

Be my Valentine.

It's not just football teams who are promoted and demoted as the years roll on – it even happens to the saints. When the RC Church reworked its calendar about 40 years ago, a number of popular but slightly suspect saints were downgraded to a sort of 'well, you can celebrate them if you really must' status. George was one victim of the purge, Valentine another.

On the face of it, Valentine is decidedly dubious. Not only do we know nothing reliable about him (that's not particularly unusual, mind), there's a suspicious overlap between his feast day, February 14th, and what is thought to have been a rather, should we say, 'uproarious' pagan festival on the same date. So what's going on here?

It looks as though Valentine's Day is yet another move by the Church to 'baptise' a pagan festival – that is, to build on celebrations already going on and give them a new twist. We did it with Christmas, the old midwinter festival; with Midsummer (St John the Baptist's Day) and with the Celtic festival of the dead, Samhain, which smoothly became All Saints and All Souls. Each time, new ideas were welded on to the old date which took away (for example) the fear of the dead and replaced it with thanksgiving and prayer for the departed.

So what about Valentine's Day, so beloved of vendors of chocolate and all things pink and heart-shaped? Well, it looks as though the idea was to try and divert the romantic excesses of impending spring into more permanent and selfless channels: the day becomes (at least in theory) a celebration of stable and permanent relationships where people matter.

Well, hooray for St Valentine. But there's a further point to this. It's tempting for respectable, God-fearing (or Dawkins-fearing) honest taxpayers like we all are to look out at the world and mutter darkly at how astray it all is. We may think that's a fine Christian practice – but it's not. At best it's Puritanism, at worst Pharisaism which can only see ill in others. The *real* Christian, by contrast, tradition looks at the world as it is and asks, 'How can we take this and transform it for the better? How can we turn this impulse to greater good, greater beauty, greater love?'

The great season of Lent is approaching, where we get chance to pause, think and allow our spirits to grow. Maybe one thing to work on is our outlook on the world – can we learn to recognise the potential for good that is already there? And once we've recognised it, can we work to make that good grow and blossom?

Fr David

St Mary's Teaching Evening, Monday February 13th. 'Forty Days and...?' 7.30-9.00 in the Church Hall.

As the season of Lent approaches, Christians all over the world get ready to 'give things up', presumably in imitation of Christ's Forty Days in the wilderness. But although the wilderness story gets a mention during Lent, Lent itself isn't really to do with the Forty Days and Forty Nights, but with something far richer and more positive.

Fr David will lead an exploration into the roots of the keeping of Lent, and how we may make use of the weeks before Easter to enrich our keeping of the Great Three Days of the Christian year.

ADVANCE NOTICE

This year's Women's World Day of Prayer Service, arranged by Christian women of Malaysia, title "Let Justice Prevail" will be held at St Mary's Church on Friday March 2nd at 2pm. The speaker will be Rev Liz Brown.

Refreshments will be served afterwards.

EVERYONE WELCOME.

A bit of a do.

Family matters took me into the Register Office recently, and, for want of something to do while I was waiting — I've never quite got the hang of my iPod — did my usual thing of reading the notices and posters on display.

One thing which took my eye was that the Register Office can now offer a baby-naming ceremony. Though, like a Christening, it's got no legal force, it's a helpful option for families who don't want to go down the religious route of baptism. But it included a scale of charges, almost £200 for a Saturday 'do' at the Register Office, getting on for £300 at an 'approved venue' on Sunday.... St Mary's puts out a plate for a charity.

Let me make it crystal-clear that I'm not criticising the Council, the Register Office or Secular Celebrants. Public bodies have a duty not to run at a loss (and would soon be attacked if they did). In an age when computer-generated bank letters cost eye-watering amounts, those who earn their living by presiding at family occasions must charge for their services as any other business would. And – to be frank – across the country there's plenty of people who have had bad experiences with religion and so would run a mile from any Church ceremony: it's right and proper that they have someone to help them celebrate. No, no criticism, not for a minute.

My reasoning's different: first, there may well be families out there thinking, 'If it costs that at the Council, what on earth will it cost in Church?' and, second, that it may say something about how the Church works very differently from the world of business and even the world of public service.

So, firstly, Church fees. People who'd like to use the Church for a family celebration may worry that it'll cost a fortune - exclusive use of historic building etc. etc. In truth, an organ wedding in Church costs much the same as the legal fees at a licensed wedding venue; I've already mentioned naming ceremonies; Church funeral fees seem to be lower than a civil funeral, and the cost of burial in a churchyard is a fraction of its equivalent in a cemetery.* So if you – or someone you know – really wants to 'do' things in Church but is put off by how much it might cost, maybe this'll help.

But secondly, and maybe more important, is *why* the Church charges so much less. I think it's part of the Church's mission and ministry to society. The day-by-day, week-by-week members of the congregations work and pay (and pray) to keep the Church building open, usable and staffed so that it *is* there for people marking life's journey. Many times we probably run 'at a loss', but that's part and parcel of wanting to be available to folk with their needs, hopes and desires without them having to ask, 'Can we afford?'

It makes no business sense whatsoever, and if we were a Government Department the Audit Office would be after our blood — but we're neither. We're the Church, we see things differently — and long may we do so. DR

**Figures are all taken from official websites.*

Dear friends,

For many years I have sat in the same seat on the Kop at Sheffield Wednesday and, during my time as a parish priest just up the road from the ground, I would be asked by many members of the Sunday school and youth club whether they could come to a game with me and my family. On many occasions, I would be sat with a group of seven or eight football mad youngsters and would get vicarious enjoyment from their excitement. On one such occasion, the match was going well! Sheffield Wednesday were winning, the crowd were singing and all seemed well in the world. Suddenly, the opposition equalised via the superbly struck volley of the opposing team's striker and I was surprised to see the young boy next to me, a young black boy of African extract, rise sharply to his feet and make his way to a steward. A few words were exchanged, and then a man sat just behind us was forcibly removed by a gaggle of stewards. Unbeknown to me, my young friend had heard a racist comment directed at the black striker who had scored the superb goal and decided he would act: I've not seen the ejected and dejected fan ever since. That young boy, now a strapping man with a first class honours degree in sports science and himself a successful cage-fighter, often reminds me to this day of that incident long ago.

In today's world, it all seems so antediluvian when we hear of such racist incidents but, sadly, we do not have to go too far to be reminded that, as proscribed and publically despised as racism now is, it still lurks just beneath the surface.

This reality has, both, come to light recently in the case of the Liverpool footballer Suarez and the subsequent racist barracking of an Oldham player by a Liverpool supporter and also in the intimate revelations about the nature of racism during the trial and conviction of the two men found guilty of Stephen Lawrence's murder. In both these cases, the institutions involved-a football club in one case and the police in the other-have taken all the right steps to try and ensure that such prejudiced behaviour is not systemic and inherent in them. However, the horrible truth is that, in the heat of competition or in the bravado of a deeply disturbed young person's hateful tirade, the evil of racism still lurks and it is not far from us all.

Such racism was not unknown to Jesus: we are told that he stood at the well with the Samaritan woman; a woman from a race despised by some simply because they chose to worship God in another Temple other than that in Jerusalem. Jesus cleverly extracts from this 'hated' foreigner the knowledge that he is the source of eternal life and the eagerly expected Messiah. On their return to the well, even Jesus' disciples join in the unconscious and implicit racism, being 'astonished' that he was speaking with her.

In William Shirer's seminal book on The Third Reich, one is struck by the matter of fact way in which the cremators for the killing fields of the concentration camps were ordered from the manufacturers: as simple as ordering a microwave for the kitchen. Such ordinariness combined with horror is rightly named 'the mundanity of evil'. My young friend in the football match was right to challenge that thoughtless and cruel barb by a fellow supporter for there must be link between these small, mundane, acts and the kind of racism that leads to violence and loss of life?

In the end, the real tragedy of racism is that it de-humanises those we parody and to whom we attach simplistic prejudices. It was the 'hated' foreign woman at the well who saw the deep mystery of Jesus and his

divinity: when our eyes are clouded by colour, class or creed we fail to see and enjoy the true beauty of the person underneath.

+Tim Grantham

SNAKE STRINGS AT ROPERY HALL

A ground-breaking collaboration between sax maestro Snake Davis and an outstanding British string quartet, featuring peerless sax melody and classical strings in a fresh and innovative crossover of classical, pop, soul and jazz, will be appearing at Ropery Hall on Friday, March 2.

Only formed in the summer of last year you can expect tunes ranging from "River Deep, Mountain High" and "A Little Respect" and self penned numbers to classics from Albinoni, Faure and Bach.

Snake is acknowledged as one of the UK's foremost saxophonists, and his session work includes the likes of Sir Paul McCartney, M- People and The Eurythmics.

The music sometimes gets deep and emotional but the evening is always relaxed and entertaining. This is a great show for all the family, crossing genres and introducing a wide spectrum of music to audiences of all ages. The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £15 in advance or £17 on the door. More details from www.roperhall.co.uk

St. Mary's Bellringers

The St. Mary's Bellringers finished the year with general ringing for a number of the seasonal occasions including the Christingle, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. They also marked the New Year by ringing from 23.30 on the 31st December until 00.15 on the 1st January.

Sunday morning service ringing throughout 2011 had been well attended with only one occasion when fewer than 8 bells could be rung.

Robert, a new learner who only started in the summer, is progressing very well and regularly rings for service and at practice night. The ringers look forward with great enthusiasm to 2012 which already has several events planned for ringing both locally and further afield.

The following Quarter Peal was rung on the 28th December 2011

St. Mary's Church, Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire.

Wednesday 28th December 2011. 1260 Plain Bob Triples

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sue Thompson | 5. Geoffrey F. Bryant |
| 2. Jenny Bennett | 6. K. Joan Barton |
| 3. George Thompson | 7. Richard H. Hopper (C) |
| 4. Linda Howden | 8. Daniel Young |

Rung half muffled in thanksgiving for the life of Peter Derek Rowett father of Revd. David Rowett vicar of St. Mary's, Barton-upon-Humber.

Joan Barton

FROM THE REGISTERS:

BAPTISMS:-

Jan. 8 Freya Emilia Rose HOLLAND daughter of Ceri Jane Emma and John Paul HOLLAND
Jacob Phillip GEORGE son of Tina Marie Eleanor and Phillip James GEORGE

Jan. 22 Joseph Thomas LEE son of Susan Anne and Gerald Kenneth LEE

FUNERALS:-

Dec. 19 Roy SHEPHERD

Dec. 20 James Ernest WINSHIP

Dec. 21 Leonard Peter HORNE

Dec. 22 William Neville (Chad) CHADWICK

Jan. 5 Ena Patricia Pearl (Pat) EDWARDS

Jan. 12 Adam Matthew TURNER

Jan. 13 Dorothy WARD

Jan. 17 David William RENNISON

Donations for Church flowers have been received in loving memory of:-

Graham Askew
Frank Milner
George Clark
Jack Farrow

Additional donations were made and flowers were also given to the Church for Christmas in loving memory of George and Jessie Holland and Owen Stone

MOTHERS' UNION

Our last meeting of 2011 was a wonderful selection of carols and readings.

We all sang familiar carols interspersed with favourite readings from some of our members. We were lucky to have Geoff Brown to play the piano and Liz Brown finished with her reading and a Christmas Blessing. This was followed by seasonal refreshments.

A big thank you to Janet Petch, who had baked us some of her delicious mince pies, which were enjoyed by everyone.

Our first afternoon meeting of 2012 was our A.G.M. Sheila welcomed everyone with a special welcome to our chairman Father David. Apologies were given for those unable to attend. We then had a short service, which consisted of the hymn "As with gladness men of old", a

reading from Psalm 72 v1-7 and v10-14, read by Brenda Skinner, then prayers said by Sheila. The A.G.M followed.

Father David thanked everyone for all their work during the last year and for keeping the Mothers' Union in high profile throughout the Parish and Deanery giving a lively and distinctive witness. The minutes of 2011 AGM were read out by Brenda Skinner, then the treasurer's report by read by Elinor. Sheila then read out her third and final Leader's report as she retires from this post after three years, which she said she had considered a privilege. Sheila thanked everyone for their support during her leadership. The election of Officers and committee followed. Leader Linda Bromfield, Secretary Brenda Skinner, Treasurer Elinor Cartwright, Assistant Treasurer Joyce Gibson, Banner bearer Mavis Nutbrown, sick visitor Val Dukes, committee members Angela Henson, Joyce Gibson and Val Dukes. These were duly nominated, seconded and elected. Brenda Skinner thanked Sheila for her caring and competent leadership over the last three years and Hilary presented Sheila with a plant as a token of our gratitude. Refreshments were then served and members volunteered their names for the rotas of readers, vote of thanks, prayer time leaders and flower rota.

Brenda Skinner

Feb 1st 9.30am Corporate Communion Reader Val Dukes

Feb 15th 2pm Speaker Rev. Alan Wright. Reader/vote of thanks Val Dukes

Flower rota

Feb 12th Brenda Skinner

Lent Lunches

Once again we will be serving homemade soup and crusty bread every Wednesday during Lent, starting on February 29th through to 4th April, 12 noon to 1 p.m.

Happily, Sue Brown has volunteered again to come each week to sell her cards, cakes and many other things to boost our takings.

So, come and join us and enjoy the food, fellowship and fun, knowing you are supporting the work of Christian Aid.

Val Dukes

'Over to you.....'

Lots of people have been talking about their New Year Resolutions in January. Apparently the 16th January is the date when people are at their most 'down' - the euphoria of Christmas and New Year celebrations has long gone; holidays are a long way off for most people; days are still dark and gloomy and it's the day when most people have given up on their resolutions to 'lose weight, get more exercise (those Gym memberships and exercise machines fall by the wayside), read more etc. I expect I am as guilty as most!!

Listening to a talk on Radio Humberside by the Bishop of Middlesbrough, he said that what we should all place in front of these resolutions is the word 'HOPE'. In other words - we hope to lose weight, read the Bible more etc. Then we don't feel to have let ourselves down so much and be so depressed about it.

What's more important is that **we hope for** world peace, fewer people being on the poverty line, being homeless or unemployed, young people having better job prospects and everyone having a common purpose.

So let us all journey through 2012 hoping to achieve what we have set out to do! Have a good month. S.W.

What's in a name?

Many of you will know that I am, as Scunthorpe United's Chaplain, involved with a charity network called SCORE. Not any more! SCORE has changed its name to "Sports' Chaplaincy UK". This is to reflect the fact that when the organisation first started, it exclusively dealt with football, where the object *apparently* is to SCORE goals. Now that SCORE has evolved into horseracing, athletics and Speedway and other sports as well, there is not the same element of SCORING. The new title more fully reflects what we do, and is more readily understandable. So when you see me "rattling my tin" for "Sports' Chaplaincy UK", it's exactly the same organisation as before.

Alan.

ST MARY'S LADIES' GROUP

Seventy three ladies attended our Christmas celebration (which seems a long time ago now) and had an evening of entertainment given by Norman Hornsby (alias Nutty Norman) of magic tricks including sawing Mo Orr in half!! Also an Elvis tribute by Pauline and Mo; Elaine on the accordion and the piece de resistance, the committee dancing to 'It's raining Men' (see photo for amusement!!) Thanks to Janet Petch for the delicious melt in the mouth mince pies.

Two superb speakers started the year off well:-
Geoff Bryant gave an informative talk on 'Marriage in Medieval England' which we could have listened to all night!!

Marriage could have begun with Adam and Evehe spoke of its evolution from Roman times when a boy had to be 14 and a girl 12 to give consent; the girl had to have a dowry, there were no documents, no public authority- the wife had to obey – love and companionship were a bonus!!

Jesus approved of the Jewish teaching where there was no promiscuity and no divorce. St Paul believed that celibacy was the best.

Up to the C11 the church was little involved with marriage, although one could have a blessing. As long as there was mutual consent it was O.K. - so Mary and Joseph were all right.

The reading of the banns gave time to investigate the past of the couple - if you had a common great, great, great granddad you were not eligible to marry. This was quite a common occurrence then.

The Priest attended merely as a prompter - the couple said the vows as they do now and the said vows must be in the present tense. A valid marriage did not require consummation so as to preserve the marriage of Mary and Joseph. So marriage from 1200 to 1600 included:-

- ❖ A matchmaker
- ❖ Settlement - money or livestock, pots and pans.
- ❖ Betrothal-exchange of vows in the future tense.(could not marry until death of the father)
- ❖ Reading of the Banns - to check eligibility

- ❖ Wedding pledge - handing over the bride - hand fasting (holding hands), vows and ring.
- ❖ Nuptial mass - under the table (care) cloth (any children of the couple were put under here at the communion to legitimise them).
- ❖ Wedding Breakfast (no food before the mass)
- ❖ Bride ale - sold at the reception for a profit.
- ❖ Blessing of the bedroom and bed.

So we can see how our customs have come into being today.

Secondly, a whistle stop talk and slide tour of some of the villages in Lincolnshire was given by Kevin Harrison from the Fens (a 150 mile round trip to come!!)

There are 750 villages (including hamlets). The tour began with Blankney then Borough Le marsh which was given a charter by Henry IV to hold a weekly market. The church of St. Peter and St. Paul can be seen from miles around as can the windmill. Castle Bytham, one of the prettiest villages where the castle has disappeared followed by Falkingham once an important market town on the road between Bourne and Sleaford. The Greyhound coaching in is newly restored and it is now famous for chocolate brought Jan Henson in 1986.

Fulbeck which means a foul place!! It has a manor and hall which belonged to the Fane family. Layton by Spilsby famous for its church with a three tier pulpit to which Dr. Johnson was a regular visitor. Nearer to home, Redbourne – this has the first new village sign made for the millennium depicting carvings to do with the airfield and the coat of arms of the Duke of St. Albans. Revesby, famous for Sir Joseph Banks who was a famous botanist and explorer with Captain Cook. He was 18 when he inherited Revesby Hall.

Finally slides of the prettiest village - Tealby. It used to have a paper making industry and was famous for Alfred Lord Tennyson living there. It had four different non conformist chapels and still has the King's Head the Landlord of which used to drive a van advertising it complete with a thatched roof!!

It is surprising how we drive around the countryside and miss a lot of these features, often in a hurry and no time to notice!
S.W.

A way with numbers.

As we know, numbers and statistics can be made to fit almost any circumstance. A glass with 50% of its contents as water can be said either to be half-full or half-empty. Headlines in January in the Church Times suggested that church attendances at Christmas were down on last year. This pre-supposed that ***all*** such numbers would be down. Not in Barton and district! Both the daytime Christmas Eve services in Saxby and Ferriby were very well attended, and the numbers at Horkstow's "Carols and Hot Dogs" the previous Thursday were an amazing 120. I was not expecting anywhere near the 43 that came up Ferriby's slope for Midnight Mass. All this is very encouraging.

In Barton, too, numbers were up. The Christingle service nearly came to grief as there were not really enough oranges (we had cut down on 2010's overproduction!); the collection, at £320, was at a good level. There was hardly a seat left at the Carol Service, and the Midnight and Christmas morning services were well patronised. All right, it may be just once a year, but it shows that "the church" is there for everyone – even those who make a once-yearly visit. From small beginnings.....

Alan.

Wed 1 st Feb	9.30 am		Said Eucharist (MU)
	2.00 pm		Service at Eagle House
	7.30 pm		Ladies' Group
Thurs 2 nd	10.00 am		St. Peter's and Wootton Schools' Candlemas Service
Fri 3 rd	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 4 th	11.00 am		Lectio divina
Sunday 5th Feb		3 before Lent	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	2.30 pm		Service at The Willows
	6.00 pm		Choral Evensong
Mon 6 th	9.30 am		Toddler Time
Wed 8 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist
	2.00 pm		Service at Westbridge House
Fri 10 th	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 11 th	11.00 am		Lectio divina
Sunday 12th Feb		2 before Lent	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	4.00 pm		Baptisms
	6.00 pm		Evening Prayer
Monday 13 th	9.30 am		Toddler Time
	10.00 am		Diary meeting (Vicarage)
	7.30 pm		Teaching Evening in Hall (Revd D. Rowett)
Wed 15 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist
	2.00 pm		Mothers' Union
	2.00 pm		Service at Beech House
	7.15 pm		Ministry Meeting
	7.30 pm		Ladies' Group
Thurs 16 th	am		Home Communion
Fri 17 th	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 18 th	11.00 am		Lectio divina
Sunday 19th Feb		Sunday before Lent	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist

	6.00 pm		Sung Evensong
Mon 20 th	9.30 am		Toddler Time
	am		Home Communion at St. Peter's Court & Victoria House
	PARISH	NEWS	DEADLINE
Tues 21 st	7.00 pm		Said Eucharist
Wed. 22nd	9.30 am	Ash Wednesday	Said Eucharist with Ashing
	7.00 pm		Sung Eucharist with Ashing
Fri 24 th	5.00 pm		E1W
Sat 25 th			Lectio divina
Sunday 26th Feb		Lent 1	
	8.00 am		Said Eucharist
	9.30 am		Parish Eucharist
	11.30 am		Baptisms
	6.00 pm		Said Eucharist with hymns
Mon 27 th	9.30 am		Toddler Time
Wed 29 th	9.30 am		Said Eucharist
	Noon –		Lent Lunches
	1.00 pm		
	7.00 pm		MAP group, Limber



Mike Mumby in his new verger's gown



Ladies' Group Christmas Celebrations



Ladies' Group Christmas Celebrations

**St. Mary's Ladies Group
Sponsored Line Dance
For the Macmillan Nurses
March 22nd. 9a.m. to 5p.m.
Dance Studio Maltkin Lane.
Pop in to watch or 'have a go'**



