

LENT 2013

Deane Parish Church

www.deanechurch.org



A thought for Lent

'Happy is the man who doesn't give in and do wrong when he is tempted, for afterwards he will get ... his reward....'
James 1:12 TLB

Temptation becomes a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block when you realise that it's just as much an opportunity to do the right thing, as the wrong thing.
Temptation just gives you the choice!

So, what to give up for Lent? How about giving up yielding to temptation and growing in God's grace?

Pattern of Sunday Services at Deane

Morning

9.00 a.m. said (no singing) service of Holy Communion
from the Book of Common Prayer
— about 60 minutes

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion OR Morning Service
OR All-Age
— Holy Communion and Morning services are
about 90 minutes during which there are three
groups for children

A full programme card for Sundays is available in church. Children are very welcome at Deane, especially at the 10.30 service. There is an unsupervised crèche area and a toddler space available at the back of church at this service. The service audio is relayed to the crèche area. All-Age services are around 60 minutes.

Refreshments are available after the 10.30 service.

Deane at 6

This is not a 'service', but an informal time of prayer, praise and exploring the Bible. The music is largely contemporary and refreshments are available as part of our time together.

Prayer Meetings at Deane in Deane Church

Come along and pray for our church and community. Prayer meetings usually last for one hour to one and half hours, but feel free to come late or arrive early if you need to.

5th February , 5th March, 9th April at 7.30p.m.

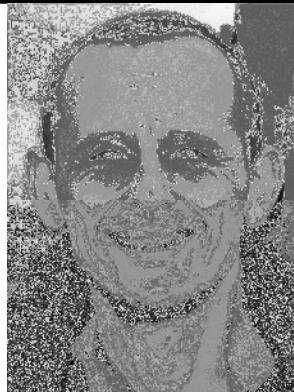
Following our pattern of seasonal editions of the magazine the Lent edition will be published on March 24th. Matter for inclusion to the editor by Monday 11th March, please.

Come And See

23rd-31st March 2013

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Matthew 28:5-6 (NIV)



During Holy Week this year the four Church of England Churches in our part of Deane Deanery will be laying on a wide range of events for anyone to *come and see* what Christians believe and why. Members of Lostock Parish Church, St Bede Morris Green, St Andrew Over Hulton and Deane Parish Church will be busy sharing the good news of the empty tomb at a range of venues and on the streets. Working with us will be Bishop Chris plus a team from Oak Hill Theological College in London.

In addition to 22 services across the 4 churches during those 9 days, there will be 34 other events for all ages. Events at Deane will include... Little Lambs Easter Party; Ladies Guild Come and See Evening; *Can you trust the Bible?* event at Ladybridge Community Centre; *Don't judge a bottle by its label*/wine tasting event; Creation Walk with local rector/botanist(!); Guides, Brownies and Rainbows evening; Good Friday Holiday Club Morning; Men's Breakfast. Plus church will be open Monday-Saturday afternoons with refreshments served and a new exhibition about the 900+ years of history of Deane

Church. It will be a 9-day celebration of the empty tomb! We have been planning this week of events for over a year now and it has been so very encouraging to see folk from the four churches increasingly working and praying together.

But it's not just about 9 days at the end of March, since after Easter there will be *Christianity Explored* courses (www.christianityexplored.org) running daytime (with crèche) and evening so that folk can continue to investigate in a relaxed and easy way the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you see the programme and other publicity do prayerfully consider what you could come along to. Don't try to get to everything but do try to get to one or two events in addition to any services that you would normally attend. The home team and the Oak Hill Team, as well as Bishop Chris have put a tremendous amount of time, effort and prayer into preparing for the week so let's make the most of it.

But if the Come And See week events and services are attended only by those who are already part of the life of Deane Church, then it largely defeats the object of the exercise! I'm sure that all of us have neighbours, friends, colleagues or family members who it might be worth inviting to something during the week. Why not invite someone? What is there to lose? God may well use your invitation to bring that person into a closer walk with him. In mission we have to be brave and step out a little from our comfort zone. But the very best and safest place to be is where God wants us to be, following him and responding to his call to mission. God is with us and we do it not for ourselves or for 'church' but for Jesus and he is worth it! In my experience, often the people who

seem most unlikely to come to a Christian event *will* come along if invited sensitively, and the Come And See week has such a wide range of events that there is almost something for everyone! The Comedy Night with meal and Christian comedian Andy Kind (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00cbg36) on the evening of Saturday 23rd is a very accessible and non-threatening social event to invite anyone to.

But, most importantly, if you believe that prayer changes things then please be praying hard for this week and especially for those fronting events, giving talks etc. For God's protection and provision. And that God would graciously use the week to bring hope, healing and light into many people's lives.

Bless you.

Terry Clark

Teaching Christianity

A recent YouGov poll commissioned by Oxford University's Department of Education has found widespread support in England for the teaching of Christianity as part of basic Education.

64% of adults agreed that children need to learn about Christianity in order to understand English history, and 57% agreed that it was needed to understand English culture and its way of life. Areas of Christianity considered important were the history of Christianity (58%), major Christian events and festivals (56%) and how Christianity distinguishes right from wrong (51%).

According to Oxford University Media News, it was found that teachers are often nervous about tackling issues related to Christianity, as they are worried that it could be considered as evangelising.

LENT FOCUS

Ash Wednesday: a good time to admit you are sorry

Have you done something which haunts you? Which makes you feel restless and defensive, every time you think of it? Why not deal with it this month, and put it behind you? Whatever your mistake has been, consider what the Bible has to say to you:

'I have not come to call the virtuous but sinners to repentance' (said Jesus). (Luke 5.32)

'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55.7)

'Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.' (Joel 2:12-13)

God is inviting you to come to him this Ash Wednesday. What a wonderful offer! Make the most of it, and remember how the prodigal son was welcomed back by his compassionate father.

As we realise afresh how much we owe to God we become more relaxed about sharing our faith in his unconditional love, with others.

A Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve and
M mercy is when God doesn't give us what we do deserve.
A God's
Z Riches
I At
N Christ's
G Expence

And the child Jesus grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was on him.

G
R
A
C
E

Church of England responds to PM's same sex marriage statement

Responding to the Prime Minister's recent statement on same sex marriage, the Church of England issued the following statement:-
"It is important to be clear that insistence on the traditional understanding of marriage is not knee-jerk resistance to change but is based on a conviction that the consequences of change will not be beneficial for society as a whole. Our concern is for the way the meaning of marriage will change for everyone, gay or straight, if the proposals are enacted.

"Because we believe that the inherited understanding of marriage contributes a vast amount to the common good, our defence of that understanding is motivated by a concern for the good of all in society.

"The proposition that same-sex relationships can embody crucial social virtues is not in dispute. To that extent, the Prime Minister's claim that he supports same-sex marriage from conservative principles is readily understandable. However, the uniqueness of marriage is that it embodies the underlying, objective, distinctiveness of men and women. This distinctiveness and complementarity are seen most explicitly in the biological union of man and woman which potentially brings to the relationship the fruitfulness of procreation.

"To remove from the definition of marriage this essential complementarity is to lose any social institution in which sexual difference is explicitly acknowledged. To argue that this is of no social value is to assert that men and women are simply interchangeable individuals. To change the nature of marriage for everyone will be divisive and deliver no obvious legal gains given the rights already conferred by civil partnerships.

"We believe that redefining marriage to include same-sex relationships will entail a dilution in the meaning of marriage for everyone by excluding the fundamental complementarity of men (cont)



CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE

VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Here is the newsletter sent by email to supporters of CSW at the start of 2013. If you are inspired to play a part in this exciting work on behalf of the persecuted Church, do visit the website.

Later in the spring we are hoping to form a local group based at Deane. If you are interested in being part of this group, please speak to Anne Roberts (01204849468); anne-roberts@talktalk.net

Happy New Year - and thank you so much! It's only because of you that 2012 was as amazing as it was. And it's only with you that we can look forward to another extraordinary year in 2013.

After three years on death row for his faith, Pastor Nadarkhani's release in September - at just the moment when you were praying for him - made his case one of the most dramatic we've ever been involved with.

And in June, there was a major breakthrough when the UN officially recognised that the awful human rights situation in Eritrea needed to be investigated. CSW's Africa Team Leader and UN Senior Advocate played an instrumental role in helping others consider the facts before that decision was made.

But it's not just the high profile cases that have excited us. In Burma, as you prayed and campaigned along with us, we saw many small steps along the path to freedom. That's what so much of CSW's work is about: small victories that build towards a bigger goal.

Cause for celebration already in 2013!

On Tuesday, Pakistan's Supreme Court dismissed a final attempt to reopen Rimsha Masih's blasphemy case, bringing a close to the legal proceedings on the matter. It is a great relief to know that this final avenue of appeal has now been closed, but attention is still needed on the safety of Rimsha's family and community.

Watch out for the new campaign

Our new campaign is being planned right now - keep an eye out for the launch in March, to find out how you can work with us to make religious freedom a reality in 2013.

I really hope and pray that this will be the year when we'll see freedom of religion and belief taken much more seriously around the world. But we need your continued help to make this happen. Thank you again for everything you did during 2012 - let's make 2013 a year in which Christians and those of other faiths can enjoy the freedoms we take for granted!

As ever in Christ



Mervyn Thomas

CSW Chief Executive

www.csw.org.uk

CSW is a Christian organisation working for religious freedom through advocacy and human rights, in the pursuit of justice.

(cont) and women from the social and legal definition of marriage.

"Given the absence of any manifesto commitment for these proposals - and the absence of any commitment in the most recent Queen's speech - there will need to be an overwhelming mandate from the consultation to move forward with these proposals and make them a legislative priority. In our view the Government will require an overwhelming mandate from the consultation to move forward with on these proposals and to make them a legislative priority.

"We welcome the fact that in his statement the Prime Minister has signalled he is abandoning the Government's earlier intention to distinguish between civil and religious marriage. We look forward to studying the Government's detailed response to the consultation next week and to examining the safeguards it is proposing to give to Churches."

Ooosh!

It seems amazing that we're already almost half way through another academic year, but a lot has happened amongst the young people of our church over that time.

In September we discovered that we had a wonderful problem. We had a bunch of young adults who were now too old for youth group, but not quite ready for home group, eager to keep coming to church and eager to keep meeting together to study the bible, pray together and encourage one another in their faith as ventured into adulthood. And so, YAAD was born. A group of Young Adults At Deane, who meet together at Terry's on a Friday evening to do just that. Not only is it a massive encouragement to have young people who have made it through our youth work and out of the other end, still going strong with God, but it means we have something appropriate to invite students and new young adults to so they can feel part of the church family much more easily than in the past.

But don't let me give you the impression that our young people just want groups running for them. We are seeing so many young people stepping up and getting stuck into serving in church life.

- For the second year running we have a young person on DCC, three of our Sunday School leaders are under 19,
- Element members are responsible for serving refreshments at Deane at 6 and many are part of the Band for that service.
- Four YAAD members joined the youth leadership team in September. As Elizabeth Tidmarsh stood down from leading Pathfinders, Danny, James, Ben, and Marc agreed to be part of the Pathfinder leadership team. Unfortunately Marc was in his last semester at Bolton University, and has now returned home, but Danny, James and Ben, are all gradually taking on more responsibility in the leadership of this group, being trained up to be ready to lead groups from themselves.

Last term also saw James' baptism. James joined the Deane at 6 congregation in the Summer term, and made the decision to follow Jesus at Soul Survivor in July 2012.

A lot of our young people count seeing him make that commitment publicly at his baptism and share his faith with his friends and family as the highlight of 2012.

Despite losing half of our membership to YAAD or university, The Element and CYFA are still going strong. There may not be many of them, but they are committed to each other, to their own growth as Christians, and to the growth of the group. Over the last five months they've done loads of bible study, explored their spiritual gifts and how they might use them in the church, and invited their friends along to a games night as we work towards 'Come and See'.

Voltage are also growing as a supportive group that study the Bible together and pray for each other, as well as playing plenty of games and doing the occasional bit of craft. It's great seeing them listen to how each others' weeks have gone (with endless tales of detentions) and help each other work out how to operate a Bible and what we can learn about God from it.

We've had at least four young people turn up for Pathfinders each week, and despite tending to be a different combination of young people each week, they're beginning to gel as a group and asking some really great questions. It's always a challenging time as our church young people figure out how to transfer the biblical grounding they got at Sunday school into their high school lives and

figure out where God fits in their understanding of the world and their own identity, but it's a privilege to be a part of it.

Thinking about the rest of this year, there's much to look forward to. We have young leaders waiting in the wings to join the Voltage leadership team when the Church Centre opens and we're able to include more young people in our youth work. We have young people keen to invite their friends along to youth events and quietly pointing their friends to Jesus in school and college, and a bunch of teenagers already excited about the summer, looking forward to Soul Survivor and to serving on the holiday club team. As our teens would say....

Ooosh!

We have young people
keen to invite their
friends along to youth
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friends to
Jesus in school and
College...

Wilderness

(Mt 4:19, Jn 16:33)

Landscape of contrasts -
Wealth with want,
Celebrity with suffering,
Power with vulnerability.
A wilderness world
Without boundaries
Or signposts,
As secularisation sets in
And society fragments.
A technological super-world
Of cynicism and suicide.
A twenty-first century
Wilderness world

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit
Into the wilderness...

Here is one who understands,
Who is familiar with the landscape,
With hunger and homelessness,
With rejection and exploitation,
With temptation.
Here is one who exposed
The sham of self-sufficiency,
Who sacrificially overcame
The wilderness world -
And is still the Way out.

And Jesus says, "Follow me."

By Daphne Kitching

Prayer for de-cluttering

Father,
Sometimes there is so much clutter and rubbish in our lives and in our hearts that we can't see where we are, or where we are going. We can't find our way and there is so little room for you to get through, to show us.

Help us to learn to de-clutter regularly; to sweep away the distractions; to throw out the things that take up the space we could share more wholesomely with you.

May we co-operate as you spring-clean our hearts Lord. Help us to make it easy for you to reach us, to sort us out and to fill each part of us with your cleansing Holy Spirit, so that your love will shine through our lives to draw others to you.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

The main roles of the Archbishop of Canterbury

The various roles and responsibilities of the Archbishop of Canterbury have developed over more than 1400 years of history. The one constant is his ministry as a senior bishop, though the nature and purpose of his authority differs in different contexts.

Historically the central role, and the source of the archbishop's authority, is as Bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury. His diocese in East Kent has a population of 890,000 people and comprises 261 parishes in an area of nearly 1,000 square miles.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the Primate of All England (the 'first bishop' of England), and shares several roles with the Archbishop of York. For over a thousand years the distinction of the Diocese of Canterbury has given its bishop formal responsibility as a 'metropolitan' - the first among the bishops of a region. He has authority at all times in the 30 dioceses of his Province - 29 in southern England, and one in continental Europe. York has the same roles in relation to the 14 dioceses of his Province.

Based on his oversight in the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury became the original sign of the unity of the bishops and local churches of the Anglican Communion - all 34 provinces in communion with See of Canterbury, a total of about 80 million members throughout the world which has developed over the last 200 years or so. He is the focus and spokesman of its unity today, but shares his oversight as president of the Communion with other bodies.

In the last two areas of dialogue and activity - Ecumenical relationships between Christian Churches, and Inter Religious relationships between different traditional world religions - the Archbishop has no formal authority. But his role in England and the UK, and his leadership in the Communion at large, give him significant influence and the responsibility to speak authoritatively for the faith and witness of the Church, the Anglican Church in particular.
(See over for the new archbishop.)

Our New Archbishop Justin Welby

An upbringing involving a broken marriage, a single parent family, an alcoholic father. A recipe for disaster? It is one of many tributes to the toughness, stability and faith of our new Archbishop that he survived these conditions to succeed brilliantly in industry and to attract the trust, respect and admiration of the Church.

His father's family were German Jewish immigrants who moved to England to escape anti-Semitism in the late 19th century, and integrated quickly. His British ancestors, on his mother's side, include several clergymen.

Of course there was money. You don't go to Eton without it and no doubt it made life more comfortable at Trinity College, Cambridge. Through those years Justin Welby gave sympathy and support to his father, whose wealth, according to *The Daily Telegraph*, came from the drinks industry which destroyed him. Justin knew nothing of his father's career, nor of his connections with the Mafia and the Kennedy political dynasty. It seems an amazing background for a bishop. If so, we have a narrow view of the Church and what it can do.

His business acumen makes him a formidable member of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards. Behind him is seniority in the oil industry in Africa. This experience led, after ordination, to directorship of international ministry within the International Centre for Reconciliation. In this role he saw at first hand the ravages of civil war in Nigeria and was often in danger himself. He brings all this experience to leadership of the Church, to analysis of those vexed pastoral questions that get so much publicity and to gain publicity for important matters that get none at all.

In youth, family problems demanded active sympathy and understanding. These qualities have been evident in his pastoral work as lay leader and ordained minister. In his first church as curate he

gave new life to the youth service. It was as canon at Coventry Cathedral, whose building is an expression of renewal after the Second World War, that he became involved in the International Centre for Reconciliation. As Dean of Liverpool and Bishop of Durham, his skill in negotiation and his understanding of other points of view led to progress where none seemed possible.

The Church rejoices that he was called to serve in his middle thirties. It was a decade earlier that the death of their infant daughter brought him and Caroline closer to God. In his personal life he has known darkness and desolation and he knows the strength that prayer can bring. The group who recommended him to the Prime Minister and the Queen found the Archbishop we need.

He follows an Archbishop distinguished in intellect, radiant in spirit, honest and subtle in his response to social and moral questions. He joins the Archbishop of York, who shares his experience of conflict and of the world. Such outstanding leaders are a great gift to the Church.

An extract from the announcement of his appointment:
‘Looking forward, I am very conscious of my own weakness and the great need I will have for advice and wisdom, especially from those who are senior amongst the bishops who see deeply into the issues that are faced by the Church of England, and amongst the Primates who guide the Anglican Communion in its present struggles. There are some things of which I am deeply confident. Our task as part of God’s church is to worship Him in Christ and to overflow with the good news of His love for us, of the transformation that He alone can bring which enables human flourishing and joy. The tasks before us are worship and generous sharing of the good news of Christ in word and deed.’



This month's profile

Barbara Winder

I was born in 1945 Barbara Osbiston, in rural NE Derbyshire about 5 miles from Chesterfield on the edge of a pit village in a hamlet of 15 houses. Cows came past to be milked twice a day, and if you forgot to shut the yard gate they entered and ate clothes off the line. 'The cows are coming' was the cry and everyone rushed out to bar the gates. There were advantages in such a small community, doors were usually left unlocked and people cared for in trouble, but disadvantages too, everyone knew the gossip and there were limited playmates.

My mother and father had had another child some 12 years before me, but he had died at birth, and they were warned not to risk another. I was therefore a rather welcome surprise to parents in their 40s and much loved and indulged. The years after the war had limited toys and sweets were rationed, although I did have a useful aunt with a local shop! My father worked at the local Iron and Steel works as a Pattern Maker and my mother was a housewife. Money was limited but carefully spent so we had a holiday each summer but no car, like most of our neighbours. Though I had no siblings, I have numerous cousins, as both families were large.

My first vivid memory was of the severe winter of 1947, when I slid off a polished table, in search of fresh jam tarts hot from the oven, and broke my collar bone. The snow drifts were so high there was no transport, so mother carried me to the nearest town, and met father for a visit to the main hospital and a large plaster-soon to be written on.



Mother was a Methodist who had signed the pledge aged 11, and I was taken to Sunday school and later chapel regularly. I remember the attendance prizes we had with books to choose, and the social activities in the Methodist Hall; beetle drives, old time dancing and some silent films. My mother read Bible stories to me every night, taught me to pray for a long list of family members before sleep, and I eventually became a Sunday School teacher and was confirmed. She wasn't a narrow Christian; her friends included Catholics and Church of England followers and she encouraged an interest in missionary work overseas. I took part in the large annual Methodist Festival with certificates for singing, reciting poems and writing and other crafts. Like all chapels we had a special Anniversary service on our foundation every year which involved solos, and Whitsuntide witness walks with a brass band and sticky buns. At Christmas we took an old harmonium on a pram and walked around the village on Christmas Eve singing carols until midnight. Then we sang `Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning`.

I met my oldest friend Ann at the local infant school, and she also attended chapel. We both then went to the local primary (a longer walk-about 2 miles) and passed our eleven plus to the local grammar school. In the end we also went to the same university, Birmingham, though she read Languages, and I English and Psychology. At school I became leader of the Student Christian Movement and organised visits to local geriatric wards to sing hymns. I also continued to enjoy drama, including several Gilbert and Sullivan productions.

I trained to be a secondary teacher in London, where I met my first husband. I have taught in many places and many types of schools, including Birmingham, Manchester and Darwen and Blackburn. My first marriages ended leaving me with two young children, and I met and married Nigel and his older son, and moved to his home town of Bolton where I have now lived for over 30 years, including supporting the Wanderers. Now all three of the children have grown up and have lives of their own, taking Robert to California, Becky to Wiltshire, and Daniel to London, although all 3 were educated in

Deane.

Now retired, my last 20 plus years spent at Blackburn College as Senior Tutor for the Sixth Form, I still work as an A Level examiner for AQA, and a local magistrate. I have attended St Mary's for the past 20 years, including three rectors and help with readings and prayers as well as the magazine, home groups and cleaning. I have two PAT dogs that work in two local retirement homes, the hospital and (one) a Read2Me scheme working with reluctant readers at a local primary school. Despite some arthritis I still enjoy walking in the local countryside, and going on holidays around the world, whilst I can, and as my old friend Ann says, 'if the good Lord spares me' ..

Pets As Therapy!

Pets As Therapy is a national charity founded in 1983. It is unique in that it provides therapeutic visits to hospitals, hospices, nursing and care homes, special needs schools and a variety of other venues by volunteers with their own friendly, temperament tested and vaccinated dogs and cats.

Since its beginning over 22,000 PAT dogs have been registered into the Pets As Therapy scheme. Every year some of these retire and new dogs, having first been examined and passed on health, temperament, suitability and stability grounds, join Pets As Therapy.

Today there are around 4,500 active PAT visiting dogs and 108 PAT cats at work in the UK. Every week these calm friendly dogs and cats give more than 130,000 people, both young and old, the pleasure and chance to cuddle and talk to them. The bedsides that are visited each year number a staggering half million.



Timeline of Christianity

We may be guilty of taking our religious freedom for granted. However, it has been hard won. It is only in the last century and a half that all have been allowed to worship in the way we wish without at the least incurring penalties such as not being allowed to vote or to hold office, even to have our own church. There have been many acts of parliament in the losing and regaining of our religious liberty. Here are brief summaries of just two.

The Act of Uniformity 1662 was an Act of the Parliament of England. It prescribed the form of public prayers, administration of sacraments, and other rites of the Established Church of England, following all the rites and ceremonies and doctrines prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Adherence to this was required in order to hold any office in government or the church.

Great Ejection

An immediate result of this Act, over 2,000 clergymen refused to take the oath and were expelled from the Church of England in what became known as the Great Ejection of 1662. Although there had already been ministers outside the established church, this created the concept of non-conformity, with a substantial section of English society excluded from public affairs for a century and a half.

The Toleration Act of 1689

The Toleration Act of May 24, 1689 marked a significant milestone in the struggle for religious freedom in England. The act was a culmination of religious and political manoeuvring that began after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy via Charles II and ended with the Glorious Revolution and the ousting of James II by William of Orange. The act granted freedom of worship to Nonconformists of the Church of England i.e., Protestant dissenters like Quakers, Presbyterians, and Baptists. However, Catholics and Unitarians were excluded from this grant of religious freedom. The events leading up to the Glorious Revolution and the subsequent Toleration Act of 1689 had religion and religious beliefs at their core. (continued over)

Books 4U

Jane Austen by David Nokes

Are you a Jane Austen fan? Did you know that we have just passed (at the end of January) the 200th anniversary of the publication of the first edition of *Pride and Prejudice*? Or perhaps you are one of those who think Jane Austen was a boring, prim, maiden aunt, writing about a tiny segment of society with no reference to what went on in the 'real' world during her lifetime, the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, debates about slavery and the Napoleonic wars. Whatever your opinion of Jane Austen, you will find David Nokes' biography a fascinating read.

David Nokes aims for the truth about Jane. He begins from the viewpoint that many of Jane's biographers, several being members of the Austen family, have wanted Jane to be thought of as perfect in every way. He thinks some have 'air-brushed' many of her experiences so as to preserve a figure without fault and one untouched by anything unpleasant.

But David Nokes tells the reader that Jane could not help but be very aware of what was going on in the 'real' world. Her aunt Philadelphia had chosen to sail out to India to marry a man she had never met. Her cousin, Eliza, the issue of this marriage, was almost certainly the illegitimate daughter of Warren Hastings, the governor of India at the time. Eliza was a frequent visitor to Jane's home. She married a French count and lived a frivolous life in France bringing to Jane stories about seeing the beautiful French Queen at parties in Versailles before Eliza's husband was guillotined in the Revolution. A second aunt, on the other side of the family, was accused of grand larceny (stealing lace from a shop in Bath). When she was imprisoned the family discussed whether Jane or her sister, Cassandra, should go to live with her in the prison to help and support her. In the end this was not necessary, but to many the mere thought of Jane Austen contemplating life inside a 19th century prison will be unbe-

lievable.

David Nokes reveals other Austen family tragedies. Jane's older brother George was mentally handicapped. He was sent away from the family as a small child and never came home again. Indeed the family acted as if he had never existed. Two of her brothers joined the navy at the age of 12 and saw active service against the French. There were friends and sisters-in-law who died in child birth.

David Nokes is not afraid to describe the 18 year old Jane herself as a great flirt whose behaviour was considered verging on the scandalous. Indeed we can see that Jane was describing herself when she drew many of her characters. She was a tomboy like Catherine Morland, impetuous like Marianne Dashwood, witty like Elizabeth Bennet and like Anne Elliot, she shared the experience of a lost love, though for Jane there was to be no happy ending.

Jane Austen by David Nokes (ISBN 1-85702-419-2) seems to be out of print at the moment. But used copies are available from Amazon for as little as 1p plus postage. Review by Elizabeth Plant

(Religious freedom continued) To be sure, much of the impetus behind the Toleration Act came from a desire to avoid Catholic religious freedom while also uniting Protestants. Prior to the Glorious Revolution and the Act, Protestants were divided and there were legal penalties for not adhering to the strict tenants of the Church of England. Nonconformists were persecuted and Parliament could not agree on a way to keep the Church happy while also allowing religious freedom only to Protestant Dissenters (not Catholics). In 1689 passage of the freedom of worship law came with ease, and the less favoured sects of Protestantism gained an improvement in religious, legal, and social status. (More on persecution and emancipation of Catholics later)



A watercolour and pencil sketch of Austen, believed to have been drawn from life by her sister

Books 4U

Sense and Nonsense

by Malcolm Rothwell

(Authorhouse UK, ISBN 978-1-4567-7010-5)

Malcolm Rothwell is a Methodist minister with strong Bolton connections. *Sense and Nonsense* is a distillation of his experience and expresses wisdom and humour, understanding and knowledge of the Christian life with unusual clarity. It is presented as a dialogue between two aspects of the writer's personality, the serious and the humorously subversive. The humour is always challenging and prompts serious reflections on such issues as science and belief, interpretation of scripture in a secular age, communication between man and God, the importance of silence and listening and the future of a changing church.

Published in 2011, the book is up-to-date in reference to the world we live in. For example, Facebook is examined and its importance acknowledged though the superficial nature of the contact it encourages is stressed. The writer quotes a Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hahn, who lists the many means of contact we have which do not disguise the absence of community in much modern experience. In discussing social issues Mr Rothwell speaks as a minister of religion, one concerned with community and the present and future of the church. A poem by Hilaire Kirkland celebrating café church contrasts it with the formality and distance experienced by new attenders at traditional churches. In such alternative contexts community lives and grows and its growth is one of the many reasons why the writer paraphrases St Paul with confidence, "not even the future will separate us from the love of God."

From café church to Dietrich Bonhoeffer to the spiritual exer-

cises of St Ignatius, *Sense and Nonsense* is wide in its range. Each chapter ends with references, suggestions for meditation and points to reflect on. These last are presented in the open way which will prompt discussion in any group. In its approach to the modern world and its deep investment in inherited values, this is a thoughtful and absorbing book for any reader. The writer of the Preface properly describes it as "immensely pleasurable".

Charles Winder

With the beginning of Lent in mind...

God's love is not drawn out by our loveliness, but wells up, like an artesian spring, from the depths of his nature. Alexander MacLaren

It is the love of God that makes him the sworn enemy of sin. G Campbell Morgan

All a believer's present happiness, and all his future happiness springs from the eternal purposes of God. Thomas Brooks

There is nothing round the corner which is beyond God's view. J Charles Stern

We no more earn heaven by good works than babies earn their food and drink by crying and howling. Martin Luther

No amount of good deeds can make us good persons. We must be good before we can do good. Chester A Pennington

I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was, and I can say with the great apostle, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' John Newton, former slave trader

Grace in the soul is heaven in that soul. Matthew Henry

All acts strengthen habits. Thomas Brooks

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