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### **BOLDRE STILL AND BOLDRE (October 2020)**



#### *All Saints Hursley (see 368 below)*

*The Reverend Canon Andrew Neaum became the “House for Duty” Anglican priest of the lovely Boldre Benefice in August 2013. The Vicarage in which he and Diana live is on the edge of the New Forest, a couple of miles north of Lymington in Hampshire. He is old fashioned enough a priest to visit his flock in their homes, but “house for duty” clergy are supposed to work only two days a week and Sundays, which means visiting everyone in the parish takes a long time. The following are the **October 2020** weekly ruminations, aired prejudices and footling observations that in the weekly pew sheet augment his visits and help keep folk in touch week in and week out. Earlier articles are available from the Article Page on this Website:*

<http://www.andrewneaum.com/articles.htm>

## (371) “This and That” - 25 October 2020

To receive a whopping inheritance isn't necessarily morally ruinous. Needn't turn you into a privileged prat, bloated brat or hedonistic horror.

### **The sharp sweet flowers of Michaelmas**

I should know. I inherited a fortune from both my parents, too much ever to squander. It remains with me to this day, not ruining but enhancing and delighting my life.

Perhaps more from my mother than father, I inherited an oblique, more than literal way of looking at things. That is, through the lens and after the manner of poets. It is a gift of gifts. It allows the world to remain enchanted, leaves room for God, eternal beauty and absolute truths.

This good fortune came to mind last week as Diana and I read yet another fine poem by Charles Causley.

Called *Zelah*, (a village in Cornwall) it recounts a local legend about a great stone dropped into a churchyard by a flying demon. The poet describes the demon tumbling into the sea, shot by an arrow from a “silver bowman” on the beach. The bowman is possibly Cornwall's patron Saint, St Michael the archangel. The poet ends by saying:

*I saw no demon in the sky  
With other than a secret eye,  
And not an angel on the land  
Had any but a human hand.*

*Angel and stone and demon-claw,  
These I did see, though never saw.  
All these I saw but did not see  
As I went down by Zelah Tree  
And found beside the fading grass  
The sharp, sweet flowers of Michaelmas.*

It thrilled us. Thrilled us. Left us saying “Yes, yes! That's how it is. That's how it is!” Wonder all around us, seen but not seen, not seen but seen.

### **Black crow days**

Another valuable part of my huge inheritance is a head full of evocative hymnody.

Margaret, my first wife revisits me from beyond time and space whenever I hear “The day thou gavest Lord is ended....”, so reminiscent of our happy days on St Helena. My mother comes to mind when I hear her favourite “The duteous day now closeth,” sung to the tune “Innsbruck”.

My father is recalled by Cardinal Newman's “Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom”. A good hymn for these black corvidian days. Queen Victoria asked for it to be read to her when she lay dying. It was sung at the final service aboard the Titanic on the afternoon before the disaster.

### **Amid the encircling gloom**

As a young Anglican, Newman, travelling in the Mediterranean, was struck down by a fever that nearly killed him. “My servant thought I was dying and begged for my last directions,” he recalls in his autobiography. “I gave them as he wished, but said, ‘I shall not die, for I have not sinned against light.’” He recovered, but felt desperately homesick. On the way back to England his boat from Palermo to Marseilles was becalmed in the Straits of Bonifacio. Stranded, exhausted and emotional, he wrote this verse as a meditative poem called “The Pillar of the Cloud”. It's expressive of his longing for consoling Christian certainties in an age of mounting doubt. When questioned as to the nature of the “kindly light” and the identity of the lost “angel faces” in the last line, Newman replied, “I am not bound to remember my own meaning.”

*Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead thou me on;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home;  
Lead thou me on;  
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see  
The distant scene: one step enough for me.*

*So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on,  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone,  
And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost a while.*

### **(370) “This and That” - 18 October 2020**

Serious monarchists avoid all royal tittle tattle. A truth made more felicitously by the Victorian journalist, business man and essayist Walter Bagehot:

*Above all things our royalty is to be revered, and if you begin to poke about it you cannot reverence it. ...Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic.*

In my sermon on Sunday I mistakenly married off Prince William to Meghan Markle. A serious monarchist then! Honourable ignorance.

#### **Posthumous adultery**

It is reprehensible to marry someone to his brother's wife though. Our patron saint, John the Baptist, criticized Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. It cost him his head.

The closest I ever came to uniting a woman to someone else's husband happened in an Australian cemetery. Having officiated at a decorous and moving funeral in the parish church, we travelled ten miles out of town to the local cemetery. There the coffin was carried from the hearse to a reopened double grave. Before we quite got there the daughter of the deceased expostulated: "It's not the right grave, that's not my father's grave."

She was right. The gravediggers had opened the wrong one. We had to make our way to the correct but unopened grave for a little pre-burial interment ceremony. What would John the Baptist have made of a priest aiding and abetting posthumous adultery?

#### **Roaming wild in the mind**

When visiting art galleries one's fellow visitors are as interesting to contemplate as the art. Like worshippers in a cathedral they are reverential, pious, wonderstruck and entranced. They converse, if at all, in hushed, awed whispers. Contemplation of a painting is prayer. Art, for many folk, has replaced God and invokes similar postures and poses.

The pictures are more rewarding to empathise with than their worshippers though. Paintings, like animals in a zoo, don't belong *en masse* in galleries. Up until recently they belonged in and enjoyed the close familiarity of a home, be it a cottage, mansion or palace. Galleries overwhelm us. Can only to be borne in fleeting visits.

Little wonder then that this poem by Nicholas Salaman delighted me when I encountered it in the pages of the Spectator many years ago:

#### **The Gallery**

The pictures look at the people  
Like animals in the zoo,  
the landscapes growl and thump the bars,  
the gouache goes twitawhoo.

The still-life slides along the wall  
In search of devourable faunas,  
The portraits gibber and show their parts  
And play with each other in corners.

The people throw them critical buns,  
And sometimes they want them for pets,  
For an etching is jolly to have round the house  
And a mezzotint never forgets.

But the pictures remember the forests  
and the waters' imponderable roar,  
And some grimace back at the people,  
and some keep watching the door.

And at night when the full moon is blowing  
The moon-silver dust on the blind,  
They howl for the madness and freedom  
They had roaming wild in the mind.

#### **Steak, kidney and cauliflower cheese**

I've had enough of my study desk where I sit to write this article, as is my custom on most Mondays. As darkness gathers and cold begins to creep indoors it is time to go and cook dinner. A steak and kidney pasty for each of us, made ages ago and frozen. They are a favourite, especially when accompanied by an exceedingly cheesy cauliflower cheese. Cheers.

### **(369) "This and That" - 11 October 2020**

Slang words tend to have short lives and are usually coined, taken up and then dropped by the young. This is a good reason for elderly people to avoid them. By the time we've noticed them sufficient to begin using them, they are already passé. Trying to be with it we're actually without it.

#### **Quoz**

Consider the word "quoz". Its only use these days is to win games of scrabble. When placed on a corner triple word score it earns 96 points. The word "quiz" does too, but to add the eight "O's" available in a game to the nine "I's" doubles the chance of obtaining that 96 score.

I came across "quoz", for the first time, last week reading an 1852 book: *Memoirs Of Extraordinary Popular Delusions And the Madness of Crowds*, by Charles Mackay. It's available to be read on line, or uploaded free onto a Kindle, thanks to the Gutenberg Project. An excellent read.

#### **Resounding in every alehouse**

In a section entitled "Popular Follies of Great Cities" Mackay considers a collection of what he calls cant words and phrases. "Quoz" is one of them:

*When a mischievous urchin wished to annoy a passenger, and create mirth for his comrades, he looked him in the face, and cried out Quoz! and the exclamation never failed in its object. When a disputant was desirous of throwing a doubt upon the veracity of his opponent, and getting summarily rid of an argument which he could not overturn, he uttered the word Quoz, with a contemptuous curl of his lip, and an impatient shrug of his shoulders. The universal monosyllable conveyed all his meaning, and not only told his opponent that he lied, but that he erred egregiously if he thought that any one was such a nincompoop as to believe him. Every alehouse resounded with Quoz; every street-corner was noisy with it, and every wall for miles around was chalked with it. But, like all other earthly things, Quoz had its season, and passed away as suddenly as it arose, never again to be the pet and the idol of the populace.....*

### **Twaddle tippy poz**

In 1789 there appeared a song called “Quoz” written and sung by Mr Edwin at the Theatre-Royal, Haymarket. The first of nine verses goes:

*Hey for such buckish words, for phrases we've a passion  
Immensely great, and little ones, were all the fashion;  
Hum'd, and then humbug'd, Twaddle tippy poz;  
All have had their day, but now must yield to Quoz.*

An unlikely etymology of the word appeared in The Bury and Norwich Post of 23 September 1789: *Shortly after the destruction of the Bastille, the most valorous men of France fled from their country, like so many lions, from the crowing of one solitary cock. Arriving in the Downs, on board some of the Dieppe fishing boats, they made signals for the Dover pilots to come off. When these people (who are justly stiled sharks) came on board the French vessels, they saw, by appearances, that the passengers were none of the common sort of men, they asked very exorbitant prices for bringing them and their baggage on shore; upon which the Frenchmen shrugged their shoulders, and fore and aft sent the general cry of “Quoi, quoi, quoi,” (in English, “What, what, what.”) The pilots immediately cried out, “Damn your Quoz, Quoz, Quoz, speak that we may understand you, and don't bore us with your Parley vous and Quoz.”*

### **Chuck, chuck queeee**

It is a thrill to hear a new bird call in the garden. We have recently acquired a phone app that identifies bird calls, usually, though not always, accurately.

Diana was gardening some weeks ago when she heard what she took to be a harsh but interesting new bird call. After a while she traced it to its source. It turned out to not to be a bird but a squirrel, the animal's whole body taut and vibrating: “chuck, chuck, chuck queeee, chuck, chuck, chuck queeee....” over and over again, all the while jerkily flicking its tail. We have since learned that urban squirrels have learned to express their alarm more by sight than sound. In noisy cities tail flicking predominates, whereas in the quietude of the country both sound and sight are called upon to warn off predators, and friends to take cover.

## **(368) “This and That” - 4 October 2020**

Few, surely, admire Henry VIII. A nasty piece of work. In the bad old days he provided for Roman Catholics the ultimate insult with which to assault Anglicans.

### **Not for prudes**

The insult is encapsulated in an old Irish quatrain, translated from the Gaelic by Brendan Behan. Prudes might well wish it had been left in Gaelic, it goes:

*Don't speak of the alien minister,  
Nor of his church without meaning or faith,  
For the foundation-stone of his temple  
Is the bollocks of Henry the Eighth.*

How do you answer that? Historically speaking it's nonsense. The Church of England was not founded by Henry VIII. He was just one of many, both good and bad, who helped clean up and free the historic church of abuses and accretions acquired through the centuries. Its ties with Rome were severed not Jerusalem, with the Vatican not Golgotha Hill and Pentecost. But insults distilled into rhyming quatrains are impervious to truth. They stick in the mind. I've remembered and laughed at that verse for years.

### **Despoiling iconoclasm**

I find myself deploring Henry VIII whenever I roam the ruins of despoiled abbeys and monasteries. Likewise Oliver Cromwell when I visit ancient cathedrals and churches with faceless statues, empty niches and Victorian instead of medieval stained glass. So much beauty wantonly and mindlessly torn down. It breaks the heart.

A surprising discovery in All Saints Hursley (between Romsey and Winchester) was a large and appropriately, ugly monument to Richard Cromwell. He was Oliver's son and successor as *Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland* for just 264 days. That there should be a monument to an arch Puritan and his family in a lovely church, rebuilt, decorated and furnished by Keble, the originator and doyen of Anglo-Catholicism, is ironic.

We were delighted to be told by the lady who showed us round, that Keble had refused to have it in his refurbished church. It was kept in storage and only returned to the church on Keble's death. Mercifully, not to its original and prominent place in the chancel, but to the back of the church, under the tower.

The Cromwell family come from Cambridgeshire not Hampshire, but in 1649 Richard married Dorothy Maijor, daughter of Richard Maijor of Hursely Lodge and Park. Whereupon he and his wife moved to the family estate at Hursley in Hampshire. There during the 1650s they had nine children, five of whom survived to adulthood.

### **Tumbledown Dick**

Richard Cromwell seems to have been a bit of a dud. He didn't last long as Lord Protector. After his forced resignation he survived in the Palace of Whitehall for a short while and was then ordered to return to Hursley. Royalists rejoiced at his fall, nicknaming him "Tumbledown Dick" and "Queen Dick".

A new puritan regime had promised to pay his considerable debts, but didn't, nor his pension. When Charles II was welcomed back to the throne Richard opted for exile in Europe, probably more to avoid his creditors than from fear of the Stuart regime. While abroad, he assumed a variety of pseudonyms, including John Clarke.

### **A coxcomb and poltroon**

When travelling around Europe, the story goes, he was invited as a visiting Englishman, to dine with the Prince of Conti, who was unaware of who he was. At dinner, the prince questioned him about affairs in England and observed, "Well, that Oliver, though a traitor and a villain, was a brave man, had great parts, great courage, and was worthy to command; but that Richard, that coxcomb and poltroon, was surely the basest fellow alive; what is become of that fool?" Cromwell replied, "He was betrayed by those he most trusted, and who had been most obliged by his father". He left discreetly the following morning.

He returned to England only after 20 years. His wife was dead by then, and he spent the rest of his long life unobtrusively in a succession of lodgings, dying in 1712 at the age of 85 at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire.

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