

JUBILEE MAGAZINE

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THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

Celebrating 50 years

PBS

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Teapots & wine merchants

Madeleine Drage

My mother, after reading Lady Playfair’s letter in the *Telegraph*, which lamented the easing out of the Book of Common Prayer, responded by offering our home as a venue for a meeting.

Having checked the wisdom of holding a public meeting with Daddy first, she drove to Soho, where, in a famous catering shop, she bought two gigantic enamel teapots for

refreshments. Daddy had other ideas. After informing the police about the intended meeting, he alerted our wine merchants and thereafter was able to fortify some very tired and distressed, but eminently respectable, men and women of faith who came to those early meetings.

Only a few names at these meetings remain in my memory: Jack Trefusis and his wife Shirley, Prebendary Hetherington from a parish church in Ealing, Tony Kilmister

and his wife Sheila. The Revd Keith Ensor and his wife Jean also came, until the Revd Ensor became so agitated and upset that his wife thought she would come alone in future and report back to her husband when she returned to Gloucestershire, where they lived!

Miss Madeleine Drage, daughter of Commander and Mrs Charles Drage, who hosted the first meeting of the Prayer Book Action Group on 29th June 1972.

A Jubilee greeting from the Archbishops

The Book of Common Prayer speaks deeply to the profound sense of being part of something larger than ourselves.

It is a witness to our history, and yet its relevance to our contemporary world has never been clearer. In this time of pandemic and fragility, the Book of Common Prayer finds language that speaks to the heart of being human. It gives words and meaning to our mortality and dependence on God, concepts we have often tried to forget in the modern world, but which remain so fundamental to our humanity.

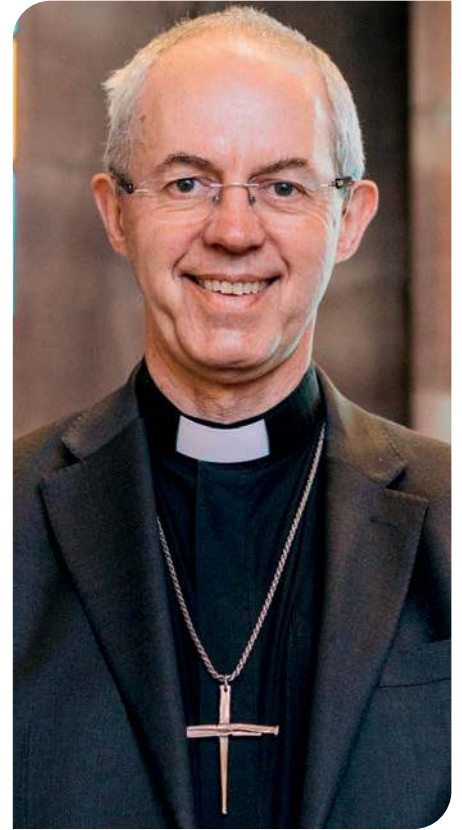
By the grace and goodness of God, the BCP has spread from one candlelit room in Lambeth Palace in the sixteenth century to dozens of countries, thousands of churches and millions of Christians across almost five hundred years. The history of our Church has been woven into the language of this book; it has influenced our culture, given form to so many lives in Christ, and left us all the richer for its beauty, power, and majesty.

As they celebrate their 50th anniversary, I commend the Prayer Book Society's tireless work in proclaiming the Book of Common Prayer's role in our society and our Church today, and keeping alive the words that have been a comfort and an inspiration to so many Christians across the generations. May they be a sign of the liturgy they uphold, in wisdom and faithfulness, for many more years to come.

The Most Revd and Rt Hon. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In the Church of England, we are deeply blessed that the incomparable beauty of the message of God's love for us in Jesus Christ is given to us in the most incomparably beautiful language. On this 50th anniversary, I thank the Prayer Book Society for promoting and celebrating the living tradition of this language and this liturgy: the best words we have for proclaiming the best story we know, God's 'inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ'.

The Most Revd and Rt Hon. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York.





Notes from our Chairman

A special celebration was held at York Minster on Saturday, 19th July 1997, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Prayer Book Society. The Archbishop of York, David Hope, was the celebrant and preacher; Canon Paul Ferguson, now Bishop of Whitby, acted as deacon. The Ven. George Austin, Archdeacon of York, and the Revd Hugh Prosser ('Fr Prosser of Pocklington' as I knew him), Chairman of the York Branch, assisted with the distribution of Holy Communion. The service was sung by the choir of Howden Minster, and in the PBS Newsletter of August 1997, Neil Inkley noted that it was the first time in many years that he had heard both the Epistle and the Gospel intoned.

Following the service, a grand luncheon was served at St William's College. Suitably refreshed, members then repaired to Tempest Anderson Hall for a lecture given by the redoubtable Baroness James of Holland Park. The day of celebration concluded with Choral Evensong at the Minster.

This was, I think, the first PBS event I ever attended. I was fourteen years of age. I had been confirmed by the Archbishop the previous year, and the liturgical rhythms of the Book of Common Prayer were already very much part of my life. I was a server at the eight o'clock Holy Communion and I sang in the choir for the main service (BCP on alternate Sundays); at Evensong, my job was to extinguish the candles after the third Collect. For me, the Prayer Book was just 'normal', and it came as something of a surprise when I discovered that some churches didn't actually use it and that some didn't like it.

It was thanks to the influence of enthusiastic members of the Prayer Book Society, among them Pamela Heap, a feisty retired headmistress and passionate advocate of the BCP; Veronica, Lady Piercy, the churchwarden of a small rural Mission Room where I sometimes played the harmonium and later officiated at Evensong; and the clergyman and crime novelist, Ivon Baker, that I came to be present at the York celebrations and subsequently joined the Society. How thankful I am today for their guidance and encouragement in my teenage years.

Although my membership lapsed when I went to university, I certainly did not give up on the Church or on the

Prayer Book. Indeed, one of my priorities was to find a church with regular BCP services. I remember writing to Ada Zahoui, then Secretary of Chichester West, who kindly furnished me with a list of churches and services in the Bognor/Chichester area. When I restored my membership of the Society, I felt a real sense of homecoming.

Some years later, I was to become Secretary of Chichester West, working alongside Branch Chairman, the Revd Dr Michael Brydon, to whom I am distantly related. Michael was also present at the York celebrations in 1997 and his diary carries the following entry for 19th July: 'Despite the encouraging comments of various chairmen who believed that the Prayer Book was recovering lost ground, many members were concerned that it was being killed off. One lady warned that if the Society did not attract a more youthful membership, they were probably doomed.'

Sitting in York Minster, aged fourteen, I could not have imagined that, twenty-five years later, I would have the immense privilege of being Chairman of the Prayer Book Society in its 50th anniversary year. I must tell you that I had absolutely no intention whatsoever of putting myself forward for the role of Chairman when Prudence Dailey announced her intention to step down. Besides, I already had a

busy schedule with a full-time job and numerous parochial and diocesan responsibilities. I only agreed to have an informal meeting with the Society's Deputy Chairman, David Richardson, to keep a couple of people quiet who had been badgering me to put myself forward! I duly met with David, and within a couple of weeks, found myself in front of an appointments panel. The rest, as they say, is history.

It is a real joy to serve as your Chairman at this very exciting time in the Society's life. I am thrilled to see the blossoming of activity as we seek to reach a wider audience with the spiritual treasure of the Book of Common Prayer, and, now that all COVID restrictions have been lifted, I have great pleasure in accepting invitations to visit parishes where new BCP services have recently been introduced, or where existing Prayer Book services are attracting growing congregations. Let me give you a few examples from my own Diocese of Chichester:

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Society's life*



The commemoration of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, Oxford, March 2022

For many years, the congregation of St Mary's, Aldingbourne, has used contemporary forms for its Sunday services. During the first lockdown, however, they decided that good old Prayer Book Matins was more suitable for Zoom. When public worship resumed, communal singing was still discouraged, so the morning canticles were recited in place of the hymns at the Parish Communion; now the congregation has decided to use the BCP Communion Service in place of Common Worship on at least one Sunday each month, and new people have started to attend. I visited and gave a talk about the differences in content and structure between the traditional and contemporary forms of service.

With the arrival of a new priest at St Nicholas' Church, Middleton-on-Sea, the monthly Prayer Book Communion immediately became weekly, and a brand new Evensong was introduced. The church did not possess any congregational copies of the BCP and worshippers were encouraged to bring their own. We made a donation of twenty copies of the pew edition, which soon proved insufficient for the growing congregation, and earlier this year we presented a further twenty copies. I visited St Nicholas and gave a talk on the Collects during Evensong.

By the time you receive this magazine, I will have visited several other parishes in the Diocese and beyond. At St Andrew's, Bishopstone, a new Corporate Member of the Society, I am giving a talk entitled 'Why the Prayer Book Matters', and at St Mary's, Bepton, another new Corporate Member, I will be speaking on the spirituality of the Prayer Book during a United Benefice Sung Communion. I recently gave a similar talk to a group of trainee lay ministers.

I highlight these examples for your encouragement and for your prayers. There is a great deal of enthusiasm for the Prayer Book among young clergy. Key to the implementation of the Society's 2030 Vision—people of all ages finding life in Christ through a growing Prayer Book service in every benefice—is the use of the Prayer Book for principal services, and our Churches and Ministry Committee is working on a strategy to encourage parishes to use the Prayer Book for the main service at least once a month. We must rescue the BCP from the margins to which it has been pushed over many years, and put it back where it belongs, at the heart of the Church of England.

The challenge of engaging a younger generation is a priority for the Society, and during this Jubilee year we will launch an ambitious project to present a special edition of the BCP together with our excellent *Teen Guide* to every junior chorister in the country. You can read more about this project in the Trinity 2022 issue of *The Prayer Book Today*. A new committee of the Board, established to develop a strategy for engagement with children, families and young adults, has held its first meeting. Please pray for this new group as they discern the way forward.

I wish to renew my thanks to each and every one of you for your on-going commitment to the work of the Society. We have many challenges ahead of us, and our work is more important than ever. Let us commit ourselves to praying for the life and witness of the Society in the days and years ahead; let us ask the Lord to bless and prosper our work as he has these past 50 years, that many people of all ages and backgrounds, and in all contexts, will, through the living words of the Book of Common Prayer, find the living Christ, and in Him find their life.

I close with some words of Charles Wesley which I learned many years ago:

*This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful, unchangeable Friend;
whose love is as great as his power,
and knows neither measure nor end.*

*'Tis Jesus the First and the Last,
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home.
We'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust Him for all that's to come.*

May God bless you all.

Bradley Smith

Key dates for 2022

PBS Annual Conference
8th-10th September
Liverpool Hope University

50th Anniversary Celebrations
8th October
Westminster Abbey
11.00a.m. Choral Communion
Lunch and address at Church House
3.00p.m. Choral Evensong

Online Advent Seminar
3rd December
2.00p.m. via Zoom



A salute to the PBS at 50

Richard Chartres

These days, 50 is no age at all but it is still an important milestone in the life of the PBS. I salute all those who have persevered over the past half-century in keeping the Prayer Book tradition alive, despite every attempt to expel us to the margins of church life, in said services at unearthly hours.

I am proud to belong to the Wiltshire Branch of the Prayer Book underground. In an era of institutional fidgeting, I rejoice that members of the Prayer Book Society are a link to the rich liturgical and cultural traditions of a more humble and confident Church of England.

The Prayer Book in English was the centrepiece of an audacious cultural revolution. It was introduced by Archbishop Cranmer on Whitsunday 1549, despite a chorus of conservative opposition. One of Cranmer's most intelligent and determined critics was Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. He rejected the proposition that the language of worship should be audible and 'understood of the people'. Instead, he claimed that 'it was never meant that the people should indeed hear the matins or hear the mass but be present there and pray themselves in silence'. In his view, barriers of language and audibility were actually conducive to devotion.

By contrast the Book of Common Prayer was an audacious attempt to reshape the culture of England by collapsing the distinction between private personal devotion

and public liturgical worship in order to create a godly community in which all, and not just the clergy, had access to 'the pure milk of the gospel'. Eventually, by dint of constant repetition, the Prayer Book played a part in creating a sense of English nationhood, crystallising around the biblical narrative of God's dealings with the children of Israel.

The Prayer Book also had a decisive influence on the evolution of the English language. The biblical material was largely derived from William Tyndale's muscular translations direct from the Hebrew and Greek of the Old and New Testaments. He surpassed the previous attempts to turn the Scriptures into English but there had never been a liturgy in English. This was Cranmer's distinct achievement. Together they made of English a language fit for sacred themes and devotion.

In the sixteenth century, there was a debate about the direction in which the language should develop. Some people, like Cranmer's friend Sir John Cheke, wanted an Anglo-Saxon simplicity in which words like 'disciples' would be replaced by 'freshmen', and 'crucified' would become 'crossed'. On the other wing, some saw the future in further enrichment of the language by vocabulary derived from

Greek and Latin and a more complex syntax. It was Cranmer's genius to steer a middle way and to produce a dignified and memorable liturgical language that had balance and rhythm.

The Archbishop distilled his liturgy from citations of Scripture and his studies of the Christian past, and especially from the writers of the first five centuries, the springtime of the Church. In the preface to the First Book of Common Prayer of

1549, he appeals to the authority of the 'auncient fathers' as a guide in liturgical matters. Queen Elizabeth I in her letter to the Roman Catholic Princes of Europe insisted 'that there was no new faith propagated in England, no new religion set up but that which was commanded by Our Saviour, practised by the Primitive Church and approved by the Fathers of the best antiquity'.

The liturgical inheritance was however drastically

*A link to the rich
liturgical and cultural
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humble and confident
Church of England*

pruned and simplified, with an accent on **hearing and understanding** and not so much on **seeing** as it had been in the theatre of late medieval religion.

There have always been those, however, who are critical of any set form of worship. Puritan opponents of the Prayer Book and those who practise a strict informality in our own day value spontaneity and the unpremeditated voice over what they see as less authentic 'set prayers'. They have always privileged original sermons and extempore prayers over readings from liturgical texts derived from traditional sources.

The simplified symbolism enjoined by the Prayer Book was also resented. The survival of symbols, like the ring in marriage and the signing with the cross in baptism, was constantly attacked. Even the simplified version of traditional clerical vesture was controversial. Milton excoriated vestments as 'griegaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe and the flamen's vestry'.

The agitation against the Prayer Book led to its suppression in the seventeenth century during the years of the Commonwealth, but the sufferings of Prayer Book loyalists during that period contributed to the powerful aura of the book and its restoration after the return of the monarchy. A lightly revised Book of Common Prayer was annexed to the Act of Uniformity, which received Royal Assent in May 1662. Our Prayer Book is part of the law of England and remains a doctrinal standard for the Church and an indispensable part of our identity.

In a book published in 1662, Simon Patrick, later Bishop of Ely, comments on the rites and ceremonies of divine worship and approves 'that virtuous mediocrity which our church observes between the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and the squalid sluttishness of dissenting conventicles'. Of course, we would be too polite to say such things now, but the Prayer Book offers within a single volume a simple and moderate system for a whole life, from baptism to last rites, and it seeks in its rubrics and ceremonies to embrace the whole person and not merely the cerebellum.

Over the past half-century, despite all the efforts of the PBS, both the Bible and the Prayer Book have been more and more edited out of public discourse and increasingly also expelled from school. Mostly this is the result of a general secular trend, which the Church has found no way to resist, and may even have accelerated by constant fidgeting with in-house matters of little concern to the majority of the population.

Sadly, the fiercest hostility to the Prayer Book seems to come from within the Church. There was a fascinating example of the antipathy some clergy feel towards the BCP in the reaction to the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Westminster Abbey. In acres of commentary in the secular press, there was no hint of criticism of the fact that the couple had chosen to use the traditional-language version of the marriage service. Then, a week later, the *Church Times* published letters from clergy expressing exasperation 'that the language of the liturgy remained buried in the past' and 'that once again the opportunity to present the Church in

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Greetings from Sarum College

James Woodward

Sarum College values its connections with, and support from, the Prayer Book Society. We send you our very best wishes and congratulations on your 50th anniversary.

Words and language are fundamental to our life as human beings and nurture in faith as Christians. The Prayer Book has nurtured generations of women and men in the poetry, cadences and theology of faith. We have been especially struck in these pandemic times by the ways in which the Prayer Book has spoken into our condition in and through its naming so powerfully our shared experiences of lament and hope. The Collect for Peace has become our daily prayer as we live with the horrific unfolding of war in Ukraine.

I write this on the last Sunday of March, aware that across this region the Prayer Book is still both much used and deeply loved. Sarum College is committed to enabling students to be formed in liturgical leadership of the Prayer Book and its services.

We are grateful for all you do and wish you well as you strengthen your Society and work.

**The Revd Professor James Woodward is
Principal of Sarum College.**

A message from Cuddesdon College

Humphrey Southern

The Book of Common Prayer is central to the identity of the Church of England, its culture, liturgy and doctrine. Forged in times of religious contest and strife, it has served both as a repository of received tradition and (in the example of Cranmer) an encouragement to worship and to explore truth in 'the vulgar tongue', that is both accessible and attractive.

Cuddesdon is a TEI that is fully committed both to the inheritance of the orthodox Christian faith as it has been received by the Church of England, and to serious theological exploration and openness to new ideas in the Church and the world. As such, we treasure the Prayer Book as a central aspect of our inheritance.

We are grateful to the Prayer Book Society for its encouragement and support, and especially for its provision of resources to individual students and to the College as a whole. We congratulate the PBS on its Golden Jubilee and wish it every blessing in its continuing work.

**The Rt Revd Humphrey Southern is
Principal of Cuddesdon College.**

A salute to the PBS at 50

Continued from page 7

a more up to date way was missed'.

A week after that, however, another clergyman wrote to point out that the three who had decried the 'stuffy service' were born respectively in 1960, 1951 and 1937. The royal couple (born 1982) had opted for the traditional service and the author of the letter observed that 'it would appear that nothing dates so rapidly as yesterday's modernity'.

Thanks to the labours of the Liturgical Commission, the influence of the Prayer Book is more prominent in the new Book of Common Worship, but we can rejoice that we still have access to the original.

Every generation faces the challenge of distinguishing between tradition, the living stream of spirit-filled wisdom which unites the Church in every age, and traditionalism, which is the obstinate attachment to the customs of the day before yesterday. As the late Archbishop Anthony Bloom used to say, tradition is the living faith we share with dead people; traditionalism is the dead faith of living people.

England has been transformed in the last 50 years. The notion of uniformity has expired. The Christian tradition maintains a marginal place in the public square but now shares that space with other, often more assertive faith traditions. We do not have French-style secularism but a religious pluralism in which being a Christian is commonly regarded as a personal lifestyle choice, rather like vegetarianism.

This is not necessarily the shape of the future. We only have to look back to the 1990s when, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the victory of market economics and liberal democracy appeared to be inevitable. There are certain questions, however, that are perennial and demand a response. What, if anything, is the meaning of human life? How do societies cohere in a fruitful way? How do governments acquire legitimacy? What is the nature of the good life? What is worth dying for and therefore what is worth living for? In default of worthy approaches to these questions, the vacuum is filled with the din of cults of unreason.

The Book of Common Prayer is not a museum piece but a system that immerses us in the whole symphony of holy Scripture. It is a spiritual education that addresses the nature and destiny of human life. If our civilisation is to have a future, the roots must be irrigated in our generation and the texts we choose to pass on to our children must convey the wisdom and power that liberate us from the flatlands of getting and spending. If every day we enrol in the school of the Prayer Book, then we shall see visions with the prophets, seek wisdom with Solomon and hear in our own lives the call to Abraham to leave our household gods. We shall receive the abundant promises of God, who so loved the world that He was generous and gave Himself to us in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon. The Lord Chartres GCVO, PC is the Ecclesiastical Patron of the PBS.



A word from Lord President of the PBS

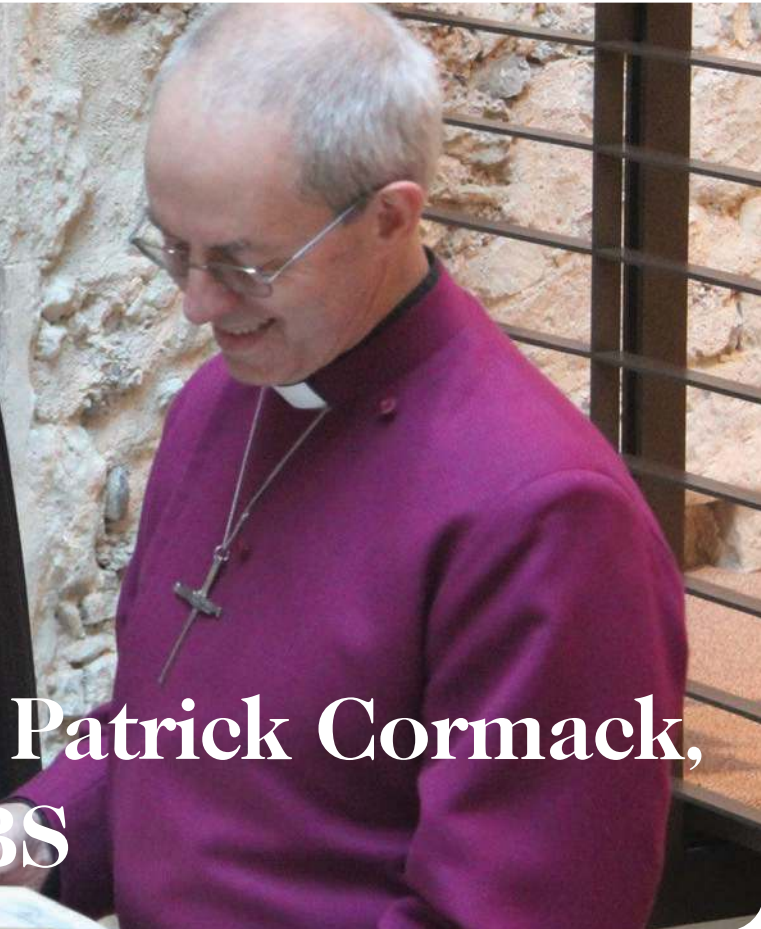
As we prepare to celebrate a Jubilee unique in our history, the Queen's 70 years on the throne, we in the Prayer Book Society have a much more modest, but supplementary, and not unconnected, Jubilee. For it was in 1972 that our Society was created to stem the tide (or was it panic?) of revisionism, which was in danger of overwhelming the Church of England and very possibly destroying it as we know it.

Slowly, steadily, determinedly, those of us who wished to hold fast to that which is good have seen our efforts recognised by many within our national Church, and rewarded by some. Largely thanks to the leadership of the Society, of which I am honoured to be President, those of us who love the Prayer Book no longer regard ourselves as total outsiders, and it has been encouraging to see more bishops and deans recognising the centrality of the Prayer Book in Anglican worship. It has been even more of a tonic to see an increasing number of ordinands (all of whom we present with a copy) anxious to familiarise themselves with the services in the Book of Common Prayer. So we have much to give thanks for in our golden year.

But if we are to recover fully from the liturgical anarchy which left traditional congregations confused and alienated by the end of the twentieth century, we have much still to do to refresh Church of England congregations throughout the country with Cranmer's incomparable legacy of 1549 and 1552, which was so strengthened and renewed in 1662.

Just over a century after that renewal, in 1784, John Wesley wrote, 'I believe that there is no liturgy in this world,

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either in ancient or modern language, which breeds more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England.' These sentiments are still as valid today.

Perhaps the most defining characteristic of the Prayer Book is that its language is so truly memorable. It is not fossilised sixteenth-century language any more than is the language of Shakespeare—and he was just the first of a succession of great authors who were familiar with, and influenced by, its phrases and its cadences. Would that those who so busied themselves modernising the liturgy in the second half of the twentieth century had been better employed in using their talents to explain the incomparably rich and beautiful liturgy they were dismembering.

I well recall, as a schoolboy, having to learn the Collect of the week. I still remember most of them and those I do not are instantly familiar when I hear them read. The Collects are the greatest collection of prayers in the language. They express the petitions of the faithful with a wonderful force, immediacy and clarity and we all have our own favourites. Among mine is that for the 21st Sunday after Trinity: 'Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind...' What could be more simple, more direct or more memorable than that?

I have a modest collection of eighteenth and nineteenth-century editions of the Book of Common Prayer. For me,

handling them and using them underlines the continuity of Church of England worship from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth. There is something very special about following a service in a building, hallowed by centuries of prayer, from a book used two centuries or so ago, and in prayers familiar to generations before then.

I feel this the more because mine was the last generation of Anglicans to be brought up on the Book of Common Prayer. There was nothing else at the church I attended as a small boy, and where I sang in the choir until my voice broke. I still have the copy I was given in my confirmation year—with the coronation portrait of the Queen inside the front cover, for I was confirmed in 1953. So, for me, there is a very special connection between our great national Platinum Jubilee celebrations, and our Golden Jubilee commemoration of the foundation of our Society. Another prayer book is now widely used in the Church of England, but its official title of 'Alternative' underlines the fact that the core liturgy of our national Church is embodied in a prayer book that has lasted, with little change but some glorious additions, since 1549.

I hope I shall see many of you at our great service in Westminster Abbey in October. If you come, you will be warmed by, and familiar with, the liturgy we will be celebrating.





In the beginning was the Word

Tony Kilmister meets PBS Patron, HRH Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall

'I think the Authorised Version can be trusted to look after itself; but I agree that the 1662 Prayer Book needs active protection.'

Anthony Kilmister

I find it hard to believe—true though it is—that the Prayer Book Society (including its forerunners) is 50 years old this year. Indeed, I little thought that half a century ago (or thereabouts) I would take an active part in such an unexpected event.

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

But as the 1970s began, there was, in the wake of a Commission on Church and State, the possibility that the Book of Common Prayer could face elimination. This is not some far-fetched claim. At that time, there were two drafts of a Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure on the stocks. One would make the BCP optional and the other would outlaw it. Either version would open Pandora's Box.

Already there had been the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure that had passed through every legislative hoop in 1965 and had come into force in May 1966. Now the Acts of Uniformity of 1548, 1552, 1559 and 1662 were to be supplanted

by what would effectively be an act of disunity—and the very reverse of uniformity.

What, then, did the Church House mandarins have up their sleeves? How ghastly might new services become? The first 'You' type service was the proposed Series 3 Communion Service, published as a booklet, that went through its various stages in 1972.

This made the blood boil. So, when I read a small news item in the 'Peterborough column' of the *Daily Telegraph* on 19th June 1972, that the wife of an elderly Air Marshal (who belonged to the Church of Scotland) was calling a protest meeting at the Kensington home of the late Commander and Mrs Charles Drage, my vicar (Prebendary Richard Nevill Hetherington) and I were determined to be there—heatwave or not.

Thus it was that we arrived at 38 Sheffield Terrace, Kensington on 29th June 1972 on a particularly warm evening. As that evening 'ticked by' and a long talk by a clergyman on Church history droned on (and on), it seemed as though this meeting was going to get us nowhere. In frustration, I felt it was time to take some drastic action. Cheekily therefore, I proposed (and Mr Theo Pike seconded) a motion, which the meeting carried (with Miss Daphne Fraser of the Liturgical Commission being the only dissident), that a new

society be formed as 'The Society for the Defence of the 1662 Prayer Book and Authorised Version'. Naturally, we all realised that the title was too long and cumbersome—but for simple usage and publicity purposes, that could be tidied up later. We knew little or nothing about Church politics and would be facing experts in manipulating the liturgical debate and driving a liturgical steamroller.

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

Before I left home for the meeting, I had been warned by Sheila (my late wife) not to get too involved in some new enterprise! But, of course, in the event I got carried away by enthusiasm and was unanimously elected as Honorary Secretary—with Theo Pike becoming both Chairman and Honorary Treasurer. Mrs Drage, her daughter Margaret and a few others were elected members of the Steering Committee. The next days and weeks were full of feverish activity. Hardly a week went by when the *Church Times* did not publish an argumentative letter from me complaining about liturgical fidgeting of one sort or another. Letters generated by interest taken in all this by the *Daily Telegraph* and other media absolutely poured in.

Advice also started to arrive from influential quarters that too much was being attempted and that so wide-ranging a society could not successfully continue. Archbishop Lord Fisher of Lambeth (who had crowned the Queen at her coronation in 1953) sent me a thoughtful, handwritten letter from Trent Rectory in Dorset, only weeks before his death, in which he gave me his views—saying, in part, ‘I think the Authorised Version can be trusted to look after itself; but I agree that the 1662 Prayer Book needs active protection.’

Within a relatively short time, a decision was reached that this society with a long title should have a short life. It was therefore wound up and immediately re-formed as the Book of Common Prayer Action Group. New people came forward to help. Among these were Commander Sir Peter Agnew (a former MP and Church Commissioner, who lived in Smith Square, SW1), the legendary and wholly splendid Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh, Sir John Betjeman (the then brand-new Poet Laureate), Miss Betty Young and numerous others. Mrs Enid Drage was hospitality itself and ‘the wheels’ of our group were ‘well oiled’.

In the autumn of that first year, I invited a stranger named Jack Trefusis to join the committee. He attended his first meeting in October 1972 and, early in 1973, he succeeded Fr Hetherington as Chairman. I concentrated (as Vice or Deputy Chairman) on publicity and lobbying (of Synod and of Parliament) while Jack, with great enthusiasm, set about building a network of regional Branches. It was on these that the network of Branches as we have known them began.

In the early 1970s, alarm had grown over the proposed Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure designed to give to an unrepresentative General Synod *carte blanche* in deciding how we should pray and what we should believe. It was seen for the danger it represented, and the BCP Action Group resisted this legislation in every way it knew how, making the General Synod fully aware of its concerns.

Put simply, the Measure conferred upon the General Synod wide powers for the *interpretation* of doctrine or, as many would claim, the power to *change* doctrine by interpretation. The Measure would make the Synod advocate, judge and jury on what did or did not depart from previous norms. The same was true in matters of liturgy and the Synod would, over the years, embark upon liturgies of the most banal kind and agreeable only to those with cloth ears. Radical change was of course suited to this period, which closely followed on from ‘the swinging 60s’. The BCP Action Group fearlessly spoke out against it by lobbying both Houses of Parliament, to which the Measure would in due course be passed for approval.

On 14th November 1974, a shameful exhibition of quasi arm-twisting took place in the House of Lords. On that day, not only was the Measure to be debated in the House but it was also the last day in office (as Archbishop of Canterbury) of Dr Michael Ramsey. Peers wanted to wish him well and did not want to spoil his desire to see the Measure passed without a division. On 4th December, a debate on the Measure of exceptionally high quality took place in the House of Commons, as anyone who has read *Hansard* for that day would agree. Concern for the Book of Common Prayer loomed large and, because the vast majority of speeches were of our persuasion, sitting in the gallery I thought we were in with a chance. However, on hearing the division bell, a substantial number of MPs from the left-wing Tribune Group (who had not heard the debate) suddenly appeared and supported Mr Terry Walker MP, the Labour Government’s recently appointed Second Church Commissioner in the division—and passed the Measure.

Only a few days later, on 7th December 1974, a BCP Action Group ‘Convention’ was held at the Royal Commonwealth Society in Northumberland Avenue, where the decision was made to reconstitute the Action Group as a society. Three representatives felt we should merge

with another organisation, but 34 were in favour of us continuing as an independent body. Lord Sudeley and Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh would get in touch with their contacts on the *Daily Telegraph*—as the need for publicity was universally recognised.

Extended discussion of what we should now call ourselves was clinched when Sheila, my then wife, proposed that we call ourselves ‘The Prayer Book Society’ and, on a show of hands, this commanded warm and general assent. It was also agreed that a new constitution be drawn up.

This drafting was completed in time for a further ‘Convention’ at the Royal Commonwealth Society, held on 15th March 1975. As I had proposed the formation of the earlier organisation, I was accorded the privilege of formally proposing the formation of the Prayer Book Society and the adoption of the draft Constitution and Rules for our Branches. It was then agreed that the BCP Action Group be wound up and its funds transferred to the new society.

Jack Trefusis and I continued in our leadership roles, with Margaret Drage temporarily being Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. In July 1975, the first national newsletter (edited by Jack and typed by Shirley Trefusis) made its appearance. This was how the PBS story emerged.

Since then, a vast quantity of water has flowed under the bridge, as will be seen here and elsewhere. I am merely placing before you a story of beginnings and not a history of the Society over several decades. Indeed, it is now some many years since I relinquished day-to-day PBS chairmanship and became a Vice-President. Other Trustees now run the Society’s affairs, adopting new ideas and following what are, perhaps, narrower but nevertheless important pursuits. I wish them well.

Anthony Kilmister OBE was a Vice-President and a former Chairman of the Prayer Book Society until his death in March 2022. His obituary is published in the Trinity edition of *The Prayer Book Today*.



Looking backwards and forwards

Neil Inkley

I was not 'in at the outset' 50 years ago. I joined the Prayer Book Society in 1985, already in my 50s, when asked to become Honorary Secretary of the Blackburn Branch, a post I was to hold for over thirty years. My exposure to the Book of Common Prayer was already pretty complete in terms of both usage and rubric, having sung in church and cathedral choirs from the age of eight. From 1971, we had been fixtures at Blackburn Cathedral, where liturgical revisions came rather later than in many places.

I had a particular interest and involvement in the governance of the Society. From 1988 to 2000, I was Vice-Chairman of the PBS. These were halcyon days for personal relationships. Almost every Branch was represented at each of the Executive Council meetings and many of these representatives were quite long term, such that networks of close friendships developed, which spanned the country and continued long after this form of governance had ended. The scheme was that the Executive Council was the governing body and it elected a Finance and General Purpose Committee to carry out day-to-day business. The F and GP Committee effectively ran the Society.

Those were the days of the 'Branch Secretaries' Manual', which I took on to produce—a loose-leaf binder that would include most things a Branch Secretary might ever need to know. The colourful montage of its cover was rather splendid. Alas, the commitment to the manual fell away after the constitutional changes of 2001, but there were still copies about—collectors' items.

Those were also the days of the great Branch festivals. I was privileged to be speaker at quite a few up and down the country but, I recall, particularly here in the North West, where a considerable phalanx attended each other's events in addition to the local membership. Over one hundred communicants was commonplace. Manchester moved from church to church around the Diocese, Chester's were usually at the atmospheric St James, Gainsworth, and Carlisle's were in Kendal. Liverpool events were held in Penny Lane! I think of Geoff Wood in Manchester as the initial architect of these

events. One needed stamina in Manchester for the content of Matins, Litany, Eucharist, lunch, speaker and Evensong. These occasions recharged the batteries of our members and also kept the diocesan clergy aware that they could not disregard the BCP and its adherents.

I recall too very warmly the Society's national celebration in 1999 of the 450th anniversary of the 1549 Prayer Book. This was held at York Minster and, being then fairly recently retired from business, I was delighted to be responsible for making the necessary arrangements. The Chapter were so very helpful and the Archbishop of York (David Hope) readily agreed to celebrate and preach. The songmen of the Minster sang a service as would have occurred in 1549 and, in delightful surprise, the precentor obtained from the Minster's treasures a Prayer Book dating from 1549, which was used on the altar for the service. Something in the order of 700 people were present, overflowing from the choir into the nave. It was a day of high celebration characteristic of that time, when many more people attended such events.

Changes in the governance came in 2001, with the Society's establishment as a company limited by guarantee, and a board of Trustees. I was pleased that the new constitution still provided for a Branches' Representative





Council (an extension of the idea of the Executive Council but without statutory powers), so that Branch representatives could still meet together for their mutual benefit, and I was happy to lay aside other offices to become the first Chairman of the BRC. Attendance has waned in recent years but I do hope it continues to operate. 'Our roots are our Branches.'

Looking back in assessment of these 50 years, I think there has been one tremendous achievement in terms of what did not happen. Such was the attack on traditional liturgy that, without the resistance of the Prayer Book Society, we could have lost the BCP completely. That absolutely has not happened and the Society can take almost the whole credit for it. Meanwhile, there has been an attitudinal change. Clergy no longer mock it, it has regained a good sense of respect and now younger priests are coming through who support it enthusiastically. Regaining lost ground has proved more difficult: Matins has largely disappeared. It is rare indeed to find a prime-time, choral, main Sunday service of Eucharist that is BCP. We still have work to do.

A commentator wrote:

The Prayer Book Society deserves praise for defending and promoting the Prayer Book but I urge its members not to suppose that the people most in need of its persuasion are those who use Common Worship instead. The greater risk is to defend the very idea of liturgy itself, the idea of having a set and authorised liturgy using forms of service in anything like the way that the phrase has previously been used.

This challenge may be coming round again in a sterner way than before in the new vision of the Church of England composed of lay-led house groups. This does not present a liturgy-friendly situation.

The Society's 2030 Vision for 'a growing Prayer Book service in every benefice' may just be too hard a task. But if we can see every diocese, every archdeaconry, every deanery as markable stones in that direction, then I believe we will be building constructively on the foundation of the last 50 years. Let's keep up the good work—'hold fast to that which is good'.

Neil Inkley, former PBS Vice-Chairman and current Vice-President.

John Service

Churches and Clergy Co-ordinator



John Service, in his salaried role for the PBS, has the task of making contact with churches who wish to further the use of the Prayer Book in worship, or are looking to appoint a priest who is sympathetic to the regular use of Prayer Book liturgy. Likewise, he advises clergy (the current list is around one hundred) on possible appointments, screening vacant parishes to identify 'Prayer Book parishes'.

John is a point of contact for parishes exploring Corporate Membership of the Society. New members join on average once a month.

An important area of his work is visiting the twenty-six theological colleges and courses every two or three years. He also organises the Round Table events to support the Vision 2030 initiative.

The journey to here

Prudence Dailey

When I first joined the Prayer Book Society, it was already over a decade old. The Alternative Service Book (ASB) was perceived as fresh and 'relevant'; bishops and clergy were widely convinced that 'modernising' the liturgy was the solution to declining church attendance. Anti-Prayer-Book sentiment swept through theological education: ordinands professing a love of the Book of Common Prayer were routinely mocked. PCCs determined to hang on to the Prayer Book were admonished by their clergy that they were 'resisting the working of the Holy Spirit'; one bishop is reported to have exclaimed, 'I will not have Prayer Book enclaves in MY diocese!' Among the young, the Book of Common Prayer had few adherents: it was widely perceived as behind the times, old hat, and unlikely to survive the generation that had grown up with it. Believing in the future of the Book of Common Prayer was truly an act of faith.

The advent of Common Worship in 2000 reflected an ongoing shift in attitudes within the hierarchy of the Church of England. The aggressive modernism of the 'ASB generation' had given way to a postmodern worldview that (within relatively loosely defined limits) any form of worship that was helpful to somebody should be encouraged—including the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed, to facilitate its wider use, the Liturgical Commission included its most frequently used services within the covers of Common Worship; and the Revd Paul Thomas—at that time still a curate, and Deputy Chairman of the Prayer Book Society—was appointed to the Commission as a representative of the 'Prayer Book interest'.

The Society realised it was time to relinquish its often oppositional stance in favour of active co-operation with Church authorities. Although there were already some collaborative endeavours—such as the supply of Books of Common Prayer to ordinands entering training, donated by the Prayer Book Society and distributed through training institutions—the Church had hitherto often been perceived



Long-time Chairman of the PBS, Prudence Dailey

as 'the enemy': it was clear that this had now become counterproductive.

The Prayer Book's main adversary was no longer hostility, but unfamiliarity (as, having been pushed out of theological education from the 1970s onwards, it had in most cases never found its way back in), and so the Society sought to provide educational resources for the clergy. Strategy crystallised around identifying and working with sympathetic clergy and congregations, and to that end a Churches and Clergy Co-ordinator, John Service, was appointed in 2011. John built relationships with theological education institutions around the country, getting to know the 'Prayer-Book-minded' ordinands, and encouraging them to take up the Society's new offer of free honorary membership for the duration of their training. Having largely grown up with no exposure to the Book of Common Prayer and no preconceptions about it, they came to it with fresh eyes: no wonder, then, that (as John remarked) 'the younger they are, the more enthusiastic



Opposite: Prudence presents a gift to Conference organiser Rosemary Hall for her many years of service to the PBS

Left: Prudence's retirement as Chairman is marked after lockdown at Pusey House, Oxford, in 2021

they are! From 2012 onwards, the provision of bursaries to enable cash-strapped clergy, ordinands and young laity to come to the Prayer Book Society Annual Conference has had a significant impact on the age profile of those attending, providing opportunities for younger members to get to know one another.

At the same time, increasing numbers of parish churches were brought into the fold as Corporate Members, and some churches began to reintroduce Prayer Book worship after decades of disuse.

For all the devastation it wrought on so many lives, lockdown provided an unexpected boost for the Prayer Book. With their doors firmly shuttered, churches up and down the country scrambled to put their offerings online, and the laity suddenly found themselves able to worship virtually wherever they pleased: the popularity of online Prayer Book worship took many by surprise, and provided an additional impetus for the use of the Prayer Book. In recent months, I have attended (in person) Prayer Book services at a few different churches—and in all of them the congregation was both larger and significantly younger than it had been before. My own church (St Michael at the North Gate in central Oxford) had for decades been dominated by grey heads: now, around half the regular congregation is under 35. The change has been sudden and dramatic.

There is an old joke that, upon asking for directions, a hapless traveller receives the reply, 'You can't get there from here!' For long enough, promoting the use and understanding of the Book of Common Prayer seemed rather like that—but we have, at last, reached the top of the hill, and a new horizon lies before us.

Miss Prudence Dailey is a Vice-President and former Chairman of the Prayer Book Society.



Key moments

David Richardson

As someone who was involved in the PBS at national level for a decade until 2021, I welcome the opportunity to offer some reflections as the Society enters its sixth decade. I judge that there were three key changes during those ten years, which have been of particular benefit to the PBS and have helped advance its cause.

The first was the decision to change the post of Churches and Clergy Co-ordinator from part-time to full-time—thus enabling us to strengthen our links with TELs (theological colleges, in a language understood of the people) and individual ordinands, and to see an increase in the number of parishes becoming Corporate Members.

The second was a twofold initiative in fundraising: inviting individuals and households able to do so to become Benefactor members and give £42 a month (£500 p.a.) to support the Society; inviting members to consider naming the Society in their wills—those who do so are enrolled in the '1662 Circle'. In recognition of these particular forms of support, the Society organises an annual event for Benefactors and a triennial one for the Circle.

The third—inherently more important than the first two but, in significant measure, underpinned by them—was the decision by the Board of Trustees to adopt the following as the 2030 Vision for the Society: People of all ages finding life in Christ through a growing Prayer Book service in every benefice. The Vision is bold. It is not backward-looking or inward-looking. It focuses not on the BCP itself but on the One to whom the Prayer Book bears so eloquent a testimony. I commend it to all members, individual and Corporate, as a topic both for prayer and for (other forms of) action.

These three changes have helped—are helping—to ensure that, if I may venture a transport metaphor, the Prayer Book Society is seen as part of the network rather than a heritage line out on its own. So, let us all dedicate ourselves anew to the cause. After all, there are now only 40 years to the 400th anniversary of 1662.

David Richardson is a Vice-President and former Deputy Chairman of the Prayer Book Society.



Sister to sister

Greetings from the Prayer Book Society of Canada to the English Prayer Book Society on the occasion of their Golden Jubilee celebrations

It is with joy and affection that the Prayer Book Society of Canada (PBSC) sends sisterly greetings to the Prayer Book Society in England as they celebrate 50 years of perseverance, hard work and loyal service to maintain and uphold the centrality of the Book of Common Prayer for the life and witness of the Christian faith in the established Church of England. The Prayer Book Society in England was the inspiration for a similar society in Canada in the wake of the introduction of a Book of Alternative Services (BAS) in the life of the Anglican Church of Canada. Despite episcopal assurances that the new book would not replace the Book of Common Prayer, the BAS rapidly became the sole liturgical book used in many congregations. Thus, in 1986, the Prayer Book Society of Canada was formed to ensure that the BCP would continue to set the standard of theological discourse, sacramental discipleship and liturgical propriety for Canadian Anglicans.

The Prayer Book Society of Canada has come a long way since its start just over 35 years ago. What began as a protest movement with an acrimonious relationship to the House of Bishops has evolved into a more fruitful and constructive relationship with Church authorities. Like the PBS in England, we offer bursaries to seminary students who are sympathetic to our aims and goals, we provide online resources (both print and audio) to help seminary students and clergy learn how to use the BCP properly and with integrity, and we have developed educational materials (both print and online) to help people grow deeper spiritual lives and to demonstrate how the Prayer Book provides an ordered, scriptural system of nurture for life in Christ.

We publish a newsletter three times a year with articles about the Prayer Book itself, or about how the Prayer Book continues to affect the lives of Christian people who use it.

We encourage English members of the Prayer Book Society to see what we have to offer on our website at www.prayerbook.ca.

Our most recent initiative as a Society was the development of a downloadable app for phones, tablets and other electronic devices, that allows the user to pray the Prayer Book Daily Office with ease. One can toggle the settings on the app to allow for the different options in Morning and Evening Prayer (such as the variety of canticles and occasional prayers) and a person can select the Bible translation preferred for the lessons. An Ante-Communion service, with the lessons provided in the Prayer Book, is also available on the app for use by lay readers who lead such a service in the absence of clergy. We are currently planning to expand the app by developing indigenous language versions of the Office drawn from Inuktitut and Cree editions of the Prayer Book, so that these Anglicans can pray in their own native tongues.

The year 2022 is full of jubilee celebrations. As Canadians we can, of course, celebrate the 70th anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty the Queen. The year marks the 360th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. It is also the 100th anniversary of the first edition of a Canadian Book of Common Prayer. When the Church of England in Canada gained its autonomy from the Mother Church in England in 1893, it also gained the right to revise the Prayer Book without seeking the approval of Parliament because the Church of England in Canada was not an established church. A Canadian BCP was given final approval by General Synod in 1918, but the Primate's proclamation giving final assent to the canon authorising the new book was not issued until 1922. Thus, 100 years ago, Canadian Anglicans for the first time had a version of the Prayer Book they could call their own. This version of the BCP was authorised for use



until it was replaced by the 1962 version of the Prayer Book.

The 1962 Canadian BCP was first used (on an experimental basis) on 3rd September 1959 in the Canadian Church. Why, one might ask, is it called the 1962 BCP when it was first published in 1959? In our Canadian Church, any legislation that comes before General Synod and has the potential for changes in doctrine must be passed by two consecutive General Synods to come into effect. For Anglicans, doctrine is enshrined (in part) in our liturgical formularies, and thus changes in the Prayer Book have potential doctrinal implications. Therefore, it was not until the revised Prayer Book was passed at a second General Synod in 1962 that it could be accepted by the Church as a whole. Between 1959 and 1962, the new Prayer Book was used only experimentally alongside the 1922 Canadian BCP.

The date of 3rd September has further significance for Canadian Anglicans. It was on this day in 1578 that the first recorded celebration of the Eucharist using the Book of Common Prayer took place in what is now Canada, celebrated by the Revd Robert Wolfall, Chaplain to Martin Frobisher on his ship *Anne Francis*, in what is now called Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island. This was one of Frobisher's expeditions in search of the Northwest passage to Asia. The historical significance of the 3rd September date was not lost on the Anglicans assembled for General Synod in 1959, because the Bishop of the Arctic, D. B. Marsh, was allowed to be the first cleric to celebrate the Eucharist using the new Prayer Book, which took place in St George's Church, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. The choice of date and celebrant for the first Eucharist using the present Prayer Book was a conscious way of signalling the historical continuity of Anglicanism within Canada.

After the revised Prayer Book received approval at the 1962 General Synod, the then Primate, Archbishop Howard

Hewlett Clark, sent out an episcopal decree to the whole Canadian Church that the canon authorising the exclusive use of the 1962 BCP would come into effect as of the First Sunday in Advent 1962. As one can see, this year marks the 60th anniversary of the official adoption of the 1962 BCP for use in Canada. This book is still authorised for use and is still legally the official Prayer Book for Canadian Anglicans, even if its use has been severely curtailed by unsympathetic clergy and laity.

I can think of no better way to conclude this article than by quoting from the Preface to the 1962 Prayer Book:

When the Bishops, Clergy, and laity of the Church in Canada assembled for the first General Synod in 1893, they made a Solemn Declaration of the faith in which they met together. It is in that faith that this Book of Common Prayer is offered to the Church, in the hope that those who use it may become more truly what they already are, the People of God, those who in Christ are the New Creation which finds its joy in adoration of the Creator and Redeemer of all.

The Revd Dr Gordon R. Maitland is the National Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada and the incumbent of St John's Anglican Church in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The past, present and future of the Prayer Book in the USA

In England, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious fabric of the country, anchored by Church establishment and statutory authority and enjoying patronage at the highest levels of public life. In the churches of the Anglican Communion, especially in the USA where the Anglican churches established in some of the thirteen colonies became autonomous and disestablished long ago, the 1662 Prayer Book has undergone its own history of development. The first American Prayer Book of 1789 was the 1662, with modifications to the state prayers, and the adoption of the Scottish Episcopal Church's long Prayer of Consecration—a feature retained in subsequent revisions up to and including that of 1928.

In 1979 came the calamity of its abolition and replacement by a new liturgy bearing the name of the Book of Common Prayer, but in most respects retaining nothing distinctively Anglican in faith or worship from the historic Prayer Book. The exception was the limited provision of 'Rite One' services for Holy Communion, Morning and Evening Prayer, and Burial of the Dead, in which the Cranmerian texts (and some pastiches of Cranmerian style) were retained in forms modified in accord with the fashion in liturgical 'shape'. Expected to be a temporary concession to the laity's love of the old Prayer Book, they have remained the mainstays of liturgy in some of the larger parishes in the Episcopal Church.

In a few parishes, such as my own parish of St John's in Savannah, St Thomas Houston, and All Saints Wynnewood

(near Philadelphia), the 1928 Prayer Book continued in use despite its lack of canonical status. Meanwhile, numerous smaller 'continuing' churches were established outside the Episcopal Church where the 1928 Prayer Book remained in use, usually with High Church ceremonies. In the Reformed Episcopal Church, established in the nineteenth century, a version of the 1789/1928 American Prayer Book remains the standard liturgy. So the Cranmerian legacy is far from dead in the USA. It's just not highly visible.

*In the USA... the
1662 Prayer Book
has undergone
its own history of
development*

Recently, with financial help from the American Prayer Book Society, an 'International Edition' of the 1662 Prayer Book has been published by InterVarsity Press, one that incorporates state prayers for use in countries not ruled by a Christian monarch, as well as some other resources (prayers, daily office lectionaries etc), which are consistent with the 1662 Prayer Book in doctrine, language and liturgical craftsmanship. For copyright reasons, it was not published in England, though it is available for purchase; but it marks an important renewal of the 1662 liturgical legacy outside England. Sales have been brisk and further reprints are expected. Now that the 'worship wars' of the 1980s have receded, there is perhaps an opportunity for new initiatives to reintroduce American Anglicans, inside and outside the Episcopal Church, to the great legacy of English-speaking Christianity, whose classical expression is 1662.

Father Gavin Dunbar

Chairman of the American Prayer Book Society.

The Prayer Book and my vocation

Aron Donaldson

When I was a little boy of primary school age, I spent an afternoon at my grandmother's. On this particular occasion, I had been especially intrigued by the books on her bookshelf, some of which were very old. At that time, old books had a particular allure: I had probably seen old books in movies that would show adventurers how to find great treasures, would help the main characters discover something important about the past or, in some cases, could even be a repository of spells that could either be the solution (or cause!) of the defining problems of a story...

As I rummaged around, I found a few books that could play the role my imagination had cast for them,

but when I opened them I discovered that most were either unintelligible or terribly boring. There was, however, one that stood out...

As I opened its pages, I saw all sorts of fascinating words and sentences before my young eyes. Very quickly they locked on to something that was surprisingly familiar. They happened upon the Lord's Prayer, something I had learned at school. I noticed that the prayer kept occurring as I skimmed along (I realise now that I must have been flicking my way through Morning and Evening Prayer).

When my mind had latched on to something so familiar and understandable in such an ancient-looking book, I concluded that it was a book I could read and so I asked my grandmother if I could take it home.

She graciously agreed and I took it home, only for it to gather dust on a different bookshelf, this time in my parents' living room.

Many years later (and the subject of a story for another time), I found myself asking questions about the ultimate meaning of existence and I had grown dissatisfied with the rebellious atheism of my adolescence. In that period of searching, my mind reached again for that ancient-looking book on the bookshelf, and I opened the Prayer Book once more and used it as a textbook of how to pray. For a few days, I was diligent in Morning and Evening Prayer, though I didn't know what the Collect of the Day was, nor had I figured out what Bible reading should be read. I remember one day very clearly when I gathered up the



The Prayer Book and me

David Norman

I grew up in a 'dissenting' family—Strict and Particular Baptist, to be exact—but I remember coming across a small Prayer Book on the bookshelf one day. Something about it made an impression on me, although, as I was around five or six at the time, I think it was the red leather and gilded pages rather than the prose or theological content.

It wasn't until a decade or so later that I had opportunity to give a little more thought to the BCP. I was baptised by 'full immersion' at the age of fifteen and became a member of the local Baptist chapel. At around the same time, I had become interested in church music and made the first tentative steps towards playing the organ, soon being pressed into service due to a shortage of chapel musicians. My developing

interest in church music led me to listen to Choral Evensong on Radio 3. Eventually I decided that I wanted to experience that service in person. I went to my local cathedral (St Albans) one September Saturday afternoon. I knew what to expect musically, but what hadn't come across over the radio was posture—the somewhat infamous matter of when to stand, sit or kneel! It was all a bit different from what I was used to, but I didn't find it to be the off-putting activity that some would claim it is.

Evensong of a rather different nature was encountered when I went up to study at York in 2017—parish Evensong, sung by the congregation to Anglican chant. I experienced this at both St Lawrence and All Saints Pavement. It was there that I really got to know the service. Three aspects in particular made an impression on me: the introductory exhortation and Confession, the Psalms (as translated so

Continued page 28

courage to pray the general Confession at Morning Prayer for the first time. Up to that moment, I had certainly been dissembling and cloaking the sins of my heart because I feared I would get into trouble. This time however was different, and I laid everything bare and cleaved to the sentence, 'Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live...' I profoundly remember after praying the Confession (and meaning it!) that I had been seen by an eye that pierced flesh and bone, that knew every part of me, and yet somehow was pleased to accept me. I didn't fully understand how it worked but I gathered that Jesus' death had done something to allow that to happen and I was

profoundly grateful. So began a new faith, nurtured by the Prayer Book.

A few years later, when I found myself rattling around the labyrinth of the vocations process in the Church of England, I found myself reaching, once again, for that ancient book on the bookshelf. So many people had so many views on what it meant to be a priest (or whether one should even refer to oneself using that word). It was confusing for someone who didn't know much to be given so many conflicting answers by so many different people. To cut through the tangles, I found the Prayer Book a useful (and sharp) tool. Flicking to the back of the book, I read the Ordering of Priests and found a simple but capacious framework that articulated better than I could what I felt I was

called to be. Again and again, it instructed the person to be ordained to be someone who glorifies God and edifies His Church. As I honed in on that double goal of glorification and edification, I found direction and encouragement that resonated with the call I had felt before.

And so, the Prayer Book sits on my own shelf now as I meet the demands of ministry. Another copy dwells permanently in the bag I take everywhere with me, and the book I first thought could lead me to hidden treasure, or contained solutions to great problems, continues to guide me as I press on with travelling the path I seem called to tread.

The Revd Aron Donaldson is an assistant curate at St Wulfrum's Church, Grantham.



Cranmer student at Hampton Court Palace, 2022

The Cranmer Awards

Joanne Clark, National Administrator for the Cranmer Awards

The Cranmer Awards are in their 33rd year. Mr Tony Kilmister OBE, Sir Martin, later Lord Charteris, and Mr Charles Moore, the then editor of *The Spectator*, launched the Awards in 1989. They were first titled the Thomas Cranmer Schools' Prize, with heats held through speech and drama festivals. Their popularity grew, aided by a generous prize pot, and has continued to grow, from the first event with just five Junior and Senior heats being held consecutively, to now having seventeen heats all over England. An array of churches, schools, and festivals of music, speech and drama now hold heats to identify candidates who will compete at the Finals for the prestigious awards. Junior and Senior heats are now run concurrently, from Newcastle and the Isle of Man down to Winchester and Rochester.

The Awards are aimed at children and split into two categories: Juniors aged eleven to fourteen and Seniors aged fifteen to eighteen. Candidates at the heats are required to choose and learn their passages from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. The presentation should be not less than three minutes and not more than five minutes in duration. Winners from each category gather at the Finals on the last Saturday of February to recite their chosen passages from memory. Three judges, an accuracy-checker and time-keeper officiate the proceedings.

The first event was held at St James Garlickhythe Church in London, the Prayer Book Society's HQ, with HRH The Prince of Wales presenting the prizes. Providentially, this happened to be on the 400th anniversary of Thomas Cranmer's birth. The panel of judges for the Finals included the poet C. H. Sisson, the composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and the actress Prunella Scales, with the novelist P. D. James as their chairman.

Following these early successes, judges for the Finals have included clerics from across the faiths, celebrities, authors and illustrious academics. We have enjoyed being hosted at Hatfield House (by kind permission of the Marquess of Salisbury), Charterhouse, London, The Old Palace, Worcester, and this year at the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace.

Our hope is that heats will take place in all 42 dioceses, that the Book of Common Prayer may once again be the traveller's map and pilot's compass, uniting the Church of England in worship and prayer, and that our children will read it through, live it out and pass it on.

For further information, please contact the National Administrator, Mrs Jo Clark at cranmer.awards@pbs.org.uk.



Former Archbishop Sentamu presents the awards at the 2013 competition



The 2019 winners in Lambeth Palace with HRH The Prince of Wales



Due to the COVID pandemic, the 2021 competition was conducted online. A year later the winners were invited to the 2022 Awards Ceremony in the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace

Laudate Dominum:

the digital advance of the Prayer Book Society

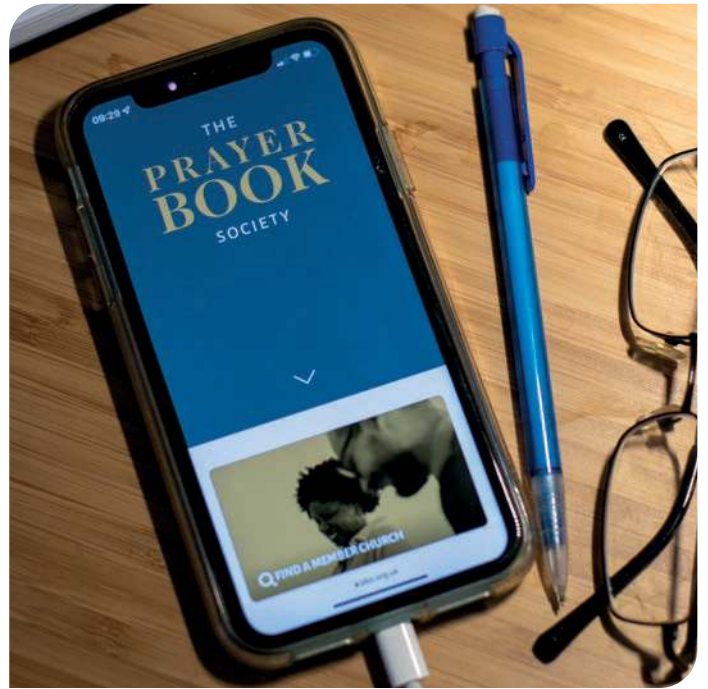
Iain Milne

The 150th psalm invites us to pray and praise with everything that we have—with cymbals, with dances, with our breath. In 2022, we in the Prayer Book Society have tools at our disposal to further the worship of God according to the Prayer Book, which did not exist when the Society was founded 50 years ago. We have started to use these tools more ambitiously, but there is much more we should do to spread our message digitally. We need the help of members far and wide to get the word out.

The Prayer Book Society maintained a presence online pre-COVID and had videoed some talks and popular demonstration videos, but the lockdown hugely accelerated our efforts in this area and widened the audience open to us by these means, as many more people learnt about things like videoconferencing. With people becoming increasingly technologically literate and broadband reaching more and more parts of the country, this is becoming an invaluable way for us to make sure that, even if the local ecclesiastical authority doesn't think to share it and newspaper editors believe there is no interest in it, the captivating words of the Prayer Book can be pushed out to draw people from the furthest margins towards God. Online media are increasingly proving an invaluable way to reach young people without funds to travel, elderly or disabled people who struggle to travel, and people resident or working in areas with poor transport links or outside England.

As the psalmist says, 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy'. The PBS has sought to ensure that, in the terrible circumstances we have lived through since March 2020, as many people as possible have continued to hear about the Prayer Book, and that we have laid foundations to draw more to see the Prayer Book's timeless relevance and to heed the gospel call which it proclaims. With its phrases so fitting for hours of trial and its bold message reliant, not on attention-grabbing externals dependent upon comfortable and untroubled prosperity, but on the very power of God's Word, the Prayer Book has proved its worth to us again, and our obligation to share this treasure with others has been made even clearer.

One of the first things the PBS did during the pandemic was to organise 'In Time Of Plague And Sickness'—an online conference exploring the history of the Church's response to pandemic disease, the role of the Prayer Book in that, theological implications from the Prayer Book for living in times of pandemic disease today, and the many positive responses to the pandemic which the Prayer Book had prompted in the first months of COVID. Many of us felt that conversation about our response to the pandemic was severely lacking, and that there was an absence of clear leadership to help us understand how the Prayer Book could still assist us in prayerful Christian response to trial,



even when gathering in common was banned by law. With hundreds attending online, lively discussions, and hundreds more watching the videos online afterwards, it was clear that a need was answered. It also showed how the PBS now had a much greater power to directly stir up conversations in the Church than it had done when only a story appealing to a newspaper editor could reach a mass audience.

Since then, we have sought to build on this, particularly through two Lent series and an Advent series, themed on God's mercy, the Advent Collects, and, most recently, monarchy and the Prayer Book. Each of these has sought to respond to the need of the hour with timeless themes—to help us ask for and to see mercy after a year of illness and isolation, to find wisdom and peace through a dark winter, and to reflect with hope, at a time of great conflict in the world regarding the right ordering of political power and sovereignty, on Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee (a much-needed beam of light in a troubled period).

There are other ways beyond online talks of heartening the faithful and stirring up interest in the Prayer Book. We have sponsored a virtual Ash Wednesday service with Communion and the special Accession Day service, offering worship to those unable to attend a local service on important days and promoting lesser-used parts of the Prayer Book for wider use, while also appealing to the curiosity of the undecided to encourage them to begin to see what depth there is to the Prayer Book once you really start living with it. We have promoted links to the many Prayer Book services broadcast online. These local efforts have, whilst serving a local need, done a great deal to encourage

Continued page 28



PBS pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Bishop Michael Langrish

31st August to 10th September 2023

It is always very moving to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; there is so much to see and experience and learn together. St Jerome said: 'Five gospels record the life of Jesus. Four you will find in books and the one you will find in the land they call Holy. Read the fifth gospel and the world of the four will open to you.' So this is a wonderful opportunity to engage afresh with the roots of our faith and discipleship. We will do so as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus and those who followed Him in the places where they walked.

Our pilgrimage will include the sites where the most important

events in our Lord's life and ministry took place: in Jerusalem and the surrounding area and further north in Galilee. We shall listen to, and reflect on, the words of the Gospels in the landscape about which they speak.

We shall also have the privilege of standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters there, the local Palestinian and Israeli Christians who are the ongoing, living Church in the region. These are the 'living stones' whose witness to Christ has been a constant for 2000 years.

And on this particular journey, we shall be drawing on the deep wells of the beauty, poetry and majesty of the

Book of Common Prayer.

We hope that, if you have never been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land before, you will choose to join us and, if you have been before, we welcome you back. The various sites and situations will speak to us all differently; but we shall be united on a journey together thirsting for holiness, forgiveness, peace and justice. Our journey will also, I am sure, bring joy and laughter, with profound worship, growing fellowship and deepening faith.

Rt Revd Michael Langrish

Request a pilgrimage brochure by contacting Mrs Lesley Bryant: pilgrimage@pbs.org.uk or **01243 555181**.



Prayer Book economy

Angela Tilby

If I were looking for one word to sum up the genius of the Book of Common Prayer, it would be 'economy'. The Prayer Book is the most extraordinarily slim, short volume, considering what it actually does and enables. For the Prayer Book is not just a service book or a set of liturgical texts. It is those things, of course, but it is also a spiritual and communal resource, a polity, a theology and a guide to personal and social ethics.

If I were to be stranded on a desert island, the Prayer Book and a Bible would supply all I needed for daily prayer and worship—if there were others present, we would have the texts to celebrate the sacraments and mark the turning points of life.

There are virtues, of course, in a much wider range of options, and there are some good texts and attractive liturgies in Common Worship. But it is immensely sad that the sheer range and complexity of Common Worship seems to have led a generation of clergy to opt out of liturgical worship altogether, or to make up their own as they go along, thus contributing to the fracturing of the Church of England along lines of doctrinal allegiance and taste. The C of E has always had a generous view of difference and has not attempted to impose conformity of belief.

In my teenage years, as I learnt more about theology and history and belief, I found myself attending at the same time a 'North End' evangelical church and an Anglo-Catholic church in the same area. Visually and in terms of liturgical habit, they were at opposite ends of the C of E spectrum. But I always felt at home in both because the texts were the same. I knew what to say, and, of course, I knew the words by heart, which is the best way to know them.

Now, sadly, the evangelical church I once attended has no liturgy at all and the Anglo-Catholics use the Roman missal. It is at our peril that we have lost common texts, and much of the dysfunction of the contemporary Church comes from the fact that we no longer pray the same words. I wonder what would happen if an imaginative-minded bishop were to encourage the use of the BCP at major diocesan services in the interests of genuinely Common Prayer?

The Revd Canon Angela Tilby is a broadcaster and writes on matters of faith and spirituality.



Congratulations to the Prayer Book Society on 50 years of service!

At Cambridge University Press, we greatly value the work of the Society in supporting and promoting the use of the Book of Common Prayer.

The Prayer Book and the Bible are the foundations of our publishing and our very first book was a liturgical work, followed by Bibles in the Geneva and King James translations. We published our first Prayer Book in 1629, and have been producing them ever since.

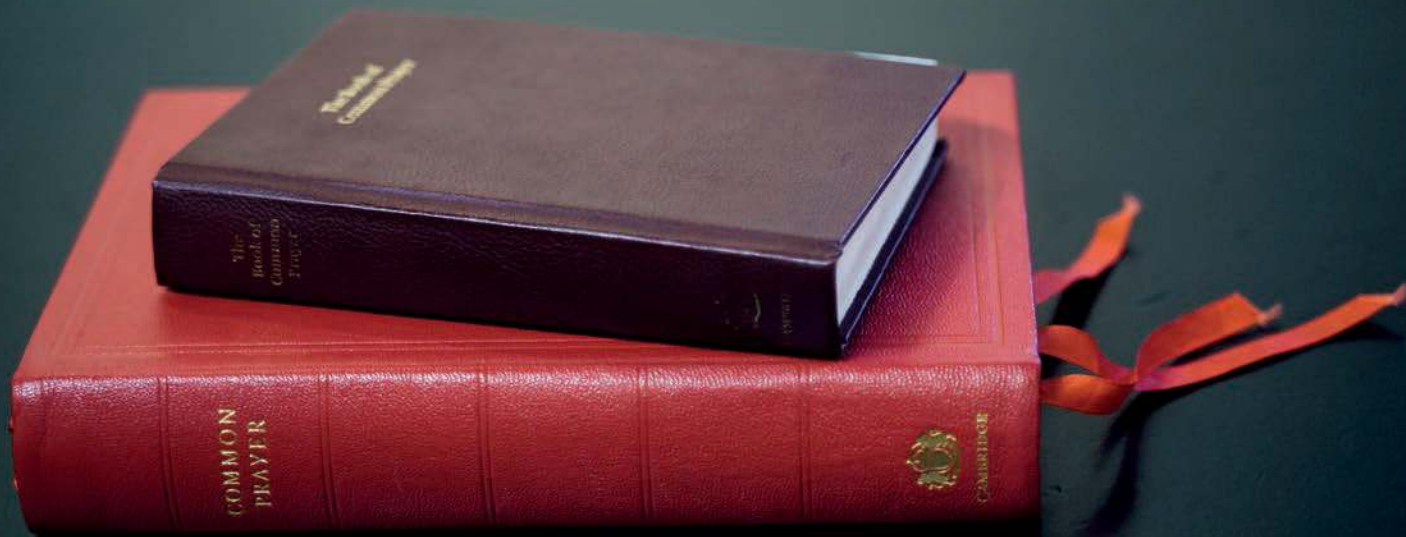
We have the honour of being the Queen's Printer, conferring upon us the responsibility for administering the crown copyright of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in England and Wales, as well as that of the King James Bible.

Today, we publish a range of BCP editions: small Prayer Books for individual use, either for private devotions or for use in church services; large and giant-print editions; an edition combining the two historic texts of the 1611 KJV and the 1662 BCP, as well as a desk edition for use by officiants. All are available direct from Cambridge University Press, from all good bookshops, and through PBS Trading.

Although we have been publishing for over 400 years, we continue to develop new ways of doing things: for example, our desk and giant-print editions are produced print-on-demand, meaning we can supply these specialist editions more flexibly.

Our most recent innovation was during the 2020 lockdown, when we created the Prayer Book 'skill' on Alexa, Amazon's digital assistant. Through the use of this emerging technology, we were thrilled to be able to offer audio services from the Book of Common Prayer, allowing people to take part in the comfort of their own homes. Anyone with an Alexa device can participate in the Morning and Evening Prayer services in the company of the Press choir and two Cambridge clergy. We are very grateful to the Prayer Book Society for their help and advice in delivering the skill, and look forward to further collaboration as we continue to develop it.

To keep up to date with Cambridge Bibles and Prayer Books, check our website, www.cambridge.org/bibles and the Cambridge Bibles Facebook and Instagram accounts.



Extracts from articles from early editions of *Faith and Heritage*

From 'Common Order and Discipline' by the Revd Professor Raymond Chapman, Summer 1994

The desire for authority to determine the lawful limits of duty and service is a natural and ancient human emotion. The word [authority] is not popular today: it suggests interference with individualism, which has been given paramount importance since the rise of Romanticism. It suggests control by a power not answerable to those it governs. It is not hard to share something of the disquiet in an age when authority is indeed often anonymous and derived from sources that may seem far away from the immediate situation. The memory of inhuman totalitarian regimes on a large scale, and the survival of many petty tyrannies, may give us pause.

Authority is acknowledged and honoured in the Book of Common Prayer. We pray that we should serve the Queen, 'duly considering whose authority she hath' and, in the prayer for the Church Militant, we pray for 'all that are

put in authority under her'. Sacramental absolution, as set out in the Visitation of the Sick and not thought up by any subversive Romanising tendency as some suppose, is given by the priest in the name of Christ, 'by his authority committed to me'.

The Book, which rests so firmly on authority, was itself the source of authority for the Church of England. It was not the liturgical manual of a sect but the received standard for the nation in matters of worship, order and doctrine. It was not a book for the clergy alone, like the medieval service books that it replaced, but a compilation made, as Cranmer's Preface says, 'in such Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding of the Readers and Hearers'. It provided for corporate worship in word and sacrament, and for the sanctifying of the individual rites of passage. For centuries it was an integral part of life for almost every man, woman and child in the realm.

Extracts from letters to *Faith and Heritage* (the former PBS magazine)

From near Appleby, Easter 1976

I tell myself God is still there, and things should grow and change and that I should be more adaptable, but it is no use. We are losing a great treasure. The beauty and majesty of the language uplifted one and its very familiarity was a comfort and strength.

From Keswick, Autumn 1976

I think that one of the main difficulties about the destruction of the liturgy is that most people seek to be so insensitive to words and language. I suppose they wouldn't be so arrogant if it were a question of tampering with Mozart or Rembrandt.

From Professor Brian Porter, December 1977

The increasing tendency in the pulpit to address the Almighty as 'You' is much to be deplored. For if persisted in, it

will lead to the total disappearance from living speech of the 'Thou', 'Thee', 'Thine' forms and the consequent impoverishment of the language. Suppose our poets had to make do with the ugly 'your'—'Drink to me only with your eyes'. If the older pronouns are now unfamiliar, the answer, surely, is not to abandon them but to revive them. We restore our cathedrals, our paintings and even our historic ships. Should we not take similar care over part of a heritage even greater than these—our English tongue?

From 'The Heritage of Liturgy' by Professor Brian Morris, Easter 1979

The new Marriage Service [as later appeared in the Alternative Services Book 1980] seems to lack authority and confidence, and to my mind, we shall lose much of the solemnity, the beauty and 'awe-fullness' of the ceremony. The same is true for the Burial Service. There is a small but telling example right at the beginning. The Book of Common Prayer instructs the priest to meet the corpse at the entrance of the churchyard, and go before it to the church or grave saying, 'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord...'

The new Series Three service omits any mention of corpses or churchyards, and the minister begins, 'Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and I am the life..."' In the one, the priest pronounces, in the other the minister explains. It's a subtle change, but is typical of the grievous loss of confidence and authority in all these new services.

Consider what has happened to the grave and profound words at the committal. The BCP offers a rhythmically complex utterance which spreads out its meaning in an attempt to render the ultimate mystery of death: 'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.' Series Three, in the first sentence, omits 'that is' and 'and is full of misery'. The first change wrecks the rhythm, the second negates what hitherto has been believed a truth. The Liturgical Commission has decided man is not full of misery. On whose authority? By what sign? Has our misery been lifted by a majority vote of a committee? In the second sentence, Series Three alters the presentation of the images—presumably to foster clarity. 'Like a flower he blossoms and then withers; like a shadow he flees and never stays.' 1662 first offers a general statement about growth and then enforces it with the analogy of the flower. Next, it says 'he fleeth', and who amongst us could have predicted the comparison (delicately touched in 'as it were') with 'a shadow', so rich a suggestion, so much more powerful for being delayed? By comparison Series Three is explicit, brutal,

plain and short. It clarifies. It explains. It instructs. But at the committal we confront the intricate nexus of hard fact and ineffable, inexorable mystery. It is not the moment to attempt clarification. Series Three [later authorised in the ASB 1980] is full of examples of just such insensitive discourtesy.

From 'The Christian Ministry in a University' by Dr Edward Norman, Autumn 1976

The Christianity of this century will go down in history as the religion of compulsive rationalising. It is sometimes a very depressing experience to attend Christian gatherings and watch the conversion of living faith into a set of desiccating and lifeless propositions. Those of simple spiritual perception are told they must 'think out their beliefs'. It is advice doubtless appropriate to some, but disastrous as a universal canon. Alas, the vice of intellectuals is spreading rapidly. Sometimes it seems as if the whole Church is becoming a gigantic talking shop; a change considerably assisted by the arrival of synodical government. The three-tiered synod already looks rather outdated. They were planned in the later 1960s, a period—as we see now—characterised by an extravagant instability of values. All sorts of institutions in our society at that time, especially universities, felt it was necessary or proper to increase 'participation' in decision-making. There was a sudden multiplication of committees and consultative bodies. The structure of synodical government in the Church almost perfectly preserves the idealism of those years, crystallised and intact.

Other institutions, including the universities, have since gone though a process of consolidation and streamlining; the Church has not. This is not to say that synods should go, or that participation is wrong; but they do need an extensive revision. For they now represent something sadly familiar to those who work in the academic world: a heavy machine, lubricated by professional moralists, which grinds down living experience and tries to reissue it in neatly labelled packages, each one stamped and approved with fashionable ideas.

From an 'English Churchman', Easter 1979

I am more and more convinced that the Church of England has thrown away its precious heritage by virtually abolishing the Book of Common Prayer. It is like the cutting off of Samson's hair, which left him weak and defenceless. To a large extent, the great strength of the Church has gone. Samson's hair was long because of his Nazarite vows of dedication to God. This set him apart from the world. Once he conformed to the world, his strength left him. Mercifully, Samson's hair did grow

again. Perhaps the Church will regain some of its strength if it brings back the Prayer Book.

From the Bishop of Peterborough, first published in Cross Keys, the Peterborough Diocesan News, May 1978

If we are not careful and considerate, some unsurpassed treasures will be completely lost to a whole generation and more, notably the Collects. The Litany must not be allowed to fall into desuetude. I have used it most of my life every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday and I know no greater

stimulant to intercessory prayer and no more powerful enlightener of the imagination than the Litany. Said slowly and distinctly, it can evoke the whole mercy and majesty of God, the great saving acts of Christ and our need and necessity in this mortal life. It needs no embellishments; and it is the best exercise in corporate intercession a congregation can grow by.

Crisis for Cranmer and King James—why spit on your luck?

In the Poetry Nation Review (PN Review) edition of May/June 1980 (just before the authorisation of the Alternative Services Book 1980), the then Chairman of the Prayer Book Society edited a collection of essays, whose contributors were well-known writers, musicians, dramatists, theologians and poets. These included Philip Larkin, John Betjeman, Joyce Grenfell, Iris Murdoch and A. J. P. Taylor. Here are few extracts from that edition:

Professor David Martin, Professor of Sociology at LSE (1971–1989)

Either the Church wills the conditions under which Cranmer and King James continue to be part of the natural furniture of the mind, or else they drag out a shifty afterlife amongst an eight o'clock or midweek remnant. Indeed some parishes have already blotted them out altogether. Behind the thin guise of 'choice' the double crown of English faith and language is being hustled and shoved into the museum. And what loosens the keystone of these classic texts touches the whole arch of rhyme and imaginative reason. The common poetry of English life is now being abandoned, in church and in school. This will be a national loss comparable to the wholesale destruction of our churches and cathedrals. Where the markers stood, there will be gaping holes filled by utilitarian disposables. Vast tracts of feeling and reference will be obliterated. Not merely will some 50 pages of the *Oxford Book of Quotations* disappear but we shall lose an Atlantis of the mind. There will be and can be no replacement. So far as memory is concerned, we face a universal blank.

When a clerisy fears to pass on its inheritance, the treasures are then packed away in the private collections of

those who have already amassed cultural resources. What is not publicly offered and automatically maintained cannot be chosen. There is no elitism more naked and negative than the kind which colludes with the current level of impoverishment and so cuts off access to the best. It is plain paternalism and condescension to decide that others are incapable of recognising vigour and beauty. Young people cannot respond to what isn't there or choose what they have never known. Choice presupposes availability, and availability has to be actively brought about. Instead, some of the erstwhile guardians actively install their own products and attempt to monopolise the consciousness of the next generation. In political life such activities would be publicly denounced.

*Behind the thin guise
of 'choice' the double
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hustled and shoved into
the museum*

Mary Warnock was a philosopher and one-time Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge

To speak, in the context of the liturgy, of 'aesthetic ideas' gives rise to the darkest suspicions. It may be said that I am arguing for an intolerably sentimental view of religion, according to which the liturgy and the readings from the Bible are to be used simply to suggest certain vague sublimities, to evoke in their hearers certain obscure stirrings of feeling,

which cannot be precisely expressed since they attach to no particular or definite doctrine. Sentimentalism, in the field of religion, it may be argued, is wrong. It is self-indulgence, and has no connexion either with statements that are true or with principles that are morally commendable.

I would argue, on the contrary, that the traditional language, when used in the liturgy, and the Authorised Version, when read as part of a service, does indeed arouse

Extracts from letters to *Faith and Heritage* (the former PBS magazine)

From Chalgrove, Oxford, October 1978

As many of your writers state, the health of the Church of England and indeed of the country as a whole, is at a very low ebb. Despite the various excuses, much of the blame for this is in our hands. We have created a General Synod that has a voracious appetite for change and discussion (as opposed to action), and a house of clergy that is unable or unwilling to be seen on the defensive, for fear it might offend. Why is it so hard for our bishops and other leading voices in the Church to reflect a truer picture of what is wanted at parish level?

From Guildford, Easter 1977

Ichabod was the name given to the son who was born to the wife of Phineas before she died in childbirth. The translation from the Hebrew into English is the 'Glory of the Departed', and it refers to the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines. For someone who has been a member of the Church of England all his life, it is a temptation to utter 'Ichabod' with reference to the new services held in our church.



sentiment, but it does so only because it makes a direct appeal to the imagination, a power inextricably linked with our emotions. And the appeal to our imagination is direct precisely because of the unordinariness and antiquity of the language itself. I would further argue that it is only through the power of imagination that we can apprehend any significance or any value in life itself. Thus no appeal to imagination can be dismissed as trivial.

Andrew Louth is presently emeritus Professor of Patristic and Byzantine Studies at Durham University

The language of the Prayer Book too has phrases that draw us up short, that make us think: ‘What does that mean?’ Just as the great early Christian theologian, Origen, explained apparent contradictions and confusions in the text of Scripture as having been put there on purpose to trip us up and make us look beyond the simple literal level of Scripture to a deeper, more divine meaning, so those words and phrases in the Prayer Book that seem strange point us beyond to the source of that strangeness. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns used to insist that ‘the Gospels are strange to us men of the twentieth century, and to pass the gulf which separates us from them is an infinitely difficult task’. And that there is such a gulf is hinted at when the language of the Prayer Book seems strange and odd (though not awkward). The awkward solemnity of modern liturgical English hides from us the strange by smothering everything with the awkward. (Only a few lines earlier: ‘Hallowed be your Name’—how like or unlike hallowed ground, or hallowed precincts? We cannot tell, for such English belongs to no time.) The strange in the Prayer Book invites explanation: and such explanation can be fruitful and illuminating.

Sir David Willcocks, composer and conductor

The damage to the Anglican Church has been inflicted from within, and it is therefore all the more difficult to combat those responsible. Have we to wait for a new generation to rediscover the Book of Common Prayer and the glories of Cranmer and Coverdale? This requires no answer, but I know that I voice the almost unanimous view of church musicians who have had to witness the debasement of their art and the impoverishment of their offering.

John Bowker, theologian and one-time Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge

No matter how often the words of Hamlet’s soliloquy are repeated, they are not repeated anything like so often as the words of the liturgy. And for words to bear that amount of repetition, and still to yield renewed meaning and inspiration as the plays of Shakespeare do, the dramatic and the poetic standard has to be set very high—still more so if the words are to be the vehicle of that most demanding of human exercises, worship and praise.

This does not mean that liturgy is thus reduced to play-acting. It is simply that, for words to strike deep and to become resourceful both in life and at the approach of death, for words to say for us what we long to say but cannot ourselves express, they need to have a richness and complexity which may well (though not necessarily) conflict with other goals of colloquialism and simplicity.

Dr Herbert Howells, composer, organist and teacher

Ever since I was a choirboy, the words of the Book of Common Prayer could move me to tears. But now it is as if someone had gone about putting black marks on one church after another. What would we say if someone thought they could alter the rhythm and vocabulary of Shakespeare?

Have we to wait for a new generation to rediscover the Book of Common Prayer and the glories of Cranmer and Coverdale?

The Prayer Book and me

David Norman

Continued from page 19



memorably by Coverdale) and the Collects (most of which are the work of Cranmer in translation or, occasionally, in composition itself). I think that what unifies these three is how they all speak to the human condition.

As a student, I continued to be involved with non-conformist churches alongside attending Evensong and the occasional said Communion. However, around December 2019 or so, I began to come to the realisation that it was in the Church of England in general and at services conducted according to the Prayer Book in particular that I felt my faith being nourished and strengthened. A couple of months later, feeling led by God, I decided from then on to attend the services at All Saints Pavement, all of which used the Prayer Book. I also took up saying one of the offices each day as my Lenten discipline. Just then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and churches were shut. It was a dark time indeed. However, as the old saying puts it, every cloud has a silver lining. In my case, the extra time available to me meant that, by Eastertide, I was saying both Morning and Evening Prayer every day, a habit which has stuck with me ever since. Having been able to resume attendance at All Saints Pavement after things began to open up in 2020, I requested confirmation.

The Prayer Book has continued to enrich my spiritual life since then. I am preparing to return to York for work, having been absent since the completion of my studies in August 2021. I have missed living in York immensely, not least worshipping at All Saints. However, whilst I have been 'down south', it has never failed to uplift me when I have managed to find a Prayer Book service to attend—whether Evensong, the Lord's Supper, or the all-too-rare treat of Matins. Such occasions have given me a sense of what is meant by 'Common Prayer' and have moved me to lament that it is anything but common these days. At the recent Prayer Book Society Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer in Oxford (for which I was the crucifer), I found myself both thanking God for the life and work of Cranmer and praying that the Church of England might once again embrace his vision.

I do think there is reason, however, to have hope and optimism in this regard. I have never been the only young person at a Prayer Book Society event. The BCP is certainly not an irrelevant artifact to be consigned to the archives, but rather something that, even centuries on from its composition, God is still pleased to use to bring wanderers back to the fold and to knowledge of Him whom to know is life eternal. That is reason enough for hope.

The digital advance of the PBS

Iain Milne

Continued from page 21

and build up Christian people scattered far and wide, and to inspire clergy to proclaim the gospel as effectively as possible by all means possible. We have provided downloadable aids to personal Prayer Book prayer and, through social media, we have gently tried to promote the full Prayer Book calendar to address the void left in the Church's pattern of life by cancelled events. I would hope that many, like me, have discovered some of our calendar's more neglected, but nonetheless profitable, corners in the process. We have also sought to ensure that, as we have been able to hold more events in person, we have more systematically filmed them so that they can reach the widest audience possible and achieve the greatest impact. All these activities together make it plain to anyone that we are a Society with a lively Christian mission. Many have been inspired to join us during the last two years through our digital activities, and are already contributing valuable new ideas.

The value of our online material isn't just in meeting the need of a moment, but in its ability to keep on winning people over to the Prayer Book, just as the Prayer Book's prayers, put into print centuries ago, continue to be picked up and, being read, point the way to the salvation given to us through Jesus Christ. We need to share this material as effectively as possible, which is why we have revamped our website and redoubled our social media efforts. Our videos are sitting on YouTube, waiting to be watched and shared—we need our members to share these videos with friends, clergy and lay, as well as to contribute to talks, to offer ideas and, of course, to run events of their own at Branch and parish level. Many outside the Prayer Book Society still scoff at the idea that the Prayer Book can have any life in a digital age. We are proving them wrong, but individuals have to make the arguments to busy mockers time and time again. With members' help, we will continue to produce the best material we possibly can, print and digital, to promote the use and understanding of the Book of Common Prayer. I hope that everyone reading this magazine is inspired to keep encouraging people to turn to this material and fundamentally to the Prayer Book itself, that God might be glorified.

I am sure I am not alone in looking forward to events, like our conference in Liverpool later this year and our anniversary service and lecture at Westminster Abbey,

being able to happen in person—and, from pushing for the resumption of services regrettably still suspended ostensibly due to COVID, to new initiatives to encourage people to discover Evensong for the first time, there is much non-digital activity that PBS members must, and I am sure will, make happen in the coming months.

But our experience over the last two years has also armed us with new ways of taking the good fight forward into fresh corners of the country, new ways of campaigning and raising awareness of a book which some would like to gather dust

in a forgotten corner, and new personal connections which can help us encourage one another to hope, pray and act for the revitalisation of the Church through spiritual and numerical growth in Prayer Book services of all kinds across the country and beyond. The empowerment this has given us is something to be thankful for and to encourage us, as we look to build on the inheritance given to us by the Prayer Book Society's first 50 years.

Iain Milne is a Trustee of The Prayer Book Society.

The Prayer Book Society supporting the next generation

An anniversary, particularly one as significant as a Golden Jubilee, may prompt us to pause and be grateful for the vision of those who established the Prayer Book Society and for the dedication of those who have kept that vision alive and have secured the standing of the Book of Common Prayer in the Church today.

It will also, I am sure, encourage those of us who are its current members to renew our own commitment to ensuring that the Prayer Book continues in use, and continues to be valued, over the decades to come and, more immediately, that the 2030 Vision of *people of all ages finding life in Christ through a growing Prayer Book service in every benefice* may be fulfilled.

It is with these considerations in mind that I venture to ask if you might consider giving additional expression to your support for the PBS and its aims in this anniversary year. Let me suggest some possibilities:

- That you might seek to recruit another member to the PBS—whether that be an individual or a Corporate Member, such as a chapel or a PCC.
- That you encourage a child of secondary school age to engage with the Prayer Book by entering our annual Cranmer Awards Competition.
- That you might consider increasing the amount you donate annually (above the current recommended figure of £28 per annum) by making an additional donation through our website.
- That, if circumstances allow, you might consider becoming a benefactor of the Society—making an annual gift of £500 or more, paid yearly or monthly.
- That you might look to the longer term and provide for the Society in your will and so join the '1662 Circle'.
- That you might support initiatives we are launching to provide 'Prayer Books for Choristers' and 'Prayer Books for Prisoners'.

To expand upon the last point, we wish to make copies of the BCP available to young choir members in cathedrals and other major churches across the country. We have been in discussion with Cambridge University Press and have their support. What is proposed is a new edition, of the same size as the present Enlarged Edition, but in a different colour, with



the PBS logo embossed on the cover and with a presentation bookplate inside. A glossary of Prayer Book terms that may be unfamiliar to young people will be bound into the edition. Choristers will also be presented with a new guide to the Prayer Book, written for us by a former school chaplain.

This new edition will be known as the 'Grantchester Edition'—in recognition of a legacy gift from a member of the Society, the late Betty, Lady Grantchester. With the agreement of members of her family, her legacy is being used to help defray the initial costs of this initiative. Gifts of any amount are welcome—but perhaps I might venture the thought that one could make oblique reference to the year of the Society's creation and give a sum of £19.72, whether that be as a one-off or on a periodic basis.

The Society organises regular events for its benefactors and members of the 1662 Circle. Special services are planned at Chapel Royal Hampton Court Palace, St George's Hanover Square, Chapel Royal St James's Palace and Bath Abbey. If you would be interested in learning more about them then please contact the Trustee responsible for fundraising, the Revd Christopher Hancock, PBS, The Studio, Copyhold Farm, Lady Grove, Goring Heath, Reading RG8 7RT, or by email: christopher.hancock@pbs.org.uk.



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11am Holy Communion

6pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday

9.30am Holy Communion

All regular services according to the Book of Common Prayer. Our professional/scholarship octet helps lead the Sunday morning service; the 1915 three-manual organ by Frederick Rothwell is on the British Institute of Organ Studies' register of historic instruments of importance to the national heritage. The church has a fine interior with glass and furnishings by Martin Travers and associates. Visitors most welcome.

Contact

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The Vicarage, 96 Pinner View, Harrow HA1 4RJ

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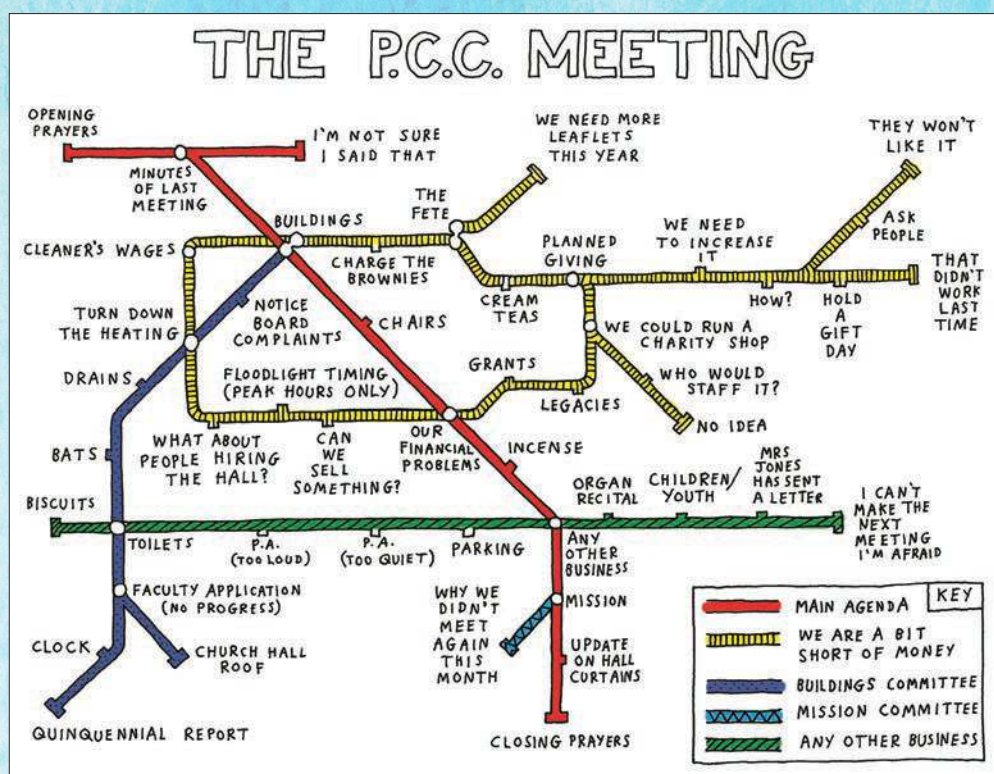
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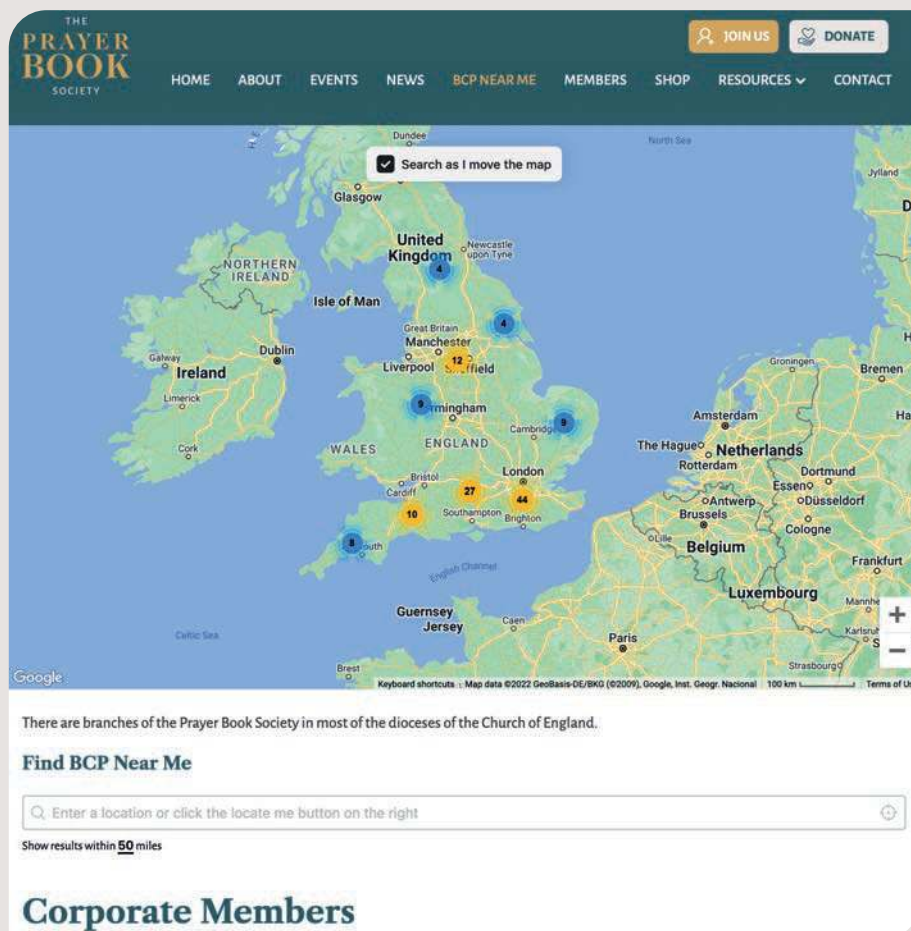
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