

Special Edition May 2020

Vol 47 No 5

As we can't get our Rendezvous printed or use the usual distribution method in the current situation I have created this simpler edition. If you have an email address, please let me know by emailing me at andrew_plested@yahoo.co.uk. For those who do not have email, we will endeavour to get this simpler version printed and circulated.

Take care

Andrew

CALENDAR May 2020

Fri	1	Philip and James, Apostles
Sat	2	Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher
Sun	3	The Fourth Sunday of Easter
Mon	4	English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era
Fri	8	Julian of Norwich, Spiritual Writer
Sun	10	The Fifth Sunday of Easter
Thurs	14	Matthias the Apostle
Sun	17	The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Tues	19	Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, Restorer of Monastic Life
Wed	20	Alcuin of York, Deacon, Abbot of Tours
Thurs	21	Ascension Day
Sun	24	The Seventh Sunday of Easter
Mon	25	The Venerable Bede, Monk at Jarrow, Scholar, Historian
Tues	26	Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury
Sat	30	Josephine Butler, Social Reformer
Sun	31	Day of Pentecost
Mon	1 June	The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth
Fri	5	Boniface [Wynfrith] of Crediton, Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyr
Sun	7	Trinity Sunday

From the Parish Registers

Baptism	<i>We welcome into the Lord's family</i>
March	Eleanor Scarlett Furner Keira Natalie Mason Ava Marie Carruthers
Confirmed	Eleanor Scarlett Furner
March	Keira Natalie Mason Ava Marie Carruthers Amelie Donnelly Leighton Faye Antonia Webster Lukas Cook
Departed	<i>May they rest in peace and rise in glory</i>
March	Terence Tumber

Supporting our Church Financially

During this time when our usual supporters are not able to make cash donations or use the planned giving scheme, I would like to ask if donations could be made instead by bank transfer so that we can keep paying our bills! All donations would be gratefully received. Our bank details are:

Account Name: Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe
Sort Code: 52-41-42
Account Number: 08627290

The Peace of the Risen Christ

Here are some verses from John's Gospel (20:19-23):

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Notice that the first thing Jesus says to his gathered disciples is 'Peace be with you'. Peace – that quality of being that he had promised just three days earlier. 'Peace I leave with you', Jesus had told them, 'I give you *my* peace and *my* gift is nothing like the peace of this world'.

Do you have that kind of peace? Would you recognise it if you had? And would you know how to get it if you don't?

Mind you, there are different notions of what peace is. Listen to this poem by Wendell Berry:

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

This view of peace is all about you as an individual. If you don't have peace of mind because you're worried, then you can find it for a while by withdrawing from others and connecting with nature.

It's a very contemporary way of viewing the world, this idea of us as individuals finding the resources to make our own way forward, alone. But for most of history, 'peace' has usually meant a quality that is the opposite of conflict and war. Here's a poem by Denise Levertov:

Making Peace

A voice from the dark called out,
"The poets must give us
imagination of peace, to oust the intense, familiar
imagination of disaster. Peace, not only
the absence of war."
But peace, like a poem,
is not there ahead of itself,
can't be imagined before it is made,
can't be known except
in the words of its making,
grammar of justice,
syntax of mutual aid.
A feeling towards it,
dimly sensing a rhythm, is all we have
until we begin to utter its metaphors,
learning them as we speak.
A line of peace might appear
if we restructured the sentence our lives are making,
revoked its reaffirmation of profit and power,
questioned our needs, allowed
long pauses. . . .
A cadence of peace might balance its weight
on that different fulcrum; peace, a presence,
an energy field more intense than war,
might pulse then,
stanza by stanza into the world,
each act of living
one of its words, each word
a vibration of light—facets
of the forming crystal.

But Jesus offers something that is different either from a calm mind or the construction of mutual living. It's not that Jesus' peace is not these things; it is. But it's more than they are; it

encompasses them and completes them because he goes to very roots of who we are in relation to God, ourselves and one another.

Jesus' everyday language was Aramaic. And the Aramaic for 'peace' is 'shalama', the exact equivalent of the Arabic 'salaam', or the Hebrew 'shalom'. The Aramaic language reflects a different way of seeing the world than that reflected by English. Western languages tend to emphasise the distinction between things whereas Semitic languages tend to emphasise the connection between things.

For example, the Gospels sometimes have Jesus saying 'The Kingdom of God is *within* you' and sometimes 'The Kingdom of God is *among* you'. In Aramaic 'within' and 'among' are the same word. It would have been inconceivable to Jesus that something that is within me and within you is not also shared and made manifest between us.

So with peace. If *shalama* is to be within me and within you then it must also be between us and between us and God.

And so when Jesus stands among the disciples for the first time he emphasises the connections among them. He brings peace from God to them all.

And, actually, he doesn't say 'Peace be with you', as if he's somewhat hopeful that it might be. In the original languages he says an emphatic, 'Peace to you'. It's an impartation. He pronounces peace between God and them, between them and each other and between them and themselves.

But it's what he does next that gives us both hope and an immense challenge.

He sends them in the power of the Spirit to forgive sins. Verse 23 of our Gospel reading: 'if you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any they are retained'.

Now, this verse is usually interpreted and debated as being about the Apostolic and priestly power to give or hold back absolution.

But do you really think that if you come with genuine contrition to God that any priest anywhere is going to stop him from forgiving you?

Or that, if you convince a priest to pronounce absolution but in your secret heart are not sorry, that you will get away with it with God?

Of course not!

No, this verse applies to all disciples of Christ, as the other verses in this passage do and it does not invest us with special power over others' sins. Rather it describes the truth about how we can all affect the peace which Jesus plans should flow between us; either to let it flow or to block it.

'Sin' is an interesting word in Aramaic. It is not about the state of an individual soul. Rather, 'khtahayn' has the sense of tangled threads, frustrated hopes, failures and mistakes. It implies that mending and restoration is needed.

It is about the mistakes that tie ourselves and one another in knots and which block the flow of peace within and between us and which must begin to be untangled before peace can flow once more.

And forgiveness is the key. Peace is not achieved by everyone being sinless, never making mistakes, never hurting each other, never being hurt. Peace is achieved by untangling the

knots through forgiveness. If you forgive the sins of others, Jesus says, then they will be released between you and there will flow peace.

If you do not forgive the sins of others then they will be retained between you and the flow of peace to you, from you and between you will be blocked.

It really is that simple, and it really is that hard.

Real peace then, Jesus' peace, is achieved by constantly keeping the connections and relationships between ourselves, God and others clear and whole. And that can only be done as we learn to give and receive forgiveness.

We can't have real peace within relationships, families, communities or nations without forgiveness.

And there can't be peace within churches, congregations and individual disciples without forgiveness either.

It's not easy. Sometimes the tangle of hurt between us and others is so... profound; intense; complicated... that it's very difficult to achieve. It takes careful truth-telling. And the willingness to hear uncomfortable truths about yourself.

And sometimes you, or the other, cannot bear or is not willing to bear the pain it sometimes takes to unblock the flow of peace between you. It takes two to untangle.

And so we always begin with the relationship that only depends on **our** commitment to receive the flow of peace. Our relationship with God. For the risen Christ stands before us today, as he did before the first disciples, and he says to us:

'Peace to you. Receive the Holy Spirit.' For he is always willing to untangle the relationship between us and him. And, having received his forgiveness; his peace, we now have the resources to work on our relationship with others: with partners, family, friends, enemies, communities, organisations, our nation, our world.

Truth-telling and the willingness to hear uncomfortable truths. The peace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are removed; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

Peace to you, this day.

Revd Dr John Walker

Sunday Eucharist Gospels – May 2020

Sunday 3 May – Fourth Sunday of Easter. John 10.1-10

I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.

The best Christian witness is now – as it has always been – the evidence of lives patient in adversity and thankfully joyful in prosperity. Those who are close to Jesus show that life in him is different and continually blessed.

Sunday 10 May – Fifth Sunday of Easter. John 14.1-14

'Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?'

The deep heart of the Christian Faith is not in a book, though we reverence and seek to obey the words of the Bible. It is not in formulas of belief, though we value the wisdom of the creeds. It is in a person, the Son of God who has opened the way between the human and divine.

Sunday 17 May – Sixth Sunday of Easter, John 14.15-21

Because I live, you also will live.

People have always sought for the meaning of life and an answer to the problem of suffering. The message of Christianity is that the Resurrection of Christ made new life and final confidence open to all who receive it.

Sunday 24 May – Sunday after Ascension Day. John 17. 1-11

All mine are yours and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

No one can be a Christian in isolation. We need the support of shared worship and the knowledge of fellowship with those many, known or unknown to us, who are seeking to do his will and perhaps are suffering for his sake.

Sunday 31 May – Day of Pentecost. Whit Sunday. John 20. 19-23

He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’.

Whatever power for good we may have comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit in us. All God's people can share in this great gift.

RED LETTER FESTIVALS – May 2020

Thursday 21 May - Ascension Day, Luke 24. 44-end.

They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

The work of Christ on earth, incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is ended. Now it is for those who believe in him, from the Apostles to the end of time, to continue that work in his name. Exalted to heaven, he gives the strength that we do not have in ourselves.



Friday 1 May - St Philip and St James, Apostles; John 14.1-14.

This day is also the anniversary of the death of Canon Matthew Woodward in 1898, whose faith, inspiration and determination made our church one of the jewels of Kent with its unrivalled stained glass and unique murals.

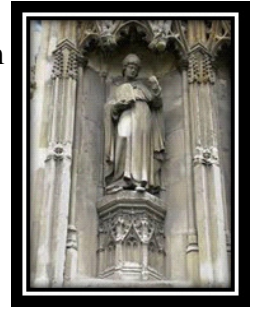
Thursday 14 May – Matthias the Apostle. John 15. 9-11

Matthias was chosen by lot from among the disciples to take the place of Judas Iscariot, bringing the number of Apostles back to twelve – mirroring the twelve tribes of Israel.

Commemoration

26 May - Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury

Probably of aristocratic birth, Augustine was prior of the Benedictine monastery of St. Andrew, Rome, when Pope Gregory the Great chose him to lead an unprecedented mission of about 40 monks to England, which was then largely pagan. They left in June 596, but, arriving in southern Gaul, they were warned of the perils awaiting them and sent Augustine back to Rome. There Gregory encouraged him with letters of commendation (dated July 23, 596), and he set out once more.



The entourage landed in the spring of 597 on the Isle of Thanet and was well received by King Ethelbert of Kent, who gave the missionaries a dwelling place in Canterbury and the old St. Martin's Church, where he allowed them to preach. With Ethelbert's support, their work led to many conversions, including that of the King. In the following autumn Augustine travelled back to France where he was consecrated bishop of the English by St. Virgilius at Arles.

Thousands of Ethelbert's subjects were reportedly baptized by Augustine on Christmas Day 597, and he subsequently dispatched two of his monks to Rome with a report of this extraordinary event and a request for further help and advice. They returned in 601 with the *pallium* - the symbol of metropolitan jurisdiction - from Gregory for Augustine and with more missionaries, including the celebrated saints Mellitus, Justus, and Paulinus. Gregory, with whom Augustine corresponded throughout his apostolate, directed him to purify pagan temples for Christian worship and to consecrate 12 suffragan bishops thus giving Augustine authority over the bishops in Britain.

Augustine founded Christ Church, Canterbury, as his cathedral and the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul (known after his death as St Augustine's) where the early archbishops were buried and which came to rank as the second Benedictine house in all Europe. Canterbury was thus established as the primatial see of England, a position it has maintained to this day.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose servant Augustine was sent as the apostle
of the English people:
grant that as he laboured in the Spirit
to preach Christ's gospel in this land
so all who hear the good news
may strive to make your truth known in all the world;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

OT Isaiah 49. 22-25 NT 1 Thessalonians 2.2-8 Gospel Matthew 13. 31-33

What do you think?

I sometimes wonder what impression the church gives to the world at large. The newspaper headlines and radio and news bulletins rarely feature any good news about the church. Mostly the reports are concern aggressive fundamentalists criticising scientists in general and evolutionists in particular; clergy who have fallen from the high standards the press expect of everyone in public life – apart from themselves of course! – and anything that seems to contradict the freedom of individuals to choose a lifestyle in which any thought of responsibility for others appears to be absent.

Some who would call themselves Christians do, in my view, present a distorted view of what Christ preached and taught. As a child and teenager, in the parish where I grew up, our understanding of the Gospel was illuminated by the sermons and Confirmation classes led by a remarkable team of priests.

We learned that:

- a Christian did not judge others – no one is perfect;
- a Christian lived his or her life by Christ's commands – love God and love your neighbour;
- a Christian need wear no badge – how life was lived and others treated was the best witness;
- God was not a 'superman' living in heaven but the source of love and life beyond the bounds of human comprehension;
- prayer was a means of contemplating God, Christ and oneself – praying for good things to happen was not on the agenda! – 'God's will be done' was the petition.

This was pretty 'hot stuff' for the 1960s as I discovered when I went on to university!

I do feel wary – and not a little intimidated – by people who seem to need to proclaim their faith loudly and aggressively. My heart sinks if I am approached by someone of that character. In my youth, you did not have to be a genius to know that one of the great priests in my parish was gay. His life was lived in service to God in imitation of Christ. He went about his life and ministry, striving to be the person he realised God had created him to be. He was accepted for who he was and loved by us all. Imagine my horror and distress when a member of the Christian Union at my college told me that all homosexuals would burn in hell because the Bible says so. I found that very hard to reconcile with my own experience. Sadly I learned to distrust and eventually avoid such avowedly aggressive Christians. I cannot doubt their sincerity but my understanding of Christianity drives me to distrust it.

None of us is perfect. Our understanding of the incredible mystery that is God is faltering and grows erratically as and when we find the time to sit read and contemplate and talk openly and honestly. That there is a God, I have no doubt; that Christ is the closest anyone has ever come to experiencing God here on earth, I have no doubt. That there is only one way to interpret the Bible and Christ's life of love and sacrifice, I find hard to accept.

In Luke 18:9-14, we read the parable of the self-righteous Pharisee and the humble Publican.

The Pharisee thinks of everyone except himself as the sinners; the publican thinks of himself alone as the sinner standing before God, spending no time comparing himself to others, asking only for God's mercy. I always felt drawn towards the Publican – his words and attitude reflected much of what I had been taught and how I see myself.

We are all different. Our understanding and faith are shaped by a multitude of influences – from our genes, our upbringing to our education and experience of life. God created each of us to be someone special – unique even – and we should not be afraid to discover what this individuality is and live honestly by it.

Malcolm Adie

Meet the Bell Ringers

There are many people who give generously of their time to ensure the smooth running of the church; most of these people are unpaid. This is the seventh of a series of articles to meet some of these unsung heroes and this month we meet the bell ringers – people who are heard but not often seen.

David Robinson – Tower Captain

I have held the post of Tower Captain since April 2018 but have been a bell ringer since 1965. I started to learn when my family move to Wye from Essex shortly before my 11th birthday and went on my first bell ringing outing on my 11th birthday. Since then I have been a member of the band at Saltwood, Canterbury Cathedral and now Folkestone.

Bell ringing is a fascinating hobby and plays an important part in calling the congregation to Sunday worship. The bell ringing band is like a family and in some cases whole families are ringers. This is the case here as my wife and 3 daughters also ring. As bell ringers we usually find that we are always welcome to join in at other towers either on practice nights and or Sundays. This adds an extra dimension to holidaying in the UK and some other foreign countries. Notably Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. Bell ringers come from all walks of life and can range in age from about 10 or 11 up to, well there isn't really an upper age limit. It all depends on general health and fitness. If you would like to find out more about church bell ringing, please contact me on 07955 599498.



The Band 11 November 2018

Michael Godfrey

It all began in 1908. A friend of my father's who was a bell ringer at St Mary's Dover persuaded him to have a go. Forty five years later and aged 10 it was my turn, my father suggested to me that I start to learn too and so I did. From the mid 1970's I also rang at St Mary and Eanswythe's. After ringing here on a Sunday I would dash over to Dover and ring there. That arrangement came to an end when both churches changed their Service times so they overlapped and I stayed with St Mary and St Eanswythe's.

Once a learner has grasped the mechanics of pulling a rope and catching it again, he/she will progress to ringing sequentially with other ringers and later to varying the order of the bells blow by blow. The next stage is ringing to fixed patterns or methods and there are lots of these to hold one's interest.

While bell ringers have an allegiance to one main tower, they are happy to ring anywhere as the need arises. With a general shortage of ringers we are called upon to ring for weddings and other events anywhere in the area.

In 1990 we had about 14 ringers at St Mary and St Eanswythe's and now we're down to just five on a Sunday, two of whom are homing in on their 80th birthdays. The picture is the similar throughout the ringing world and many churches are silent. It's a dying art, which is sad.

Sue Atkinson

I have been involved in bell ringing most of my life. My parents met through bell ringing and I can remember being in the ringing room from a very young age. In turn, I met my husband through bell ringing when I was a student at Wye College and our three daughters are all ringers. I was probably about 8 years old when I first learnt to ring in Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire. I was very small, and I had to stand on a wobbly chair balanced on two large boxes. There obviously wasn't much health and safety in those days. I have been ringing at Folkestone since 1991.

I enjoy bell ringing as it is a sociable hobby as well as providing physical (not that you need great strength) and mental exercise. I am a member of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers and we meet once a month at different towers and we also go on outings to different areas (both these activities often involve a pub lunch or a bell ringers' tea!). We welcome visitors from anywhere



The regular Sunday Band

and in turn, we frequently ring at other towers when we are on holiday.

I have three particularly memorable ringing events. I was the youngest person (at the time) to ring the Trafalgar Day Date touch of 1806 changes in Burton upon Trent when I was 14 years old. At about the same age, I rang a quarter peal for the funeral of a local dignitary, for which the bell ringers were rewarded with a crate of beer. As I left the church clutching my share of bottles, I received a very odd look from two police officers who were walking through the churchyard. Thirdly, I rang at three different churches on 11th November 2018 to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day starting with the 11 am service at Winshill (where I grew up and my Dad used to be tower captain), then when I changed trains at Tamworth I was able to join the band there to ring for the Ringing Remembers celebrations at 12:30 pm before arriving home just in time to ring at Folkestone for Battle's Over at 7:05 pm.

Marina Robinson

I learnt to bellring at Folkestone in 2010 when I was 12. I regularly ring for the Sunday morning service, and weddings and special occasions. I enjoy bell ringing because it is sociable, and we are often welcomed at other towers when on holiday. The Folkestone bell ringers also have an annual Christmas dinner which is enjoyed by all the ringers and their families.

Mick Fuller

Whilst out for a walk with my wife along the Leas in 1986 we heard the bells of St Mary and St Eanswythe's church ringing.

So we went up the tower to see how it was done. I was asked to try it and that led to me ringing for the next two years, then for some reason I stopped.

Then in October 2012 I returned to ringing and I am still there.

Bonnie the Dog

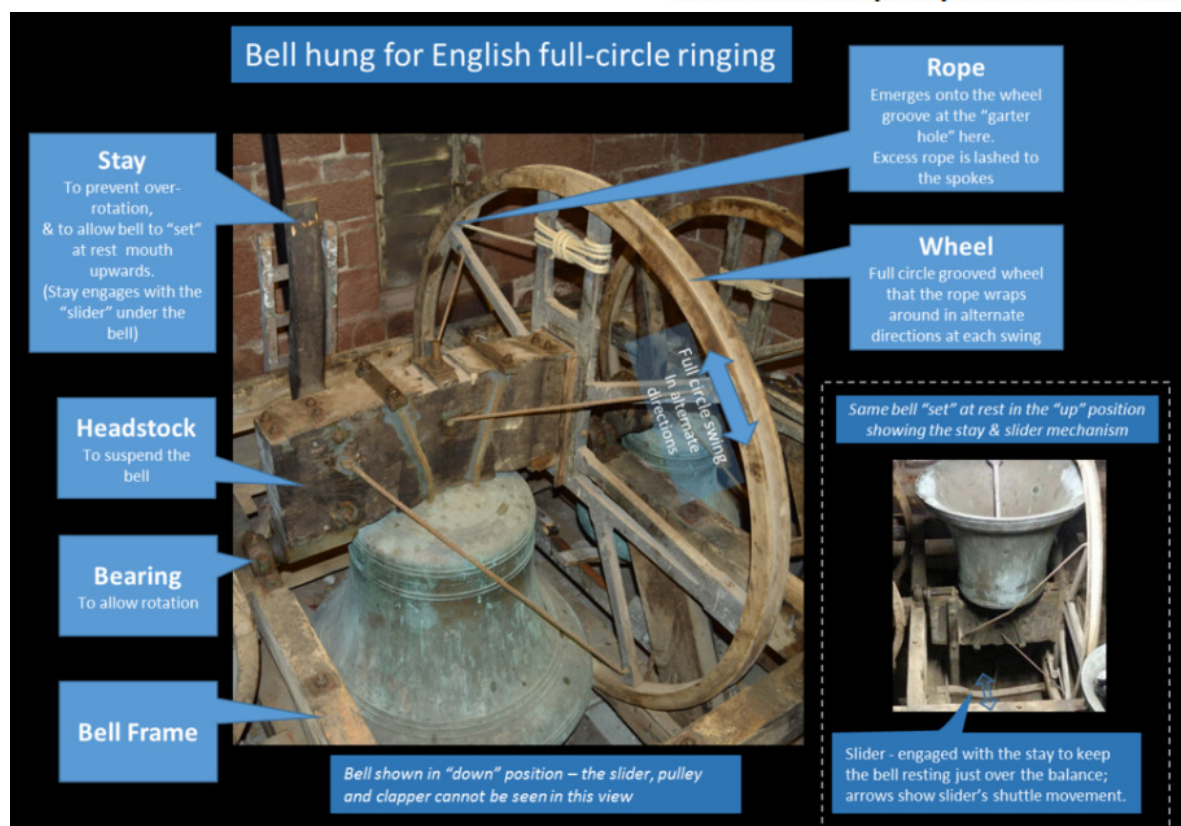
I have been a regular visit to the tower since I was 12 weeks old. I enjoy meeting all the regular ringers and visitors. I can recognise rounds as this means that ringing will stop soon, and everyone makes a fuss of me.

When do we ring?

We practice Tuesday evenings, ring for Sunday service, weddings and other special occasions. Most recently for the Armistice centenary celebration.



Dedication plaque on the Leas



....and what makes all the noise. The left picture shows inside the top level of the Tower. There are eight bells in our Tower all arranged on the wooden bell frame.

The right picture shows the bells ready for ringing with their mouths uppermost. A pull on the bell rope pulls the bell over centre and it swings once to rest again mouth uppermost.



BOOKWORM: BOOKS TO READ DURING LOCKDOWN

Despite having a 'to be read' pile of some 200-300 books (yes, honestly) I feel that that these strange and unsettling times call for comfort reading more than anything else. Here is a small selection of the books by Nevil Shute that I've been rereading. He's a great author and I find it sad that he's not read very much these days.

The Far Country – Nevil Shute (1952)

That was just what I needed. A feel-good story with an element of gentle romance and a happy ending.

Mostly set in Australia in 1950, it's about an English girl who goes out there on holiday and meets a nice Czech doctor who is working as a lumberjack because his qualifications aren't valid in the new country. Following a serious accident with a bulldozer, and in the absence of any official medical help, they both find themselves performing illegal operations in an effort to save two lives. Romance blossoms.

It's beautifully old fashioned and has always been one of my favourite Nevil Shute books.

A Town Like Alice – Nevil Shute (1950)

This is probably Nevil Shute's best known work, and even though I've read it several times before, it is a very good book indeed.

It starts off in post-war London and then moves back to Malaya during WW2 where Jean is a prisoner of war leading a group of women who are being forced to walk hundreds of miles to a non-existent POW camp. During this time she meets Joe, an Australian POW, who helps her group but is then seemingly killed by the Japanese soldiers. After the war, in the late 1940s, Jean returns to Malaya where she discovers that Joe is still alive, living back on a cattle station in Queensland. So she goes to find him.

It's an exciting story about survival and determination, with an underlying romance. Very readable, and at times unputdownable.

Requiem for a Wren – Nevil Shute (1955)

Another excellent read from Nevil Shute, though it's a tragic story.

It starts in 1954 with the suicide of a young English parlour maid at an Australian sheep farm, then leaps back a decade to Portsmouth in the run up to the D-Day landings and a heartbreaking love affair between a Wren and a Marine. As the tale works forward to 1954 again, the reader has a constant sense of doom, because we've already had the unhappy ending at the start.

Don't for a moment think that this is a soppy romantic tale. It's not. It is a very moving book about grief and atonement, love and loss.

Catriona Hunter

For the present, we have to keep the church shut until the Government and Archbishop allow us to open again.

However, that doesn't mean nothing is happening!

For those of you with a computer or smartphone Fr John has been providing the following:

- Daily Reflection - if you aren't getting this, email **rev.dr.john.walker@gmail.com** to be put on the mailing list
- Recorded Services on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/pg/sainteanswythe/videos/> you will get a facebook sign in panel but just click *not now* at the bottom of the panel.

See also the church website **<https://stmaryandsteanswythe.org/>**