

FACEBOOK RAMBLINGS – 17 TO 31 JULY 2020

Friday 17 July

I worked all morning - there's now an Order of Service and prayers for Sunday on the church website (sermon to follow!) - then walked across to St Matthew's to put posters up on our snazzy new noticeboards (the age of laminating is dead). A circle round meant a 6 mile walk. I then fell asleep in the sun.

Fortunately I checked my emails and found a reminder I had signed up for a webinar from Selwyn College Cambridge. Did I want to find out about "Oliver Cromwell, hero or villain" at 6 pm on a Friday? I'm very glad I did - thank you Dr David Smith.

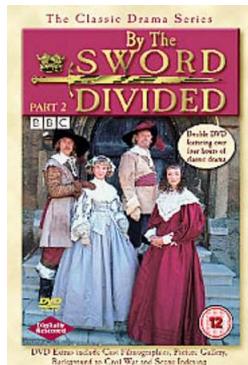
I always feel an affinity with Cromwell, since I too am a Fenland Nonconformist by birth. I have lived in Huntingdon, and Hannah was a regular visitor at The Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon when she was little (we moved north to Lincoln when she was 4). The museum has re-opened, so there's an excuse to go back.

Earlier this year we found we had the dvd of the first series of "By the sword divided", the TV series from the early 1980s. Watched it and thoroughly enjoyed it. I don't have series 2, so that will go on the birthday list!

I have this fear that in the Senior Combination Room of Selwyn someone is shaking their head and commenting that Barham, P. (1980) wasn't the world's greatest academic when he did his degree (Part 1 Geography, Part 2 Theology). Now he's commenting on a TV series about the Civil War he means to sit and watch. I am making no comment about the academic prowess of Brown, J. (1980). Fortunately David, who was an undergraduate about the same time as we were, has enough academic prowess to make up for the two of us!

He mentioned a book called "Cromwell's Head" by Jonathan Fitzgibbons. "Oliver Cromwell's magnificent funeral in 1658 was a regal affair, witnessed by thousands and drawing on all the trappings of state. Yet less than three years later his corpse was removed from Westminster Abbey and 'executed' at Tyburn. This gruesome ceremony launched Cromwell's head on three centuries of extraordinary adventures, from a traitor's pole by Westminster Hall to an exhibition in London's Bond Street, the probings of 'cranial detectives' to the peace of a Cambridge college. ""Cromwell's Head"" tells the story of the head's remarkable journey, blending gallows humour with a compelling portrait of the great parliamentarian in life." That needs to go on the birthday list too.





Saturday 18 July

It's a long time since we had a wedding. We managed one on 20 March, the day before we locked down (whatever date Matt Hancock likes to say). Today I have had the pleasure of seeing Shaun and Georgina who will be married in five weeks, and Jason and Faye who are waiting until September 2021. I've had another enquiry for this September, and re-booked David and Karen for May next year.

If you're interested in being married in either of my churches, or if you know people who might be, please be encouraged, get in touch. We offer a lovely venue, a special day, and much love and support.

We won't be calling banns when we reopen St Matthew's tomorrow as the other churches where banns need to be called are not opening for public worship yet - and you can't call banns on zoom. Thank you to the Diocesan Registrar (the wonderful Nadine and her team) who are making sure the legalities are right.

I took Shaun and Georgina across to St Edmund's to find a church with a team of people working hard cleaning after the building work. It is looking good, and I am very grateful. Michele and Pam, flower arrangers extraordinaire, were so chuffed to be able to plan for a wedding again. The couple felt very welcome and very special.

I'm chuffed too, but while Covid remains a threat we are having to marry with social distancing. This means the Vicar can't kiss the bride. Fortunately I have a beautiful bride at home, so I'll kiss her. (Who is that young man she's marrying in this picture?)



Sunday 19 July

At last, after a break of 18 weeks, we had a Communion service at St Matthew's this morning. 23 people present, just over a third of the usual congregation, but that meant we had space and I didn't get stressed. We could have fitted in another 20 people with no problems.

We didn't sing hymns, but it was lovely to sit and listen to the organ playing. John also played the Adagio from Bruch's Violin Concerto as we spent some time in prayer and remembrance at the start of the service. (I should make it clear that he played an organ version, he isn't a secret violinist). We also rang the bells, so the village knows we're back.

There was a certain sense of irony that the teetotaller was the person who drank the wine. It felt a little odd moving among the congregation, masked, and placing wafers in their hands. It took me back to my Baptist days when we moved to alternate rows to take communion, and the deacons came round with bread and a little tray of glasses. I do need to find a different "Invitation to Communion". The one we normally use starts with "Draw near with faith" and we're remaining seated, then "drink this cup" when we're not! Any of my clerical colleagues found/written anything that fits better?

The only failure was that the batteries ran out on the lapel mic. I should have put others on to recharge last week! I spent several years in a Cathedral - there you can leave microphones to the Verger's tender care. I was spoilt!

Thank you everyone who made it possible, and those who've been in touch with positive comments. It's also good to know that folk at home used the Order of Service on the website, and felt part of worship. Same again next week! (We should start in St Edmund's the following week (2 August)).

I came home and tried making scones. I am only grateful that my liturgical skills are better than my bakery skills. But it did give me a chance to use my new cutter, purchased from Blist's Hill at Ironbridge. They tasted better than they looked. I spent the afternoon snoozing in the garden. All this religion is hard work!



Monday 20 July

I had a leisurely picnic today - in the Crematorium garden (and they are beautifully cared for gardens). I had two funerals, two hours apart. Always a privilege to lead them, to meet family and friends, to find out so much about special people.

The second funeral was Franklin Wilson, who was a talented artist. In 2000 he designed the Millennium Window for St Matthew's. It has an interesting selection of images. The seal of the Abbey is linked with a portrait of St Augustine (the Abbey was an Augustinian foundation). The Three Wise Men from Matthew's gospel, following their star to find the Christ child, are paired with the Hubble Space Telescope. At the bottom, John and Charles Wesley remember the Methodist heritage of the village, and they are paired with Thomas Evans (the man who built the original mill). - if you want to know more, watch the video <http://darleyabbey.com/about/from-monks-to-mills/>

When the window went in, the Hubble Space Telescope had been in orbit for ten years. 2020 is its 30th anniversary, and there is a huge amount to read and watch at https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/main/index.html. Sounds a good plan for the evening!



Tuesday 21 July

The man from Del Monte has said YES again. The Archdeacon approved our risk assessment for worship at St Edmund's within 20 minutes of me sending it. This coming Sunday (26

July) we just have a Communion service at St Matthew's, the following week (2 August) we will have Communion at St Edmund's and Morning Prayer at St Matthew's, both at 10 am.

I've just put a Ryman's order in for more laminating pouches so we can produce the signs that are necessary. Caroline Audley is back at work on Monday - sorry Caroline, it's time for a hot date with a laminator.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral have posted that today their lovely Millennium Tower is 15 years old. So I know that 15 years ago today I was more stressed than I am now. HRH Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall had come to the opening service. It was Cathedral worship at its best. Michael Hampel was in charge, all I had to do was walk in the right direction and look vaguely holy. I was very proud as the young people of PYG, our Performing Youth Group, bought the symbols of building and ministry up as part of the service.service.

The evening before Michael had insisted we had a full dress rehearsal. Pops Barham and her then boyfriend Staszek (he was a nice boyfriend) played Charles and Camilla. The clergy formed the receiving line, and the pretend royal couple made their way down. "And what do you do?" Staszek asked the Dean. When he got to me he shook my hand in a regal way and commented "Nice dress Vicar". Michael told us off for not taking his rehearsal seriously (sorry Michael).

On the day itself Julie had to wait to be introduced. She was stood with her crutches for rather too long. She was not a happy bunny. Eventually the Duchess got to her. "Julie is a Lay Reader and a Teacher" said the Dean as he introduced her. "What do you teach?" asked Camilla. "Anything except PE" snapped my wife.



Wednesday 22 July

After yesterday's facebook, I went and found my diary for 2005. St Edmundsbury Cathedral were wrong. Yesterday was the 15th anniversary of the rehearsal, today is the 15th anniversary of the "Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving" for the Millennium Project.

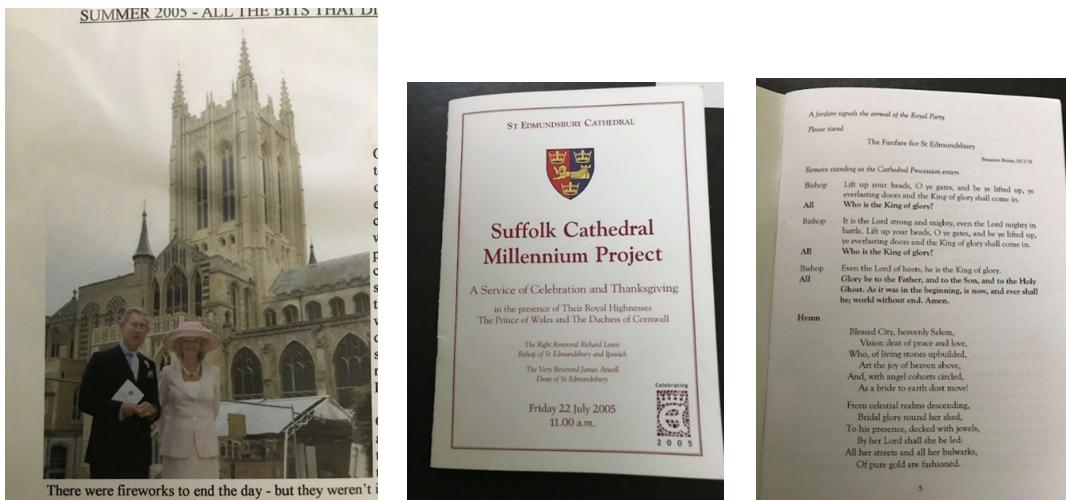
I found the Order of Service. Those of you in Allestree and Darley Abbey (and those who were in Ponteland) will recognise the house style. I looked at the order for Procession and realised how important I was in those days (members of the Cathedral Chapter are almost at the back of the procession). I once said to the kids "do you realise I am the fourth most senior

cleric in this diocese?" to which Gareth replied, "yes, but your pay is still crap". Thanks Gareth.

We started with Benjamin Britten's "Fanfare for St Edmundsbury" (I'll put that on the Order of Service I will produce for this Sunday), and the choir sang his Te Deum. Finzi "God is gone up with a triumphant shout", and a piece written for the Festival itself by the Dean and Director of Music. Hymns were 'Blessed City, heavenly Salem', 'Christ is our cornerstone', 'Crown him with many crowns' and 'Ye that know the Lord is gracious' - not many modern ditties in that lot! And we sang the National Anthem (which was, I see, more than they were able to do at last week's Royal Wedding). Out to Walton's "Crown Imperial". Dum de dah, diddle um dum dum.

That was another thing that jarred. As the Chapter procession moved down the nave, we were instructed to stop and acknowledge the Royal Couple. I have no problems acknowledging Royalty - but in rehearsal Michael Hampel made me stop and bow to my daughter and her boyfriend ...

My diary says we followed the service with a superb lunch in a marquee in Abbey Gardens.



Thursday 23 July

Be afraid, be very afraid! Julie has new wheels. Russ from TGA Mobility was great, Julie had a play with several models, and she went for a Whill model C. This is the same model as Pops Barham so it could be interesting when they get together.

I have suggested lots of exciting things we could do. A bus ride to Bakewell, a train ride somewhere fun. We could do a walk round Allestree Park, but sadly the Millennium Topograph in Quarndon requires a stile to be negotiated. There is a new all-purpose path beside the river through Darley Park, so we can head down that way - the Darley Park Cafe does a good bacon sarnie. Apparently the new Derby Riverboat will be wheelchair accessible and we know we can manage Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway and their wonderful wheelchair lift.

We went for a walk together this evening and did 3 miles (it started to rain). There were a couple of times where there wasn't a dropped kerb in the obvious place, and a few places

where the camber was like the north face of the Eiger (there's a prize if you get that quotation), but we managed.

In our household, all wheeled vehicles have to have a name - so meet Morgan (named after Morgan Le Fey of Arthurian legend). Selwyn likes his Morgan as well.



Friday 24 July

We have just had Graduation Rehearsal in our garden. [St. Edmund's Preschool, Kings Croft, Allestree, DE22 2FN](#) are here this afternoon - sadly I've got a funeral - and they have made the leavers mortar boards. Sadly in the world we live in, I can't share a photo of them - but they look very sweet.

When Julie and I graduated BA in 1983 [Selwyn College Cambridge](#) we had no mortar boards, but we were in the splendour of Cambridge's Senate House. For the MA a few years later, Julie had permission to stand to receive her degree as she was 'great with child'. I didn't bother to graduate at the end of Theological College, being ordained was enough of a fuss. When Julie got her MA from the Open University we had a ceremony at The Sage in Gateshead. Last year we were in the non-splendour of Derby's Velodrome, but it was still fun.

I regularly wear an academic hood (actually that should now say "regularly wore"), but never bothered with a mortar board. When a young [Michael Hampel](#) came to St Edmundsbury Cathedral he carried his as that's what he'd done at Durham. Then Neil Collings came as Dean and he carried his, as that's what he'd done at Exeter. At that point I decided it was time to buy my own - and I carried it solemnly in processions for the next few years. I only wore it once - I was Canon in Residence when West Suffolk College came to the Cathedral for their graduations, so it seemed right to wear mine too (since everyone else was). When I left [St Edmundsbury Cathedral](#) I left it in the cupboard, and I hope someone has used it.

Several people have asked what the next course of study is going to be. I'm not going to start something this September as I feel the next few months are going to be busy catching up, but I have my eye on the Parish Church Studies Course at the University of York for 2021. I've got to get a few more letters after my name to catch up with [Pops Barham](#)



Saturday 25 July

I listened earlier to a month old edition of Last Words, the BBC Obituary programme. One of the people remembered was the neurobiologist Geoffrey Burnstock. I didn't understand most of the obituary, so I looked him up. Wikipedia says "He is best known for coining the term purinergic signalling, which he discovered in the 1970s". Yes, of course!

One thing they mentioned was that he was involved in the development of the drug Clopidogrel, and I remember that. Gareth used to take his "cloppie dog", it's a blood thinning medicine. So, thank you, Dr Geoffrey and his team.

Wikipedia also refers to his "lasting work with ATP-related signalling" - and to me the APT is British Rail's Advanced Passenger Train, designed here in Derby in the 1970s. National Railway Museum tweeted this morning to say that "On this day in 1972, the experimental British Rail tilting train, the APT-E, made its first test run from Derby to Duffield".

In 1975 the APT-E achieved a new British railway speed record when it hit reached 152.3 mph. One of my biggest regrets in life is that when Cambridge University Railway Club had the option of a ride on the APT-P train in about 1984, I was unable to go. Sadly the project was cancelled soon after, and the Italians developed the tilting technology now used on the West Coast Main Line.

Why does this country have such an appalling record? When we have something that was world beating we threw it away, now when we have something that is pretty useless we say it is "world beating".



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ASK AT B.R. STATIONS ABOUT MONEY SAVING OFFERS, INCLUDING THE NEW FAMILY RAILCARD.

Sunday 26 July

Another lovely service this morning at St Matthew's - 30 people. Thanks everyone. No problems (once we'd worked out how to turn on the organ). Both churches next Sunday. Then a drive to Yorkshire as my little girl has a birthday. 15 years ago my diary (which I read for the Millennium Tower celebrations) says she banged on the bedroom door at 7.30 am shouting that she was 18. She was told to "go away and make the tea", though apparently I didn't use those words. Then she woke Gareth up telling him that at least she had got to 18 with all her organs intact. He retorted that his heart was older than that, and also told her to "go away".

Today we went for a picnic. The girls had wheelchair races around South Milford rec - [TGA Mobility](#) - and I slept in the sun. Now she's gone and ordered a takeaway from [Cumin Lounge](#), her next door neighbours. Happy Birthday Hannah.



Monday 27 July

The crisis is over! [Caroline Audley](#) is back in the Office. Welcome back. Normal office phone and email. We are so efficient that the Orders of Service for Sunday have already been printed - it's only Monday!

While we are on the subject of incredible Derbyshire women, today is probably the birthday of Bess of Hardwick. Born in 1527 the English Heritage website describes her as a "noblewoman and builder" - <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/.../wo.../bess-of-hardwick/...>

Born into a family of Derbyshire landowners she married Robert Barlow when she was 15 and he was 13. He died a year later. The teenaged Bess moved on probably to become a lady-in-waiting to Frances Grey, mother of Lady Jane Grey, which brought her into the top echelons of Tudor society. She married Sir William Cavendish. Twenty years older than Bess, he had amassed a fortune under the Tudors, and in 1549 the couple were able – on Bess's advice – to buy the Chatsworth estate in Derbyshire. In 1557, at the age of 30, she was widowed again. Husband number 3 was William St Loe, number 4 George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in the country. It is always good advice to marry well, and make sure that each husband is richer than the one before. (I am not suggesting that my church administrator should follow the second part of that advice).

We can see Bess's handiwork at Chatsworth, and in both Halls at Hardwick. English Heritage manage the old hall, the National Trust the new - we need another visit there. Bess rests in Derby Cathedral. It will be good to get back there soon and say "Hello" to her.





Tuesday 28 July

Transport for Scotland have today issued a New Action Plan to decarbonise Scotland's Railway by 2035. It includes electrification of all the major railways, over the Forth and Tay Bridges right up to Aberdeen and Inverness. There are also different ways of removing diesel traction from the West and North Highland lines. It is a vision - and thank God for people with vision. Sadly we have no green transport vision south of the Border.

I first travelled Scotland's railways in the early 1980s. British Rail had a Student Liaison Officer scheme in Cambridge. One person in each college had a fares manual, timetable, and a pile of student railcard application forms. In return for answering queries we got a free return trip from Cambridge to anywhere a term. So we all went to Wick, Thurso, Kyle of Lochalsh, Mallaig, Oban, Stranraer - wonderful trips.

I also had an amazing week as a guest of Scotrail. We had a ride in a brake van to Waterside colliery, a cab ride to Bathgate car plant, another cab ride to Kyle, a walk across the Forth Bridge, and a visit to the signalling centre at Edinburgh Waverley.

The signallers at Waverley thought it was hilarious that none of the posh English boys could pronounce the word "Kirkcaldy", but they did let me be station announcer. In those days there was a through train from Edinburgh to Harwich, "calling at Carstairs, Carlisle, Preston, Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield, Nottingham, Grantham, Peterborough, Ely, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, Ipswich and Harwich Parkesston Quay."

The train would have been hauled by a class 47 diesel, though it would have run "under the wires" between Carstairs and Preston. If they still ran this through service today you can get Edinburgh to Manchester under the wires, and Stowmarket to Harwich. Not much progress in 40 years.

I have had fun finding train photos - Edinburgh, Manchester, Ely and Harwich (the name of the ship is "St Edmund"). I want a train ride!!





Thursday 30 July

This coming Sunday we will have services in both churches. 10 am Morning Prayer at St Matthew's Darley Abbey led by Clive, and 10 am Holy Communion at St Edmund's Allestree led by me (Peter). The signs have been prepared - I was quite proud of the "Do not sit here" ones as they can face forward whichever end of the pew we attach them to, but no one else seems to have noticed that attention to detail!

You can see that we are "strongly advised" to wear masks. Clive and I will not wear one while leading the services as we are more than 2 metres away from everyone, but I will wear one before and after and while walking round the church with communion. Communion will be "bread only", and I will bring it to you in your seat. No hymns I'm afraid, but we do have music before, during and after.

For the last two weeks the numbers at st Matthew's have been manageable, and I hope they will be at St Edmund's. We can only allow people in if there is space to safely seat you - and social distancing takes a lot of space. It is possible we might have to say "sorry we're full" and ask you to come back at 11.

At both churches we are collecting for the Food Bank - the bags will be in the porch at St Eds, and food can be left in the Fellowship Room at St Ms. If you can't come to church, Primrose's Book Shed next to the garage at the Vicarage is always unlocked - please leave any gifts there (ideally before Sunday).

A fuller statement about the services and the precautions taken is on the front page of the church website - <https://www.stedsandstmatts.co.uk/>. Material for worship at home is also posted there (or will be when my sermon is written).

I am sorry that my signs don't have the humour of the Coach and Horses.



Friday 31 July

Today's facebook post would have been a couple of hours earlier, but we have been to Yorkshire for the day. Driving home down the A1 near Ferrybridge we had an orange sky as the sun set in west. We also had light rain, and a couple of rainbows. The rainbows were an amazing orange shade.

Julie spent about ten miles trying to photo them. Trying to turn on her phone camera. Trying to photograph the rainbow and not the windscreen wiper. At one point she said "wow, that lightning was bright." "No darling, it was the flash on your camera."

An orange rainbow is not a sign of hope and promise. First the A1 Doncaster bypass was shut. I have now driven through Doncaster (I can tick Doncaster off my bucket list, though the Minster church looks worth a visit sometime).

Then the A38 was shut south of Ripley, so they sent us down the M1 to the A52, adding another 20 miles or so to the journey. There are roadworks starting just south of junction 25 (the A52 exit), so they start slowing traffic down and getting you into the right hand lane quite a long way north. The overhead gantry just before the junction displays the large red X in the three left hand lanes, so all traffic has to be in the right hand lane. No traffic should be in the lane with a red X.

The junction is still open. You can still exit the motorway. But only by going back across the three lanes that are marked as closed. This country seems incapable of getting any message right.



Red X the 'lifesaver' sign

A red X shows that a lane is closed and MUST not be used. This is so we can manage an incident or roadworks while creating a safer environment for road users and road workers:

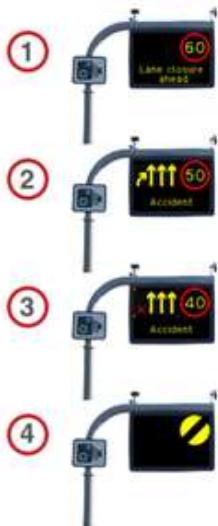
- Driving in a lane with a red X sign is dangerous both to you and anyone working or stopped on the carriageway ahead.
- We sometimes need to set red X signs far in advance of an incident in order to provide access for emergency vehicles.
- Digital cameras can be used by the police to enforce the red X sign.

The red X can be displayed on signs above each lane or large signs on the verge of the carriageway. The illustrations to the right show a typical sequence of signs we use in order to safely manage incidents. Any of the lanes may be closed by a red X and arrows will show the next available lane.

Never drive in a red X lane!

Red X signs on a smart motorway - what you'll see

Verge mounted signs



Signs above each lane

