

THIS AND THAT (400)

At the church door after services, my priest father was good humoured, witty and genial to a fault. He was also emotionally contained.

If he detected a gleam in the eye of an affectionate parishioner that might just possibly indicate an intention to peck his cheek or give him a hug, he would extinguish it with a fierce frown. If the peck or hug had already been launched and was on its way, he'd avoid it with an abrupt face-turn and agile back-off.

Most of us are pleased and delighted at the thought of being able to hug and be hugged once more. For him, the ban on such expressions of affection, would have been one aspect of the present pandemic he'd have had little quarrel with, though he did soften with age.

Not the happiest of marriages

In England, during the eighteen thirties, there was a flu epidemic to which the attractive and radical critic, essayist and poet Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) succumbed. On his recovery he made a surprise visit to Jane Welsh, the wife of the heavily bearded, curmudgeonly historian and polymath Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Their marriage endured but was often unhappy. Samuel Butler remarked upon how good it was 'of God to let Carlyle and Mrs Carlyle marry one another, and so make only two people miserable and not four'.

Leigh Hunt might well have disagreed. On visiting Jenny Carlyle, newly recovered from his bout of flu, he was greeted with a welcome enough kiss to inspire the second of the two poems for which he is most famous, this gem:

Rondeau

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add
Jenny kiss'd me.

Thomas Carlyle's small poetic output contains no such happy sparklers. This is more his line:

Cui Bono

What is Hope? A smiling rainbow
Children follow through the wet;
'Tis not here, still yonder, yonder:
Never urchin found it yet.

What is Life? A thawing iceboard
On a sea with sunny shore;—
Gay we sail; it melts beneath us;
We are sunk, and seen no more.

What is Man? A foolish baby,
Vainly strives, and fights, and frets;
Demanding all, deserving nothing;—
One small grave is what he gets.

Categorising and pigeon-holing

To categorise, pigeon-hole and label people, diminishes, narrows and reduces them. Even to be called a Christian doesn't do justice to those times when we are doubtful or hardly so. Is ever an atheist totally atheist?

A few weeks ago I discovered a poet born in the same fine vintage year as me, 1945. He would probably more readily categorise himself an atheist than a Christian but here he is on the subject of faith: *I feel very conflicted about organized religion, but I must admit that there's some religious art, both visual and musical, but especially musical, that takes away my will to resist it. There are particular pieces of Christian music that are so moving that I find myself assenting to their spirituality while I'm listening to the music. I suppose I tend to think of my religious feelings as kind of an 'evening' thing. At the end of the day, you often allow it. But when you wake up in the morning and the sunlight comes in, you think, 'Oh, that can't be true.' But later, when the evening comes, you're ready for it once again. I also have the feeling that the same thing might happen in the 'evening' of life.*

Part of the family

I love him for that. He's part of the family. As for his poems, I love them too. His name's Dick Davis.

These weekly articles are at: <http://www.andrewneaum.com/>

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TODAY : 16 May 2021

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion

St John's Boldre: H.M.S. HOOD Commemoration, online details below

For Prayer This Week

World peace and cooperation. Our armed forces and especially the Royal Navy and all its personnel For progress in overcoming Covid worldwide. For gratitude and care as restrictions are eased here. **Prayer Requests:** Joan Anderton, Robin Clabburn, Leslie Boyt, Rebecca Coetzee, Joan Downer, Colin and Joy Erne, Joy Flanders, Harold Hendey, Stephen Parker, Tony Partington, Kate. **Rest in Peace:** All lost on H.M.S. Hood, Adrian Otten.

Next Week: PENTECOST 23 May 2021

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Matins

Forthcoming Events, Services and Activities

Mon 17 May - 10.30am - Twyford Cottage Stewardship Meeting

Mon 17 May - 6.00pm - W G School Governors' Meeting

Wed 19 May - 10.30am St Nicholas' Chapel, Holy Communion

Wed 19 May - Bible Study Ph 07946 865704 for venue or zoom

Thu 20 May - 5.30pm - P-map Strategy Meeting

Wed 26 May - 10.30am St Nicholas' Chapel, Holy Communion

Wed 26 May - Bible Study Ph 07946 865704 for venue or zoom

Mon 7 Jun - 7.00pm - Benefice Strategy Meeting - Zoom

Thu 24 Jun - 12.30pm - Thanksgiving Service - James Venner

Sat 26 Jun - 12.00pm - St John's Ellacombe Chimes Anniv.

Sun 27 Jun - 6.30pm - Patronal Festival Choral Evensong

Sat 3 Jul - William Gilpin School Fete

Mon 5 Jul - 5.30pm - St John's PCC Meeting face to face!!

Fri 9 Jul - 5.00pm - St John's - Wedding Rehearsal

Sat 10 Jul - 12.00pm - St John's - Wedding: Sam and Amy

Thu 5 Aug - 5.00pm - St John's Wedding Rehearsal

Sat 7 Aug - 3.00pm - St John's Wedding: Sean and Jayne

Sat 25 Sep - 7.00pm - Memorial Hall - Harvest Supper

H.M.S. HOOD COMMEMORATION ON LINE

The recorded service this week is a pre-recorded H.M.S. Hood Commemoration. Well worth watching. Next year, hopefully, we will be commemorating HMS Hood here in St John's live.

COFFEE AND BISCUITS AFTER CHURCH

From today, so long as the weather permits, we are providing the wherewithal to make a cup of tea or coffee with a biscuit. Please bring your own cup. Socialising is an important part of churchgoing and vital to true pastoral care, though we must still abide by the rules and limit groups to six or two 'bubbles'. Do remain cautious and sensible about distancing. On Wednesdays at St Nicholas' we can do the same though it would be sensible for those able to bring a folding chair to do so as well as a mug. The church chairs are heavy.

CAR PARKING

Please refrain from parking along Church Lane and instead use the car park. Parking along the lane is reserved for those with mobility problems. When using the car park please try to do so tidily, with your car facing the way the notices direct.

SUNDAY 27 JUNE CHORAL EVENSONG

On the following day, 27 June at 6.30pm there we hope to resume our monthly choral Evensongs with a celebratory Patronal Festival ceremony, hopefully rung in on our Ellacombe Chimes and possibly preceded by a BYO late afternoon picnic with a glass of something bubbly and spirit-lifting provided too.

RED FOR PENTECOST

The liturgical colour for Pentecost is red. If so inclined do please come along to church brightly ablaze with red.