

The Prayer Book TODAY

Cranmer Commemoration 2023
Royal St James' day for benefactors
Thy Chosen Servant: The Rite of Coronation
Key dates for 2023

PBS

Lent 2023

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Key dates 2023

The National Finals of the Cranmer Awards

Saturday, 25th February at 10.30a.m. at Liverpool Hope University

Sing unto the Lord: the Psalms and the Prayer of the Church

A day of prayer, study and reflection for Lent

Saturday, 11th March at 10a.m. at St James', Garlickhythe, London

Register via the PBS website

Annual Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer

Tuesday, 21st March, St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

Speaker: Professor Alec Ryrie, University of Durham

Preacher: The Revd Tom Sander,

Rector of St Giles-in-the-Fields

Please see the enclosed booking form

Blackburn Branch Festival

Saturday, 22nd April at Blackburn Cathedral

11a.m. Choral Matins followed by lunch

The Annual Meeting of Members will follow at 1.45p.m. and

Evensong will be sung at 4p.m.

Further details from Christopher Norton (please see Branch Contacts page)

Peter Toon Memorial Lecture

Wednesday, 10th May at 4p.m. at Pusey House, Oxford

Speaker: Monsignor Jeffrey Steenson, Ordinary Emeritus,

Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter

Preacher at Evensong: The Revd Dr Ben Sargent,

Priest in Charge of Bransgore and Hinton Admiral,

Diocese of Winchester

Choral Matins for the Benefactors of the Society

Saturday, 20th May at 11a.m. at the Chapel Royal,

St James' Palace

PBS Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

31st August–10th September

www.pbs.org.uk/event/pbs-pilgrimage-to-the-holy-land

Lichfield Branch Relaunch

Saturday, 23rd September at Lichfield Cathedral

12.30p.m. Sung Communion

Celebrant and preacher: The Bishop of Lichfield

After lunch, an address by Bishop Rowan Williams

(Archbishop of Canterbury 2002–2012)

www.pbs.org.uk/event/lichfield-branch-re-launch-celebration

Cover Photo: Cranmer Memorial, Oxford/Ash Mills

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Royal St James' day for benefactors



Just days after the Coronation of King Charles III, the benefactors of the PBS are invited to a very special Choral Matins, in Royal St James'.

On Saturday, 20th May, the Chapel Royal at St James' Palace will be the venue for the service, sung by the choir of His Majesty's Chapel Royal. It will be led by the Revd Canon Paul Wright CVO, Sub-Dean of His Majesty's Chapels Royal and Domestic Chaplain to the King.

The Chapel is steeped in royal history. In February 1840, it was the location for the marriage of Queen Victoria to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg. Most recently, in October 2013, Prince George was baptised at a ceremony attended by four generations of the Royal Family.

The choir, which was founded in the reign of Henry V, is one of the oldest musical institutions in continual existence. Its duties today are essentially the same as they were in the fifteenth century: to sing the regular services in the Chapel of the Monarch's home, and to attend the Monarch at services and other events elsewhere as commanded. Almost all the principal names in English music have been members of the Chapel Royal, including Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell and Handel.

Following the service, Canon Wright will lead a tour of the remarkable building. This will be followed by a lunch served at the nearby Royal Automobile Club. The new Pall Mall Clubhouse was designed

in 1907 by fashionable architects, Charles Mewès and Arthur Davis. They had been lauded for their work on the recently constructed Ritz hotels in Paris and London.

After three years of construction, at a cost of what was considered then a huge sum of £33,000, the eclectic mix of Classical, French and English architectural styles opened in March 1911. A 'mini-palace of opulence and Edwardian hedonism' was one exuberant description.

Benefactors will be briefed on the work of the Society by PBS Chairman Bradley Smith, and Canon Wright will be invited to share his first-hand experience of the King's Coronation.

If you'd like to join the existing group of the Society's benefactors, you are invited to donate £42 a month / £500 a year.

Details of joining this group can be found on the website (www.pbs.org.uk) or by calling the PBS office on 0118 984 2582.



Thy Chosen Servant: The Rite of Coronation

Join us for an online seminar series exploring the liturgy, ceremonial and music of the Coronation.

1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd March 2023 via Zoom.

Each session will begin at 7.30p.m.

Register: www.pbs.org.uk/event/thy-chosen-servant

O Lord, save the King!

The accession of H. M. King Charles III has meant a new task for Cambridge. As King's Printer, we publish the 1662 Book of Common Prayer on behalf of the Crown. We've received Royal Warrants instructing us to make alterations to the BCP to reflect the change of Sovereign and other changes of title—for example, in the Royal Prayers, which appear in five different services. There are over 140 alterations altogether!

Our typesetters are amending the text and we hope to have the updated books in time for Lent.

We are working on a commemorative Bible to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles and Camilla the Queen Consort. It will be a special binding of the classic Cameo Bible, bound in royal red leather and blind blocked with the King's cypher. The Bible will include pages recording the details of the Coronation and will have an accompanying booklet commemorating the occasion.

The Prayer Books and the Coronation Bibles will be available from the PBS.

For details of all Cambridge Bibles and Prayer Books, please see www.cambridge.org/bibles.

Amanda Taylor
Marketing and Sales Executive, Cambridge Bibles.

Bishop of Oswestry



We send our prayers and good wishes to the Rt Revd Paul Thomas as he begins his new ministry as Bishop of Oswestry.

Bishop Thomas will be well known to members as a former Deputy Chairman of the Prayer Book Society. His excellent book, *Using the Book of Common Prayer. A Simple Guide*, is presented by the PBS to every Church of England ordinand entering training; he delivered a lecture at All Saints', Northampton in February 2022, at the Society's national celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of Her Late Majesty's Accession; and contributed to 'Joy and Felicity', an online seminar series on the Prayer Book and Monarchy, in Lent 2022.

His consecration, which took place at Canterbury Cathedral on the Feast of the Purification (Candlemas), 2nd February 2023, was attended by many officers and members of the Prayer Book Society.

ALMIGHTY God, giver of all good things, who by thy Holy Spirit hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in thy Church: Mercifully behold this thy servant now called to the work and ministry of a Bishop; and replenish him so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn him with innocence of life, that both by word and deed he may faithfully serve thee in this office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edifying and well-governing of thy Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

Arthur Moss



On 22nd September 2022, surrounded by friends and fellow parishioners in Kendal Parish Church, Cumbria, Mr Arthur Moss (97) became the first recipient of the Kilmister Award, a brand-new award for lay people who have made an exceptional voluntary contribution to the work of the Prayer Book Society.

Commenting on his nomination Arthur said, 'Thirty years ago, I became Chairman of the Carlisle Branch of the Society, at a time when we needed to breathe new life into the organisation. I felt called to accept that task and, with the help of committed colleagues, our membership quadrupled and our activities became more well known, attracting further support. By the time I gave up the chairmanship after twelve years, I'd like to think that the organisation had flourished.'

The Award was presented by the Revd Eric Robinson, a former curate and vicar of Kendal Parish Church, and a friend to Arthur for twenty-five years. He said: 'It was an immense pleasure to be able to honour Arthur in this way. I first got to know Arthur when I was a curate in 1999. I soon realised that he was a man of God, his heart was central to the life of the church, and his faith was central to who he was as a human being.'

'He approached me to see if I would like to be a member of the Prayer Book Society and it is one of the best things I've ever done. It introduced me to the Prayer Book as an immensely strong liturgical tool for the church, but it also introduced me to its spirituality and its language, which I've valued ever since.'

Arthur remains committed to the promotion of the Book of Common Prayer, a text he says 'strengthens adherence in the faith'. He added: 'It summarises our thoughts; you can listen to the words of the liturgy and apply them to yourself, which is very uplifting. I believe it to be irreplaceable; what is coming in its place doesn't even begin to compare.'

'This is a moment I shall treasure for the remainder of my days. I was brought up in the Prayer Book, taken to church at a very early age by my mother and, if it's God's will, I shall die in the Prayer Book.'

The first Corporate Member in Wales—a dispute!

Philip Godsal

It is with apologies to St Paul's Church, Craig y Don (*The Prayer Book Today*, Michaelmas 2021 edition) that I write about our parish church, St Mary's Whitewell, which was the first PBS Corporate Member in Wales, although I concede that Craig y Don would be the first Church in Wales Corporate Member. St Mary's Whitewell is unique within the Diocese of Chester, being wholly within the ancient Township of Iscoyd, in the former County of Flintshire (Detached), now within the County Borough of Wrexham. I explained how this came about in the letter you published in the Lent 2022 edition of *TPBT*.

There has been a place of worship on the site since at least 1550, being a chapel of ease attached to the ancient Cheshire parish of Malpas. The original black-and-white, timber-and-plaster building was taken down in 1830, having partially collapsed during an attempt to enlarge it, when the present building was funded by Miss Marianne Congreve of Iscoyd Park. Miss Congreve had inherited Iscoyd from her father, the Revd Richard Congreve, and incorporated some of

the original panelling from pews and memorials.

Whitewell became a separate parish by Order of Council dated 19th May 1885, and the first appointed rector was Reverend Joseph Jacob MA (1857–1926), educated at Uppingham School and Trinity College Cambridge. He was ordained in Chester Cathedral in 1882 and licensed to the curacy of Malpas, until presented with the living of St Whitewell, where he remained until his death. The Revd Jacob was a renowned horticulturist, a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society and a famous breeder and grower of daffodils, tulips and crocuses, including the Whitewell daffodil (widespread, orange-yellow crown), the Whitewell purple crocus (*Crocus Tommasianus*) and the Iscoyd White Freesia. He published, in 1912, what was then one of the first works in the English language on tulips, as part of a series, *Present Day Gardening*. The Revd Jacob's memorial, with its floral decorations round its edges, is located on the south wall of the chancel.

Philip Henry (1631–1696), the famous non-conformist minister, lived at Broad Oak in the parish, was married in

The Alternative Celebration

Charlotte Appleby

After so many events having to be postponed because of COVID, it was disappointing that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Prayer Book Society had to be rescheduled because of a train strike; but we are getting used to the notion that all plans have to be provisional. My grandparents' generation used to add the initials DV, shorthand for *Deo Voluntatis* (God willing), routinely to acceptance of any invitation, as a reminder that our lives are in the hands of God.

However, thanks no doubt to a great deal of hard work by all involved, an alternative was put in place for those whose plans to get to the service and celebrations were not affected—indeed in many cases could not be changed. This select group, some of whom were enjoying trips to the theatre or opera as part of their visit to the metropolis, met instead at St James' Garlickhythe for Sung Holy Communion. Thanks to the choir for giving up their time; for a buffet lunch; to the organisers who had not only to arrange it at short notice but also rearrange it when the plans fell through; and for a most interesting talk.

The sermon given by the Bishop of Southwark reminded us, among other things, that the era of print culture, which enabled mass production of books so that all churches could have the same texts, was, if you take the long view, unusual. Before print, manuscripts were rare and not always exact; after print, we have electronic media and throwaway service

Whitewell chapel in 1660 and preached there occasionally. His son, Matthew Henry (1662–1714), famous for his six-volume biblical commentary, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, was baptised there. The marble tablet in Philip Henry's memory was moved from Whitchurch and placed in Whitewell in 1844.

As to other memorials, it is remarkable that this small parish produced an outstanding naval officer in each of the two world wars: Commander Alfred Edmund Godsal DSO Croix de Guerre, captain of *HMS Vindictive*, killed at Ostend on 10th May 1918, and Captain Bernard Warburton-Lee VC, killed in 1940, while in command of a destroyer flotilla in Narvik Fjord. His posthumous VC was the first naval one of the war.

Today, St Mary's Whitewell has a flourishing wedding ministry. It hosts, periodically, services of Choral Matins or Evensong, performed by local choir, Vox Vocavit, and occasional BCP services by arrangement.

Philip Godsal attends St Mary's Whitewell.

What would Thomas Cranmer make of the current state of Prayer Book use in the Church of England and the wider Anglican communion?

sheets in a culture of choice, diversity and computers. He asked us to consider: 'What then is the vocation of those so properly devoted to the place of the Prayer Book in the Church of England's living tradition?' He suggested that it was 'to recall the Church to its liturgical and worshipping life'

and that 'our commitment to corporate prayer should be paramount'.

This resonated with me, and no doubt with many of us who find so often no space for private prayer in the modern services, with intercessions being a series of instructions to God to sort out the problems currently top of the news agenda. The Collect for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, which is the Collect of the Prayer Book Society, is as relevant today as it was when first written:

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

After lunch, Fr Tim Handley, Rector of St James', invited us to wonder what Thomas Cranmer would make of the current state of Prayer Book use in the Church of England and the wider Anglican communion, and of the fact that the liturgy of the Prayer Book is now officially part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, with communities of Orthodox Christians using derivatives of the Prayer Book.

He said, 'These are extraordinary developments and fine testament to the strength of the language and thought of the Prayer Book, which have found a home not merely in the English-speaking world, but in the wider life of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.' He detects signs of revival in the increasing number of people attending Evensong in our cathedrals and in the popularity of online streaming of Prayer Book services. He feels, and probably many of us would agree, 'Part of this is, no doubt, the simple beauty of the language of the Prayer Book'. In addition, 'the Prayer Book represents the faith and spirituality of the Early Church as the Church of England has received it from those first four or five vital centuries of its life'.

Although many of our churches do not much use the Prayer Book, just as when it was suppressed during the Commonwealth and people continued to use it in their homes, so it can be, and is, used by lay people *in the world*. As he put it in conclusion, 'It is holy enough to be used by the whole people of God across the denominations'.

Worship returns to

The Saxon church of St Olave is the oldest building in Chichester. Built around 1050, it contains evidence of late eleventh and twelfth-century work, and was partly rebuilt in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It was further restored in the nineteenth century. Dedicated to the Norwegian Saint and King, Olaf II (995–1030), it is one of the ‘five little churches of Chichester’, all of which, with the exception of St Olave’s, have either ceased to exist or are now used for non-Christian purposes.

With the amalgamation of the city centre parishes, and a rapidly diminishing population caused by the conversion of residential properties into commercial premises, St Olave’s ceased to be used for regular worship in January 1953.

Happily, however, an Order in Council of 1956 provided for St Olave’s to be vested in the Diocesan Board of Finance, and used as a church information room and bookshop under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

(SPCK). The bookshop was dedicated by Bishop George Bell, and opened to the public in 1957. Since the building would be used for the promotion of *Christian* knowledge, and on the understanding that an annual service of Holy Communion would be held in the church on 29th July each year (the feast of St Olave), it was *not* deconsecrated.

The SPCK disposed of its chain of bookshops in 2006, and a deeply unhappy period followed under the management of an American firm known as the St Stephen the Great Charitable Trust (SSG). Those difficult days passed in 2008 when SSG filed for bankruptcy in the US courts. The bookshop’s doors were then closed on 22nd August 2009, shortly to reopen under the management of a new local Trust, the St Olav Trust, on 12th December of the same year.

Under the Trust, the bookshop continues to flourish, selling a wide range of Christian books, church supplies (including communion wafers, candles and stationery), cards and gifts. Having secured Government

funding, and with the generous support of local churches and individuals, the building was thoroughly restored and refurbished during the 2021 lockdown. The decaying walls were replastered, new bookcases, lighting and heating were installed, and the whole place transformed into a beautiful and inviting space filled with Bibles, Prayer Books and Christian resources for all ages and Church traditions.

A large central display was removed during the refurbishment (much to the relief of the staff), and the installation of smaller, moveable display units created a flexible space, which could be used for other purposes. In the autumn of 2021, the staff decided to try something new; and so *Evensong at Olav’s* was born.

On the first Wednesday of every month, Prayer Book Evensong is celebrated in the bookshop. Music is provided by an electronic keyboard positioned on the counter, and thirty folding chairs, purchased through the generosity of regular attendees, fill the body of the church. After the service,

Off by heart: a love letter to the Book of Common Prayer

Jayne Manfredi

There is a small, black, leather-bound book that I keep by my bedside. The pages are well thumbed and semi-translucent, faded by time, slightly curled and fragile, like a dry oak leaf in November. If I put my nose to its spine and sniff—and why wouldn’t I?—its scent conjures up a memory of the Liddle Archive in Leeds, where, as an undergraduate, I once spent many hours poring through the letters of dead soldiers, mailed home from the trenches. They contained splashes of mud and a lost idiom, etched in a forgotten hand. The book by my bedside is also an artefact. It’s a memory of a time long since dead, yet it still breathes when I read it.

It was given to me by a priest shortly after I came to faith when I was 33, but I didn’t really bother to open it with any clear intention until the first lockdown in 2020. Then there was time and a goodly dollop of existential dread prompting me to know those

pages better; to explore my faith by saying the prayers that are my Anglican inheritance. What I discovered within the pages of that diminutive book was unchanging timelessness amidst a turbulent transition; routine and stability during unprecedented chaos; and uplifting beauty at a time when all was flat and dull. In recent weeks, amidst a period of deep sadness and distress, that little black book has come into its own again.

The ancient Greeks believed that the heart was the seat of intelligence and memory, as well as emotion, as did the Hebrews, who used the word ‘heart’ to denote the human will. This ancient belief is possibly the origin of the phrase, to learn *by heart* or *off by heart*.

Recently, I watched a retired priest in his nineties preside at a Prayer Book Eucharist, intoning the whole service entirely from memory. What was learned as a boy and a young man, and oft repeated as a serving priest, had never been

*What I discovered within
the pages was unchanging
timelessness amidst a
turbulent transition*

Chichester's oldest church

which includes Psalms and Canticles sung to Anglican chant, refreshments are served, and a talk by a guest speaker follows. Recent speakers have included:

- Bradley Smith: *Fires of Faith: The Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer*
- Dr Caroline Adams, historian and archivist: *Interpreting the Past for the Present*
- Dr Miles Leeson, Director of the Iris Murdoch Institute: *Iris Murdoch and Christianity*
- The Revd Canon Paul Armstead: *Walter Hussey: The Northampton Years*

The bookshop's assistant manager, the Revd Sarah Manouch, a PBS member and House-for-Duty incumbent of three rural churches in the South Downs National Park north of Chichester, frequently leads the service, which always concludes with the General Thanksgiving. Members

of the congregation come from far and wide and represent many different churches and denominations, while a quartet from St Paul's, Chichester, leads the singing of the Psalms and hymns. In the summer months, the doors are left open and the joyful praises of God can be heard in the streets. Passers-by hear the singing and sometimes tiptoe to the door to see what's going on. Some come in and stay for the service.

Evensong at Olav's is unique. We don't know of any other regular Evensong held in a bookshop; and it goes from strength to strength. The Trust joined the PBS as a Corporate Member in 2018, and since 2020, the annual St Olave's Day Holy Communion has been celebrated according to the Prayer Book. The staff and Trustees warmly welcome visitors to the regular Prayer Book services in Chichester's oldest place of worship.

A detailed history of St Olave's Church can be found in *The Five Little Churches of Chichester* by PBS member, Alan Green. Copies cost £10 and can be

obtained directly from the bookshop: mail@stolavchristianbookshop.org / 01243 782790.

Bradley Smith
Chairman, Prayer Book Society.



forgotten. Newer discoveries, like my name for example, continued to escape him entirely. I've encountered elderly women who can recite the Collects and can join in with Evensong without needing to refer to the Book because they practised it so often during childhood and absorbed it along with their times tables. Once a Prayer Book Anglican, always a Prayer Book Anglican.

If something is known in our heart of hearts, then it is truly known: as Diarmaid MacCulloch so poetically puts it, to know it so well that the words become polished 'as smooth as a pebble on the beach'. Polished prose you can keep in your pocket, and caress with your fingertips and clench in the palm of your hand like a talisman. Or, to use Eamon Duffy's sideways compliment: 'Cranmer's sombrely magnificent prose, read week by week, entered and possessed the laity's minds and became the fabric of their prayer, the utterance of their most solemn and vulnerable moments'.

I've rarely felt more solemn and vulnerable than I have of late. When all the words that usually come so easily are spent, there is a little book of prayer language written just for that

purpose. Uttered by multitudes over hundreds of years, often by rote, *off by heart*, even when it's completely broken. When I crave the comfort of simplicity and predictable routine, and extempore prayer is impossibly onerous, this book speaks in my stead. It doesn't seek to coddle me nor deny the shadow side of my earthly life, but instead offers me the stark truth: that if salvation is to mean anything at all, then I need to know that one of the things I need saving from is myself. I have repeatedly lost my life and found it again within those pages. 'Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord' and 'there is no health in me', hits particularly hard when you've reached rock bottom, the very depths of the miry pit.

I've heard the language described as arcane and not accessible for ordinary people, but as someone who has been described as *common* a fair few times, it speaks to my heart as though it's my first and only tongue. I'm not learned or scholarly. I don't speak any other languages and I don't understand most Latin, yet when I read this book I can utter the same words to God penned long ago by a master liturgist,

Continued on page 22

Our little Prayer Book

The liturgy of the Prayer Book is now officially part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church... One needs to pause for a moment to take in that statement. The Book of Common Prayer is now officially part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church! Last year, the current Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, celebrated a liturgy, large parts of which Cranmer would have known like the back of his hand.

It's known as the Book of Divine Worship and was composed for members of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, created by Pope Benedict XVI, for Anglicans who wished to enter into full communion with the Church of Rome, whilst not leaving behind their Anglican heritage. Parishes in the United States have been doing something similar since the 1980s.

Just imagine that for a moment: a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church kneeling to say those words: 'we do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness'. An historic and quite extraordinary moment.

I wonder how Cranmer would react to the knowledge that his daily round of Psalms, readings, versicles and responses—Matins and Evensong—is now a beautifully bound volume published by the Catholic Truth Society, and used by hundreds of former Anglicans, many current Anglicans, and, I hear, some Roman Catholics now exposed to the beauty of the Prayer Book for the first time.

It's not just Roman Catholics who now enjoy the majesty of Cranmer's Prayer Book. For many years, communities of Orthodox Christians have also used derivatives of the Prayer Book. Like Roman Catholics, they celebrate Matins and Evensong pretty much as per our own Prayer Book. For the Eucharist, they use a liturgy known as the Liturgy of St Tikhon which, like the Ordinariate's Book of Divine Worship, Cranmer would have easily been able to navigate, though I fancy he would have taken issue with the eucharistic prayer.

These are extraordinary developments and fine testament to the strength of the language and thought of the Prayer Book, which have found a home not merely in the English-speaking world, but in the wider life of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. It speaks of a vibrancy and continuing relevancy to our modern world.

And yet in the Church of England, Prayer Book usage has been in decline for many years, the Communion service relegated to the 8 o'clock on Sunday and a dwindling band of devotees. If it is celebrated at all. Evensong continues to attract many followers.

The tragedy of our Church is that the BCP is no longer the vehicle for national worship and unity that it once was, and is unlikely to return to that exalted status in our lifetimes. We saw that at the funeral of Her Majesty: though we might have recognised many of the prayers, it was not a Prayer Book funeral. For good or ill.

The historian, Diarmaid MacCullough wrote this on the 350th anniversary of the Prayer Book in 2012:

Its liturgy was not a denominational artefact; it was the literary text most thoroughly known by most people in this country—the Bible should be included among its lesser rivals. The English and the Welsh were active participants in the Prayer Book, as they made their liturgical replies to the person leading worship in the thousands of churches throughout the realm: they were actors week by week in a drama whose cast included and united most of the nation, and which therefore was a much more significant play, and culturally more central, than anything by Shakespeare.

Sadly, it is not used as much as it might be and there are large areas of the country which can only be described as BCP-bereft.

But there are signs of revival. Before the pandemic, more and more people were attending Evensong in our cathedrals. Why?

In an article in the *Church Times*, the writer Angela Tilby had a stab at the answer, albeit one with a barb.

Not surprisingly, those who attend weekday evensong do not talk to each other much. They come and they go, yet they are there. I suspect that they represent a large constituency who have more or less given up on other forms of church life, and who, in time past, might have gone to morning or evening prayer on Sundays in their parishes, but less often to holy communion. They come for God, I think, relieved that no one is going to get at them. The music is important, of course, but so is what the rhythm of speech and music does for them: that slowing of the heart rate and breathing, the quietening of the mind, the sense of space and mystery and presence.

The beauty of language. A beauty which always points us to the source of all beauty, which is God. This has to be one of the reasons behind the signs of renewal I think we are seeing. But there's another word. I said earlier: it's a *prayer book*, so part of the answer has to lie in the spirituality of the Prayer Book.

This is about the Prayer Book as a vehicle and means for systematic Christian living borne out of the witness of the first Christians, who 'devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42). For me, the Prayer Book represents the faith and spirituality of the Early Church as the Church of England has received it from those first four or five vital centuries of its life. Which is, by the way, why Roman Catholics and Orthodox are able to absorb it into their liturgical life with barely a blink of the eye. It stands in the great spiritual tradition of the Western Church, and

yet also bears the unmistakable stamp of the reforms of the sixteenth century.

I recently read a book which described England as the *land of the Benedictines*. In other words, our liturgy, our landscape, like so much of that in the Christian West, bears the stamp of the Benedictine life. So Benedictine life and rhythm permeated the life of the English up to the Reformation, and after. Let me give you some examples.

The Holy Rule of St Benedict forms a rhythm based around the Daily Office and the Eucharist—the *prayers and the breaking of the bread*. This is the rhythm of the monk or nun, but it is one which is clearly reflected in the Prayer Book because it reflected the practice of the Early Church; as is contemplative recollection on the words we have prayed: private devotion, in other words.

The Rule of St Benedict says every day should have the character of Lent: that is recollection and repentance. And those who use the Prayer Book will know that corporate prayers of confession form the heart of those principal services of the Eucharist, and Morning and Evening Prayer.

The Rule of St Benedict and the Prayer Book are about that most vital of Benedictine charisms: stability. And that stability, though it can be expressed in the privacy of our own homes, has as its preferred setting the parish church: the visible community of faith that is as much a part of the spirituality of the Prayer Book as the Benedictine monasteries or convents that dominated the land prior to the Reformation. And at the heart of that stability is the monthly round of Psalms in the recitation of the Daily Office.

When the Prayer Book was suppressed during the Commonwealth, people took their Prayer Books home with them.

The domestic church was now the setting for the *opus dei* and this homely use of the Prayer Book—again—allowed it to put down deep roots into the hearts and minds of the English people.

It is still so today when so many churches are still closed. We can still pray the Prayer of the Church in our homes. We can take our Prayer Books on the bus or the train or into the park. This way the Prayer Book becomes a part of normal life *in the world*.

It is also an antidote and solution to the increasing problem of a shortage of clergy. One of the marks of the Church in the last half a century or so has been the empowerment of the laity: to see their role as the whole People of God through the kingly, prophetic and priestly vocation.

And one of the ways we can bring this about is through devout and observant lay people prayerfully saying their Prayer Book Morning and Evening office, either in church or at home, with others. It is flexible enough to survive tinkering, so long as it retains the essential Prayer Book



Father Tim Handley who gave this address

elements. It is holy enough to be used by the whole people of God across the denominations. That means we can look forward to the future with hope and confidence in our little Prayer Book and its place at the heart of our Church.

This is an extract from the talk given by Father Tim Handley at the 'Alternative Celebration' to mark 50 years of the Prayer Book Society at St James' Garlickhythe.

New Corporate Members

We are delighted to report that, since the Michaelmas 2022 issue of this journal went to print, a further ten churches have joined the Prayer Book Society, making a magnificent total of 32 new Corporate Members during our 50th anniversary year. Our new Member churches represent nine different dioceses and a range of Church traditions.

All Hallows', Gedling is unusually large for a rural church. Its tower is 90 feet high, as is the spire above, making it the second tallest parish church in Nottinghamshire. The building was extensively restored in 1872 when 500 seats were installed to cope with the rapidly rising populations of neighbouring communities, later to become parishes in their own right. Three services are offered at All Hallows' every Sunday, including Prayer Book Holy Communion and Evensong.

The ancient church of St Michael, Baddesley Clinton is situated close to the National Trust property of Baddesley Clinton House, Warwickshire. St Michael's attracts a small, friendly congregation, some of whom travel a considerable distance, drawn in by the beautiful surroundings, the links with the National Trust house, and traditional Prayer Book worship, including three services of Holy Communion and one Evensong each month.

Located in the heart of the Peak District, and within the Chatsworth Estate, St Peter's, Edensor (pronounced 'Enza') boasts more than just a stunning location; for in this beautiful church, all services are conducted according to the Prayer Book. The congregation prides itself on its warm welcome and enthusiastic singing, and seeks to serve both the local community and the many visitors to Chatsworth.

The parish church of All Saints', New Longton, Preston, Lancashire was built in 1964. Here, the Revd Tom Woolford, who is a tutor in Theology at Emmanuel Theological College as well as Vicar of New Longton, has successfully used the Prayer Book for teaching Christian basics in confirmation classes. Each of the twenty-six confirmands in 2022 were given their own copy of the BCP. Regular Prayer Book services are being introduced at All Saints' this year.

Standing on the north side of Holborn Viaduct close to the Old Bailey, the church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate is the largest parish church in the City of London. Its bells once rang to announce executions at Newgate Prison. Today, the church is deeply committed to social action; it is also the National Musicians' Church. In addition to a contemporary service on Sunday mornings, St Sepulchre's offers weekday worship according to the Book of Common Prayer in the form of Holy Communion and Choral Evensong sung by a professional choir every Wednesday.

The church of the Holy Spirit, Southsea is also renowned for its strong musical tradition. Its large and enthusiastic choir of adults and juniors sings a wide range of music dating from the ninth century to the present day, including items by local composers. Firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, Holy Spirit is the only Portsmouth



St Sepulchre-without-Newgate



St Mary, Beverston

church other than the cathedral to offer Evensong every Sunday. Commenting on the decision to join the Society, the Revd Russell Lawson said, 'As a parish that cherishes liturgical forms of worship, and that has recognised the continuing appeal of the Prayer Book to people of all ages and backgrounds, we wanted to be part of a movement that advocates for the cherishing, as well as the rediscovery, of this gift across the whole Church.'

The beautiful Norman church of St Mary, Beverston, Gloucestershire had fallen into disrepair by the early part of the nineteenth century, and it was not until 1842 when repairs were set in hand. Unfortunately, much of the restoration work was destructive. Over 40 years later, significant improvements were made, and the old rood screen was rescued from the rector's garden where it had been acting as a pergola! The parish registers, which date from 1565, contain references to the Shakespeare family: William Shakespeare undoubtedly knew Beverston and this part of the Cotswolds well, as he describes the district in *Richard II*. Worship at Beverston is conducted according to the Prayer Book, with two services of Matins each month and two celebrations of Holy Communion.

The earliest reference to King's Sutton, Northamptonshire is in the story of St Rumbold, who was born there in the year 662. The church of St Peter and St Paul has Norman elements and was completed in the fourteenth century. Its finest feature is the tower and spire, rising to 198 feet. The spire is regarded as one of the greatest in the country. The church, which has been in the Anglo-Catholic tradition since the late nineteenth century, offers a variety of services, including those drawn from the Book of Common Prayer.

St Margaret the Queen, Buxted is one of three churches in the parish of Buxted and Hadlow Down in East Sussex. Each church has its own liturgical tradition, with thirteenth-century St Margaret's, delightfully situated in Buxted Park, offering worship in the central tradition; Prayer Book Communion services are celebrated weekly, and Matins and Evensong monthly.

St Peter and St Paul, Easton Maudit, possesses an impressive memorial to Sir Christopher Yelverton (died 1612), who bought Easton Maudit Manor from the Earl of Oxford. He became Speaker of the House of Commons and Judge of the Court of the King's Bench. The monument is free-standing with a canopy held up by columns, beneath which lie life-sized effigies of Yelverton and his wife. Along the base of the tomb are their children, five sons and eight daughters. Regular services at Easton Maudit include Matins, Holy Communion and Evensong, and the parish hosts an annual service for the Peterborough Branch of the Society.

In each of the ten churches named above, the Book of Common Prayer continues to be known and loved. In some it is used exclusively, in others alongside contemporary forms of worship. Any church where the Prayer Book has



St Peter and St Paul, Easton Maudit

a valued place is invited to apply for membership of the PBS. Applications can be made online via the website or by requesting a membership form from Copyhold Farm.

We are also delighted to report that the patronage of the benefice of Catsfield and Crowhurst in the Diocese of Chichester has been transferred from a private patron to the Prayer Book Society. The patronage of the said benefice is held jointly with the Bishop of Chichester.

Becoming a Corporate Member

Is your PCC or organisation set to be the next Corporate Member of the Prayer Book Society?

For more details visit our website.

www.pbs.org.uk



St Andrew's Mickfield/suffolkchurches.co.uk

Staffing a 'peculiar'

Since the mid-sixteenth century, the term 'peculiar' has been used for churches not under diocesan jurisdiction. Royal peculiars, like St George's Chapel, Windsor are still well known, but elsewhere there are now few left. However, privately owned chapels do still exist and St Andrew's, Mickfield in mid-Suffolk is a recent addition to their ranks. Its origins are lost in the mists of time but there was certainly a Saxon church on the site and it featured in the Domesday Book. To this place of worship was added the present tower in 1310, which must have eclipsed the old church, that building being replaced by the present one in 1345—several of the consecration crosses from that date survive. Some of the windows were enlarged in the sixteenth century, but the Victorians did little more than repair the structure, justifying its later classification as a Grade I building.

Mickfield was an essentially agricultural village till the post-war farming mechanisation, which brought the village population to a low recorded in the 1971 census. After the death of the rector, the Revd Shrapnel Shrubbs, in 1969, the ecclesiastical (but not the civil) parish was amalgamated with neighbouring Stonham Aspal, and St Andrews became a chapel of ease with fortnightly Evensongs. After the Harvest Evensong in 1975, the church was closed, and declared redundant in 1977. This was justified by one of two architects' reports, which deemed the tower to be unsafe; the other, which was later found to be more accurate, just recommended a programme of repair.

The village, however, was by then on the point of revival, with a programme of new housing. By 1980, the rising population prepared a petition to the Diocese to reopen the church. This was rejected and in 1989, the building was sold for £14,000 for housing. The new owner, an architect, sold off the pews, including the ancient choir stalls, which raised more money than he paid for the building. He also did enough preparatory work to enable the planning consent to be extended in perpetuity—and then he emigrated!

The church slid into dereliction but the District Council took action, repairing the roof after thieves stole the lead, and boarding up the doors and windows, which were by then all broken. Eventually, in 2002, they took the owner to court and obtained possession in lieu of their expenses on the building, and passed the ownership on to the Suffolk Architectural Heritage Trust (SAHT). The Trust obtained grant aid to restore the historic structure. In 2004, English Heritage had it as their leading Eastern England Project. The builders started work in March and took till November to achieve the restoration. They were helped by a report on the tower showing it to be essentially sound, though requiring repair after over twenty-five years of complete neglect.

In the meantime, Faith and Mark Wright discovered the derelict building in its overgrown churchyard, and obtained access through the priest's door, which unaccountably had been left unlocked. Inside, they found only rubble and broken glass, plus the remains of a bonfire. Local children had been using the tower as an adventure playground. Nevertheless, they felt embraced by the centuries of prayer that had gone forth from the building and were determined to restore it as a place of worship. They therefore bought it from SAHT and set about making the building usable again. They tracked down two of the four ancient choir stalls, with Friends of Friendless Churches meeting the cost, and obtained financial support from local sources, but their first action was to hold a St Andrew's Day thanksgiving Evensong at the end of November—it was a close thing, with the restoration of the last window by the builders that afternoon, together with a temporary nave floor in plywood installed by the Young Farmers Club. The congregation of around 140 had been told to bring their own torches and to wrap up warmly! Faith read the first lesson, the well-known 'Valley of Dry

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Bones' vision by Ezekiel. Thereafter, the chancel was brought back into daily use with temporary furnishings while work was undertaken in the nave and tower.

The Wrights had first bought a house in Stonham Aspal, as nothing they could afford was available in Mickfield—until an ex-council house came onto the market, which they bought. As Mark had been an Anglican lay reader for many years with an upbringing of church worship using the Book of Common Prayer, there was no doubt about the direction in which the restored St Andrew's was headed. Music was assisted by the gift of a small pipe organ from a closed Methodist church, and many local people (including an organist) came along and assisted in the progress, to the extent that, in 2011, Mark and Faith felt they could leave the village and let the church be mainly run by the community rather than being 'the Wrights' church'. Nevertheless, they continued to run the Anglia Church Trust (ACT), a charity set up back in 2003 and to which they had leased the church for a nominal sum immediately after taking ownership the following year. Mark continued to come back to Mickfield on a regular basis but, sadly, a number of key people died or moved away and, by 2017, it was decided to seek new owners to take St Andrew's into the next phase of its life. However, this sale was to be subject to the chancel continuing as a 'peculiar', with public access and services organised by ACT. This restricted interest in the sale but eventually, Richard Hawkes and Anna Ardley came forward and entered into the spirit of the revived St Andrew's.

Mark and two of the ACT Trustees, one of whom is a priest, continued to run the services until the COVID pandemic, which closed the church. They are now trying to get it back into use. However, all three live at some distance and are keen to find younger replacements. Richard and Anna are happy to help but do not have BCP backgrounds, so there is a great eagerness to find at least one person, clerical or lay, sympathetic to St Andrew's traditional stance, who lives either not too far away or is willing to relocate to central Suffolk.

We have appealed to the Prayer Book Society for help in finding such a person. If it might be you, please phone the PBS and talk with John Service, or email Mark at markwright.act@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Cranmer Day Celebration Truro Cathedral Wednesday 22nd March 2023

3.30p.m. Tea and biscuits

4p.m. 'The Prayer Book Revolt and
its effect on the Cornish language'
– Revd Professor Andrew Lewis

5.30p.m. Choral BCP Holy Communion
– sung by Truro Cathedral Choir
Preacher: Father Simon Robinson

All welcome.

Please join us on this important day.

The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin: presentation



Owen joins students of the Church of Ireland's Theological Institute

The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin is the sole ministerial training faculty for the Church of Ireland (which covers the whole of the island of Ireland), and it provides a range of full- and part-time courses for the various forms of ministry in the Church of Ireland.

The PBS has for a number of years presented a pack containing the BCP, *Using the Book of Common Prayer. A simple guide* by Paul Thomas, and other useful items to new ordinands starting training in England. Owen Wilson (Ireland Branch Administrator) suggested to our Chairman, Bradley Smith, that the Theological Institute be invited to participate in the scheme. Bradley put the suggestion to the PBS Board and they in turn gave their approval. The total student body of the Institute numbers only 40, so it was decided to offer to extend the scheme to them all. Owen subsequently contacted the Institute's Director, the Revd Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, and he approved the Institute's acceptance.

Owen made the presentation to the full-time students following their regular morning service in the Institute chapel on 26th January 2023 (there will be a presentation to the part-time students at a later date). The service was taken from Morning Prayer One of the Church of Ireland's Book of Common Prayer, 2004, which is in turn taken verbatim from The Order for Morning Prayer, as is much of the 2004 Book. Owen's address after the service and before presenting the packs individually to each student included the following:

- The history and objectives of the PBS.
- That the BCP is the foundational document of Anglican doctrine and worship; as such it enables Anglicans to connect with their roots, evaluate their present and chart the future.

- That the study of the BCP is not 'theological archaeology' but has a continuing relevance which is being discovered/rediscovered by a growing number of people of all ages; a recent example was the BCP helping people cope with the severe challenges of the COVID pandemic and develop spiritually from the experience.

The literature presented included the recently published booklet 'The early history of the Book of Common Prayer in Ireland, 1551–1647' by Dr Kenneth Ferguson (a PBS member resident in Dublin). Dr Ferguson was present and signed copies of his booklet for the students.

Owen comments: 'I found the presentation and the time I spent with students and staff the previous day to be a positive and encouraging experience. The opportunity of informal discussions with the students, including their differing journeys to ministerial vocation, was particularly rewarding. There was a genuine interest in the BCP and openness to discussing various aspects of it. This may be due, at least in part, to the Church of Ireland's Book of Common Prayer, 2004, containing a significant proportion of the BCP; consequently, students would generally be familiar with traditional worship. As ministers, they will be conducting traditional worship with varying degrees of regularity, depending to some extent on their parish's background.'

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

What a bitter blow to all those who had organised the 50th anniversary celebrations at Westminster, only to have to postpone the events because of the rail strike. I was, however, fortunate, with my wife and one of our church wardens, to be able to attend the events organised at very short notice by our Chairman, the President and Trustees, at St James' Garlickhythe.

This was an intimate and spiritually uplifting occasion, with two perfect BCP services, a wonderful choir and organist, and a brilliant sermon by the Bishop of Southwark, together with a fascinating and enjoyable talk by the rector, the Revd Tim Handley. It was also a very convivial occasion,

with an excellent buffet lunch, prepared largely by our Chairman, and a glass of wine.

I hope the success of the events on Saturday is some consolation to the organisers for the disappointment of the postponement, and we can now all look forward to gathering again at Westminster Abbey when a new date has been arranged. In the meantime, heartfelt thanks to all those who made the arrangements for Saturday.

Yours truly,

Philip Godsal

PBS member, St Mary's Whitewell, Chester Diocese

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Prayer Book Society Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
with Bishop Michael Langrish

31st August — 10th September 2023

See www.pbs.org.uk/event/pbs-pilgrimage-to-the-holy-land

Booking closes - Friday 28th April 2023

Finding the date for Easter

David Fuller

By the middle of the seventh century, there were two strands of Christianity in these islands, essentially Roman in the South and the Celtic in the North. Between them there was much discord, especially regarding the dating of Easter. This came to a head in the household of King Oswiu (612–670) in the Kingdom of Northumbria. Royal embarrassment was caused when the King and Queen Eanflæd found themselves celebrating Easter on different Sundays. A synod was convened at Whitby in 664. Hosted by Abbess Hilda (614–680), and presided over by Oswiu, the synod discussed and adjudicated on such matters as ecclesiastical discipline, the correct form of tonsuring and the calculation of the date of Easter. This date controversy pitted representatives of the Irish Church against representatives of the ‘universal’ Roman Church, a Church newly embraced by the Anglo-Saxons. The spokesmen for the two factions, Colman of Lindisfarne (605–675) and Wilfrid of Ripon (633–709), respectively, had some tetchy exchanges. King Oswiu, who based his conclusions on the primacy of St Peter in the Roman Church, the holder of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, over a few minor Celtic bishops, condemned the Irish dating of Easter. At a stroke, Ireland’s religious traditions, as observed by the country’s fathers like St Columba, were rejected.

All seemed well with the dating of Easter until October 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585) introduced the Gregorian calendar, a change from the previous Julian one. The Gregorian version of the calendar corrected the length of the year by a small amount and it stopped its drift in relation to the solstices and equinoxes. The Gregorian calendar restored Easter to the time of the year when it was traditionally celebrated by the Early Church. Corrections to the length of the year were made through a redefinition of what constituted leap years. The number of these in a period of four centuries was reduced from 100 to 97. Thus, every year that is exactly divisible by four would be a leap year, except for years that were exactly divisible by 100, but these centurial years would be leap years if they were exactly divisible by 400. For example, the years 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not leap years, but the years 1600 and 2000 were.

While the Gregorian calendar was accepted for use by the Western Latin Church, the Eastern Greek Church continued to calculate the date of Easter using the Julian formulae. In some years the two dates coincided but in others there was a serious disparity. For example, the two dates coincided in 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2014; but in 2005, 2008 and 2013 they were over a month apart.

Procedures for the dating of Easter began to be published in the Second Edwardine Prayer Book of 1552, which contained a table entitled ‘An Almanack for Nineteen Years’. This contained six columns, labelled: The Year of our

Royal embarrassment was caused when King Oswiu and Queen Eanflæd found themselves celebrating Easter on different Sundays

Lord (range 1552–70), The Golden Number, The Epact, The Cycle of the Sun, Dominical Letter and the Date of Easter. There is no indication of how these values were connected and no rules were provided for their use. At a time when significant numbers of the population were illiterate, and probably even more were innumerate, there seems little reason for the inclusion of the first five columns of data. The Golden Number (*aureus numerus*) is a nineteen-year, Metonic cycle in which the phases of the moon recur on the same dates. The Metonic cycle was the basis for the Greek calendar until the Julian calendar was introduced in 46 BC. The cycle began (Year 1) when the new moon occurred on 1st January. The Epact is a cycle of thirty numbers which correspond to the age of the moon in days on 1st January. The Dominical Letter is based on a system of seven letters (A–G), determined by the day on which 1st January falls. If this is a Sunday, then the Dominical Letter is A; if a Monday, then B etc. The column headed Cycle of the Sun contains numbers in the range 1–28. There is no explanation as to what this Cycle means, except to say that it most likely refers to lunar rather than solar events.

A century later with the publication of the Restoration Prayer Book, the number of listed tables had expanded considerably; no fewer than eight were provided, six of them dedicated to the dating process for Easter. The first of these offers its users data to find Easter Day, ‘from the present time to the year 2199 inclusive’. A complex set of rules determined the use of the Golden Number and the Sunday Letter. Easter is found to be in the range 21st March to 25th April. The second table is entitled ‘Another table to find Easter’. This has columns for the Sunday Letters (A–G) set against rows of Golden Numbers (1–19). Each row has a set of consecutive dates but these may begin under any of the Sunday Letters. For example, the row for Golden Number 1 has the dates 15th April to 21st April, but it begins in column G and continues in A, B, C etc. At Golden Number 9 the dates are 17th April to 23rd April, starting at column B and ending in column A.

These Easter dating tables are followed by two that are titled, ‘Tables of the Movable Feasts’. The former of these contains columns headed: Year of our Lord, Golden Number, The Epact, Sunday Letter, Sundays after Epiphany, the dates for Septuagesima Sunday, The First Day of Lent, Easter Day, Ascension Day and Whit-Sunday. It concludes with columns showing the number of Sundays after Trinity and the date of Advent Sunday (*sic*). There are rows for about 50 consecutive years, generally beginning with the year of publication of that particular edition of the Prayer Book. The latter table lists the same feasts and numbers of Sundays but determines these by reference to the date of Easter Day (this time in the range 22nd March to 25th April). This table has a

complex footnote showing corrections that must be made in leap years (also referred to as bissextile years).

The next table follows the same structure as the first but determines the dating of Easter for the years 2200–2299 inclusive. Again, the start date is 21st March. There then follow three General Tables. The first of these, Table I, uses some quite complex arithmetic and allows users to find the Dominical or Sunday Letter for the opening years of the centuries from 1600 to 8500 and beyond. This is supplemented by Table II, which determines ‘The Month and Days of the Month to which Golden Numbers ought to be prefixed in the Calendar, in any given years of our Lord’. Again, it lists centuries up to 8500. Table III is not accompanied by any instruction for its use. It is a comprehensive table listing in its first column dates of the Paschal Full Moon (range 21st March–18th April), a column giving the Sunday Letter (A–G) and a further nineteen columns headed The Golden Numbers. These list values in the range 0 to 29.

Using Prayer Book tables to date Easter is further complicated by the knowledge that the vernal equinox does not always fall on the 21st March. It can occur on 19th, 20th or 21st March. Even allowing for the Gregorian calendar corrections, which described more accurately the rotation of the earth around the sun, the timing of the equinox can change by six or so hours, often cumulatively, from year to year. The last time the vernal equinox fell on 21st March was in 2007; it is not expected to happen again on that date until 2101.

In the modern world, the dates of solstices, equinoxes

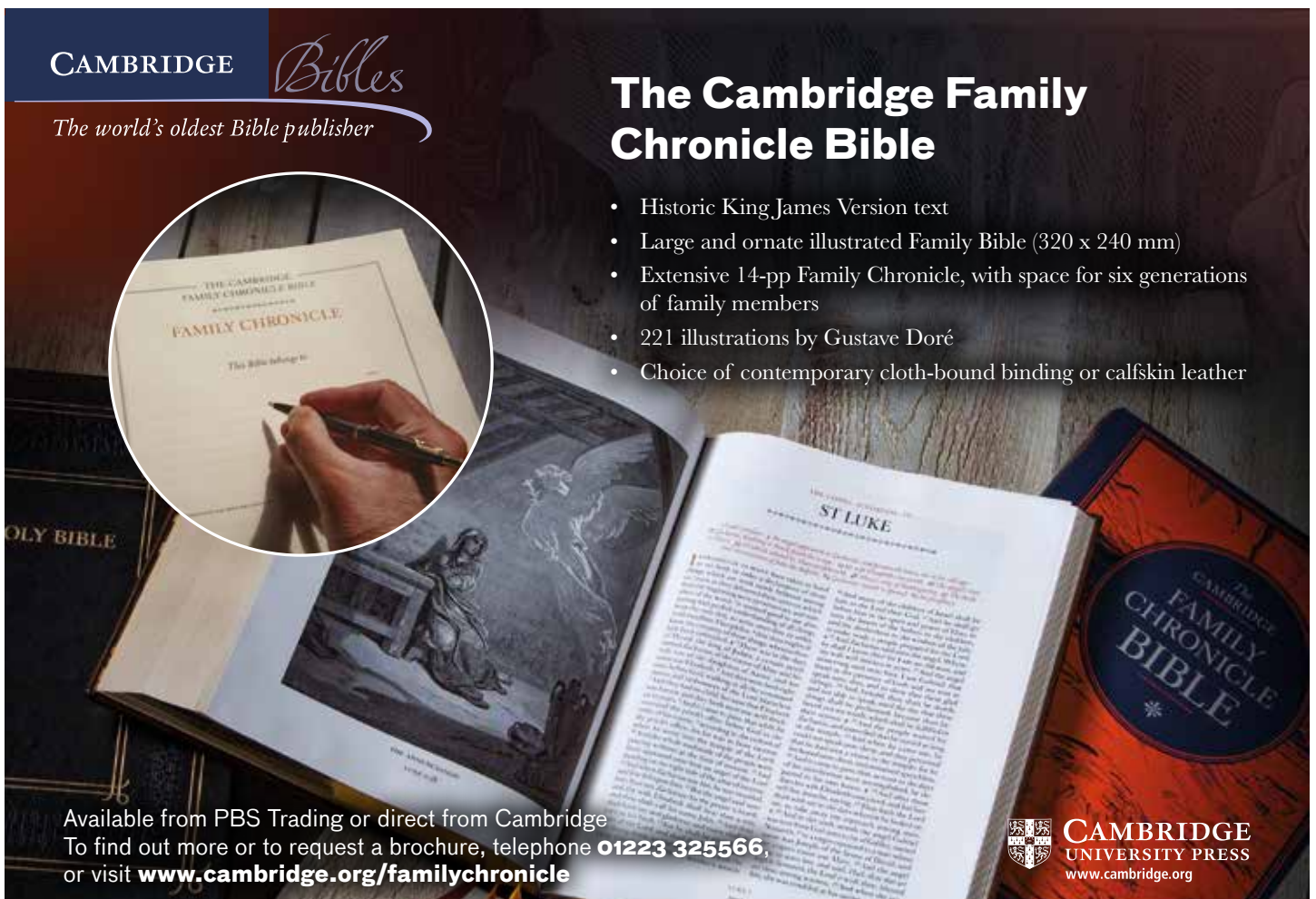
and phases of the moon are provided in many calendars and diaries. Often the dates of Easter Day, and sometimes those of Saints’ Days and other festivals, are also listed, such that we rarely need any arithmetical processes to determine them. If all else fails, recourse can always be made to a plethora of search engines, or by simply asking a digital assistant, such as Siri or Alexa. Arithmetical calculations increasingly rely on the use of electronic calculators or, for more difficult problems, spreadsheets. These latter have complex functionality which can be used for computations such as the determination of the dates of Easter. Recently a competition was held to find the shortest spreadsheet function, designed for that purpose. The winning entry, from Norbert Hetterich of Germany, was:

```
=FLOOR("5/"&DAY(MINUTE(A1/38)/2+56)&"/"&A1,7)-34
```

This function may be used to find the date of Easter for the years 1900–2078. The year in question is inserted into spreadsheet cell A1.

Members of the Prayer Book Society can take much comfort from the knowledge that the compilers of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer considered that it would still be in use until at least the year 2299, and maybe as far into the distant future as the year 8500, and possibly beyond.

Dr David Fuller was a founder member of the Blackburn Branch of the Prayer Book Society. He is a licensed lay reader in the Scottish Episcopal Church and lives on the Isle of Mull.




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Exeter

Once again, gratitude was shown to Mrs Marigold Seager-Berry, who hosted another Quiet Day at her home, Black Hall, Avonwick, on Thursday, 13th October, led by the Branch Chairman, the Revd Preb. Paul Hancock. The theme was 'Words to Inspire. The Psalms'.

Members and others met for coffee/tea (available throughout the day), then all convened for opening prayers, which included the text, 'Come unto me' (St Matthew 11:28–30).

The first address: 'Growing'—Psalms 1 and 23.

The second: 'Enriching'—Psalms 65 and 104.

The third: 'Glory'—Psalms 147 and 150.

Each address was punctuated by quiet time for reflection and meditation, when many availed themselves of areas of the beautiful garden in the autumn sunshine.

The day finished with Evening Prayer and with a hymn, 'Blest Are the Pure in Heart'.

Grateful thanks were expressed to the Chairman.

Donations of £93 were gift-aided and sent to the Ukraine Appeal Fund.

Leeds



PBS members at Bolton Abbey

On a beautiful autumn afternoon on Sunday, 9th October at 4.30p.m., the Leeds Branch met for Choral Evensong in the wonderful setting of the parish church—St Mary and St Cuthbert—of Bolton Priory to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Prayer Book Society. The parish church is within the ruins of Bolton Abbey, Wharfedale, North Yorkshire. Bolton Abbey was a twelfth-century Augustinian monastery, dissolved in 1539 on the Dissolution of the Monasteries, but with the nave left intact, allowing parish worship to continue to this day. The choir sang an introit by Purcell, chants by William Smith, J. Randall and C. V. Stanford, and an anthem by Palestrina—all usually beyond the scope of the average country parish church.

The service was conducted by the rector, the Revd Nicholas Mercer, who gave a sermon in celebration of the Book of Common Prayer. He said he was honoured to have been asked to organise this service and was almost certain that Thomas Cranmer's Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 had been used at Bolton Abbey, and that the great, final Prayer Book of 1662 had been used ever since. He mentioned that he had been 'tutored' in *Common Worship* at his theological

News from

college. *Common Worship* is a sort of library, rather than the succinct, single volume which is the Book of Common Prayer. He mentioned that, when he was Rector of the Falkland Islands, he took Prayer Book services at Christ Church Cathedral in Port Stanley as well as the whalers' church in Grytviken in South Georgia.

After the service, afternoon tea was served by the ladies of the parish in the Boyle Room which, like the Georgian rectory, was built as a result of the bequest from the scientist Robert Boyle.

Oxford

Prayer Books for ordinands

For the first time in three years, the Branch was able to present copies of the Book of Common Prayer in person to ordinands to the diaconate. This was, of course, on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been preventing direct contact.

Geoffrey Horne, Branch Chairman, and John Dearing, Branch Secretary, attended Ripon Theological College on 29th June, when 32 ordinands received their copies of the Prayer Book. The college, set in a rural setting at Cuddesdon outside Oxford, was founded in 1853 by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and is housed in buildings designed by the leading Gothic Revival architect, George Edmund Street.

In a short speech, Geoffrey referred to the place of the BCP over many centuries of Anglicanism and repeated the Society's wish to see it used more widely in current worship, especially for main services. The distribution of the Books was warmly appreciated by the ordinands.

The Branch thanks the Lord Bishop of Oxford and the Director of Ordinands for this annual event.

Quiet Day

On Saturday, 9th July, a Quiet Day was organised at the Franciscan convent at Freeland, west of Oxford. The Branch Chaplain gave two short addresses on the subject of prayer and those attending also joined in the sisters' act of worship at 12 noon. At other times, members were free to use the community's guest house and gardens. Six members attended and the Branch plans to make this an annual event, with September 2023 earmarked for the next Quiet Day.

Thanks are due to the sisters at Freeland for their hospitality, and to Branch Chaplain, the Revd Richard Smail, for suggesting the event in the first place and for leading our thoughts on the day.

Cranmer Awards

The Branch's 2022 heats for the Cranmer Awards took place at St Edward's School, Oxford on Friday, 25th November. Fifteen candidates participated in all from four schools in Oxfordshire. The winner of the Senior heat was Flossie Butler-Adams, with Will Deslandes in second place, both

the Branches

from St Edward's. In the Junior section, the top prize went to Samuel Jones of Kingham Hill School. Runner-up was Gabriel Sherwood from St Hugh's School, and from the same school, Florence Miller secured third place, with William Jones highly commended.

The judges for the competition were the Revd Richard Smail, Branch Chaplain (formerly on the staff of Oxford University), the Revd Jeremy Tayler, Rector of Henley-on-Thames, and the Revd Rachel Weir, Minor Canon of St Paul's Cathedral and a former school chaplain. Richard Smail, presenting the prizes, complimented the candidates on the high standard overall and commented on each performance.

The Branch is most grateful to St Edward's for hosting the event and providing a splendid tea. In addition, special thanks are due to Betty Morgan of St Edward's for her part in organising the heats.

Rochester

After the restrictions of the past two years, we were delighted to resume our usual programme of Branch events, including gatherings at three of our Corporate Member churches. These began in March with Ash Wednesday Morning Prayer, Litany and Communion at St Botolph's, Lullingstone, followed by a frugal lunch of bread and soup, with donations going to Porchlight, the Kent charity for the homeless.

In early May, fifteen members gathered at St Martin of Tours, Chelsfield, for our first Branch AGM since October 2019. This was preceded by an interesting exploration of the church and churchyard under the guidance of Philippa Rooke, Church Warden and Archivist, and followed by Choral Communion.

On Ascension Day at the end of May, we attended a joyful service of Morning Prayer led by Canon Don Laurie at the third of our Corporate Member churches, St John the Evangelist, Groombridge, where we enjoyed a welcome from the congregation and the wonderful organ-playing of Anthony Roberts. This was followed by a convivial pub lunch at the popular Crown Inn.

June saw us in Rochester for a visit to the cathedral gardens under the expert guidance of Graham Huckstepp, the cathedral's head gardener. Most of us were aware of the peaceful Garth at the south side of the cathedral, but we were shown five gardens in all, some of which are not generally open to the public. The visit was greatly enjoyed, both for committee member Christine Bostock's background history of the gardens and for Graham Huckstepp's knowledge and enthusiasm for the on-going improvements. These include a knot garden, which Graham designed, reflecting patterns found on the cathedral's great west door. Another recent introduction, though harking back to mediaeval times, is the planting of vines on a sunny slope in King's Orchard. In five years' time, we may look forward to Rochester Cathedral wine.



Graham Huckstepp leading the tour of Rochester Cathedral's gardens

A visit to Biggin Hill provided a varied programme for what proved a popular day out. We began with a visit to St Mark's Church, where we were welcomed by the Revd Alison Newman, Vicar of St Mark's, and her husband, Mark, who gave us tea, coffee and homemade cake.

St Mark's is known locally as 'The Moving Church', and Mark told us how, in three and a half years from 1952, the then vicar, the inspirational Revd Vivian Symons, personally moved much of the stone, brick and timber, and the bell from a redundant and bomb-damaged church in North Peckham for the building of a new church. His efforts received much publicity and goodwill: Richard Gilbert Scott designed St Mark's using the reclaimed materials, and local building firm Durtneils did the work at cost. Vivian Symons also taught himself silver-smithing, creating an altar cross, alms dish, chalice and paten from donated jewellery, and he engraved biblical scenes in the style of mediaeval manuscripts on the clear-glass windows, using only a dentist's drill.

After marvelling at what had been achieved in the heart of the community by faith, determination, endeavour and answered prayers, we went a little way out of the village towards the famous airfield and the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum. The museum's gates are flanked with reproductions of a Spitfire and Hurricane, the planes forever associated with the wartime air station. After being welcomed by Katie Edwards, Director, we lunched in the Nightingale Café. In the afternoon, knowledgeable volunteer, Margaret Wilmot, told us about the museum and showed us around the Memorial Garden and the St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance, bringing to life all we saw. A cream tea and more time to wander round the museum brought a memorable day to a close.

As usual, the Branch's year ended with the Cranmer Awards heat at the Judd School, Tonbridge, in November. We are still struggling to get the numbers of competitors we had before COVID-19 closed everything down. However, those taking part reached a high standard and impressed experienced adjudicator, Amelia Appleby. Joshua Thornhill, from Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, was the Senior winner, with the Collect and Gospel for the Epiphany. This year's Junior winner, with the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for St Luke the Evangelist, was Alice Parker. Confusion over



Rochester's Cranmer candidates

dates meant that she and some others missed the Chichester heat and were accepted as last-minute entries in the Rochester heat.

We wish both Alice and Joshua success when they compete in the Final at Liverpool Hope University.

Salisbury

Having closed 2022 with our Cranmer Awards heat at Sherborne Abbey—congratulations to the winner Rex Wickham, an Abbey chorister—and then our customary Advent Carol Service in St Catherine's Netherhampton, we are looking forward to our 2023 programme:

- 21st March—Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, Salisbury Cathedral. 4p.m. in the Refectory before Evensong at 5.30p.m.
- 22nd April—Branch Annual General Meeting, Church Hall, Wilton. AGM 2p.m. Speaker TBC. Tea followed by Evensong at St Mary's.
- 17th June—Village Hall Toller Porcorum 2p.m. Speaker: The Revd Colin Heber-Percy followed by Evensong at St Basil's Toller Fratrum at 4.45p.m.
- 16th September—Salisbury Cathedral, visit to the Stonemasons' Workshop. Speaker: The Clerk of Works Two groups: 11a.m. and 2p.m. Refectory Lunch 1.15p.m. Refectory Tea 4.30p.m. Evensong 5.30p.m.
- 18th November—Cranmer Award heats, Sherborne Abbey 10a.m.
- 2nd December—Advent Carol Service at St Catherine's Hetherhampton, 10a.m. followed by lunch together.

Chichester West

Following a delightful cream tea at Lordington House and Evensong at St Peter's, Racton last summer, we have arranged a series of visits to other small county churches in West Sussex where the Prayer Book remains at the heart of church life. The visits will take place on the last Saturday of each month from April to August:

- 29th April: 3p.m. tea and 4.30p.m. Evensong at St Mary's, Apuldrum.
- 27th May: 3p.m. tea; 3.45p.m. organ recital; 4.30p.m. Evensong at St Mary Magdalene, Madehurst.
- 24th June: 3p.m. summer tea at the Old Rectory, Wiggonholt, followed by Evensong at Wiggonholt Parish Church at 4.30p.m.
- 29th July: 3p.m. tea followed by 4.30p.m. Evensong at St Andrew's, Didling (the Shepherds' Church).

- 26th August: 4.30p.m. Patronal Festival Evensong followed by drinks at St Bartholomew's, Egdean. We hope that these occasions will be enjoyable and uplifting, both for PBS members and the regular congregations, and we would be delighted to welcome non-members and friends from other Branches.

On Saturday, 25th March, we will be holding a 'Come and Sing Matins' event with Dr Alan Thurlow at St George's, Donnington. The congregational rehearsal will commence at 10.15a.m. with the service proper at 11a.m. Anyone wishing to take part in the congregational rehearsal is asked to register with Bradley.

The annual Chichester Branch Festival will be held at the cathedral on Saturday, 16th September. Please 'save the date'.

Off by heart:

Continued from page 8

and it belongs to me. It is mine as much as it is the property of Oxford dons and Masters of Choirs, linguists and clever writers of note, because its treasures transcend boundaries of class and status, and we do people a disservice if we assume that traditional language can't belong to us all.

When I'm feeling emotionally fragile, a plethora of options and choice is stressful and bewildering. Reaching for just one book is as consoling as slipping my feet into a pair of worn but well-loved slippers. It's liturgical hygge. That Cranmer's great project to streamline liturgy and prayer has been largely replaced by something which is labyrinthine in its sundry variations and endless choices is a sad irony indeed.

Of course, it doesn't have to be an 'either or' situation. For example, I can appreciate the convenience of the Daily Prayer App on my phone, despite the fact that the last time I used it, one of my kids WhatsApp'd to say that the dog had been sick—not something you need to know about when you're halfway through the *Benedictus*. Whereas moments spent with my dainty and delightfully pungent BCP are valuable moments away from that blasted device and its vampiric demands upon my time. And I suppose I will one day make use of the *convenient* new curate's *Common Worship* bundle—all seven volumes of it—that currently sits gathering dust on my bookcase. Just not today, please, Lord.

For now, I will retreat to the tiny sanctuary that I've created beside my bed. I have a door I can close and a candle ready to light. Ever practical, I reckon Cranmer would be horrified at the way I've spiritualised his sombre verse, but for me it remains a paradigm for hope. As I read, certain phrases assert themselves, causing my chest to constrict with a tiny spasm of pain: 'Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give... because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God...'

And I find myself reflecting that the ancient Greeks and Hebrews may not have been so wrong about the heart after all.

The Revd Jayne Manfredi was ordained Deacon in 2022.

Before...



... and after



Before...



... and after



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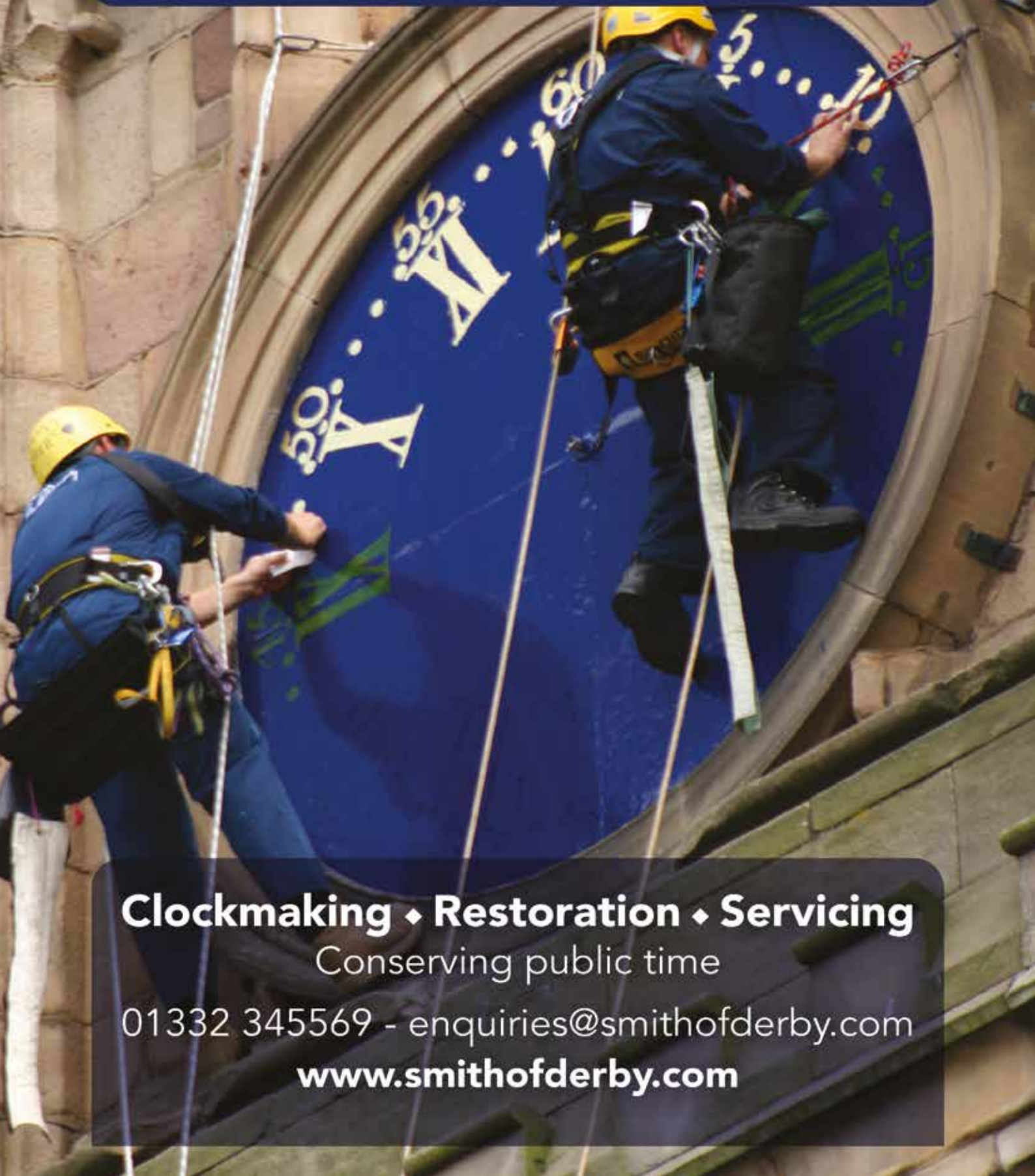
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