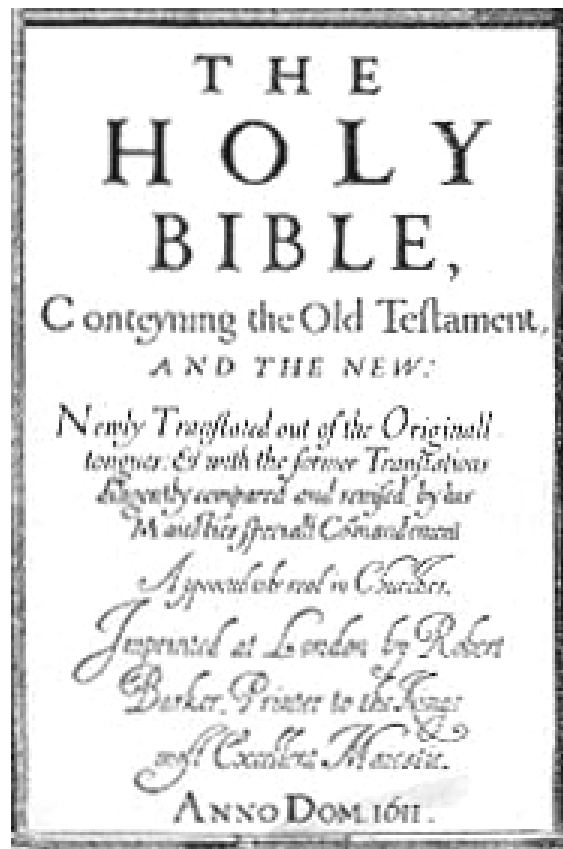


The Louth Herald

The magazine of the Team Parish of Louth

60p

September 2011



In 1604, King James I of England authorized that a new translation of the Bible into English be started.

It was finished in 1611, just 85 years after the first translation of the New Testament into English appeared (Tyndale, 1526).

The Authorized Version, or King James Version, quickly became the standard for English-speaking Protestants.

Its flowing language and prose rhythm has had a profound influence on the literature of the past 400 years.

SOME OF THE TOPICS IN THIS EDITION

The Bible—probably the most widely printed book in the world
The Practice of Social Love for a Big (and good) Society
Return of Pat Whistler, ruminating on the Wisdom of the Aged
Extension of Trinity Centre's activities
The "perfect storm" discussed at General Synod
St Michael and All Angels has a new web site

It's Philipians, Jim, but not as we know it

"He was God, right through to the marrow, But he didn't use his clout to put himself about heaven. He took off all the royal bits, cut up his heavenly credit cards, chucked his global contacts list, walked off without his body guards...."

This is a passage from the Word on the Street, Rob Lacey's interpretation of the Bible. I like the idea of a street version of the Bible because it takes us back to an idea at the heart of the New Testament, scripture written in the language of the street. If we read many

of today's translations of the Bible we can be led to thinking of it as a well written scholarly document.

However, the New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Not fancy academic Greek, but common Greek. The intention was to speak to people in a language they used every day and understood.

There is a powerful message there for all Christian people. Are we speaking a language that our society can engage with or are we just talking to ourselves?

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What various Bibles have done for me

When I started at Ossett Grammar School, in the then West Riding of Yorkshire, I and all my fellow pupils were given a copy of *The Bible*. In our first Scripture lesson, yes, that is what it was called in those days, we had to cover it with brown paper. The presumption was that we would use it **so** much and, being but eleven such messy individuals, the brown paper cover would protect it.

That paper has long since disappeared, the edges of the pages have browned, the spine is broken. But that isn't because I used it ever so very much! That's age and being moved about quite a bit! When I first had it I did try to read it from cover to cover but very soon gave up, as most people do! My copy has lots of pictures and maps in it and I can remember way back leafing through it and looking at the pictures, line drawing at least every other page by one Horace Knowles. Soon though it was kept but no longer used....a common fate I'm sure. It may be on my bookshelves in my study but only in this year of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible have I looked at it again.

My old school copy calls itself *The Bible - Authorized Version*. Authorisation is what kicked off this year's celebration of *The King James Bible*. In 1611 King James authorized the putting of a copy of the translation he had commissioned near the beginning of his becoming the King of England as well as Scotland, into **every** church in the land. So the *King James Bible* became the *Authorized Version*. And 400 years ago our ancestors would have marvelled at it and treasured it. It was in **their** language. They could begin to understand it, most likely for the very first time.

In the early seventeenth century, the eminent scholars who created the *King James Bible* used the



best texts then available, obviously all copies, some of the originals all copied by scribes using varieties of handwriting. Their basic working text was the translation from the original Greek texts by one William Tyndale, an early sixteenth century man. Tyndale's life's work, and death, was founded on his determination to make the Bible understandable in English. There had been a much earlier English translation by John Wycliffe in the 1380's, real ancient times! The most commonly used Bible right up until 1611, The Vulgate, was in Latin. Only men, and only the few well educated men at that, understood Latin. So for Protestants, for whom the Bible is a key foundation of faith, this was a big issue.

But influential of the Church authorities, from Wycliffe times, right through the 1500's, thought it was subversive for the people to know the Bible. Men and women were burned at the stake for using those early translations....Tyndale himself was. So it was the hugest of changes when suddenly every priest **had** to read from King James's *Authorized Version* in the language of the people.

But the language of the people changes....even fifty years ago no Vicar would write an Editorial for the Parish Magazine like this... starting sentences with "And" and "But", using something like a conversational style. Another example of the change in our language: when I was confirmed in Worcestershire, my Granny gave me a copy of a new translation, *The New English Bible* (with

Apocrypha). That was only three years after the one I had been given in Ossett. No pictures, but at least I made it all through the Gospels OK.

And then, like a lot of older teenagers then thought, Church was boring. For many years I stopped going. And neither Bible was looked at, let alone studied and prayed with! But when I had my first baby, and **knew** I had to bring her up in the Church, then there was another translation, *The Good News Bible*. In the Church I attended until I started training to be a vicar, there was a copy of *The Good News Bible* in every chair in the church and we were encouraged to find the readings in the pew copy in every service. For the first time I had an inkling of what St Paul was on about in his *Letters* which had been *Epistles* in both the school *Bible* and *The Book of Common Prayer*. And the Old Testament was much less difficult too. It became possible to study and pray with the Bible when I could understand the language.

Now there are many other translations and I guess

most of you have your preferred copy, the one you are helped to find God in, the one that speaks to you. If you haven't looked it up for some time, get it out, find your favourite Bible stories and enjoy spending time with the creator of heaven and earth who loves each and everyone of us. And give thanks for the King James's *Authorized Version*, now 400 years old, still greatly loved for its Shakespeare-like poetry. Without it we would all be much the worse off!



Sue Oliver

No Grinding Organ

The thanks of the congregation, Clergy, Churchwardens and in particular the organists go to Friends of St James's who have paid nearly £8,000 to have the St James's organ key actions fully refurbished. (A complete end to end and top to bottom refurbishment of the entire instrument would cost in the region of £120k - £140k!). Great care is being taken with phased work such as has been carried out in the last few years that further stages do not require unpicking work already carried out.

The organ, which was first installed in 1857 and completely rebuilt to its current state in 1911, (the centenary of which is being observed this year). It is used nearly every day for services, practice, instruction and recitals and has suffered the effects of wear and tear.

For the technically minded:

Two emergency visits were needed to attend to ciphers caused by the worn out trackerwork which connects the actions together. The bushings in the "squares" were nearly all rotted away which caused very audible "clatter" when notes were worked, particularly noticeable in rapid playing. In addition, the 232 aluminium squares suffered occasional breakages over recent years and needed renewal rather than repair of these items.



The underactions were removed to the workshops for restoration. All the trackerwork and the tapped wires were cleaned (any not of phosphor bronze were replaced) and new leather regulating buttons and felt cushion cloths were fitted throughout. The pneumatic power machine was carefully dismantled and all valve work was cleaned, regulated and replaced where shown needful. The leather covering of the motors was inspected and renewed where required. Finally the actions were carefully set up and regulated for optimum efficiency of operation.

This highly specialist work was carried out by Lincoln based father and son team Julian & Lewis Paul. This team is renowned for their work all over the country and they have done work in London and Julian had the Lincoln Cathedral Organ in his care for eighteen years. Lewis says "St James organ is one of the finest we have worked on not only in Lincolnshire, but throughout the whole country. This work will keep it in good condition and hopefully the audiences and organists will be able to appreciate the wonderful, improved sounds"

So no more grinding organ or monkeying around!

More Light & Retained Heat New doors for St James's

Earlier this year the DCC and PCC approved the proposal to install new glass doors in the south entrance porch and applied for a Faculty to do the work.

The DAC have approved the design as being appropriate for a Grade 1 listed building and so we will be going ahead with the project in the next few weeks.

The plan is to install two new elegant glass doors at the main entrance to the church. The existing wooden doors will remain, but will be folded back most of the time. Immediately behind them will be glass doors which will be assisted opening although not fully electrically self opening. This will allow easy access for both pedestrians and wheelchairs. The glass doors can also be opened wide for weddings and funeral processions.

Under the guidance of our architects Anderson & Glenn, the contractors will take precise measurements and then manufacture the bespoke doors at their workshops. In November, after the Remembrance Day service, they will install the doors which will take about two weeks as they will also renew the tiles and stone at the entrance.

If all goes to plan the doors will be in place providing a more welcoming easier access entry into St James before the onset of winter weather.

Robert Haynes
Churchwarden

STEWTON SUMMER FAIR — Plants, fun and relaxation in the sunshine



Photos by Stuart Sizer



Canon Gavin Kirk will be celebrating a Traditional High Mass on Sunday October 9th at 3pm in St Michael and All Angels Church. Father Gavin will be remembered by many as having been part of our serving team when a youngster!
Everyone is welcome.

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3 Free life assurance is provided without a medical
This FREE facility might have been the major selling point for other savings schemes, and it is a very useful benefit. All Members qualify for life assurance, matched £ for £ on savings up to £1,750. This is in addition to the guaranteed return of all the savings to the estate.

4 It is easy to join and kick-start the flow of benefits
As for any regulated financial institution, you need to prove your identity with two appropriate documents, one of which must be dated within the last 3 months and include your address. This can be done at Trinity Centre on Wednesdays between 11.00am and 1.00pm. Savings can be deposited by cheque, cash or standing order as soon as your membership is confirmed.

Deposits for saving are being taken NOW
Official launch 21 September at Trinity Centre

For further information, please contact Peta Hill at Trinity Centre, Eastgate, Louth, LN11 8DJ
Tel: 01507 610752 email: pcwpeta@btconnect.com

Trinity Work Club to begin in mid-October

An identified area of need for many people is some support, mentoring, and hand-holding with issues and concerns around employment, cv & application writing. There is also a latent demand for information about sources for help with debt and financial budgeting. In addition to this practical advice, people without work often would benefit from social support and 'a listening ear'.

Young men seem to have a particular need, but it will be open to everyone, and in the current economic climate there are many public sector workers looking for support.

Coincidentally, the Development Manager from Job centre Plus has approached the parish to see if we are interested in establishing a Work Club.

There is an opportunity to bring a number of initiatives together to help address these issues in a co-ordinated way, offering a rounded range of services to people in one place at one time every week. The proposal is to build on the Credit Union session at Trinity

Centre on Wednesday mornings. The style will be relaxed and informal (with bacon butties and tea/coffee) and there will be, in addition to the Work Club facilities, Drop-In opportunities with a range of organisations which will include Citizens Advice Bureau and the Volunteer Service.



The target start date is mid-October, with a briefing meeting on Wednesday 5 October.

As always, the success of these activities is dependent on the quality of the effort put into it. Peta Hill is leading this programme. Please do get in touch if you feel this is something you could help with – or if you want further information.

Sue Oliver to have operation on her foot

Sue's operation is scheduled for 9 September and she will be confined by a plaster cast for 6 to 8 weeks thereafter. She expects to return to her ministry duties in November.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sue. We wish her a speedy and full recovery and look forward to her return.



Do you have a few hours a month to be a volunteer visitor?

"Be A Friend" is a scheme funded and managed by the Louthesk Deanery. It provides social contact for vulnerable adults of any age regardless of any connection with the Church.

Anyone who would like to be part of the scheme can contact us directly or be referred by family members or friends. Contact with the scheme can be long term or for short periods, according to individual needs.

'Be A Friend' is expanding rapidly and needs more volunteer visitors in order to keep up with demand. If you could spare an hour or two once or twice a month to befriend someone, we would be very happy to hear from you. Similarly, if you know someone who is spending a lot of time on their own and feeling lonely (or you are in that position yourself), please get in touch.

Contact Gill Fraser
Scheme Co-ordinator
Tel: 07890 629062 or email
be.a.friend@btconnect.com

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The Bible is probably the most widely printed and distributed book in the world

There are no reliable figures for the number of Bibles printed and distributed in the world, but it is not a small number. In common with other religious books and some political tracts, they are not only sold but also distributed free of charge by a number of organisations. Then there is the question of whether or not they are read. And if read, the personal and social actions that might follow from the various interpretations that are placed on the words in the Bible. You will be pleased to learn that these last considerations are beyond the scope of these brief insights into the spread of the Bible.

If you have ever stayed in a hotel you know something of the Gideons

Gideons International (also known as Gideon's Bible) is an evangelical Christian organisation dedicated to distributing copies of the Bible in over 94 languages and 194 countries of the world, most famously in hotel and motel rooms.

The organization was founded in 1899 in Janesville, Wisconsin, as an early American parachurch

organisation dedicated to Christian evangelism. It began distributing free Bibles, the work it is chiefly known for, in 1908. Nearly 79 million Gideon Scriptures were given out in 2009. Close to 1.7 billion have been distributed since 1908.

In addition to their well-known hotel-room Bibles, the Gideons also distribute Bibles to members of the mili-

tary of various countries, to hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, MPs and students.

The Gideons principally use the King James Version for their Bibles. They also distribute New King James Bibles and Testaments, which they refer to as "Modern English Version" (MEV) Bibles and Testaments.

The world wide effect of a dedicated Welsh girl, Mary Jones

The experience of a 15-year old Welsh girl, Mary Jones, is at the heart of the initial founding of Bible Society and the global network that now exists. Her commitment to have the Bible for herself contributed to the inspiration behind Bible Society's aims today.

Mary Jones was born in December 1784 into a poor Welsh family. Her father was a weaver. Her parents were Calvinistic Methodists and Mary herself became a Christian aged eight. They lived at the foot of the Cader Idris mountain, in Gwynedd, North Wales.

Mary learned to read in schools organised by Thomas Charles, a preacher from nearby Bala, who had

a passion for teaching children from poor families. Mary used to visit a farm two miles from her home to read a copy of the Bible there. But it became her burning desire to possess a Bible of her own.

It was a vain hope. Money was scarce and Welsh Bibles were hard to come by. The nearest place to buy one was Bala, 25 miles away. And it was not even certain that a copy could be bought there. But Mary saved money for six years. And eventually she had enough money to buy a Bible.

One morning in 1800, Mary set out and she was barefoot, as usual. Eventually, she came to Bala and to the home of Mr Charles – the only

man with Bibles for sale in the town. But all the copies Mr Charles had were either sold or spoken for. Distraught and heartbroken, Mary wept. Her despair touched Mr Charles, who sold her one of the copies already promised to another.

The impact Mary's visit profoundly impacted Thomas Charles. He began to wonder what could be done for others such as Mary – for people who long for the Bible around the world.

He proposed to the Council of the Religious Tract Society to form a new Society to supply Wales with Bibles. And, in 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was established in London.

Bible Poverty is still an issue

At its root are language barriers: blindness, illiteracy and people simply being too poor to own a Bible. Even in developed and relatively prosperous countries such as Britain there are plenty of families without books in the house.

Others are Bible-poor because they live in a 'sophisticated' culture where the Bible is written off as irrelevant. Bible poverty is robbing millions of the truth that Jesus can set them free. Bible Societies hold the vision for a day when the Bible is shaping the lives and communities of people everywhere.

This stark reality of global Bible poverty is a scandal as great as global poverty. Both break the heart of God. How can they not touch our hearts too?

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The Deanery Office, 6 Upgate,
is open every Wednesday evening
between 6.00 and 7.00 pm
for the booking of
Baptisms and Weddings and for consultations
with the Clergy.

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Locally Ordained Minister
The Old Railway House
Stewton
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September Services

Thursday, 1 September

8.00 am Holy Communion St James

Sunday, 4 September – Trinity 11

8.30 am Holy Communion St James
 9.30 am High Mass St Michael
 10.00 am Parish Communion St James
 11.00 am Holy Communion Stewton, St Andrew
 3.00 pm Baptisms St Michael
 6.00 pm Choral Evensong St James

Tuesday, 6 September

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Trinity
 6.30 pm Low Mass St Michael

Thursday, 8 September

8.00 am Holy Communion St James

Sunday, 11 September – Trinity 12

8.30 am Low Mass St Michael
 9.30 am High Mass St Michael
 10.00 am Family Service St James
 11.00 am Holy Communion South Elkington,
 All Saints'
 Morning Prayer Welton-le-Wold
 6.00 pm Sung Eucharist St James

Tuesday, 13 September

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) St James
 6.30 pm Low Mass St Michael

Thursday, 15 September

8.00 am Holy Communion St James

Sunday, 18 September – Trinity 13

8.30 am Low Mass St Michael
 9.30 am High Mass St Michael
 10.00 am Parish Communion St James
 11.00 am Morning Prayer Stewton,
 St Andrew
 Holy Communion Holy Trinity
 6.00 pm Choral Evensong St James

Tuesday, 20 September

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) St James

Thursday, 22 September

8.00 am Holy Communion St James

Sunday, 25 September – Trinity 14

8.30 am Holy Communion Welton-le-Wold,
 St Martin
 9.30 am High Mass St Michael
 10.00 am Parish Communion St James
 6.00 pm Harvest Festival South Elkington,
 All Saints'
 Choral Evensong St James

Tuesday, 27 September

11.00 am Holy Communion (BCP) St James
 6.30 pm Low Mass St Michael

Thursday, 29 September

8.00 am Holy Communion St James

Ageing Church of England 'will be dead in 20 years'

This was the headline in the Telegraph on-line report on the General Synod meeting in York in July.

The Church of England could be virtually extinct in 20 years as elderly members die, an Anglican leader has warned. The average age of worshippers has risen to 61 with many congregations above that. In the past 40 years the number of adult churchgoers has halved, while the number of children attending regular worship has declined by four fifths.

The Church of England now faces a 'perfect storm'.

The Church was accused of 'impeccably' managing itself into failure. 'These congregations will be led by fewer and fewer stipendiary clergy ... 2020 is when our congregations start falling through the floor because of just natural wastage, that is people dying. Another 10 years on, some extrapolations put the Church of England as no longer functionally extant at all.'

Andreas Whittam Smith, the first Church Estates Commissioner, said the demographic 'time bomb of 2020' for Anglicans was a 'crisis'. One problem may be that decline is so slow and imperceptible that we don't really see it coming clearly enough,' he said.

'We know about it in theory but we don't really know about it in practice. I wish that all of us would have a sense of real crisis about this.'

Is the Church of England in Louth different from the national church? Are these trends unalterable? Are there things we can do to make a difference? Should we just go with the flow?

We will be exploring possible responses to the crisis Whittam Smith invites us to address in the Herald in future editions. Your thoughts and suggestions will be welcomed. Let us know what you think should be done.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF RAY HOWDEN

Ray Howden's daughter Sue would like to say thank you to family and friends who made it possible for this wooden bench to be installed in St James's Remembrance Garden in his memory.

Ray was a great servant of St James's for many years. The bench is located close to the vestry where he conducted so many of his duties.



BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS IN THE PARISH

Baptisms

19 June Mac Harvey Josham
 26 June Thomas Charles Edward Dunkin
 Ameya Paige Richardson
 Isabella Grace Mary Shaw
 3 July Isabella Scarlett Grace Ablewhite
 Grace Louise Pennell
 Summer Louise Webster
 10 July Jessica Olivia Atkinson
 17 July James Andrew Lingard
 Niamh Saffron Raw
 24 July Iris Mary Hunt
 Jayden James Plaskitt
 31 July Jack Ross Gilliatt
 7 August Harrison William Nurse
 Lily-Rose Amelia Pocklington

Weddings

2 July Robert Ian Havercroft with Adele Louise Turner
 Garry David Crate with Sabrina Jayne Robinson
 9 July Mark David Ingram with Amanda Jane Brown
 23 July James Nicholas Timson with Emma Louise Clay
 30 July Neal Jonathan Gostelow with Tracy Rebecca Cotton
 James Lee Hudson with Kerry Louise Male
 Jonathan Andrew Key with Hollie Marie Snowshall
 James Fountain with Rebecca Sarah Williams
 31 July Kevin Ian Boughen with Ann Edison
 4 August Ian Simon Lumb with Lindsey Leanne Lyall
 6 August Stuart Steven Leafe with Gemma Flynn
 Aidan Johnson with Jennifer Marshall
 12 August Adam Cartwright with Rebecca Liane Addison

Funerals

29 June Jack Dodge aged 87 years
 7 July Maria Adriana Jeanne (Jeanne) Smith aged 84 years
 8 July Lorna Daphne Norton aged 80 years

11 July Christopher Stuart Fenwick aged 52 years
 15 July Doris Beasley aged 84 years
 19 July Keith Sharp aged 62 years
 21 July Hylton Penman aged 72 years
 William Rex Hedderley aged 86 years
 22 July Joyce Margaret Whiteman Kirby aged 90 years
 26 July Beth Broughton aged 91 years
 27 July Tony Toohey aged 56 years
 3 August Elsie Bartholomew aged 98 years
 4 August John William Hardy aged 74 years
 11 August Kathleen Margaret Winter aged 90 years
 Robert McKie aged 73 years
 17 August Jack Anthony Clark aged 2 days
 19 August Pauline Margaret Atkinson aged 72 years
 22 August Sheila Mary Milner aged 77 years
 24 August Matty Dawson aged 20 years

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 Email: david@walnutcare.co.uk
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Roger Harrison retires to Northumberland

Roger and Chris Harrison returned to Louth in 1999 having lived here in the early 1970's and found little had changed! However, there was a new Organist and Choirmaster in Fred Goodwin.

Fred was looking for an organ scholar to replace Robert O'Farrell who was returning to St Mary's after holding the fort since Peter Burness's departure. Normally organ scholars are in their teens but Fred was quite content to have one aged 55! Roger had been playing the organ since his teens but, with continual changes of location during his RAF service, hadn't really been able to settle down to some serious playing, so the arrangement suited them both. After a fairly intensive 6-month period learning the repertoire he and Fred settled down to a good working relationship.

As the boys' choir numbers grew and the standard improved the music became more challenging, so Roger felt it was time to think about gaining a Diploma. With Fred's

Roger playing the organ at Lincoln Cathedral



excellent teaching (after all, one of his pupils ended up as Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral!) he gained his Diploma in Organ Performance in 2006. There was also the opportunity to play at Lincoln Cathedral and at Sheffield, Wakefield and Derby Cathedrals during the annual choir holidays.

It was around this time that Chris joined the choir to sing Alto. As the choir was still essentially a 'men and boys' choir, Chris was treated as an 'honorary man'. When Fred retired and Keith Morgan took over, Roger continued as Assistant Organist to

provide support and encouragement to the new incumbent. His involvement in service playing increased so he took the opportunity to develop skills such as improvisation. He had already started attending the annual Summer School of the St Giles International Organ School in London.

Although Roger's agreement with St James's ended in December 2009, it seemed as though he would continue for ever more! However, he and Chris have decided that their future lies much further north, and are planning to move to Northumberland where Chris is already establishing a base for her artistic paper-making skills. Roger therefore decided to announce his retirement this summer, giving Lisa time to find replacements while he and Chris are still around to help out occasionally.

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Presents...

The Black Umfolosi 5

**Friday 16th September 2011
7:15pm - 9:00pm**

Tickets Prices: Adult - £10 Children/Students/Senior Citizens - £5



Join us at the Trinity Centre for an evening of a cappella music and dancing from one of Zimbabwe's finest touring groups. The Black Umfolosi 5 will be performing African vocal music and dance on Friday 16th September here in Louth.

Our thanks go to the Lincolnshire County Council's Rural Touring scheme for bringing the chance to host these world class performers here at Trinity, and supporting the continuing multicultural work across the parish by the Team Parish of Louth.

Wine & refreshments available during the interval.
Tickets are on sale now in Louth at the Deanery
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Contact Trinity on 01507 605803 or enquiries@trinitylouth.co.uk
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Wisdom of the Aged by Pat Whistler

There it stands, 5 feet high, a stump. My beech tree, our beech tree belonging to us for just 17 years, felled, amputated, over 150 years from a beech nut, a tiny seed, to a 2.5 metre stump; it awaits carving into a garden ornament, a gnome, perhaps, or a dolphin, some kind of memorial.

From a seedling it has existed through the Potato Famine, the American Civil War, the Boer War; that is not to say that it was in Skibbereen, Ashokan, or Spion Kop. It was not present when the Wright Brothers heralded powered flight, or for Concorde, the liberation of Paris, the Beatles, the invention of the silicon chip. But it existed, and now it doesn't. We, mere late arrivals, had it put down. It was magnificent, but it was pulling our house apart. It didn't mean to, but it did, through its natural needs.

Now, lying in kit form on the Whistler acres, it will be reduced to logs for the fireplace, and its shade no longer inhibits our roses. The silver lining so often fails to eclipse the dark cumulus of heartache; I will miss cursing its Autumn leaves as I pile them for compost, its own beech nuts blunting my mower. I will miss my old beech tree. It was, in its day, magnificent. It may never have had a mind, but to me it had a soul. It witnessed the survivors of the Somme returning, crippled in body, mind or both, to our market town, and it heard the Lancasters droning back from the Ruhr. People will have sat under it ruminating on Harold Wilson, Harold MacMillan, Queen Victoria, Gladstone and Disraeli, Slavery, Heath, Thatcher. It was never conscious of any of this; its imperatives were, suck water out of ground, grow leaves, produce beech nuts, keep growing. Silly to be sentimental about it, really, but perhaps excusable.

Our old people have, or did have, complete minds, souls, far more than our old beech tree. At 85 plus, they have seen the days of the Hawker Fury, the Supermarine Spitfire, the glory days of British Racing Motors, the Korean War.

Many have worked for shillings, and some for pence. Their hands, now arthritic, painful, full of tremors, once lay with confidence on Olympus typewriters, Bakelite telephones, Riley steering wheels, tillers, fork handles, shovels, inch and Imperial spanners, half crowns and threepenny bits, tanners and florins. They have seen the passing of the pound note, the halfpenny, and countless cheeky apprentices and comedians of varying quality.



So, for their reward? For placing their faith in National Insurance, the New Deal, State Schooling, the National Health Service, Peace In Our Time, National Insurance, the Bomb, what's on offer? I'll tell you, though you already know. Tremble, you baby boomers. What is on offer is a saturated pad on a saturated chair in an understaffed, chilly, noisome pile of bricks. A drink of cheap orange juice "when they remember" or more culpably, when an inspection team is due round. A broken hip undiagnosed, a toilet visit indefinitely postponed. Calls for help unanswered. A meal budget of £1:50 (thirty bob!) a day. Care.

Look, it doesn't need to be like that. In a great many wonderful and unsung cases, it is in no way like that. I have been to retirement and nursing homes that are little paradises. Somehow, our parents, our aunts, our uncles in them enjoy actual love, and real concerned care. They are not always the most expensive ones, but they have heart. The residents' names and foibles are known, their comfort assured, their cries for help answered, and their eventual passing marked by staff, often visibly moved, at funerals where even close

family are absent.

But, alas, the headlines are full of the other sort just at present. The collapse of Southern Cross has brought to the public consciousness an uncomfortable sense that all is not well. More fuel for worry comes with a Panorama programme about a "care" institution riddled with apparent bullying and neglect. There is a sense that all is not well, and that inspection, generally forewarned, is not guaranteeing quality of care in the homes to which we commit our most vulnerable, and often venerable, fellow humans.

If anyone knows how irritating, contrary and generally maddening demented old people can be, it is me. I defer to no man, not even our Editor, Wee Angus, himself an irascible pensioner, in my fury at having the same conversation eleven times a day, being interrupted with irrelevant an often high-handed nonsense, having to roll the eyes heavenward at an irrational bigoted rant welling up from some warped perception of the state of affairs in 1932, refusal to drink anything under 18 proof and all the other incidents of caring for the, shall we say, non-young. As for the uses to which sinks are put, enough said.

However, some of these terrible old people crouched in foxholes, or cockpits, or gun emplacements, sick with fear. Many more went at dawn to factory benches, docks, building sites, sweatshops, fields of cold, wet crops, hospitals and morgues, bombsites and kitchens, in conditions of which we of the pampered generations can only dream in nightmare, and if their once-fine minds are now fuzzy, if their attitudes are outdated, if their needs are irrational and complex, all the more reason to honour and protect them. And this is their right, whether they can pay or not; they paid in faith and confidence for decades, what they could, when they could. They are paying still.

Please, all you readers, just consider this. Honour thy father and thy mother. It will be you one day. For me, I wish I was a beech tree.

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The Big (and Good) Society (3)

The Practice of Social Love

I come now to the last of the series of articles on 'The Big (and Good) Society' and address just what we, the people of God, can do, in hard practice, to show that we have the kind of social love upon which such a society rests and which Christ demands.

We all have problems - to be sure. Rather paradoxically, we simultaneously both nurture them and wish they'd just go away - of course. (That is our fallen nature at work.) But we also all have assets - every single one of us. (This is our God-given strength.) 'Social love', the very bedrock of any decent Big Society, demands of us that we place those assets at the service of the common good.

One of the largest problems, remember, is economic. The banks (the richest) foul up; the poorest, oldest, weakest, sickest and most vulnerable, take the hit. Let's show the banks a thing or two about banking. Consider joining and investing in the 'Credit Union'. There has been an article on this already, so I shall simply repeat the basic message. The CU, for a modest return on one's investment, seeks to ensure, in a careful, manageable way, that people in real need can take out loans without having to pay huge degrees of interest. If you go down to Trinity Centre any Wednesday, further details can be given to you.

Charities stand constantly in need of help - not just your money but also your time and your talent. Review what you do. Get involved, even if it's in a simple sort of way. This is something we should all be thinking about, especially if we are retired and have our health and any measure of stamina. If you're short of ideas and you have a computer, just 'Google' 'charities' and see what comes up. Indeed! If



you are a surfer of the great web, check out the 'Citizens UK' site and keep yourself abreast of how various local bodies are involved in creating a much bigger society in communities up and down the country. Alternatively, if you make friends easily, then why not consider our local deanery 'be a friend' scheme. It could be a life-saver for a lonely and isolated person. Check out on the website: <http://www.louthpeople.co.uk/Friend-Befrienders/story-11170859-detail/story.html>.

Think about what our own local branch of God's church is doing - or not doing - to contribute to all this. Are we missing any tricks? Do we, as Christ's body on Earth, go where Christ's body is supposed to go or is our local church no more than a 'Wendy-house' for worshippers? Remember: the church (and an individual person) is at its most spiritual when it is at its most corporeal - that is, when it is involved in the mess out there. Of course, decision-making procedures have to be observed: the PCC has to debate and draw its lawful conclusions. (We are not into doing things on a whim.) But if you think our church could become more widely involved in mission within our community - and if you have any ideas - let us folk on the PCC know about it. Let it be said of us, 'these are not drunk' (just full

of the spirit). However, we *need* your ideas. Stay alive to what your PCC is up to. It constitutes the first -line of church government.

Do you ever 'bother' your MP? If not, why not? Think of an issue at the heart of any Big Society - the way in which the elderly seem increasingly to be treated in our 'care' system, for instance - and bother your representative in parliament. They'll love you for it, and if enough of us bother them about a particular issue, perhaps...well, perhaps.

Don't hesitate. Just open your eyes, trust in the Lord, come alive and do one of these things. Then, if we ever arrive at the truly Big (and Good) Society, you will have helped in its implementation.

Paul E Hill

Where does the money go?

A well-worn five pound note and a similarly distressed twenty-pound note arrived at the Bank of England to be retired. As they moved along the conveyor belt to be burned, they struck up a conversation. The twenty pound note reminisced about its travels all over the world. "I've had a pretty good life. I've been to Las Vegas and Monte Carlo, the finest restaurants in Paris, performances on Broadway, and even a cruise to the Caribbean."

"Wow!" said the five pound note. "You've really had an exciting life." "So tell me" says the twenty, "where have you been throughout your lifetime?" The five pound note replied, "Oh, I've been to the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church and the Anglican Church." The twenty pound note interrupts, "What's a church?"