensitive lay criticisms have been generally frowned on.

Those of us who feel more comfortable with the language of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer have had a difficult time over the past thirty years or more. The reasons for our discomfort are, as I see it, quite simple. They are based on the obvious fact that the language used in church is, in so many ways, quite different from the language used outside. However much those responsible for creating modern liturgical texts try to bring them into line with what they conceive as modern language, they will always be haunted in some way by the language of the past. Because liturgical language must be appropriate to its uses and contexts, modern liturgies can never be really new. This is because the contexts are never really new.

No church could possibly afford to reinvent itself. Changes are possible, but they properly come about gradually. The relatively sudden transition from a traditional liturgy to liturgies in various, and

most often inappropriate, forms of modern English have been traumatic for many. It has also threatened the theological dogmas which previous liturgies had encapsulated. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, as the saying goes. The change from a God-centred reverence, expressed in the priest facing east with the congregation, to an enclosed sharing of mutuality was an enormous change, which pleased many and gave them a new sense of liberation and warmth but discomfited others.

Such a mutuality has to result in a change of language. The language of such liturgies has to become more the kind of language that can be shared. The priest and the congregation are communicating with each other as well as directing their worship towards God. In the process, the language tends to move towards the literal, or actual, rather than the mysterious, or numinous. There is an inevitable congruence with the secular and the mundane.

The interesting thing about all this is that it dovetails so well with Biblical and liturgical scholarship. There is a continuous appeal to the texts of the earliest manuscripts and the customs of the early church. It is as if this kind of activity gives what we do the authenticity we seek. But is it really like that?

Scholars who work with original manuscripts in ancient, dead languages will naturally be intent on providing the best translations of those manuscripts they possibly can. The translations they make will, in the first place, be literal. Later, they will attempt to turn the literal text they have worked out into something living and contemporary. Some translators will manage this better than others, and most translators will work with other translators to achieve an acceptable text. The 'life' in the new text will, to a large extent, depend on the translators' sensitivity to their own mother tongue. The language has, once again, to be appropriate.

The Bible is, of course, far more than a set of history books. It contains a wide range of genres, from simple genealogies, through emotionally charged history, to dramatic and lyrical poetry. Its range tests both scholarship and creative sympathy. But it also tests the sensitivity of its translators to the sacred and the spiritually definitive. It is, after all, God's Word.

Perhaps the ultimate test comes when the Bible has to be translated into a language which is suitable for liturgical use. There has to be reverence towards the text as sacred, sensitivity towards the genres and registers of the original, imaginative sympathy with the original authors, coupled with the seeming impossibility of keeping all this and much else in mind while creating a text which is appropriate to the liturgies with which it must harmonize.

Do we know the *exact* words which Christ used? Do we know *exactly* how the Biblical authors felt? Will we ever be able to identify totally with the *dramatis personae* of the Old Testament and the Gospels? A gulf separates us from lost generations. Irrecoverable realities are hidden in the mists of time, and the impenetrable complexities of the past. But what we do have is the continuity of tradition, and this forms a living link with a past which is otherwise irrecoverable.

The abrupt way in which those who ought to have known better has almost severed the umbilical cord which ties us to our past has resulted in the kind of dislocation and doctrinal disruption which severely threatens the survival of our branch of the church. We inherited liturgical texts which any English person with even a moderate degree of linguistic and literary sensitivity would have described as 'incomparable'. It has proved quite impossible to rewrite those texts in a form of modern English, and quite as difficult to replace them with anything approaching their quality.

The important thing about these texts is that they were handed down and shared as living texts. To describe them as 'dead' or 'old fashioned' or 'archaic' is to miss the point. Within their liturgical contexts, and used as they were meant to be used, they were 'vital', in the true sense of that word, and charged through generations of sacred usage with the inherited meanings that generation after generation had received from them. They were, in other words, entirely appropriate and properly sacred.

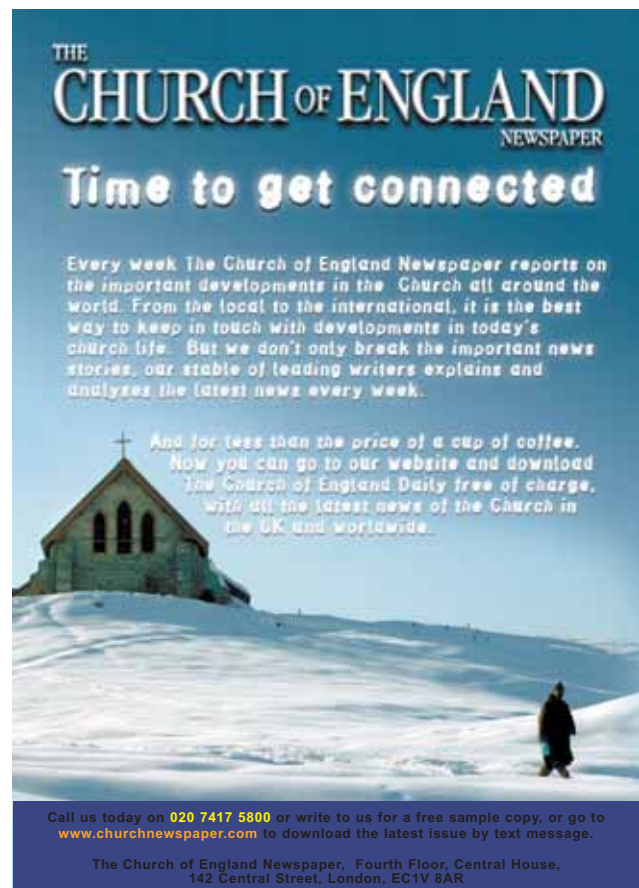
There are many and various ways in which 'The Good News' can be preached and sung, but exhortations to hear and praise are only part of a comprehensive liturgy which needs to express the totality of our human needs, our humility before the awesomeness of God, our infinite gratitude, and the mysterious depths of our encounter with the divine. And it is surely right that we should be concerned to repay God with the gifts of creativity and beauty which he has implanted in us.

I think those of us who use labels like 'modern',

'liberal', 'progressive', 'reactionary' or 'traditional' to describe our fellow Christians would do well to drop them in the context of liturgical discussion. The label 'traditional', for example, is surely less than adequate to describe the liturgical practices of the Orthodox Church. We need to concentrate more on what worshippers in other camps than our own find spiritually rewarding in their own forms of worship, and to deliberate more on why this may be so. I believe we have much to learn from the Orthodox Church in this respect.

For my own part, I find worship using the liturgies of the Book of Common Prayer links me to a spirituality which I gratefully inherit and continue to learn from. I feel these liturgies as 'living' liturgies, irrespective of what others care to say about them. I suspect that those members of the Roman Catholic Church who prefer worshipping according to the Latin Rite and every member of the Orthodox Church, which has fully safeguarded its inherited liturgy, feel much the same. There may yet be hope for all those in the Church of England who believe that only the best is appropriate for the God who has bestowed such blessings on all of us who worship him.

Michael Cullup is a member of the Norwich Branch



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Cranmer Martyrdom Commemoration

By John Dearing

The Oxford Branch held its annual commemoration of Cranmer's martyrdom six days early, as 21 March was Good Friday. By coincidence the date chosen was Saturday 15 March, the Ides of March, anniversary of another unjust killing. The office of Matins was observed at Exeter College Chapel, a first visit for the society with around thirty present. We were grateful to the Chaplain, the Revd Helen Orchard for her hospitality and for reading the service with great dignity. The Branch President, the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith, preached on a text from the Book of Numbers: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' (Numbers 23.10)

After the service members processed, a little raggedly it must be confessed, to the site of Cranmer's martyrdom, where Dr Beckwith read



The Revd Dr Roger Beckwith, Oxford Branch President and a national Vice-President of the PBS, leads prayers at the Martyrs' Memorial in Oxford

Foxe's account of Cranmer's 'last end'. This attracted the attention of a number of tourists, at least one of whom commented how fortunate he was to be passing by at just the right moment. The procession then continued to the Martyrs' Memorial where prayers were said and a fine wreath laid by the Branch Chairman, Mr Geoffrey Horne.

Afterwards those who were of a mind enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Mitre Inn, a hostelry dating back to the 1300s and perhaps ironically a hotbed of Roman Catholic recusants during the seventeenth century, where the Mass was frequently celebrated – in 1683, one landlady died of a fit after being called a Popish bitch and threatened with having her throat cut by three Fellows of All Souls', no less!

John Dearing



Geoffrey Horne, Oxford Branch Chairman, lays the wreath on the Martyrs' Memorial

New membership leaflets

Enclosed with this magazine you will find a copy of our redesigned membership leaflet, including information about the Society and a membership application form. Please do help us to increase our membership by passing this on to a friend who might be interested in joining.

Please contact the PBS office for further supplies of leaflets to hand out or to put at the back of your church.

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The Date of Easter

By Roger Beckwith

There has been much discussion of the fact that in 2008 Easter fell as early as 23 March. The schools have had to make special arrangements to avoid too short a spring term and too long a summer term, and, awkwardly, they have not all made the same arrangements, even in the same area. This has led to the old questions being asked: Why is Easter a moveable feast? Why can we not have a fixed Easter?

The answer to these questions is threefold. First, that as it is the commemoration of Christ's resurrection, Easter needs to fall on a Sunday, the day of the week on which he rose.

Secondly, that since the Gospels show Christ to have died and risen at the Passover season, which was at the time of the full moon (Nisan 14 or 15 in the Jewish calendar), Easter needs to be near the full moon.

Thirdly, that since the Passover was also held near the time of the spring equinox, or what we call the first day of spring (traditionally 21 March),

Easter needs to be near that too.

Putting these three factors together – the day of the week, the day of the (lunar) month, and the day of the (solar) year – the church arrived at the formula which begins the 'Tables and Rules for the Moveable Feasts' at the beginning of the Prayer Book.

Easter Day, on which the rest depend, is always the First Sunday after the Full Moon, which happens upon, or next after the Twenty first Day of March . . .

A fixed Easter would be bound to violate at least one of the three factors in this formula. It would also be a break with a very old tradition, and it would probably make the hope of an agreed Easter between all the churches permanently unattainable.

The consequence of the formula is that Easter may fall on many dates, the earliest being 22 March and the latest 25 April. Some occur more frequently than others, and 2008 is only the sixth time since Thomas Cranmer's day that Easter has fallen on 23 March. The other occasions were 1600, 1788, 1845, 1856 and 1913. On four occasions, however, Easter has fallen even earlier, on 22 March. These were 1573, 1668, 1761 and 1818.

It is curious that two of the dates in the first group and one of those in the second all occurred in the nineteenth century. Not until next century will Easter again fall on 23 March, and not until the century after will it fall on 22 March (unless, of course, the Lord has returned first, and Easter has given place to Heaven).

Roger Beckwith is a Vice-President of the Prayer Book Society

Note: I am grateful to Stanley Ward for information from his 1699 edition of the Prayer Book, and to Christopher Hone for information from several of the old Prayer Books in the collection which he has generously presented to the Society



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Clergy and Ordinands Training Day – the Occasional Offices

By Neil Patterson

On Saturday 10 November last year St Marylebone Church, London, provided the venue for another PBS Training Day for clergy and ordinands, the first to adopt a particular theme, in this case the Occasional Offices, and the first to take place in official partnership with the Liturgical Commission. This slightly pejorative-sounding expression is the traditional name for those services of the Prayer Book which are used only 'when occasion demands'. Although this would include in full Confirmation, the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth and the Visitation of the Sick, we chose to concentrate on the well-known trio of Baptism, Wedding and Funeral. A group of about a dozen clergy, ordinands and prospective ordinands from far and wide gathered to hear and discuss with our speakers, ably organized by Paul Thomas.

First to speak was the Revd Peter Moger, the Church's national Worship Development Officer, reporting to the Liturgical Commission. He explained the recent report *Transforming Worship*, which has been written up in previous *Journals*, and the expectation it allows that the Prayer Book should be used in appropriate parishes, termed 'centres of excellence' as a consistent part of their Prayer Book ethos. The Society has responded to this overture with the Beacon Churches initiative, as members will know. *Transforming Worship* also envisages that the Liturgical Commission will offer training both from its own resources and in conjunction with partner organizations, and Peter noted with interest that the Prayer Book Society had that day been the first to organize such an event.

Baptism naturally followed as the first Office to be covered, by the Revd Paul Thomas, Vice-Chairman of the Society and a member of the Liturgical Commission. Paul explained with typical expertise the origins of the Prayer Book rite, including its development in the Books of 1549 and 1552, and its close relationship to the earliest-known rites of Christian initiation. There was some acknowledgement that the 1662 Baptism service is among the least-used services of the Prayer Book, and the 1928 adaptation is not authorized for use. While many of the clergy present stated that they were unlikely to use the service, it was acknowledged that it remains available, and that it was helpful to understand it better.

The Revd Dr Anders Bergquist, a member of the Liturgical Commission and Vicar of nearby St John's Wood Church tackled Marriage, noting that within certain constraints it was possible to do many things in a marriage service, so long as the couple came in single and left legally wed! He took us through the service, noting the differences in the 1928 version, which as Series 1 remains authorized for use, and which he uses for the vast majority of weddings in his church. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that, given a fair choice, a large proportion of couples prefer the dignity and beauty of the traditional words, and that they should not unfairly be denied them by the clergy.

Finally it fell to me to look at Funerals, which I began with a historical introduction, before pointing out the different circumstances envisaged by the different rites. The 1662 service is written for a churchyard burial, 1928 (like marriage, still authorized) for a church service followed by burial, and *Common Worship* for the crematorium, and each has corresponding limitations which have little to do with language or text. However, it is possible for the Prayer Book services to be adapted for the majority who, unlike me, are not operating in country churchyards, and I provided a scheme of how to do this, also accommodating hymns and other music as are often expected today. There was much acknowledgement that a Prayer Book funeral service provides an appropriately severe eternal perspective on life, and eschews the optimistic liturgical engagement anticipated by *Common Worship*.

The participants (not all members of the Society) expressed their gratitude for the day, and we are collectively grateful to St Marylebone for proving a suitable and convenient venue. The discussion of funerals raised the question of those who want a Prayer Book funeral and are in effect denied it – we hope to publish a leaflet soon setting out what should be possible for any funeral, and how members and others may best go about obtaining the service that they want, rather than being subject to the whims of the clergy concerned. One clergyman from Lincolnshire noted the overall shortage of literature on 'how to do' the Prayer Book – a challenge indeed for the pen of a ready writer.

The Clergy and Ordinands Committee is looking

at further themed days – unfortunately a day proposed on the Prayer Book in rural churches has had to be postponed due to difficulties at the venue; we are also considering a day on music and the Prayer Book. The events may be small, but they are at least starting to redress the lack of training in the Prayer Book given to new clergy now, and we trust that you will pray strength to our arm for the future.

Neil Patterson
Weston-under-Penyard Rectory

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Members of our own Society will be joined in Canterbury by representatives of the Prayer Book Societies of the USA and Canada, where we will be lobbying the bishops (and their spouses), making useful contacts and highlighting the importance of the Book of Common Prayer at the heart of Anglicanism. As well as hosting receptions and handing out literature and news-sheets (as the Prayer Book Societies did at Lambeth ten years ago), we will also be running a dedicated website, www.PrayerBookAtLambeth.org which will be updated with news, views and comment relating to the Lambeth Conference and the Book of Common Prayer. There are a few background articles on the website already, but of course there will be a lot more when the Lambeth Conference gets going properly from 20 July. Why not take a look – and encourage your local clergy (and your bishops!) to do so?

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We believe that maintaining a fresh and interesting PBS Conference programme requires a fresh pair of eyes every few years. This year's Conference almost did not happen for want of a programme organizer, and we urgently need a volunteer to undertake this task for 2009.

The role involves planning what will happen when during the Conference period and putting together a programme of services, speakers, and other events, within general guidelines. You would NOT be required to organize a venue or to make 'domestic' arrangements for the Conference.

The Conference programme organizer must have attended a PBS Conference in the recent past (or be planning to attend this year) in order to gain a 'feel' for the event, and e-mail access is essential. Apart from that, the only criteria are enthusiasm, common sense and a willingness to work in co-operation with others.

Might you be able to help? For more information, please contact Prudence Dailey at prudence.dailey@pbs.org.uk

The Book of Common Prayer For Use in Personal Devotions

By Neil Hitt

With the wealth of daily Bible reading notes currently available it would appear unnecessary to look any further when wishing to study the Bible on a regular and meaningful basis. On a personal note, I have tried many different study aids with varying degrees of satisfaction/success and indeed occasionally continue to do so, thus enjoying some variety in my readings. However, I am sure I am not alone in gaining a great deal of enjoyment and instruction from the BCP with its excellent collects, various prayers and a whole host of other material for focusing the mind, heart and spirit heavenwards.

Chief among the riches to be found in this excellent book are the Epistle and Gospel readings, ostensibly to be used for Sunday Holy Communion services, saints' days and the like. I find myself returning time and time again to these short tracts which encapsulate so much of the foundations of our Christian faith. The beautiful language coupled with the perfect phrasing of the collects certainly focuses one's whole consciousness on matters eternal rather than temporal. The 'archaic' phrases only add to the marvellous 'flavour' of the whole reading and certainly speak to both my mind and heart in addition to stimulating the imagination.

I am currently reading through each Epistle and Gospel passage day by day, ignoring the correct placing of each one in the church year, yet still finding great joy, hope and love expressed in each tract. When time

permits, a psalm or two can be added into the mix – if you are fortunate to have enough time, the psalms for morning and evening prayer can be read. I haven't yet managed to read the complete psalter in a month, but I live in hope! The collects for morning and evening prayer are easy to memorize and are of great benefit (even when one's own words don't fail!).

Extempore prayer is marvellous and goes hand in hand with 'written' prayers in any daily 'quiet time' I feel. To have these ancient gems of prayer to hand and in one's mind is a great comfort and I like to think they can be made your own each time they are offered up to God. A great favourite of mine is 'A General Thanksgiving' prayer, so seldom heard in our churches, yet speaking to the heart with the great challenge to 'show forth' God's praise 'not only with our lips, but in our lives'.

I would be curious to know to what extent other PBS members use the BCP for their own devotions and what variations they have found to be of use with regard to the prayers and readings in the book we all feel so passionately about. What a great book this is and one which reveals new treasures with each visit to its pages. Let us continue to celebrate it and ensure its place in both public and private worship for many more generations to come.

Neil Hitt is a member of Chester Branch

The Revd Martin Garner

Many members of the Prayer Book Society, especially from the Oxford Branch, have visited the interesting old parish of Ewelme in its beautiful rural setting, and been welcomed there by the vicar, Martin Garner. A rare no-go area for modern-language services, it was the subject of a feature in the *Journal* several years ago. The Oxford Branch was due to hold its AGM there again later this year had it not been for Martin's premature death, which is a sad loss to the Society and the church at large. For some months he had suffered a period of

rather poor health, but his death on 16 January was unexpected when it came. He lost his wife Audrey some years ago, but leaves a daughter and three sons.

In the Oxford heat for the Cranmer Awards, Martin was regularly one of the judges. He had a good rapport with young people.

Martin was a diligent student of the Bible, a faithful pastor and a devoted user of the Book of Common Prayer. His thoughtful and sincere reading of the Prayer Book services was always helpful to the hearers. He was friendly and approachable, and had a lively

sense of humour. He will be greatly missed.

Martin Garner owed his appointment to Ewelme indirectly to the Prayer Book Society. He was invited to preach at an Oxford Branch event held in Reading in 1993, which was attended by the patron of Ewelme, Captain Wright, a member of the PBS, who was on the look-out for a suitable priest! Please pray for the present patrons and parish representatives of Ewelme and the associated parishes as they look for a suitable successor to Martin.

Roger Beckwith

Discerning the Body

By Andy Hawes

Using the Prayer Book Order for Holy Communion during Lent has been a chastening experience. In many respects the contemporary language liturgy is friendlier – it has an open, even relaxed structure, in which to be and pray. In the Prayer Book liturgy language of piercing intensity penetrates the mind and imagination. There is no hiding place for the half-hearted. I suspect that is one of the reasons for its widespread and tragic demise – it goes ‘too far’ and ‘too deep’.

There is a directness about the language of the Prayer Book that communicates the Lord’s presence in the Eucharist in such a way as to strip off the finer nuances of eucharistic devotion. The exhortation at the time of Holy Communion warns that if we do not come to the Lord recognizing our own sinfulness in penitence and faith, we cannot be ‘meet partakers of those holy mysteries’. If we ‘receive the same unworthily, not considering the Lord’s body, we kindle God’s wrath against us; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death’. There is, of course, an echo here in contemporary liturgy; ‘Lord I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall be healed.’ But that does sound a little half-hearted.

What is missing from modern liturgy is any clear statement that Holy Communion is a physical encounter with God. For parishes that pray the prayer of humble access there is the prayer ‘that our sinful bodies made be made clean by his body’ but in some way the Lord’s presence in the eucharistic elements is now elevated to the realms of spiritual mystery. In the Prayer Book Christ’s body can and will have a real physical effect on the communicant. It is a simple but stark fact.

Until the advent of the Parish Communion movement in the Church of England, around the time of the Second World War, the widespread custom was for communicants to make their communion at eight in the morning, unless illness or age made this difficult, in which case Holy Communion followed Morning Prayer. The main reason for this practice was to permit a total fast before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. The real presence of the Lord in Holy Communion was felt even at the breakfast table. Would that it

were now! If we do not discern the Lord’s body we bring judgement on ourselves; if as individuals or as eucharistic communities we play ‘hide and seek’ with God in our preparation for Holy Communion the health and fabric of our life in Christ will certainly be touched by ‘divers diseases and sundry kinds of death’. God knows there is a desperate need for us all to seek him afresh in penitence and faith if we are to be ‘meet partakers’.

In a worthy attempt to make the Eucharist inclusive and accessible something has been lost. It is the call to holiness. What is missing is the loving service of total self giving of body, mind and spirit which the Book of Common Prayer expects from each communicant who is called to work out his own salvation in fear and trembling. May the Lord have mercy on all of us who presume to come to his table.

Reprinted from *New Directions* by kind permission of the author

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:

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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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The Prayer Book In Use at...

The Parish Church of St Mary and All Saints, Ellingham

The church is situated off the A338 Bournemouth to Salisbury road about two miles north of the country town of Ringwood in south-west Hampshire. It has stood as a witness to Christian worship for over 800 years. During this time it has given much needed help and support to countless numbers of people. It is a focal point to which Christians throughout the ages have expressed their love, their support and their grateful thanks to Almighty God for all that he has provided.

The first mention found of a church at Ellingham is in a charter dated about 1160 (which is now in the possession of Eton College) in which William de Solariis, a Norman knight, gave to the Abbey of St Sauveur in Normandy and the monks there the Church of St Mary of Alngham. Thus the church at Ellingham became a cell of an alien Benedictine priory and in consequence suffered much hardship in later years.

The church has a small shingled spire which was built in 1884 and which replaced an arcaded bell cote which was erected in 1746 when the tower and the west wall fell down; at the same time a porch in Georgian style was built and contains a fine sundial painted blue and gilded in the tympanum.

Ellingham has no chancel arch, which is unusual, its place being filled by a screen, on top of which is placed the rood loft and two plastered



partitions, both extending to the roof and dividing the chancel and the nave. The original screen is decorated with stencilled roses in red and fleur-de-lis in yellow, with two censuring angels about two feet high on either side. The present screen dating from 1556 exhibits paintings of the





Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and four texts, together with the Royal Arms of Charles II dated 1671. This later screen, which hides the earlier one, may well be the reason for the preservation and survival of the medieval screen. One other church in Somerset appears to have a similar claim.

The reredos, which is considered by many to be the work of Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott, contains images representing the four evangelists. An earlier reredos is situated at the west end and is thought to be the work of Grinling Gibbons. The Harrison and Harrison organ is widely regarded as one of the best small organs to be found in the south of England.

Ellingham has some of the finest embroideries to be seen in any of our churches, including pew runners, hassocks and altar frontals. It has an active choir of seventeen who regularly sing at morning and evening services.

It is very much a Prayer Book church, with Morning Prayer on the first and third Sundays of the month, Holy Communion on the fourth Sunday, and a family service on the second Sunday; Holy Communion is also sung at the evening service on the second Sunday and Evening Prayer on the fourth.

The churchyard contains the tomb of Dame Alice Lisle (situated to the east of the south door) who was executed for sheltering two men at nearby Moyles Court after Monmouth's defeat at Sedgemoor. In the spring, the churchyard hosts a wonderful display of snowdrops and daffodils.

The Parish of Ellingham is part of the Benefice of Ellingham, Harbridge and Hyde. The incumbent is the Revd Malcolm Riches, The Vicarage, Frogham Hill, Stuckton, Fordingbridge, Hampshire (01425 650853).

The church is open during the day and we most warmly welcome all visitors.

Richard Powell
Licensed Reader

St Mary and All Saints from the outside (top left)

An interior view of the church (above)

Some of the church's fine collection of embroidered altar frontals (below from left to right) Lent, Trinity, Whitsuntide and the King of Glory



A Call from the Prayer Book Society's Little Sister: The Scottish Prayer Book Society Launches a New Initiative

By Stuart G. Hall, Chairman of the Scottish PBS

Most members of the Prayer Book Society probably know nothing about the Scottish Prayer Book Society, or even about the Scottish Episcopal Church which it serves. Anglicans are of course a small minority of the faithful north of the border, but they are active and respected, an independent Province of the Anglican Communion.

We also have a particularly good Prayer Book. It was consolidated in 1929 out of old Scottish liturgical traditions, which were somewhat different from the English, from the familiar 1662 book, and from those scholarly and pastoral influences which also affected the 1928 revision in England. The Scottish Prayer Book has a rich variety, additional to rather than substituted for the 1662 provisions – we have Compline and two additional Litanies, for instance.

At its annual Festival and General Meeting this year at St John's, Perth on 14 May the Scottish Prayer Book Society will launch a new programme. This will add to its past activities a new spiritual initiative. The members are being asked to adopt a rule of private, spoken prayer, based on the texts for daily prayer set out in the Scottish Prayer Book.

All members are being sent a paper inviting them to make a rule of daily prayer. The simplest and briefest would be to say the Lord's Prayer twice a day. The 'gold standard', which the most ardent will aspire to, would be to say Morning and Evening Prayer (or Compline) every day. Most of us will achieve something in between.

The public worship of our church now centres almost exclusively on the eucharistic liturgy. In that area, the Society has done its best to promote, support and (not least) to record the continuing use of the older rites of 1929 and 1970. These, with their stately language and strong theology have merits, which ought not to be forgotten. But the modern language of the 'Blue Book', the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982, is likely to prevail. The Society now wishes to draw the attention of its members, and of the wider church, to the spiritual tradition of daily prayer in the Prayer Book. Properly used, this should provide the context for the Sunday Eucharistic gathering.

It is true that our church has an elaborate and imaginative modern book of *Daily Prayer*. But the Prayer Book here has the advantage: it is easier and more straightforward to use. Besides, the old rites of matins and evensong are still rich in the memory of those who worshipped with them on Sundays in years past. They also have highly singable chants and tunes. And some of those go back to Reformation times, when these prayers were said and sung daily as the cutting edge of Reformation worship, in Scotland as well as England.

So when we meet at St John's, Perth on 14 May 2008, every member will have received a Call to Prayer, inviting each one of them to make a rule using some parts of the Prayer Book offices, matins, evensong, and compline. Some will start very humbly, as we have said, with the Lord's Prayer. Some may say the daily psalms as appointed. Some may use one of the canticles (*Venite, Te Deum, or Magnificat* for instance), perhaps adding to it a short Bible reading. Some may say the Collects.

This initiative takes up something which many members already do. The clergy, of course, are expected to read some form of daily prayer, whether traditional or modern. But there are a few members of our Society who already say the whole of matins and evensong. There are some who at a distance all say compline the same evening of the week during Lent. There are those who have negotiated weekly 'slots' for Prayer Book offices of prayer with their local incumbent, when they use the church building.

We cannot expect that this will all work smoothly from the start. There are all sorts of problems. Not least is the embarrassment of spoken prayer, and about such things as kneeling and standing privately or in small groups. There is also more than one series of readings available for daily prayer. Sorting out questions like these will take time.

We believe that if we make a start, and pray together like this, we shall share the prayer of our Lord for us, for the wider church, and for the world he came to save. One reason for writing this little piece is that there may be others in England who would be glad to join in and pray with us. Praying with the

Prayer Book is not a private hobby!

Copies of the Scottish Prayer Book (1929) can be obtained from The General Synod Office, 21 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EE (e-mail: office@scotland.anglican.org). There will be a copy of our leaflet, The Scottish Prayer Book Society as a Fellowship of Prayer: A call to members of the Society, on our new website <http://www.scottish-prayer-book.co.uk>. Other information will appear on that from time to time.

We would welcome the supporting prayers of all the church in this enterprise.

Stuart G. Hall is Chairman of the Scottish Prayer Book Society

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Let's Not Do Anything Physical in Church Today

By Neil Inkley

You must have noticed how difficult it has become for people to be engaged quietly in thoughtful processes these days. They have to be 'physically proactive'. 'Proactive' is a favoured word to cover a multitude of fidgets. For example, when 'notables' in the world of football have died, we used to remember them in a two-minute silence. Nowadays the unsavoury factions of the crowd cannot be trusted not to shout obscene remarks which would be audible in a silence. And even the respectful are daunted at the prospect of two whole minutes of not doing anything. Unbearable! So now we remember the departed with two minutes' applause instead. As well as (hopefully) blotting out the obscenities, it gives everybody something to do.

This practice of clapping is spreading to funerals and the passing of corteges. Applause keeps us physically busy and spares us the challenge of a call to thought. Similar 'proactive' motivations have extended to entertainment. *Big Brother* (pardon me for the mention of it) panders to our sense of participation through action – believing that our vote, our telephone call, counts in deciding who is turned out of the house. Again, we endure weeks-long series of deadly boring competitions which, rather than quickly finding a winner, proceed to eliminate one contestant at a time in each weekly episode. Why? Because instead of watching and listening, people feel they have to DO something. So they vote interactively.

'Press the red button now'.

'Telephone this number to eliminate A, that number to eliminate B'.

They feel that they are 'hands on', and hurrah for interactivity.

Watch youngsters. Nervous ticks have been superseded by mobile phone manipulation. Almost every waking minute fingers flick round the keyboards, screens and cameras – even if, indeed predominantly so, they are not actually being used. Texts that hardly need to go are sent. At all costs, keep manipulating.

All this fidgeting, ever-at-it activity, has spread into church. At its lowest level is the 'We-must-join-in' syndrome. The thought that the priest should gather up the prayers of the people

and express them to God whilst the people are pensively silent, spreads panic. We MUST join in. Don't leave us to cerebral-only activity, we need to be physically active at all times.

By way of illustration, in one of the modern rites, during the Prayer of Consecration (surely when people ought to want to be at their quietest), the congregation makes eighteen spoken entries and exits into its progression.

An intercession rota for lay folk becomes a 'given'. Sometimes lay people assist with the distribution (also on rotas) whilst priests remain in their stalls. We used to kneel quietly to share in the 'Peace of God which passeth all understanding' at the end of the Holy Communion service. Now there is a perceived need to be much more 'part of it' than that. So our services have what I call 'amidships pandemonium' where we all rush about clasping hands (and bodies) and proclaiming 'peace' (now there's a contradiction).

Look at the body language and you will soon discern that these are personal greetings being passed rather than any concept of a sharing of the Lord's peace. But a good level of physical involvement has been attained; we have been preserved from cerebral quietude.

Surely a return to less frenetic deportment would benefit us all. Could we not re-visit and PONDER. 'Be still for the presence of the Lord'? Perhaps we need a slogan – 'Thinking is good for you'. Follow it up with 'Doing some thinking helps you to think yet more'.

The structure of the Book of Common Prayer gives such clear-cut opportunities, and 'knowing what is coming' leaves one freed from concern about being seen or heard to get things right. The fact that the priest says much on behalf of the people leaves the people free to concentrate upon his words and to ponder upon them and around them.

The very lack of physical activity sponsors the cerebral activity which can so refresh us. Dignity completes the prescription for a more meaningful, more thoughtful relationship with God.

Neil Inkley is *Honorary Secretary of the Blackburn Branch*

The Thomas Cranmer Choir

About twelve years ago, after a serious liturgical dispute at their church in the Chester diocese, half the members of the choir decided to leave. They wanted, however, to continue singing and worshipping together. So they practised regularly in each others' houses, formed themselves into a peripatetic band of singers and offered their services to churches with no choir of their own. They particularly wanted to help congregations who remained faithful to the Book of Common Prayer.

Their first service was at Over Peover, and before long they found themselves in great demand. Wanting to expand, they applied to the Lottery Fund and were given a grant. The late Miss Edith Matthias of the Chester branch, a great benefactress to the Prayer Book Society, also gave generous financial support.

By 1996 the singers had acquired a rehearsal room, robes and a name – The Thomas Cranmer Choir. Based in the North West of England, they have sung in parish churches large and small, in Roman Catholic churches and Methodist chapels. They have spread their wings as far as Notre Dame Cathedral and the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, to St Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent and the Church of Our Lady in Brugge.

In 2006 they gave a concert in the church of a tiny village, Lermoos, in the Austrian Tyrol, in aid of the organ restoration fund. A year later they were invited to return, to celebrate the completion of the work.

In addition to church music, the choir perform other music and songs. They sing at weddings and funerals and have raised thousands of pounds for various charities.

With the high standard of their singing under their genial conductor, Keith Yearsley MBE, the choir adds greatly to the sense of occasion at special church services. They make a visual impact too in their snowy white surplices and purple cassocks, with matching Canterbury caps for the ladies. If no organist is available, they can provide one.

'We feel we are doing our little bit to promote the work of the Prayer Book Society', says one of the choir – and they certainly are. Of the twenty-four members, about half belong to the PBS.

If you would like the Thomas Cranmer Choir to sing in your church, ring 01625 424215. They are very busy, so early booking is advised! No fees or expenses are payable, although donations are welcome.

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Prayerbook Oratorio

By David Owen Norris

Prayerbook, an oratorio about tradition and change received its second performance on Saturday 26 April 2008 at St Mary's Parish Church, Andover (the premiere was at the English Music Festival by the Oxford Bach Choir in October 2006). Here, David Owen Norris explains how the work came to be written.

It was always my intention to be a composer – I left Oxford with a composition scholarship. But the musical fashionistas of the mid-seventies disapproved of my melodic approach, and I found greater satisfaction in following alternative careers as a piano soloist, accompanist, organist, broadcaster, researcher and teacher. I was lucky in all these: I accompanied Dame Janet Baker and Sir Peter Pears, I played piano concertos all round Australia and North America, at the Lincoln Center and at the Proms, I had several long-running series on the BBC, I ran a summer school in Chicago, I matched neglected repertoire with forgotten instruments, I discovered new works by Elgar, and I held Professorships at Gresham College and at the University of Southampton.

Reaching my early fifties, I realized I could either just carry on with more of the same, or I could at last apply a by now mature and experienced musical mind to composition. I dispensed with the services of my concert agent, thinking that I would thereby gain time for writing. That plan backfired – once I could follow my own musical interests free from commercial considerations, even more work poured in, work that I really wanted to do. So the pieces I compose have to be pieces that I really want to write.

High up the list was a means of setting the beautiful prose of the Prefaces of the Book of Common Prayer. For nearly five hundred years they have explained why the book they preface is a radical departure from the past. 'There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, that in continuance of time hath not been corrupted' begins the Preface of 1549. Radical, but not too radical. 'It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England to keep the mean between the two extremes' comments the Preface of 1662, with a justified hint of self-satisfaction. The message of moderation is timely in many fields, not least in musical composition.

I felt that music could reflect and amplify the portent of the words.

As I considered how I could construct a text that would convey not only the historical controversies of innovation, but also the prayerful praise they were designed to enhance, I found that long-loved words began to arrange themselves into a Trinitarian form. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost found parallels with Faith, Hope and Love (the word used in Tyndale's early translation of St Paul); with the Old Testament, the New Testament and various Apocalyptic visions (from the magnificent Doom painting in St Thomas's Church in Salisbury to Blake's strained human forms); and even with the Past, the Present, and the Future. Just as musical language could illustrate (rather than merely accompany) the political point of modified radicalism, so I realized that the Father could be represented by Harmony, the Son by Melody, and the Holy Ghost by Rhythm. The combination of Harmony, Melody and Rhythm, of course, symbolizes God the Three-in-One.

Thus armed, and encouraged in the project by Em Marshall, who commissioned the piece for the English Music Festival, I set to work on the music. The first piece I actually wrote down, during rehearsals in Prague for Jaroslav Jezek's Jazz Piano Concerto, was the Calypso, a setting of 'Hail, gladdening light' for unaccompanied trebles. Soon afterwards, I found myself in New York for a couple of weeks. I am fond of walking in the uncleared forests of northern Manhattan (I've seen eagles and wild turkeys just twelve miles north of the Empire State Building) and in previous years these forest walks had led me to think of setting the Litany. (So, that music has been in my mind for some years, but not so long as the music for my favourite words in the Prayer Book: In Quires and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem.) This particular New York visit, partly to record songs by Schoenberg, partly to perform eighteenth-century piano concertos at the Frick Collection, involved a good deal of travel on the A train, and it was on those journeys that I wrote some of the parts. Others I worked out walking in April sunshine of about eighty-five degrees on Washington Heights.

The rest of the piece I composed while driving about southern England. I could write nothing down, of course. I like to think that this helped me to coin memorable material. At every journey's end I would sit in the car and write in my manuscript book. I recall that the organ fugue was put together between Blandford Forum and Salisbury, and I have a very clear memory of conceiving the massive trombone scale of the Sevenfold Amen as I trudged across the university car park at Southampton.

If this informal reminiscence stirs your interest, please read the next document, which begins with the list of Contents, showing the shape of the piece. My formal Preface precedes the full libretto, which is followed by a list of authors and composers. John Keble, the eponym of my own college at Oxford, is prominent among them. It so happens that the vicar of Long Buckby to whom I owe my late arrival at Anglicanism (and a great deal more) was a Keble man, and I have dedicated the piece to him.

The first performance was given by the Oxford Bach Choir. They enjoyed it so much that I thought Andover Choral Society, which I have the honour to conduct, might like to try it.

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.

OBERAMMERGAU

The 2010 Passion Play

17th–24th September 2010

For members of the Prayer Book Society
with the Reverend Paul Thomas
Vice-Chairman of the Prayer Book Society

The famous play has been performed every ten years since 1634 by the inhabitants of Oberammergau in Bavaria. Visited by Christians from all over the world, demand for tickets always exceeds supply, as our experience with the 2000 Passion Play demonstrated. We are offering a seven-night package for members of the Prayer Book Society that includes a delightful stay near Lake Como in Italy, just the other side of the Alps, with opportunities to visit Bergamo, Verona, Lake Garda and other places of interest. This will be followed by two nights in Oberammergau, with the Passion Play.

Please get in touch with us as soon as possible for full details. Prices range from £995 to £1,200. We expect to use flights from a number of airports in the UK and Ireland. Regular departures are planned from May to September in 2010. Refundable deposits are now being taken.

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Prayer Books for Africa

A New Prayer Book Society Venture

It is easy to fall into the bad habit of taking our work with the Prayer Book to be backward-looking and defensive as, unfortunately, it sometimes has to be. We should bear in mind that there are far more copies of Common Prayer in daily and weekly use now than there were in the first hundred years of the book's life. The authentic 1662 Book of Common Prayer (not the alternative-service style liturgies that pirate the same name) is used in Africa by growing and developing parts of the Anglican Communion, and some of them want to use it more!

But our African brethren are often not as well off as we are, even to the extent of finding it hard to provide themselves with prayer books. For some years our sister society, the Prayer Book Society of the USA, has been shipping Prayer Books to Africa in large quantities. They have now asked us to join in. The Board of Trustees has agreed that this is an opportunity which should be grasped: to fulfil the second of the Society's stated Objects, 'encourage the use of the Book of Common Prayer

as the norm for all principal services throughout ... Churches in the Anglican tradition'.

The immediate need is for no less than 700 prayer books for St John's Cathedral, Fort Portal, Uganda. (Imagine a provincial English cathedral where they need seven hundred prayer books!) The Dean wishes all services there to be 1662, and the prayer books would make this possible, but it is beyond the means of the local church to supply 700. The Board of Trustees has agreed to make a start by donating one hundred to be paid for by the Society, but we thought it right to ask the membership for help. Perhaps the idea of exporting prayer books may also appeal to others outside the Society.

In bulk, with the trade discount, ordinary pew editions can be supplied for just over £6 a copy, plus transport costs. So immediately we are looking for around £3,700. But this is not a one-off request: **there is a big demand for prayer books overseas** from our not-so-comfortably-off fellow Anglicans. So the Society is establishing a special fund which we expect to be drawn upon

indefinitely: for the Book of Common Prayer can have a great future if we all do what we can.

Used prayer books in good condition are also very acceptable. If a church is ill-advised enough to discard its prayer books we have a chance of turning a bad deed into a good one. Odd copies are probably not much use, nor copies that have been worn out, but sets in good condition ought to be allowed to fulfil their purpose. Anyone who knows of such sets is requested to get in touch with the PBS Office at Copyhold Farm. But in the main we are looking for new prayer books.

This is surely a cause we can wholeheartedly support, and we ask readers who agree to contribute accordingly. Show how much you care for the future of the Book of Common Prayer!

Please, if you are a taxpayer sign up for Gift Aid, which enables the Society as a registered charity to reclaim tax without any loss to the donor, thus enrolling the British Government in supplying Prayer Books to Africa.

I wish to support the 'Prayer Books for Africa' appeal

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I want the Prayer Book Society to treat all donations I have made over the past six years and all donations I make hereafter as Gift Aid donations, until I notify otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer

Signature _____ Date _____

Please send your donation to:

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IMPORTANT: If you prefer not to cut your magazine, please enclose a note with your donation clearly indicating that it is for the Prayer Books for Africa appeal

News from the Branches

Birmingham

Well-Earned Retirement for Branch Secretary



Miss Mary Thorp has recently retired as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Birmingham Branch of the PBS, which she founded in 1989.

With a small and enthusiastic committee, the Branch has maintained a regular programme of services and events, with the most popular being an outing on the first Saturday of July (the nearest date to Thomas Cranmer's birthday – when the weather has always been fine!).

For some years the destination was a place connected with Cranmer's life, and members of the clergy and academia on the spot always made the visit interesting. When this source was exhausted visits were made to cathedrals, with talks and library tours; and to interesting historical churches.

Birmingham's achievements have included the promotion of the Sunday evening corporate act of prayer, composition of a Branch collect and the production of a bookmark and embroidered offertory bags for publicity purposes.

'It has been a rewarding experience working with a friendly and happy group, great in spirit if not in numbers', Mary said.

Mary is succeeded as Branch Secretary and Treasurer by the Revd Dr John Breadon.

Exeter

On a sunny spring day in early March, a Lenten Quiet Day was attended by members and non-members of Exeter and Truro Branches at Hampton Manor, Stoke Climsland, just across the Tamar in Cornwall. The Quiet Day was conducted by the Regional Trustee for the South West, Canon Eric Woods, Vicar of Sherborne Abbey, Dorset.

His subject, entitled 'A Breath from Elsewhere', was inspired by chapter headings of a recently purchased second-hand

book on gardening and was delivered in three addresses, the first of which was called 'The Unknown Regions'.

In this, Canon Woods enlightened us on three conscious areas which he likened to three meadows. The first referred to the busyness of our everyday lives which takes up most of our day.

The second epitomized our approach to prayer and how we may achieve this by quiet awareness of the sounds around us, starting from the furthest away and gradually moving to our own breathing and heartbeat.

The third meadow is entered when we sense the Divine Presence in the stillness of our being.

After a break for lunch, the second address continued with the gardening theme, 'Dead-heading the Guilt'.

Here, Canon Woods commented on the inappropriateness of guilt, e.g. apologizing for sins of our ancestors (slavery); of our personal responsibility for our actions and the

joy of received forgiveness; the cost of that forgiveness especially to God and how our Lord handled situations of guilt presented to him.

The third address was entitled 'There are no Right Ways'.

Finally, we were encouraged to experiment and to bear in mind that, as we progress in our spiritual lives, a practice which we may not have found particularly helpful in the past, could well be beneficial to us now.

Throughout, Canon Woods made many references to the Book of Common Prayer and how its informed use assists us and enriches our understanding.

There was time for meditation and prayer in between each address when we were able to avail ourselves of the peaceful garden and the chapel.

After a delicious tea, the day concluded with Evensong conducted by Exeter Branch Chairman the Revd Jeremy Hummerstone at the Parish Church, Stoke Climsland by kind permission of the Vicar, The Revd William Stuart-White, who read the first lesson from the second chapter of Genesis.

Everyone found the day both uplifting and helpful, enhanced by the peaceful surroundings of Hampton Manor.

We are indebted to Canon Woods for his wise words giving us much to contemplate in our preparation for Holy Week.

Oxford

Presentation of Prayer Books to Ordinands

For some years now, the Society has presented a standard pew edition of the Book of Common Prayer to each ordinand beginning training in the Church of England. This year for the first time, the Oxford Branch has followed the example of a number of other PBS Branches in presenting a handsome leather-bound Prayer Book to each ordinand being ordained in its diocese, at the completion of training.

On 4 January 2008, the Oxford Branch President, the Revd Dr Roger Beckwith, accompanied by PBS National Chairman Miss Prudence

Dailey, visited the ordination retreat being held at St Mary's Convent, Wantage to present Prayer Books to the five ordinands about to be ordained Deacon. They were welcomed by the Bishop of Reading, and the retreat leader, the Revd Antonia Cretney, and briefly addressed the candidates before making their presentation. The gift was very warmly received, and the Oxford Branch hope to repeat this regularly on future occasions.

Salisbury

Spring meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch held at Newhouse, Redlynch,

the home of members Mr and Mrs George Jeffreys, was well attended by Branch members and representatives of the Bath and Wells and Winchester branches.

Following a buffet lunch, and opening prayers, the Chairman, Mr Ian Woodhead, thanked the Officers and Committee for their hard work, and members for their support during the year. Meetings had been well attended and Branch membership had risen.

The speaker, the Revd Stephen Trott, Vicar of Pitsford with Boughton, Northamptonshire, a Church Commissioner, explained the development and present role of

the Church Commissioners. Branch Vice-Chairman Miss Sheila Houliston thanked him for his interesting talk.

After tea, Evensong was conducted at the Parish Church of St Mary, Redlynch, by the Revd Derek Frost, Chaplain to the Branch.

Slip of the tongue

Our former Branch Secretary, now our President, is 100 years old. Recently she fell and cut her head and had to go to hospital to be stitched. The young doctor stitching her asked how old she was and when she told him he said something which amused them both very much. 'Well,' he said, 'I've never stitched a centurion before.'

Psalm 121

By Brian G. Bucknall

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.

Hebrew scholars believe many psalms, including Psalm 121, were written well before 500 BC. Their thoughts are that Psalm 121 may have been written for and sung by pilgrims while travelling to and from the temple at Jerusalem. The districts outside Jerusalem are hilly and travellers were at risk from bandits. The pilgrims believed, however, that they would be protected by the Lord from bandits and other perils. They may have thought the Lord resided in the hills, possibly because he spoke to Moses upon Mount Sinai.

I first came across Psalm 121 at primary school. At this school we were fortunate to have a morning assembly taking the form of a slightly shortened version of matins. The daily psalm was selected from a repertoire of about ten psalms which included Psalm 121. We sang the psalm to the very attractive chant from Beethoven (based upon the *Sonata Pathetique*) although this chant in the *Cathedral Psalter* is the one set for Psalm 122. But Psalm 122 was not in the school repertoire.

As a then schoolboy I found the combination of the words of Psalm 121 and the music very moving. There are some memorable and striking verses in

the psalm and the music conveys and reinforces the appropriate mood. I have been singing this psalm now for many years but in grown-up life the correct chant Turlé in A has been reinstated and in my choral days the hauntingly beautiful setting by Walford Davies was occasionally sung. Sadly, in recent years, possibly because of difficulties with church choirs and congregations, there is a growing tendency to say the psalms rather than sing them. At a recent funeral I was pleased to see Psalm 121 was in the order of service but was doubly disappointed to find that it was to be said and that it was a modern-language translation, the words of the first two verses being:

I lift up my eyes to the hills: from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord: the maker of heaven and earth.

Not as poetic as the BCP version above. The whole point about psalms is they were originally Hebrew poems and therefore English translations should reflect the poetry but, sadly, modern-language versions usually fail to achieve this. In the Authorized Version the words of the psalms are slightly different from those in the BCP. This is because the Authorized Version is a slightly later translation than the Coverdale Bible upon which the BCP psalms are based and by and large the psalms in the Authorized Version tend to be less poetic.

Furthermore, the psalms were set to music in the Hebrew temples. Without music half the spirit of the psalms is lost. One can imagine the effect of saying hymns! I wish the clergy would recognize this deficiency. Maybe building up a repertoire of, say, a dozen psalms would be a first step to encourage their singing. The problem is the *Common Worship Lectionary* which provides a three-year cycle of the 150 psalms for Sunday worship, and few congregations, if any, will know the musical settings for them all.

There has been a very recent (2007) new translation of the psalms from the original Hebrew. The first two verses of Psalm 121 translate:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where will my help come?

My help is from the Lord: maker of heaven and earth.

This translation is nearer the modern-language translation above rather than the BCP version except the high ground has now been given mountainous status. In both modern-language versions there is a question mark at the end of the first verse. This might suggest the Lord does not reside in the hills or mountains. Instead, the pilgrim might be fearful of the perils lurking in the high ground and is asking from where help may be obtained.

In the BCP version there is no question mark at the end of the first verse. Its absence suggests help will come from the hills. But a further clue comes from *Collins Dictionary*. It states the word *whence* means asking the question *from where?* The dictionary also says *whence* should not be preceded by the word *from* which is superfluous. So the presence of *from* in the BCP version suggests a reinforced question thus according with the recent Hebrew translation.

Moving on to the next two verses:

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel: shall neither slumber nor sleep.

In both modern-language versions *to stumble* replaces *to be moved*. This may well, of course, suggest protection not just from falling over but from all hazards. The memorable next verse uses repetition to achieve a striking effect since *slumber* and *sleep* have identical meanings. Interestingly this phraseology, stating round-the-clock protection, is retained in the modern-language translations.

The next two verses continue the protection theme with another memorable sentence:

The Lord himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand.

So that the sun shall not burn thee by day: neither the moon by night.

In both modern-language translations the word *burn* is replaced by *strike*. In the Authorized Version the word *smite* is used. While the evidence suggests the original Hebrew meant the sun hitting you, in practice the sun can't do this! But it can burn you and indeed in a Mediterranean summer the mid-day sun might well do this if you failed to take cover. So I suggest Coverdale got the spirit of the translation right.

The 'moon by night' phrase is either poetic licence or possibly, as some Hebrew scholars suggest, protection from madness caused by the moon. The word 'lunatic' is derived from the Latin word *luna* meaning moon. But I question the belief that madness can be caused by the moon since I don't think I have ever come across or heard of a person so afflicted. Before the days of artificial light and atmospheric pollution the moon and stars would shine far more brightly. I well remember the occasional brilliant winter skies of blacked-out Britain during the war. In the Mediterranean countries the sky would frequently be clear and the moon would shine with greater intensity. Maybe this did result in some cases of madness and therefore protection from this phenomenon might be sought.

The final two verses are:

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in: from this time forth for evermore.

The theme of these concluding verses is to reassure the pilgrim and anyone else singing or saying this psalm that protection will continue for the rest of his or her life. The recent Hebrew translation suggests 'thy going out and thy coming in' means protection in all the comings and goings of everyday life.

So having sung this psalm one's immediate feelings are joyful in that all seems to be well and will remain so. The *Gloria* becomes an uplifting and fitting conclusion and a means of saying thank you to the Lord for having been able to sing such a marvellous psalm.

Brian G. Bucknall

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Letters

From Joy Rabbetts

It is such a pity that your diarist is not a member of the Salisbury Branch of the Society. If he were, he would be aware that for the last seven years the Branch has held a well-organized, well-attended Advent Carol Service.

The programme is compiled by two sisters, daughters of the vicarage, who know exactly what they are about. The bell ringers are experienced and the resident organist is a joy to hear. The readers include service and police officers, teachers and lecturers among others, so your melancholy correspondent would have no difficulty in hearing them, even if his hearing has declined in the last thirty years.

Sadly our sympathetic priest is about to retire, so we may well have to find another church (and nearby inn for lunch of course). So, when the details of our next Advent Carol Service are in place, may we please put a large advertisement in the *Journal* and a warm invitation to members of other Branches to join us?

Joy Rabbetts

Silk Hay, High Street, Stalbridge,
Dorset DT10 2LH

From Ann C. Skinner

I read the diary account of an Advent Carol Service with some surprise. A rather unconvincing and verbose description of a dreary service which took place thirty years ago hardly sheds lustre on the PBS so why was it published? And does the diarist always record his daily experiences in such detail? If so he must have filled several tomes by now. And why the anonymity?

Ann C. Skinner

59a Kings End, Ruislip, Middlesex

Editor's note: It has transpired that the diary account titled 'Thirty Years Ago' in the last issue of the *Journal* was not a genuine account. We apologize for any offence caused.

From J. J. Booth

Perhaps the difference between the Book of Common Prayer and *Common Worship* might be summed up in one short question: 'Which William do you prefer – Shakespeare or McGonagall?'

J. J. Booth

Poplars, Kettlestone, Fakenham,
Norfolk NR21 0JB

From John Hunwicke

I do not wish to disturb or insult Mr Peachey's moving expression of his beliefs, but the historical facts are not as he describes them.

The Thirty-nine Articles are not part of the Prayer Book, although they are commonly printed with it (and I have no objection to this). They are not included in the Book Appended to the Act of Uniformity of 1662.

More importantly, it quite simply is not true that 'In 1563 Archbishop Parker ... changed none of the wording of Article 28 from that of 1553'. As Gibson's 1896 commentary on the Articles (which prints the texts in Latin and English of both sets of Articles) puts it, 'In no Article are the changes introduced at the revision of 1563 of greater importance than in this. It is not too much to say that they completely transform it and change its character.' In fact, we know who drafted the 1563 Article and what he meant by it. Complaints were made by the Bishop of Gloucester about the word 'only' ('the body of Christ is given, taken and eaten ... only after a heavenly and spiritual manner') on the grounds that 'it did take away the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament'. Bishop Guest of Rochester asserted that 'the article was of my own penning' and wrote that the word 'did not exclude the presence of Christ's Body from the sacrament, but only the grossness and sensibleness in the receiving thereof; for ... though he [the communicant] take Christ's Body in his hand, receive it in his mouth, and that corporally, naturally, really, substantially and

carnally, as the Doctors do write, yet did he not for all that see it, feel it, smell it or taste it.'

It is also a fact that even some Catholic theologians in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries admitted that the terms in which the article writes about transubstantiation make clear that it is not designed to deny the Council of Trent's definition of that doctrine, but only the sort of medieval legend according to which the Host when broken might bleed.

John Hunwicke

28 St Thomas' Street, Oxford OX1 1JL

From Ian Woodhead

I recently came across 'The Crawley Chronicle', the parish magazine of St John's Church, Crawley, Sussex, which was where Ann and I were married in 1958. The magazine was dated May 1959.

The Whit Sunday services taken by the rector were listed as follows:

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

9.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Matins

12.15 p.m. Holy Communion

4.00 p.m. Holy Baptism

6.30 p.m. Evensong.

This is a far cry from what happened recently on Easter Sunday in a living in Salisbury Diocese where there are three parishes. The vicar told two of the parishes they would not be getting any Easter Sunday services in their church and if any of the congregation wished to attend an Easter service they would have to travel to the remaining parish church where there would be two services in the morning.

In my opinion this does not engender in parishioners a sense of belonging to their village church, particularly those who may only attend church on the principal festivals. Is this an isolated case or do other members have similar tales to tell about their parish churches? I find it a very sad reflection on the Church of England.

From John Myles

Writing in the Advent edition of the PBS Journal the Revd Robert Webb describes the value attached to the Book of Common Prayer by a Cuban Baptist Minister he spoke with in Las Palmas. Similarly I have noted that the Minister at the United Reformed Church I attend with my wife, a Scot, frequently uses prayers from the BCP.

Might I suggest that consideration be given to the idea of presenting Nonconformist Ministers with a copy of the Prayer Book at the time of their Ordination, as is done at present when Church of England clergy are ordained?

The more clergy and churchgoers of all denominations are exposed to the sound doctrine and glorious language of the Book of Common Prayer, the better!

John Myles

17 Audley Gate, Peterborough PE3 9PG

Editor's note: Thank you for the suggestion, and for making the general point that Christians of other denominations value the BCP, but I am told that the Prayer Book Society has insufficient resources to present all

Nonconformist Ministers with a copy of the Prayer Book at the time of their Ordination.

From Roderick Thomson

This card (see below) is handed out to tourists at the Gross Munster, Zurich. How friendly – and respectful of our Prayer Book.

Roderick Thomson

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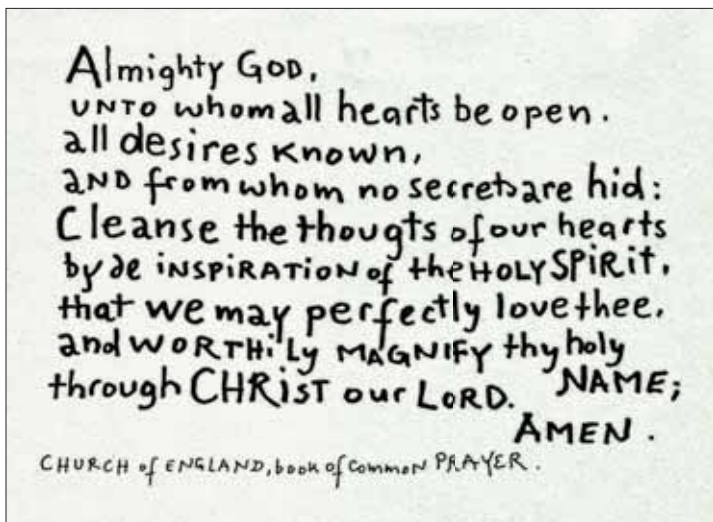
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Forthcoming Events

Blackburn

Sunday 14 September 2008.

5.00 p.m. A visit to Heysham, the most ancient Christian site in Lancashire, followed at 6.30 p.m. by BCP Evensong.

Chester

Sunday 14 September 2008.

3.00 p.m. Summer Choral Evensong. This will be the official Celebration and Service of Thanksgiving to mark the 700th Anniversary of St Michael's Church, Baddiley. The service will be conducted and the sermon preached by the Right Revd Alan Chesters, former Bishop of Blackburn.

Saturday 15 November 2008.

Chester Diocese Heat, Cranmer Awards Competition. St. John the Baptist Church, Guilders Sutton, near Chester.

Chichester

Saturday, 11 October 2008.

10.30 a.m. Chichester Cathedral BCP Choral Communion, followed by pre-bookable lunch and speaker in the Vicars' Hall, in the precincts. For further details and bookings, contact the Chichester secretary, Mrs Ada Zahoui, telephone 01273 463139.

Coventry

Tuesday 8 July 2008.

6.30 for 7.00 p.m. Aston Cantlow. AGM, supper and talk.

As in recent years the Branch AGM will be held in the pleasant surroundings of the village hall at Aston Cantlow, preceded by supper at 7.00 p.m. and followed by a talk from a speaker of note on a topic related to the work of the Society.

Note the earlier date than has been usual in recent years. Advance booking for the supper is required.

Thursday 18 September 2008.

11.30 a.m. Branch Outing.

The outing follows the successful pattern established in recent years of a service, a short walk for those who would like one, and lunch. This year we visit St Thomas Becket,

Sutton-under-Brailes, where we will say the regrettably neglected service of Morning Prayer, starting at 11.30 a.m. We propose that those who wish should lunch together afterwards at the nearby Cherington Arms, and that if the weather is suitable the more energetic members of the party will walk the mile or so there from the church by field paths and country lanes. The walk will be led by Chris Hall, Branch Treasurer. For more details and to book a place at lunch, contact Dr Hall on 024 7641 8907 by Tuesday 16 September at the latest.

Saturday 29 November 2008.

3.00 p.m. Guild Chapel, Stratford. Preparation for Advent.

The serious nature of the time of Advent is often lost in the hectic period getting ready for Christmas. On the Saturday before Advent Sunday the Branch offers an opportunity to meet together and remind ourselves of the meaning of this season of the church year. As last year we meet in the Guild Chapel in Stratford-upon-Avon. Ensemble 1685 will again lead the singing.

Further details of any of these events can be obtained from Mr Peter Bolton, Branch Secretary, 01789 840814.

Exeter

Saturday 21 June 2008.

2.30 p.m. Branch meeting at the Church of the Ascension, Crownhill, Plymouth. Talks by the Revd Paul Thomas and the Revd Preb. Paul Hancock, tea and Sung Evensong. The meeting will conclude with a convivial supper nearby.

Hereford

Hereford Branch of Forward in Faith has asked us to publicize the following meeting, to which PBS members are warmly invited.

'The Prayer Book and Women Bishops'

Wednesday 15 October 2008.

2.00–4.00 p.m. St Francis Xavier Church Hall, Broad Street, Hereford.

Speakers: The Bishop of Ebbsfleet; Anthony Kilmister.

(Please note that is not a PBS meeting, and that PBS takes no collective view on the topic of women bishops.)

Leicester

Saturday 14 June 2008.

Tour of churches in the Vale of Belvoir. Details will be mailed to members. Please reserve the date in your diary.

Thursday 4 September 2008.

1.00–5.00 p.m. A Day at Launde Abbey (lunch, tour, tea, Evening Prayer). Plan to arrive at 12.45 p.m. for luncheon at 1.00 p.m.

The cost for the day is £17 with a cheque made out to the Leicestershire PBS and sent to our treasurer Chris Stephens, 10 Beech Road, Oadby, Leics. LE2 5QL (0116 2716086).

Saturday 25 October 2008.

3.00 p.m. Shackerstone St Peter's. Evensong led by the choir of St Peter's, Market Bosworth. The Revd Peter Sheridan will lead the service, and the sermon will be delivered by a member of the Market Bosworth/Sheepy Ministry Team. Refreshments will follow the service.

Saturday 6 December 2008.

10.00 a.m.–12 noon.

Coffee morning hosted by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Edwin Bale, Feckney Grange Farm, Kilby Road, Fleckney LE8 8BQ (01162 402225).

Peterborough

Sunday 6 July 2008.

6.00 p.m. Syresham Church.

Members are invited to a service of Evensong taken by Branch member Colin Simpson who is to be ordained on that day.

Sunday 28 September 2008.

6.00 p.m. Burton Latimer Church.

Service of Evensong for the feast of St Michael and All Angels. Refreshments and bookstall to follow.

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