

THIS AND THAT (253)

To believe in God is becoming unusual. To acknowledge belief in God by churchgoing downright kinky.

Kinky

Kinky! It comes from the Dutch for a short, twist, or curl in a rope that winds tightly back on itself. My hosepipe, much in use this summer, develops kinks all too readily. To be kinky is also to be eccentric, unconventional or peculiar.

Since the mid twentieth century it bears particular reference to unconventional sexual behaviour. This has been wittily contrasted with more acceptable eroticism thus: *Erotic is when you do something sensitive and imaginative with a feather. Kinky is when you use the whole chicken.*

The dull parsonic drone

To go to church is to step out and away from the ordinary and hum drum. From reality as framed by an electronic screen and defined by overpaid commentators, to enter instead peace perfect peace. To be beyond the reach of platitudinous tweets, and the incessant, insistent fatuities of whatsapp, facebook and instagram. It is to revel in the murmurous, mesmerising beatitude of corporate prayer saying and dry parsonic droning. To sing music, not merely listen to it. It's to hear an ancient story told, re-enacted and retold, that recalls timeless truths: the primacy of love, the beauty of forgiveness, the balm of compassion the joy of gratitude, and the love of God manifest in the intriguing life, death and resurrection of the radical Jesus of Nazareth.

If worship is boring then boredom's a blessing. I love going to church. There's time to think, time to relax, time to take stock, time to be. There's time for God. Memories, both happy and sad surface. A hymn last heard at a parent's or spouse's funeral evokes cathartic tears. The bonus of old architecture and a good organist gladdens the heart. Sermons challenge and stimulate or send the mind wandering peacefully in pastures green.

Believers reluctant to go to church know not what they miss. Deny themselves the chance to grow into the practice. It's an acquired taste that becomes a deep thirst. Churchgoing has little to do with piety. It's simply being with God and neighbour in a loving context. Beautiful.

Happy to be a burden

"I feel so useless" say elderly housebound people. "I hate being a burden to my loved ones."

The best response to such sentiments is not a flirtation with euthanasia. It is to realise that eliciting love in fellow human beings is more useful and beneficial to them than almost anything else we can give them. To be a loving carer of someone infirm, elderly or terminally ill is noble and lovely. To elicit that love, by being infirm, elderly or terminally ill, is to be supremely useful.

Such thoughts came to mind on reading the following short poem by W H Davies:

Beggar's Song

Good people keep their holy day,
They rest from labour on a Sunday;
But we keep holy every day,
And rest from Monday until Monday.

And yet the noblest work on earth
Is done when beggars do their part:
They work, dear ladies, on the soft
And tender feelings in your heart.

Beggars too, by encouraging us to generosity, can be more a source of grace than annoyance.

Wake up

On Monday we held our final adult Confirmation Class. They have been a great joy. Four thoughtful, voluble, entertaining and thoroughly fine young women (certainly young compared to me). Every session overran its hour. Never were they anything but stimulating. I looked forward to them. It has not always been so. I once had to give several catch-up classes to a lad who had missed some through illness. It was winter and the room was warm. During one session I woke up to hear him crying, "Wake up Father, wake up. You're asleep."

All Andrew Neaum's weekly articles are at: <http://www.andrewneaum.com/>

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TODAY: TRINITY EIGHT 22 JULY 2018

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30am Matins BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion & Children's Club

St John's Boldre: 6.30pm Choral Evensong

For Prayer This Week

Thanksgiving: For summer holidays and sunshine **Prayer:** Local gardeners, farmers and horticulturalists. The Prime Minister and cabinet in troubled times.

Prayer requests: Jean Broomfield, Janet, James, Sarah, Colin Erne, Uli Welker, David, Vanessa & Dominic.

Rest in Peace: Vi Brown, Maggie Parker.

Activities This Week

Tue 24 Jul - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. Seated exercise to music at St Nicholas' Pilley & refreshment

Wed 25 Jul - 10.30am Communion St Nicholas' Pilley + coffee

Wed 25 Jul - Bible Study Ph. 07786194282 for venue & time

Thu 26 Jul - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. As on Tuesdays

Sat 28 Jul - 6.00pm St John's "Evening Picnic & Serenade"

NEXT WEEK: TRINITY NINE 29 JULY 2018

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30am Family Communion

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion & Children's Club

Dates for the Diary 2018

Fri 3 Aug - 12.00pm St John's Funeral Margaret Parker

Fri 3 Aug - 2.00pm Hill House School Sports Day

Sat 11 Aug - 7.30pm St John's Faure and Mozart Concert

Fri 17 Aug - 12.00pm St John's: Wedding Blessing Tom & Wendy

Sat 18 Aug - 12.00pm St John's. Wedding - Richard & Annabel

Sat 18 Aug - 2.30pm St John's. Wedding - Ben and Maria

Sat 1 Sep - 2.00pm St John's. Wedding - James & Sarah

Sat 8 Sep - Ride & Stride - St John's & St Mary's 10 - 6pm

Sat 8 Sep - 1.00pm St John's - Wedding - James & Samantha

Sat 15 Sep - 1.00pm St John's - Wedding Victor & Phoebe

Sat 29 Sep - 7.00pm Boldre Memorial Hall - Harvest Supper

Sun 30 Sep - 10.30am St John's - Harvest Festival

Sun 7 Oct - 10.30am St John's - Pet Service

Sat 13 Oct - pm St John's - Pot Pourri

Sun 4 Nov - 10.30am St John's-All Saints/All Souls (HC)

Fri 9 Nov - 10.45 St Nicholas' Chapel - Act of Remembrance

SATURDAY 28 JUL 6.00pm ST JOHN'S

A SUNSET PICNIC & SERENADE

Bring a picnic and drink to enjoy in the lovely churchyard of St John's (if wet inside the church), on Sat 28 July from 6.00pm. At 7.30 there will be musical 'Serenade to Summer'. There will be a retiring collection

28 & 29 JUL 2.00-5.00pm 'THE WILLOWS' OPEN GARDEN

Beautiful garden open, next door to the Vicarage on Pilley Hill. Admission £3.50, children free. Cream Teas and cakes £3. Plant stall and cards for sale.

11 AUGUST 7.30pm ST JOHN'S A FINE CONCERT

The *Nova Foresta Classical Players* and the *St. Nicholas Singers* present *Divine Classics*: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik by Mozart and Faure's Requiem. 7.30pm, Sat 11th Aug in St. John's Church. Tickets £10 inclusive of refreshments from Max Hamilton, Pilley Community Shop and St John's on Sundays

POLISHING FAR MORE THAN MARBLES

Wanted: a brass polisher for St John's. Not at all onerous the task takes up about an hour twice a year. A volunteer is needed in September. Someone has dropped out due to illness. Contact Pim Farquhar (01590 673744)