

THE Beckoner

The Magazine
For Beckminster
Methodist Church

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2018

PRICELESS!



St Edburgh Church Broadway, The Cotswolds

Photo by John Holt

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Dear Friends

As I write these few words I am reminded that Christmas 2017 has come and gone, and already we are two weeks into the New Year. If you are one of those who have moved into the 21st century financial mind-set of spending first and save later, you will want to keep one eye on your bank balance, and the other on your credit.

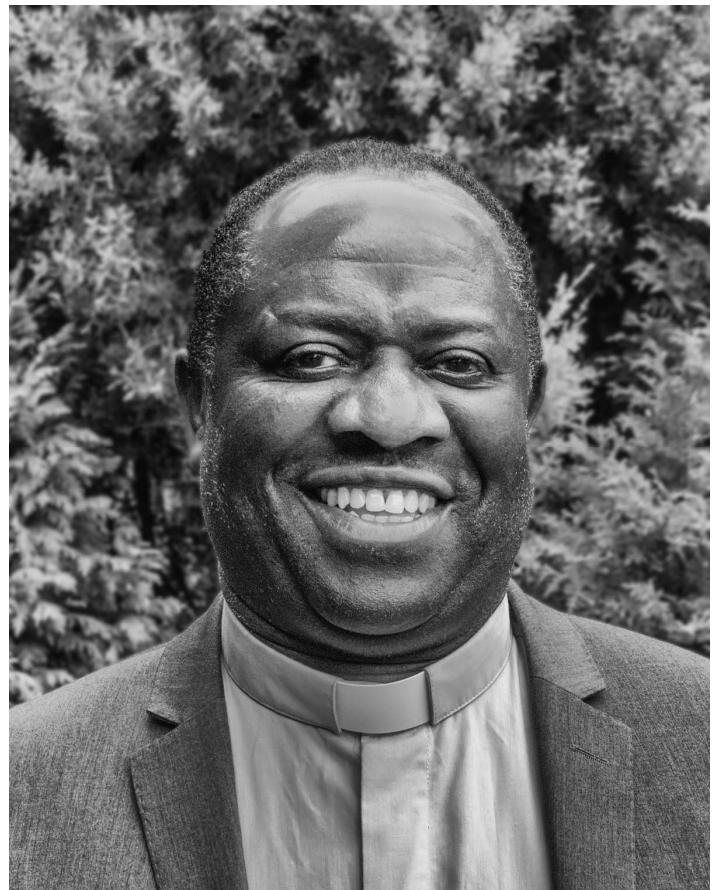
A friend of mine who called himself from the 'old generation' told me that he grew up with the sense that one saves first and then spends afterwards. Time has moved on now and debt seems to be part of our life – the debt industry is probably one of the most productive we have in western economies. But there is a downside to it; and one of the crucial times when its sting bites is after Christmas.

My encouragement to anyone of us quietly looking back at what Christmas 2017 has left behind with worry and anxiety, is simply not to panic. Regret will not help either. As Christians there is always wisdom in remembering that the one who came at Christmas is called Emmanuel - God with us - and has seen us through many complicated situations already. So, this one will pass too.

I reflected that 'epiphany' could just be the time when answers to intricate situations are given, so a calmer, collected and honest attitude is required. Hopefully this attitude, combined with a determination to probably do things the old generation way of saving first and then spend, will lead to us having a different Christmas at the end of the year.

I am also reminded of the fact that the world of civil rights and racial justice is commemorating what would have been the 89th birthday of Martin Luther King Jr had he not been assassinated in 1968. As we all know the Nobel laureate, social activist, and Baptist Minister whose protest marches and speeches left a mark on the whole world, was one of the most iconic and recognised figures of the last century.

Somebody who lived through the 1960s was asked to compare what happened then and what is happening today particularly in America (which has implications on what happens across the globe). The answer to this question was profound: referring to King's and Kennedy's assassinations, racial segregation and the



Vietnam war, the person said: 'We had two assassinations, anti-war protesters in the streets, cities torched and burning, and thousands of young men coming home in body bags from a war everybody hated but couldn't end.' And then added: 'those of us who came of age in the turbulence 1968, have a perspective that can lead us to believe this too shall pass, that we've seen worse'.

I am a fan of connecting the local to the global and the individual to the collective. If your Christmas has been hunky-dory, then take a few minutes to be grateful to the Lord and remember those for whom Christmas has left a trail of unhappiness and anxiety.

Also, those of us who live in the safety and freedom of Western societies, let us remember that the world is one human family in which we should be mindful of the fact that we are not totally safe, not totally free if one part of the world or one part of the human family is being oppressed and discriminated against by another.

I wish you a healthy and peaceful New Year 2018

Paul Nzacahayo

Steward's Musings

The editor of this magazine was kind enough to offer me a brief respite from this task, but I thought it appropriate not only to be the last person to wish you a Happy New Year, but also to thank all those people in our church community who have given Wendy and myself their practical support, their care and prayers during my recent illness.

I hope and believe that the worst is now over and that I can "pull my weight" once again. I'm not the only one who has been ill; I recognise that this column is a privilege and that not all members can express gratitude in the same way: I sincerely hope that they, too, feel the warmth of the fellowship that membership of Beckminster brings for us. Paul constantly reminds me that we have a rich group of people among our membership, full of talents, energy and social and political concern. Let's remember that!

I am writing this article on 8th January. Having missed so much of the Christmas period (but hearing about it from many quarters) I admire how much was achieved by Beckminster members over those weeks, when our families are also making demands on us. As usual, so much of the time our care and concern was for others: Christian Aid, Action for Children, The Good Shepherd Ministry, The Children's Society, not to mention those twinned toilets!

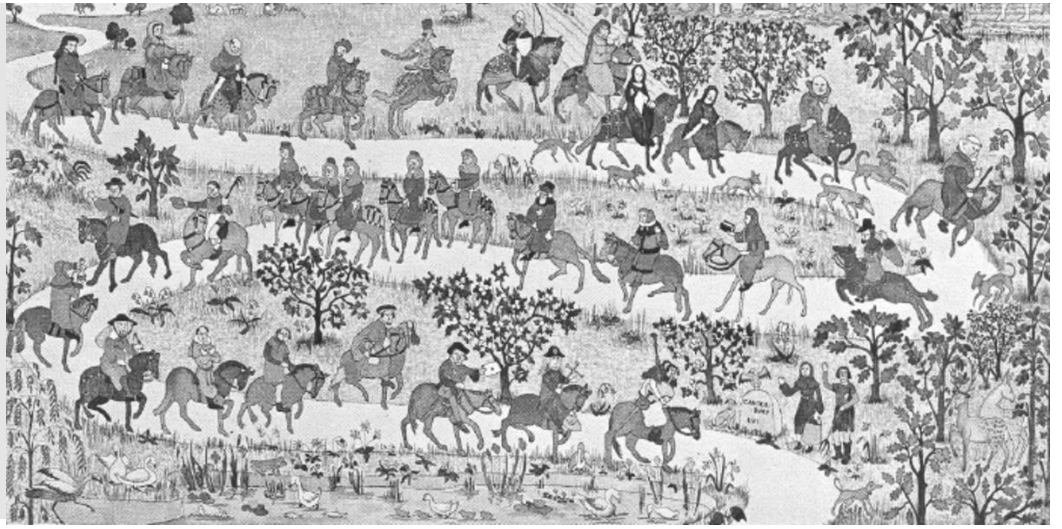
I missed most of it, but I enjoyed hearing about it all. What am I most sorry to have missed? Without doubt that Sunday Club Nativity Play and the little mouse who eventually found something thoroughly useful to contribute to all in that stable. Thank you so much to Sunday Club for that message.



I was at the Covenant Service yesterday. Paul's message was loud and clear, and it is the same message as the one in the Nativity Play. As members of the Beckminster Community, we must all make our contribution to its life and work. Sometimes we may feel uncertain, like that little mouse, of what that contribution may be. But there is always something to find to do. Perhaps I shouldn't mention names, but during my illness, a certain 99-year-old lady in Engelberg with poor mobility and very limited eyesight was among those to phone up and enquire about my health and welfare. She would agree, no doubt, that age is no barrier to action. She might even ask me how old Abraham was when he was called to serious work. I'd better check, in case she does!

John Ashwood

TO BE A PILGRIM



I remember as a child spending time with my Aunt. It was during the Second World War and her husband was in the Navy on conveyances travelling from the United States to Britain bringing much needed supplies. That meant she was on her own with a baby. She had a large atlas and I always imagined she was much occupied with where her husband was, what was happening and the danger he might be in. However what I especially recall was us travelling on our journeys together, in our imaginations, with the help of the atlas.

It awakened in me a love of maps and the idea of travelling. I admit I haven't done much travelling but planning them has always been great fun. Journeying, looking forward, discovering new places, enlarges our horizons. I have a friend who is fascinated with China who for years saved up, learned as much as she could about China and finally made her pilgrimage there. She went alone, spending time seeing the Terracotta Army, sailing on the Yangtze river and cycling into unknown territory, fulfilling a dream, encountering danger, but actually doing it!

Pilgrimages are very much a part of Christian experiences. There will be the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District pilgrimage this year to Israel. They are, in fact, popular today in many places as they were throughout Christian history – in England to Canterbury; always the Holy Land; and to Santiago in Spain. On them we discover holy sites and learn about their history and stories which enrich our lives.

Our lives are a pilgrimage. They are a journey of new discoveries about ourselves and our world, new discoveries about God and our relationship with Him. As we grow up and grow older, our experiences inform our lives, our faith

and our understanding of the meaning of life. We discover as we travel the meaning of faith, understanding what Salvation is about, the purpose of our existence and how God impacts on our life. We also learn how He calls us to be and do, helps us to serve Him and cope with success, love and friendships, hurt, tragedy, bereavement, failure, doubt and disappointment. *Pilgrim's Progress*, the great classic by John Bunyan, in its allegory, speaks about this pilgrimage.

As we enter the period of Lent and travel through Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection, we can go with Him to discover the heart of our faith and strengthen our belief in a God who doesn't lift us out of difficulties but travels with us in them and gives us grace and strength. We shall be able to share in the pilgrimage of our Lent studies to make this journey but also as we spend time ourselves to discover more about our life's journey.

Sometimes we journey further and discover more as we are still and listen to the small voice which speaks within. We never stand still in faith but in the now, which is every day, with the presence of Christ with us, we discover more about God, more about ourselves and more about the world we live in and which we are called to serve. We do not look back, or forward, but embrace what we find today and obey what God asks of us today. As we live with this, we discover the present truth of the cross and the Resurrection. Let us make this our Easter pilgrimage!

Rev Glennys Bamford

Royal Yachting Association Award

Recently Mary Harris and her family went to London to accept an award from Princess Anne, a patron of the Royal Yachting Association, on behalf of herself and her late husband David for services to sailing. It was a day to remember and a fitting recognition of the hard work they had both done for the Himley Hall Sailing Club over a period of more than forty years.

David's interest in sailing began when, while at teacher training college, he attended a course in sailing on the Hamble River. From then on he was hooked.

On returning to Wolverhampton he acquired a Mirror dinghy and joined the Himley Club in the mid 1970's. His enthusiasm prompted him to take a course in teaching sailing, after which he ran the first instruction course at the club (which both their children, Christopher and Libby attended) and set up the club Sail Training Centre, becoming the senior instructor, a post which he held for over thirty years until ill health prevented him continuing in this capacity. During this time he calculated he had taught more than a thousand people the art of sailing, coupling his training role with a term of office as Commodore of the club. When he was forced to give up as instructor he was honoured by being made Life President of the Sail Training Centre.

Mary had also caught the bug and was equally involved in the club affairs, acting as training secretary, helping with administration and even the preparing the refreshments during Club sailing events. She is still the social secretary of the club after over forty years membership.

The letter informing them of their joint award arrived at the end of June when David was extremely ill. He forecast then that he wouldn't be able to attend the award ceremony, a prediction that proved only too true as that evening he was admitted to hospital where he died the following day. The award ceremony



took place several months later, on 24 November, at the Institute of Civil Engineers in Westminster, when Princess Anne presented Mary with her award and Christopher was able to receive that on behalf of his father. Libby was also present as a guest. Mary was particularly moved by Princess Anne's condolences on this very poignant occasion.

Mary came to Beckminster to help with the Girl Guides in 1956 with David following shortly afterwards. They have both been very active members of the church ever since. During Jim Hutchen's ministry David served for three years as a church steward. Away from Beckminster he was a very keen astronomer, with his own impressive telescope in the back garden which was honoured by a visit from Patrick Moore himself. David obviously had a knack of enthusing people as he founded the Wolverhampton Astronomical Society which held its meetings at Beckminster for many years.

Truly they had a very fulfilling life together, crowned by this last honour in which David was unfortunately unable to take part. Our sympathy and congratulations go out to Mary and her family.

Alan Causer

8 = 3.6 Billion

In a Beckoner article last year, "Rags and Riches", I drew attention to the Oxfam report that had been recently published which revealed that the wealth of the richest 1% of the world's population was equivalent to that of the other 99%. Equally startling was another statistic showing that 62 of the richest people in the world owned as much as the poorest 50%. Some criticised these figures as a distortion of the true position, causing Oxfam to re-visit their research. They have now done so and reported that their initial findings were indeed flawed. New and better data on the distribution of global wealth - particularly in India and China - shows that the poor have less than previously thought. Had this information been available earlier it would have shown that just eight men, (for they are all male!), owned the same wealth as the poorest half, or 3.6 billion, of the people in the world.

The Oxfam chief executive, Mark Goldring, commented "It is beyond grotesque that a group of men that could easily fit in a single golf buggy own more than the poorest half of humanity. While one in nine people on the planet will go to bed hungry tonight a small handful of billionaires have so much wealth they would need several lifetimes to spend it".

The eight richest people according to the Forbes Billionaires List, published last year, are

1. Bill Gates:

US founder of Microsoft computerware.

2. Amancio Ortega:

Spanish founder of Zara fashion chain and others.

3. Warren Buffett:

US successful investor.

4. Carlos Slim Helu:

Mexican owner of Grupo Carso. (conglomerate company)

5. Jeff Bezos:

US founder of Amazon

6. Mark Zuckerberg:

founder of Facebook (social media)

7. Larry Ellison:

US founder of Oracle (computers)

8. Michael Bloomberg:

US founder of Bloomberg.(finance)

None were born into great wealth but have accumulated their vast fortunes in their lifetimes, often in the new industries, unlike their wealthy predecessors who made their money in steel, oil, railroads and cars. It should be noted however that both Bill Gates and Warren Buffett have already transferred much of their wealth to their charitable trusts and undertaken to give away the remainder upon their deaths.

Successive Oxfam studies show that this disparity in wealth is increasing year by year. Between 1988 and 2015 the incomes of the poorest 10% in the world increased by just \$65 while those of the richest 1% grew by \$11800 – 182 times as much. Nor is the UK exempt from this tendency. Whereas investors' share of company profits in the 1970's was 10% it is now 70% and the pay of the average UK chief executive is now 129 times that of the average employee and seemingly bears little relationship to the performance of the company they head. The public sector is not immune from this tendency either. Attention has, for example, lately been focused on the rapidly increasing salaries and fringe benefits of university vice chancellors, as distinct from those of their staffs which have virtually stagnated in recent years.

Gross inequality is the seedbed of social unrest. It was such inequality which gave rise to the French Revolution in 1789. The attitude of the



aristocrats at the time was summed up by Marie Antoinette's remark "Let them eat cake" when told that her people had no bread. The Russian Revolution of 1917 also had its origins in the contrast between the extreme wealth of the Tsars and the appalling poverty of the peasants. In our day it is fuelling the mass migrations now taking place from the poorer countries to those perceived as offering a better life.

In March of this year the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (couldn't they think of a less pretentious title?) commissioned research to try and discover which were the happiest countries in the world. The winner was Norway, followed by Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland and Finland. None, except Norway with its oil, have been blessed with great natural wealth, so have achieved their contented status by their own efforts and the undoubted benefit of wise government. It is surely not a coincidence that the four Scandinavian countries in particular have some of the highest taxes in the world but share their wealth more equally in the form of high quality education, health and social services.

Oxfam is calling for a more humane economy where the markets, which they acknowledge are essential for prosperity, are better managed to ensure that no one is left out or denied basic human rights. They also call on governments to

clamp down on tax dodging, including the use of tax havens, and for businesses to pay fair wages.

Goldring's accompanying statement concluded "Extreme equality isn't inevitable – with the right policies world leaders can re-balance our broken economies so they work for all of us and bring the end of poverty closer. We need a new common sense approach that ensures a fair deal for workers and producers; requires those who can afford it to pay their fair share of tax, and ensures that women get a fair chance to realise their potential".

All we, as Christians, can say is "Amen to all that".

Alan Causer





Laughter in the Bible

(Quiz)



1. **God told Abraham that his wife Sarah would have a son and Abraham fell on his face and laughed. Why?**
 - a. He already knew that Sarah was pregnant.
 - b. He wanted to disinherit Ishmael.
 - c. He was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old.
 - d. He had just had a vasectomy.

2. **For what reason did the psalmist say, "He who sits in the heavens laughs: the Lord has them in derision."**
 - a. The rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.
 - b. The kings of the earth, and the great men hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains to hide from His face.
 - c. Esau was rejected because he found no place of repentance.
 - d. A merry heart doeth good as a medicine.

3. **The psalmist tells us that the Lord laughs at the wicked for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows, to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those who walk uprightly;?**
 - a. vengeance is mine says the Lord, I will repay.
 - b. it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 - c. all that dwell upon the earth, small and great, shall stand before God.
 - d. their sword shall enter their own heart and their bows shall be broken.

4. **Proverbs tells us, "If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs and there is no?"**
 - a. resolution.
 - b. peace.
 - c. revenge.
 - d. quiet.

5. **King Solomon wrote: "For everything there is a season, a time to every matter under heaven: ...a time to be born, and a time to die; " Which book of the Bible is that scripture found in?**
 - a. Psalms.
 - b. Proverbs.
 - c. Ecclesiastes.
 - d. Song of Solomon.

6. **David wrote, "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy: then they said among the nations, The LORD has done great things for them." What was he talking about?**
 - a. When the creation was completed.
 - b. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion.
 - c. When the angel of the Lord slew the Assyrians.
 - d. When the children of Israel came through the Red Sea.

7. **Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes: "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by sadness of countenance?"**
- the heart of the Saviour is touched.
 - a man establishes his integrity.
 - the heart is made glad.
 - a man is believed.
8. **Who wrote, "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools: this also is vanity."**
- Solomon.
 - David.
 - Amos.
 - Isaiah.
9. **David wrote, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast loosened my sackcloth, and girded me with; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever."**
- Meekness.
 - Gladness.
 - Endurance.
 - Fine raiment.
10. **Solomon wrote: "Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything." Which book is it in?**
- Psalms.
 - Proverbs.
 - Ecclesiastes.
 - Song of Solomon.

10.	c) Ecclesiastes. (Ecclesiastes 10:19).
9.	b) Gladness. (Psalms 30:11-12).
8.	a) Solomon. (Ecclesiastes 7:6).
7.	c) the heart is made glad. (Ecclesiastes 7:3).
6.	b) When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion (Psalms 126:1-3).
5.	c) Ecclesiastes. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).
4.	d) quiet. (Proverbs 29:9).
3.	d) their sword shall enter their own heart and their bows shall be broken. (Psalms 37: 13-15).
2.	a) the rulers take counsel together against The Lord and his anointed. (Psalms 2: 1-4).
1.	c) He was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old. (Genesis 17:15-18).

Laughter in the Bible - Answers (R.S.V.)

Roy Evans

CASTLETON - 'GEM' OF THE PEAK DISTRICT

From being quite a small boy in nearby Sheffield, my parents often took my brother and I to the attractive village of Castleton in Derbyshire's Peak District. I have always been awestruck by this place which I feel has so much interest packed into its terrain of limestone hills and sweeping valleys and moors, reached at the end of the twelve-mile drive along the Hope Valley (A6187) via its neighbouring villages of Hathersage (Charlotte Bronte's *Morton* in her novel *Jane Eyre*), Bamford and Hope. Castleton stands at the head of the valley, dominated by *Mam Tor* (sometimes known as 'the shivering mountain' due to constant erosion of its steep cleft on the eastern side).

Reaching this village is almost like arriving at a terminus of beauty and seclusion as no major road goes any further (*Mam Tor* has prevented this.). However, there is a smaller road for lighter vehicles which wends its way through the nearby overhanging Winnats Pass with its dramatic sides soaring upwards to the left and right. This steep cleft in the cliffs was once an old coaching road to Buxton and now designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is in fact just slightly smaller than Cheddar Gorge in Somerset but equally as spectacular. These limestone hills are also riddled with deep and dramatic cave systems, some of which are natural and some the result of old mine workings.

On reaching Castleton a good starting point for walks to see the various sites is the well-placed Visitor Centre, which has a fine assortment of maps, guide books and other literature to provide any necessary information.

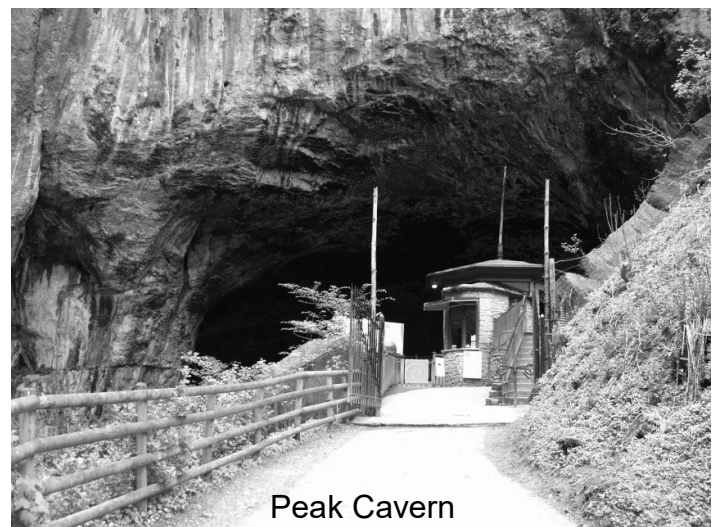
The village and surrounds have much geological and historical interest on all sides. Most visitors will start to make their way to one of the four underground caverns, two of which are within a short walking distance. As you leave, your eyes will automatically be drawn upwards to the brooding Peveril Castle, perched high on its near impregnable site at the top of a hill, towering over the whole neighbourhood. This Norman fortress can only be reached after

a very steep climb up a winding path to reach the summit (not for the faint-hearted, I'm afraid!). It was made famous by Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Peveril of the Peak* and originally built by William Peveril, an illegitimate son of William the Conqueror. It is currently run and under the protection of English Heritage.

From the centre of the village close to the War Memorial in the Market Square is another small path which wends its way upwards to a further narrow valley which gives equally dramatic views of the rear of Peveril Castle. This is called Cave Dale and, rather like the Winnats Pass, was first formed during the Ice Age. This walk opens up into a beautiful but secluded valley with splendid views across the moors and fields known as the White Peak, due to the abundance of limestone – very evident in the many stone walls dividing fields and lining roads.

However, most visitors to Castleton first make their way to one or more of the various show caverns in the area. The nearest is Peak Cavern and the pathway winds by a fast-running stream, called Peakshole Water. As the path climbs higher the massive awesome overhanging rock (on which Peveril Castle is perched) looms over everyone. As we near the cavern entrance the sight is overwhelming as it is the largest cavern opening in the UK.

For some years the mouth of this cave housed a small village and also a rope works, fragments of which can still be seen. Visitors are taken by



Peak Cavern

guides along passageways for about a quarter of a mile, after which only experienced cavers are allowed to go.

Next on the list is Speedwell Cavern, the entrance of which is through a souvenir shop at the bottom of Winnats Pass. It is a 230-year old lead mine visited by boat and here, the visitor has to walk down well over a hundred steps to reach an underground passageway cut out by miners in the 17th century and then flooded. One steps into a boat for a journey to a platform where visitors step out to gaze down into what is known as the Bottomless Pit. This is a huge underground lake and chamber that has been compared to a subterranean cathedral.

However for pure spectacle, the other two show caverns are probably the more interesting. These are the Treak Cliff Cavern and, a little further along, the Blue John Cavern. The former is probably the more colourful as it has a wonderful display of stalagmites and stalactites. The Blue John Cavern is where the beautiful and ornamental fluor-spar Blue John was first discovered, the only place in the world. (Evidence has been found that an ornament of Blue John stone was discovered in the ruins of Pompeii after the dramatic eruption of Mount Vesuvius near Naples, Italy.) It is regularly used to produce jewellery, ornaments and other precious items. Miners in the 1750s constructed a tunnel using only hand tools to reach deposits of the Blue John stone.

Naturally there are a number of shops in Castleton where items of Blue John can be purchased and quite a number of eating houses to cater for visitors. However, the village really becomes a hive of activity during the evening of 29 May each year as Castleton celebrates its premier event – the *Garland Ceremony*. Quite probably this is a link with some much earlier pagan fertility rite, but the present-day ceremony dates from the restoration of King Charles II to the throne in 1660.

A procession of dancers preceded by the local band lead the 'King' and his consort on horseback through the streets. The garland king has his shoulders and body almost entirely covered by a cone of flowers weighing about sixty pounds. The procession starts at the east end of the village and the dancers make their way, with frequent stops, outside every inn until they reach the Market Square in front of the



Cave Dale and Peveril Castle

Youth Hostel. Here the garland is removed and hoisted to the top of St. Edmunds' church tower where it is left until it withers. Traditionally it is considered that crops would fail if the garland is taken down earlier. Since the Second World War, a new practice was evolved whereby a posy from the top of the garland is placed at the foot of the War Memorial. The ceremony ends with a maypole erected in the square where children dance until darkness falls.

Naturally, the event attracts large crowds but over recent years the village of Castleton has also become famous through its Christmas lights when all the commercial buildings, inns and some householders display their own illuminated trees. It is perhaps one of the most attractive and joyous sites to witness in this beautiful area.

Undoubtedly, Castleton is steeped in history and folk-lore, such as the story from the Castle Inn which is reputedly haunted by a *Grey Lady*. The legend is that in 1603 a woman's body was found buried beneath a doorstep and it is she who flits about the passages on dark winter evenings. Thankfully she did not appear the night I once had to address a dinner there for members of the Hope Valley Forty-One Club!

If you have never been to Castleton may I suggest you make a visit yourself if you get the opportunity. You would not be disappointed.

Keith Cheetham

BECKMINSTERAMA

Open Way



This group will be taking part in the Lenten studies during February and March

Contact Hilda Evans Tel: 421777

Monday Focus

Everyone is welcome to join us at Monday Focus at 8pm on Mondays in the Beckminster Coffee Bar.

Feb 5 New York, New York
John Holt

Feb 19 Messy Church
Trish Prescott

Mar 5 Quilts Galore
Christine Pearson

Mar 19 Lent
To be arranged

Contacts: Ann Holt Tel: 650812
Margaret Nicklin Tel: 742537

Emmaus Group

Meet Thursdays at 7.45 pm. All welcome
Contact: Janet Anderson Tel: 337404

This group will also be taking part in the Lenten studies during February and March

MESSY CHURCH (I)

Monthly — Fridays
3.30 - 5.45 pm. Fun for all the family

Dec 8 Stars

Contact Wendy Ashwood Tel: 831637

Crèche and Sunday Club

Whilst the crèche allows parents of very young children to worship together, Sunday Club explore the Christian faith in exciting ways.

This is a typical week in the life of Beckminster Methodist Church.

- All groups meet at the church unless otherwise stated
- New members are always welcome at any group

Sunday

10.30am Crèche and Junior Church
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Evening Worship

Monday

9.30 - 12.30pm Art Group
2.00 - 4.00pm Art Group
8.00pm Monday Focus

Tuesday

9.45am The Toddler Group
1.30pm Art Group
4.15pm Dinky Divas 'N' Dudes
6.15pm Brownies
8.00pm Open Way

Wednesday

11.30 Luncheon Club
5.45pm Rainbows
6.30pm 'Soaring Spirits'
7.30pm Horticultural Society (monthly)
7.30pm Happy Feet Dance Group

Thursday

9.45am The Toddler Group
2.00 - 4.00pm Take a Break
7.45pm Emmaus Group
7.00 - 9.00pm St. John's Ambulance

Friday

10.30 am LWTC Diabetes Prevention Group (monthly)
3.30pm Monthly Messy Church
7.00-9.00pm Gateway Group

Saturday

Communion Services

The sharing of bread and wine takes place on four Sundays a month, either during the morning or evening worship or as an early Sunday morning service at 9.00am on first and third Sundays. Everyone is welcome.

Girls Uniformed Organisations

Rainbows 5 – 7 yrs
Wednesdays 5.45pm
Brownies 7-10 yrs
Mondays 6.15pm

Various activities according to age – include crafts, cooking, badge work, swimming, service to others, pack holidays, hikes and camps.

Contact: Julie Tonks
Tel: 01952 461006



Luncheon Club

Wednesdays 11.00am – 3.00pm

25 housebound people and helpers meet for coffee, lunch and tea. A short entertainment and epilogue. An opportunity to meet people, chat etc to relieve loneliness. A caring service provided by volunteers (who are always needed)

Contact: Tess Davies Tel: 07789 260953

Boys Uniformed Organisations

Beavers 6 – 8 years Thursday 6.15 – 7.15 pm

Cubs 8 – 10 years Monday 6.30 – 8.00 pm

Scouts 10 – 14 years Wednesday 7.00 – 9.00 pm

All groups meet at Scout HQ in Skidmore Avenue, for badge work, crafts, games, various activities and service. Camps.

Contact: Sheila White Tel: 332134

Take a Break

Thursdays weekly during term times
2.00 – 4.00pm

Indoor bowling. For people wanting to meet new friends and try something different. All welcome.

Contact: David Jones
Tel: 762408



Toddlers

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
9.45 – 11.15 am.

Approx. 40 Toddlers with Mums, Dads, carers or grandparents meet for mutual support whilst toddlers play.

Contacts:

Barbara Bennett Tel: 341877 (Tuesdays)

Camilla Clarke Tel: 07391 718084



Please hand articles, news and views to:

Keith Cheetham (Editor)(762894)
Email: jkeithcheetham@gmail.com
Alan Causer (753679)
Jean Gilbride (338944)
Hazel Graham (764036)

Church Events

Tuesday 13 February

10.30 am to 12 noon
Shrove Tuesday Big Pancake Party
(in aid of "All We Can")

Saturday 24 March

7.30 pm
Concert by Ashmore Park Choir
Various musical items
Tickets £5 including refreshments

Lenten Course

Rachel Starr will be leading four sessions on the book of Exodus during Lent. These will take place on Thursdays -
1 March, 8 March, 15 March and 22 March
At 7.00 pm in the Epworth Room

CHURCH OFFICE

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761322 (Home)
info@beckminsterchurch.co.uk
Room bookings

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MORAVIAN CONNECTIONS

Way back in the 1980s , when I embarked on tracing my family history, I asked my Dad if we had any certificates, documents and/or other things that would help me in my quest.

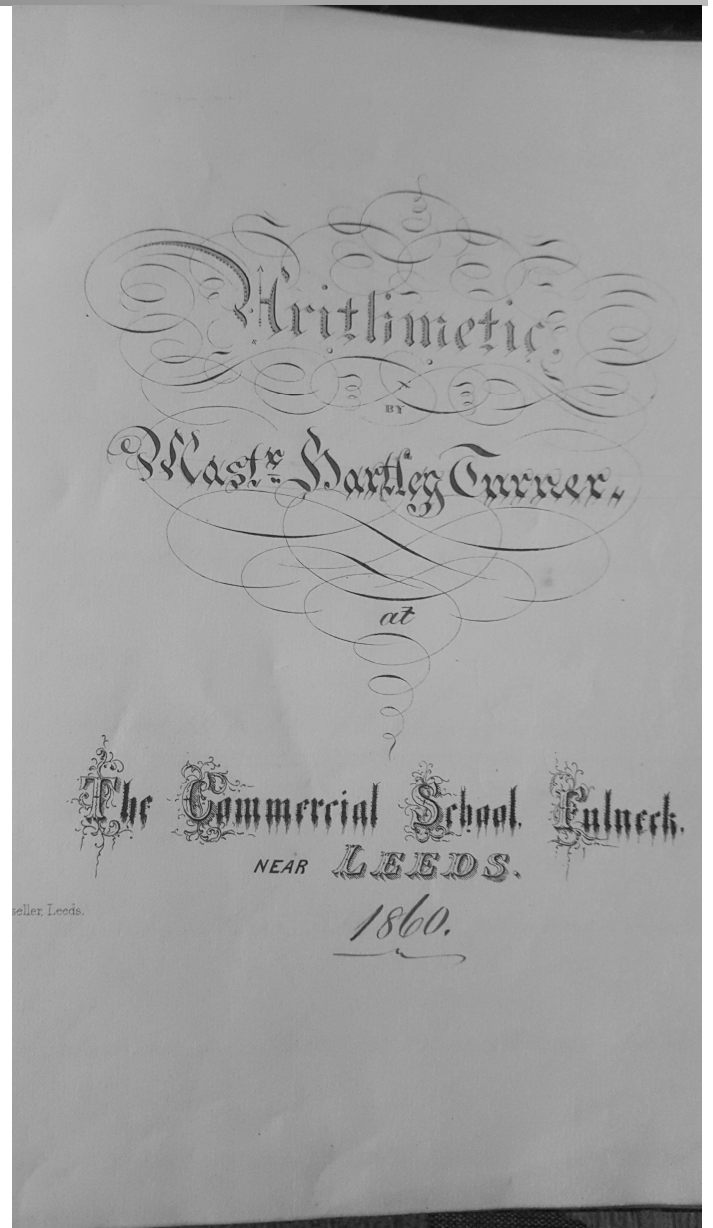
I was amazed when he produced a fair number of certificates – the oldest being the marriage certificate of my maternal great grandparents dated 1866. I had never seen these before but they were a good base to start my research.

Amongst other things were also six school books which I initially thought belonged to my maternal grandfather, William Harold Turner. However, on closer inspection, I realised they were the arithmetic books of my great grandfather, William Hartley Turner, from 1860 - 1862. The fly page, beautifully written and illustrated by William, told me that he attended The Commercial School, Fulneck, near Leeds and, on making enquiries, I discovered it is a Moravian school. Fulneck, part of Pudsey, is a Moravian settlement dating back to 1739.

The school was founded in 1753 in order to provide an education for the sons and daughters of the Church's ministers and missionaries although, quite why my great grandfather came to attend a Moravian school over two miles away from where he lived, I have no idea and neither did my Mum.

That side of the family have always been Methodists, as far as we knew, and his father John was a clothier. These days it is a day and boarding school and, if it was so in those days, I can't imagine the family being able to afford to let William board there. However, there is a possibility that he won a scholarship and, as you will read later, the Moravian Church and the Methodist Church have a strong connection!!

The mid-15th century saw the Moravian church originate in the region of Moravia in the current Czech Republic. In the 16th Century members of the Moravian Church, a mainstream Protestant Christian religion, were persecuted by a predominately Catholic population and so fled to Germany where they were given sanctuary. There they set up a self-contained community



which was based on the same principles as most religions.

As various branches of the Protestant Church, including Anglicans, Methodists and Reformists, became more accepted throughout Europe, the Moravians came and set up communities in the United Kingdom, including of course the one at Fulneck.

The Christingle tradition was started by John de Watteville, Moravian minister at Marienborn, Germany in 1747. He gave each child a candle tied with a red ribbon and a prayer which said, 'Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that their's like Thine become.'

In the early months of 1736 John and Charles Wesley landed on American soil. In the middle of the Atlantic their boat had been hit by violent storms and John, in particular, had been terrified to the point of questioning his own lack of faith. Amongst the passengers were a group of German Moravians and John noticed that they were calm and composed during the storms. When he questioned them later they responded that they were not afraid of death. John, ashamed of his own lack of bravery, was moved by theirs and also influenced by their hymn-singing.

When Charles and John returned to England in 1738, after what they deemed a disastrous visit to America, they decided to make contact again with the Moravians as they could not forget how brave and sincere the group on the ship were. They met up with a 26-year-old Moravian, Peter Bohler, from Germany, and became life-long friends. The brothers started to attend Moravian meetings in London although John very much felt his faith in God was weak and that he should give up preaching. Charles had returned from America an ill man but, whilst staying with Moravian John Bray, had his own conversion. Three days later on 24 May 1738 John was invited, by his Moravian friend, James Hutton, to a house in Aldersgate Street. He went unwillingly but it was here, of course, that ".....I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation....."

To think, that if it wasn't for the Wesley brothers' encounter with those Moravians on that boat on the way to America, or their decision to meet up with other Moravians back in England, the Methodist Church as we know it may not exist!



Moravian Church, Fulneck

Sadly, after marrying at nineteen and fathering two boys and a girl, William Hartley Turner died, of periostitis of the lower jaw and pyemia, two months after the birth of his youngest child and two months short of his 30th birthday.

One day, maybe when I've retired and have more time, I will find out why my great grandfather did happen to go to a Moravian school.

Hazel Graham

Don't forget!
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The Joys of Age

I had the pleasure a few years ago of transporting to the Beckminster Luncheon Club a lady of mature years who was wont to remark as I helped her in the rather painful process of getting into the car that "There's nothing to be said for getting old". I thought there must be some advantages arising from the ageing process and though I am only in my eighties and might grow old myself one day (after all eighty is said to be the new sixty) I thought I would try to draw attention to some of the more positive, indeed enjoyable, aspects of the ageing process, notwithstanding its physical limitations.

Nothing is more pleasurable to those of riper years than to discuss with their contemporaries details of their medical symptoms, consequent treatments and, best of all, operations. The first half hour of any conversation may be taken up with these exchanges, especially if one is able to reveal that an astonished doctor confirmed he had never in his long experience come across a similar case. After a little practice listeners will be held spellbound by graphic descriptions of operations and the recovery process, the more lurid the better, especially when coupled with graphic accounts of the hospital stay and the behaviour of one's fellow patients.

The war provides another gratifying topic of conversation for those who lived through it. We may never have personally been acquainted with bomb or bullet but our accounts of long

nights sharing air raid shelters with the wildlife that often took up residence in them can command rapt attention from those unfortunately denied the experience. We can also claim our relative longevity is almost certainly due to the paucity of the wartime food ration, not to mention the other shortages forced upon us at the time.

Those who benefited from particularly deprived childhoods can reap their rewards in describing the Friday night ritual of the tin bath by the fire with its succession of family occupants. Young flesh can be made to creep with accounts of the hazards accompanying shared outside lavatories, particularly during freezing winter weather.

The weather is always a subject of interest and younger listeners will be riveted by our accounts of making our way to school through snowdrifts several feet deep and thawing out the third of a pint bottles of school milk round the coke stove or class fireplace. It is universally recognised that in those far off days winters were invariably freezing cold and summers blisteringly hot.

Tales of bus conductors (the meaning of this term may have to be explained to the young) walking in front of the bus through thick fogs always elicit gasps of astonishment from those grown accustomed to our present smoke-free atmosphere. The ritual of preparing the winter hot water bottles for bed usually provokes discussion as to the relative merits of stone versus rubber vessels.

Those interested in sport will marvel at the fact that admission to Molineux South Bank cost only 1/6d (7½p) to watch the likes of Billy Wright, Jimmy Mullen and Bert Williams (who arrived at the ground on the bus and could afterwards be found in the local pubs) exercise their talents. Die-hard supporters on the North Bank (the Cow Shed End) had to pay 3d more for the privilege. Seats in the stand ranged from about 20p to 40p





The joys of travel can always be exploited as a subject of universal interest. Youngsters will be surprised that railway carriage windows could be opened and the head put out, at the risk of receiving eyefuls of cinders and a sooty face. Railway carriages had separate compartments with overhead luggage racks, (where on one boyhood occasion I was hoisted by sympathetic soccer fans to spend the entire journey to a wartime match at Aston Villa).

The onset of mild hearing loss can quickly be used to your advantage by employing the technique of selective deafness. You are able to plead that since your hearing test revealed the loss of the higher frequencies you can no longer hear the insistent bleeps of the microwave/ washing machine/dryer and are therefore unaware that having completed their cycles they require your attention. After a few demonstrations of this loss you should be able to rely on other family members to relieve you of these mundane tasks.

Senior citizens are not expected to be in constant touch with everyone by mobile phone as we are thought incapable of understanding them. Instruments not incorporating a screen the size of a small television are in any case considered by the young as antediluvian. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are, of course, terms completely beyond our comprehension and no effort should ever be made to rectify this situation lest you find yourself in the unfortunate position of receiving text messages from the hundreds of so-called "friends" of whom you

have never heard (and probably never want to) or, more likely, can't recall.

The generosity of successive governments enables us to ride on public transport all day free of charge. If the home heating bills become insupportable a few longish bus or train trips will allow you to keep warm at no charge to yourself. Similarly, full advantage should be taken of every opportunity where price concessions are offered to the elderly, especially where the premises are heated as it may be cheaper than staying at home.

No-one regards it as odd if you show a few idiosyncrasies such as a startling taste in clothing. Indeed, such manifestations are more or less expected of the senior citizen. Battered mis-shapen hats, odd socks, well-worn coats, and trousers an inch or two short held up with string and are all evidence of a mature outlook.

However, rumpled Nora Batty stockings are never acceptable for the more elderly female. Neither, in the case of older men, is a two-seater sports car as it is almost always indicative of a driver undergoing a mid-life crisis.

Youth, as they say, may be wasted on the young but let us mature citizens, though in our anecdotalage, not let age spoil our fun.

Alan Causer



Poldark rides again!

The last time my wife and I went down to Cornwall for a holiday was just over two years ago. It's purpose was twofold. Firstly, to spend an enjoyable holiday and, from my own part, to carry out a short inspection of Methodist sites for the Methodist Heritage committee. We stayed at Treloyhan Manor Christian Guild home near St. Ives, which was an excellent base for travelling around.

Methodism has always been a strong factor in Cornwall, ever since the eighteenth century when John Wesley and some of his preachers travelled around to the various communities, helping convert many of the tin and copper miners and local communities to Christianity. Cornwall's landscape is scarred with the traces of both ancient and modern mineral extraction.

Noticeable today are the remains of mine engine-houses which are dotted across the Cornish landscape. Wesley preached in the county many times, first visiting in 1743 and another thirty-two times before his death in 1791. People in Cornwall were particularly drawn to Methodism, its practice of preaching outdoors in barns, cottages, fields and other open spaces and market squares. This suited the mainly rural population many of whose villages were far from a parish church. It still retains quite a strong Christian presence as witnessed in the many Methodist chapels in various towns and other locations.

On our last visit, even in June, we found many of the roads and country lanes were busy with traffic. One aspect that has helped cause this was the fact that another major series of *Poldark* had been made for television and had started to attract visitors again to come and see for themselves the dramatic scenery of the North Cornish coastline, where most of the scenes were filmed and action takes place. It was not the first time that a *Poldark* series had been filmed there. It was way back in the 1970s that the *Poldark* series of books by author Winston Graham had first been brought to life.



Robin Ellis and Angharad Rees

Author Winston Graham was a Lancastrian by birth but from 1925 at the age of seventeen, he moved to North Cornwall. It was a love affair with that county that never ended. During the Second World War he worked as a coastguard overlooking the beach at Perranporth. It was during long nights and solitary walks patrolling the beaches that he first conceived the *Poldark* novels. He was, in total, to become the author of over forty novels and a shoal of short stories. Twelve of these books were in the *Poldark* saga and they became an instant success. No wonder that they were later turned into two spectacular television series, so riveting that Cornish vicars changed the times of their Sunday evening services.

I'm sure that many of our older readers will remember some of the main actors, Ross Poldark was played by the handsome actor, Robin Ellis, and his wife, Demelza, by delectable actress, Angharad Rees. His early love was Elizabeth Poldark, his cousin (Jill Townsend), and though they are parted when Ross goes to fight in America for three years during the Civil War, their love for each other never really dies. This forms one of the main themes throughout the series.

The stories unfold the adventures of the Poldark family and a bitter feud with Sir George Warleggan (actor Ralph Bates), banker and landowner – the books selling in millions around

the world. Winston Graham was a brilliant researcher and once took a convicted safe-breaker to lunch and when writing about the boxing business, visited seedy boxing clubs in the East End of London, disguised in an old crumpled raincoat.

He had a happy marriage to Jean Williamson and they honeymooned on the rim of Mount's Bay at the Old Coastguard Hotel, Mousehole, and the Godolphin Arms in Marazion. Winston greatly admired Angharad Rees (Demelza) and said "Whenever I invited her to lunch at my club, my popularity leapt. Men would think up excuses to come and speak to me!" He died in 2003 and, despite the celebrity the television series conferred upon him, Graham used to describe himself as "the most successful unknown novelist in England!" Nevertheless the fact he was never given a knighthood rankled many. As it was he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and awarded the OBE.

After his death, Winston Graham's son, Andrew, was co-opted by BBC Television over recent years and involved in the making of the adaptation for the 2014 series onwards. He checks scripts for authenticity and is involved in location finding. Comparing the 1970s series with the present ones, the earlier were perhaps much milder than the last three series of the re-make shown over recent times. Now a fourth series has been commissioned and is in the process of filming. Yet undoubtedly all the storylines have the making of good novels, perhaps more raunchy and violent than previously but at the same time creating scenes of high drama, love, hate, infidelity, family jealousies, warfare, industrial unrest, smuggling and fishing, religious unrest (yes, even



Aidan Turner and Eleanor Tomlinson

Methodism is brought into the story), and tragedy.

The re-emergence of the *Poldark* series has meant some of the present actors have become somewhat of cult figures, especially Ross Poldark played by Irish actor Aidan Turner. When he strips down to his waist he certainly makes one or two of the ladies go hot under the collar! His wife, Demelza, is played by Eleanor Tomlinson and his childhood sweetheart (Elizabeth) by Heida Reed. Undoubtedly the current series of *Poldark* has already done much to attract more visitors to Cornwall. This may be a good or bad thing as I've found that many of the roads are impassable in high summer due to the large volume of traffic which heads off to the South West of England. Car parking can also be a nightmare as well as being very expensive. Beautiful though the scenery may be it is a county with a wild elemental nature of its landscape and extreme weather.

These aspects play a huge part in the novels of Winston Graham. Whilst filming in March 2014 during the storms, makers of the series were able to film some spectacular footage of waves pounding upon the rocky and dramatic coastline of North Cornwall. On the other hand, the film crew sometimes find the weather too sunny when the script called for 'angry waves'.

Nevertheless, the finished article is always one of sheer professionalism both from the actors and production teams' point of view. If it brings a touch of colour, drama, romance and glamour to our television screens then it can't be a bad thing, can it? Bring on the fourth series!

Keith Cheetham

Whither Fairtrade?

Do you remember how we all saved our supermarket receipts back in the early days of Fairtrade? Our ask was for them to stock fair trade products. We asked and they did!

We asked Cadbury's to switch to Fairtrade – and before long the iconic "Dairy Milk" bar was carrying the Fairtrade logo. When KitKats and Maltesers switched to Fairtrade, we were rocking.

But times are changing and the big players in international trade are changing with them. In 2016 Mondelez, the giant multinational which now owns Cadbury's, opted out of the Fairtrade market in favour of its own "Cocoa Life" brand.

The Fairtrade Foundation continues to engage with the company to make sure that they keep to their promise of delivering a better standard of living to more farmers while securing their cocoa supply chain. The jury is out on that one.

Last year it was the turn the Sainsbury's. You may have noticed that their own brand tea carries the slogan "fairly traded" and "new and improved". The more eagle-eyed among you may have spotted that it no longer carries the

fair trade logo.

I am not sure what it is that is "new and improved" but the farmers at the sharp end of the supply chain are very angry about this move which is a pilot which may be rolled out to other Fairtrade goods such as coffee and bananas.

While Sainsbury's assure us that farmers will continue to receive a fair price for their tea, they will no longer receive the premium for them to invest in their cooperatives as they wish. Instead they will have to bid for grants from Sainsbury's London headquarters which will be given only in relation to the company's development goals. The farmers have thus been completely disempowered. Additionally there is now no independent verification of the standards on the tea plantations; this has always been at the heart of the awarding of the Fairtrade mark.

But fairtrade campaigners are fighting back.

A national coalition of organisations, including CAFOD (the Catholic development agency) and Traidcraft, called for a day of action last October.



Revd. Chris Collins said, "Let's have a guerrilla tea party". So we did. We set up a table in the central refuge in front of Sainsbury's St. Mark's, offering passers-by a cup of fair trade tea, explaining the difference between 'Fairtrade' and 'fairly traded' and asking them to add their signature to a letter addressed to the manager at Sainsbury's.

We received a very warm response from members of the public and at the end of the morning Chris, along with a Wolverhampton representative of CAFOD, delivered the letter to the store.

We have yet to receive a response but with activists all over the country telling Sainsbury's "Don't Ditch Fair Trade", we believe that the message is getting through.

In January representatives of the Fairtrade Foundation met with senior members of Sainsbury's and we look forward to hearing about that conversation in due course.

Meanwhile, do look carefully when you are buying your groceries. If you choose to buy Fairtrade, check that the familiar logo is on the packaging of the product. At first glance "fairly traded" sounds like a good thing but in the case of Sainsbury's tea, it is definitely not.

On a more positive note Wolverhampton Fair Trade shop is recording good growth in its sales figures to personal shoppers as more people are hearing about the range of food and craft goods on offer. If you haven't paid a visit yet, you have missed a treat!

Brenda Shuttleworth

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER, 2018

This annual event is due to take place on FRIDAY 2 MARCH 2018 at 7.30 pm at the church of St. Chad & St. Mark, Lime Street, Merridale, Wolverhampton WV3 0EX.

The Women's World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation, which enables women to hear the voices of other women from a different part of the world each year, expressing their hopes and concerns and bringing them before the rest of the world in prayer.

On that day an estimated three million people in over 170 countries will gather to observe the day of Prayer, using an order of service written by Christian women from Suriname and translated into over one thousand different languages and dialects. In the British Isles alone over five thousand services will be held. The day will begin when the sun rises over the island of Samoa and continue until it sets off the coast of American Samoa some 35 hours later.

Theme for the service is taken from Genesis 1: 31 (from the *Word of the Street*):- "God looks at everything He's made and says "Fantastic. I love it!" The title is *All God's Creation is very good*.

All God's creation is very good, at least it was – until human beings began to destroy it! The service from Suriname (one of South America's smallest countries) is a challenge to us all and is also very typical and meaningful.

Caring for God's very good creation is hugely important and highly relevant to people of all ages and beliefs!

Anyone is cordially invited to attend and share in the service – men, women and people of all age groups. You would be made to feel most welcome. Thanks.

Lindy Beere





An unusual name for a charity, though very appropriate, as you will realise when you learn of its nature. I became aware of it when John Pearson gave me a copy of its latest newsletter, suggesting it would make a suitable article for The Beckoner, indicating also that I could find out more about its activities if I spoke to Rosemary Cox. Rosemary regularly attends Monday Focus meetings since she gave a talk on the charity there some two years ago but the story is so inspiring that it deserves a wider circulation.

The charity was set up by his parents in memory of Lawrence, an eight year old boy who died in 2005 of a rare brain disease. They knew that many children in Africa had no ready access to clean water and decided that the object of their charity would be to try and remedy this deficiency as far as they were able. Many African communities can only obtain water by travelling long distances to a water source or standpipe and carrying it back in five gallon containers, weighing more than 50 lb, or having it delivered at extortionate cost by tanker or donkey. Moreover the problem is worsened by droughts which appear to be arising more frequently.

The idea of making water more readily available to the remote areas of Africa is hardly a new one, the very large charity Water Aid is very active in the field, but Lawrence's Appeal seeks to help in a more basic, but very novel, way. Once a suitable site is selected, usually near a school or community centre, and the water tested for purity, a well is sunk and a 1400 litre water storage tank erected on a steel tower nearby. The novel part of the project is to install

a playground roundabout adjacent to the well so that the energy expended by the children playing on it powers the pump, enabling it to raise the water to the storage tank above. It thus has a dual function, a real win-win situation. In a further twist the storage tanks display advertisements, the revenue from which pays the low maintenance costs of the installation. Sadly, most of the advertisements relate to health issues, particularly HIV, which is very prevalent in the region. In many recent cases the opportunity has also been taken to site a vegetable garden next to the well to provide food for the school or local community. Hitherto, such community gardens have not been viable, due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient water for the crops.

Rosemary's daughter, Christine, first learned of the charity when she was recovering in a London hospital from a serious illness. As almost all of her nurses were from third world countries she conceived the idea of raising the funds for a well in memory of her brother who had died just 20 years earlier, also of a brain disease. In due course she and Rosemary were successful being able to fund their first well, named Peter in his memory, with his name displayed on the tower.

A short time afterwards they visited South Africa and were able to visit the well to see it in operation. They received a rapturous reception at the school with the teachers and pupils only too anxious to demonstrate how it worked and to assure them what a great benefit the well had proved to be to the school and the local village.

Rosemary and Christine have gone on to raise

funds for several more wells, one in memory of John, Rosemary's late husband, and have now visited all of them, receiving a heart-warming welcome at each. Their last project was at the Mant'ase Orphanage, where Prince Harry spent his gap year, and which was in desperate need following one of the worst droughts of the century, this scheme also incorporating a vegetable garden which helps to supply food for the orphanage.

Virginia Prifti, who set up the charity, has now been instrumental in raising well over £1m, enabling the provision of over 150 wells, her efforts being recognised some years ago by the award of the MBE. The cost of each well varies according to the geological conditions but the average is around £7500. Some of the wells are over 60m (200ft) deep. The need for more wells continues as droughts are becoming more severe. In fact Capetown itself is likely to run short of water in the near future unless the rains come soon.

Rosemary and Christine can take great pride in knowing that their efforts, and those of other donors to this worthwhile charity, are enabling many disadvantaged schools and communities to enjoy the benefits of a clean and wholesome

water supply, something the people imagined would never be available to them.

Postscript

The wells are not the only way in which Peter is remembered. Before he died he let it be known that he wanted his organs to be donated to others who could benefit from them. He became one of the earliest organ donors and as a result three people received the gift of life. At the time there did not exist a register for those who wished to donate their organs so the family set about creating one .

Christine even addressed the Conservative Party conference to seek their support. As we now know, they succeeded, the register was established, and later taken over and managed by the NHS. The government have now announced they intend to introduce legislation requiring those who do not wish to donate to opt out and it is hoped this move will greatly increase the number of seriously ill people able to benefit by organ donation.

Alan Causer





Easter Services at Beckminster



25 March	Palm Sunday 10.30 am Morning Worship led by Rev Paul 6.30 pm Evening Worship led by Rev Paul
29 March	Maundy Thursday 7.30 pm Holy Communion
30 March	Good Friday See Church notices for service with other local churches and other events
1 April	Easter Sunday Holy Communion 9.00 am Easter Breakfast 10.30 am Morning Worship 6.30 pm Holy Communion

At the time of going to press not all details had been made available



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