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Winter 2017-18



All Saints' Cottenham

£1.50

A view from the Rectory

A message from our new Priest-in Charge, the Reverend Lynda Davies



A very Happy Christmas and New Year to you!

After the lovely Licensing Service in October, I am absolutely delighted to be celebrating Christmas with you and look forward to all that 2018 will bring.

Over this next year we look ahead to the re-ordering of the church, which will create a much more flexible, usable space in the nave. Phase 1, the new dais with the specially designed

Communion rail will be in place for Christmas, with Phase 2 starting in January and being complete in time for Easter. Our time worshipping in the Church Hall will provide much opportunity for us to think about how we want to use the new space once we return to the church in March.

Continued on page 2

A view from the Rectory continued from page 1

Other challenges for 2018 are welcoming members of All Saints' Rampton as we become a united parish (Cottenham with Rampton), and thinking about how we grow the church, both in depth of faith and in number. Three new Action Groups are being formed: one looking at how we help each other to grow in our faith; another looking at how we help people come to faith; and the last focusing on how the church can be best resourced to grow in faith and numbers.

As you'd expect a vicar to be, I am passionate about reaching out to those who do not yet know Jesus, particularly the younger generations. If you think back to the age you were when you first made a commitment to follow Christ, it's likely to have been before you were aged twenty-five (this is the case for 85% of all Christians). But when you discover that nationally, under twenty-fives make up a mere 5% of most church congregations, you realise the enormity of the task.

All of the research about what makes churches grow tells us that we have to focus on children, young people and families as they are the group currently missing from our churches, but we also know that we have to meet the needs of older folk who have been the mainstay of church congregations for many years. I love worship that is more relaxed and contemporary, but I also love the awe and wonder of traditional worship. The key seems to be about doing both well and reaching out to people of *all* ages.

The fact that the Ely Diocese is also serious about church growth was a key factor in my decision to apply for the post of Priest in Charge, so I look forward in 2018 to working with you all, celebrating what we do well, and thinking about what we could do differently in the future to grow the church, both in number but also in depth of faith.

But we know that we can't do any of this without God. Whilst it's our responsibility to produce the conditions for growth, to make our church as welcoming as we can - we are *utterly* dependent on

All Saints' Choir usually practises in All Saints' Hall on Fridays from 7 to 8 pm, but dates and times can vary. New members are always welcome. For more information, contact Frances Horgan (franceshorgan9@hotmail.com).

All Saints' Bellringers practise in the bell tower most Wednesday evenings 7.30 to 9 pm. New members are always welcome: if you would like to chat about it, call the Tower Captain, Simon Wilson (251105).

The **Daytime Discipleship Group** meets on Tuesdays at 1.30 pm. Anyone who is happy to study with small children present is welcome. If you are interested in joining, please contact Kirsten Burrows (kirsten.burrows@gmail.com).

The **Thursday evening Discipleship Group** meets fortnightly from 7.45 to 9.30 pm and includes a Bible study. Members aim to encourage and support one another and are always open to new members. If you would like to know more, please contact Pam Lumsden (251371, pam@mplumsden.plus.com)

The monthly **Fellowship Tea** is an opportunity for anyone to meet for prayer and a chat over afternoon tea. It takes place on the third Monday of each month in the Community room at Franklin Gardens from 2.30 to 4 pm. If you would like to know more, or if you require transport to and from the tea, please contact Sue Hooks (250560) or Maggie Appleby (200035).

ATTIC and **Does God Matter (DGM)** are run by Christians Together in Cottenham for 11 to 16 year olds and take place at Cottenham Baptist Church on Sunday evenings from 6.30 to 8.15 pm. **ATTIC** is a youth group aiming to provide fun activities in a relaxed, friendly environment and meets every 2 to 3 weeks. **DGM** is an opportunity for young people to meet together to chat about faith, life, 'the universe' and to share thoughts and opinions in a relaxed café style setting: this group meets 3 or 4 times each term. For dates for both groups please contact Steve Whyatt (01223 237874, stevew@genr8.org).

Please note that the 9.30 Service for young families, the Monday evening Discipleship Group and the Prayer Circle are pausing for now, whilst we reassess our groups and services.

Regular services and groups

The 10.30 am Sunday service takes place every Sunday in church. One Sunday a month is an All-Age service, other weeks are Holy Communion. See All Saints' Diary for the schedule for each month. Services always include hymns and are followed by fellowship with refreshments in the church hall.

Sunday School, for children up to Year 2, meets in All Saints' Hall during the 10.30 service, usually twice a month. There is no lower age-limit, and we have toys for tinies. Parents are welcome to accompany their children until they settle. We have stories, songs, games and craft activities, and re-join parents during Communion. For information contact: Sarah Ward (sarah@wardhome.me.uk). The **Samuel Group**, for Year 3 upwards, meets upstairs at the same time. For information contact Emma McCaughan (emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

The 8.30 am Sunday service takes place every Sunday in church. This is always Holy Communion without hymns. On alternate weeks the Book of Common Prayer is used.

Morning Prayer is held once a week in the Samuel Room in All Saints' Hall. The service lasts about half an hour. From January the day will change to Saturday at 9 am.

Wednesday communion services take place at different locations in the village on a monthly pattern. Details are published in the weekly and monthly notice-sheets.

Tuesday Church is designed for families with children of primary school age, but anyone of any age is welcome. They usually meet fortnightly during term-time, with games, drinks and snacks from 3.15 pm. The service is from 3.45 pm to 4.45 pm and includes songs, a story, craft and prayers. For information, contact Emma McCaughan (emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

Little Saints is a group for babies and pre-school children with their parents and carers. They meet in All Saints' Hall on Thursday mornings in term-time from 10 to 11.45 am. If you would like to know more, please contact Emma McCaughan (250827, emma.mccaughan@pobox.com).

God for its growth and we therefore need to be alert to what he might be saying to us. Through prayer, we need to listen to God for new plans and direction, and pray to him for their success. I think it's a very exciting time to be a Christian, and an even more exciting time to be a Church leader. Every period of decline in the history of the church has been followed by periods of growth and renewal, so there's much to be positive about!

On that note, I leave you with a New Year poem I came across on the Internet. The author is unknown but the sentiment true – we are indeed blessed to tread the path of this New Year in the presence of our God.

His Unfailing Presence

Another year I enter
Its history unknown;
Oh, how my feet would tremble
To tread its paths alone!
But I have heard a whisper
I know I shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."

What will the New Year bring me?
I may not, must not know;
will it be love and rapture,
Or loneliness and woe?
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;
I surely shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."

(author unknown)

From the Registers

We welcome into the family of the church by baptism
19 November Ivy Grace Richards

We rejoice in the marriage of
23 September Louise Watson and Paul Brown

We commend into God's care those who have died
30 October Mary Georgina Coe
17 November Cynthia Wiffen

Operation Christmas Child

Very many thanks to all those who helped in any way with the shoebox appeal this year. Two packing days were held in All Saints Hall in early November (see pictures below). In advance, goods were donated, hats and scarves were knitted and hundreds of shoeboxes were wrapped in festive paper. During the packing weekend, people helped by writing cards, checking filled boxes and providing refreshments.

Other people contributed by filling boxes at home or donating money towards the cost of transporting the boxes. In total, we filled over four hundred boxes, which this year will go to children in Belarus and central Asia who otherwise would have no gifts at Christmas.

Pam's granddaughter heard that money was still needed for transport and organised a cake sale at her primary school. Well done, everyone.



These included: the promise we have from Jesus that He will never leave us nor forsake us; the fact that God loves us ("I'm especially fond of you, Mack" was an oft repeated phrase); the fact that God loves all people (Mack asks about those who God is not fond of – surely there must be some? to which he gets the response "nope, I've not found anyone yet"); the importance of honesty and trust in a crisis – Mack was naturally devastated by his loss, but that was made worse by his related belief that this showed that God was not good.

There is also a huge challenge to us as Christians inherent in the story, and that is to follow Jesus' command "Do not judge." We need to learn better to love our neighbour rather than condemn him – even if he has committed grievous acts. God loves terrorists as well as Cottenham church-goers.

So what about the charge of heresy? It is my view that the condemnation stems from several misunderstandings: the film is not a work of theology – it's a story; there is never going to be an accurate portrayal of what God is like – we '*see through a glass darkly*;' and it's easy (and in my view an error) to set oneself up as the judge and criticise. I'm reminded of the Pharisees who saw Jesus heal a man on the Sabbath and, rather than being thrilled that the man was healed, they criticised Jesus for doing it on the wrong day. It's always easier to criticise others than get on with doing good. In conclusion I'd recommend seeing the film – but make sure you have tissues to hand.

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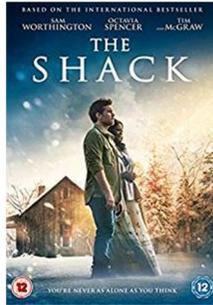
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Film Review: **The Shack** review by Mick Lumsden

The book by William P Young was published in 2007 and has sold over eighteen million copies. The film was released in 2017. Opinion is divided as to the merits of the book. Responses vary from cries of heresy to claims of transformed lives. Personally I found the book to be very moving and so was keen to watch the film (thanks to Emma for the loan of the DVD).

The film seeks to be faithful to the book. The story-line is of a devout Christian family who suffer a horrendous tragedy. The family struggle to come to terms with the horror and the question of "Why did God let this happen?" The story has been described as a modern day book of Job – "If God is good, why do bad things happen to good people?"



The focus is on the father (Mack). He descends into a state of depression described as the 'Great Sadness.' The rest of the family are suffering too, but he cannot help them because of his own great pain. Things begin to change when he receives a note, apparently from God, inviting him to a meeting in 'The Shack.' He goes along, and indeed meets with God and ultimately receives great healing.

It is difficult to know how much detail to give without spoiling the experience of reading the book or seeing the film for the first time. All I will say is that the portrayal of God is daring and controversial, with the Trinity characterised by three different people.

The critics have (predictably) responded to the film in exactly the same way as to the book. So what of my own views?

Firstly I did not think it was as good as the book. But I am struggling to think of any film based on a good book that does measure up. In that it was faithful to the plot and had (generally) a very good cast, I would have no significant complaints.

On a personal level, I think that the impact of the film on me was positive. I did shed tears at various points and was very pleased to be reminded of some of the wonderful things about our Faith.



The venomous Bead

Saint Bede of Jarrow (The Venerable Bede) was given the job of looking after the parish of Cottenham during the interregnum. During that time he wrote several letters to his old friend Trumwine.¹

My dear Trumwine,

Well, the waiting is finally over. Our new priest is with us, and her name is Lynda. Not, as you might naturally suppose, a Danish shield-maiden², nor even a refugee from the Lincoln area³. (I have realized that very little is to be inferred from a name these days.) Lynda is a (fairly) local girl, with a charming family and an impeccable background.

She is not tall. Perfectly visible to the naked eye, of course, but definitely not a large lady. But then, nor was Hilda⁴ if you recall. Now there was a woman to be reckoned with! Four foot three, with an eye like a basilisk and a bosom that had clearly been intended by nature for use as an occasional table. We young monks used to say that it could comfortably have accommodated an intimate little supper for a visiting bishop. Happy days!

Her lack of inches never held Hilda back, and I have a feeling that the same will be true of Lynda. She has a way of looking you straight in the eye and saying, "I don't see why we have to do it that way," that can stop the most dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist in his tracks. Her guiding principle, clearly and frequently articulated, is that "nothing grows without changing," and I can't imagine that many of her flock will be prepared to argue with her.

1 Trumwine was Bishop of the Picts from 681 and later a monk at Whitby.

2 *Lind-berende* means *shield-bearing* in Old English. Shields were traditionally made of linden (Lime) wood.

3 *Lindesege* was the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Lindsey, now part of Lincolnshire.

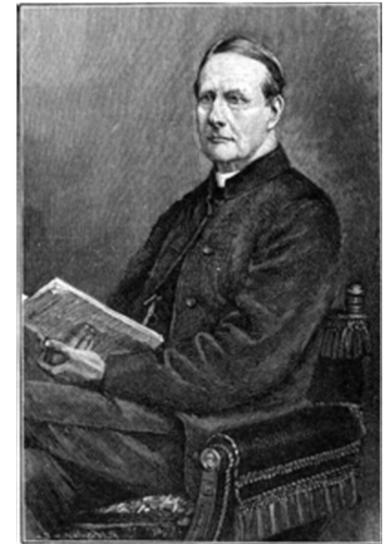
4 Hilda of Whitby (614-680), founding abbess of the influential Whitby Abbey, known for her energy and her wisdom. Bede was a boy at the time of her death, but could certainly have seen her.

The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould, Rector (sometime) at Lew, Once at a Christmas party asked, "Whose pretty child are you?"

(The Rector's family was long, His memory was poor, And as to who was who had grown Increasingly unsure.)

At this, the infant on the stair Most sorrowfully sighed. "Whose pretty little girl am I? Why, *yours*, Papa!" she cried.

(Poet unknown)



Finally, in the words of that prolific poet 'Anon', ***We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*** The origins of this well-known carol, which is traditionally sung by our own choir at the end of the Christmas Eve Carols by Candlelight, lie in the old English tradition where wealthy people of the community gave Christmas treats to the carollers who visited the great houses on Christmas Eve. Recorded as far back as 1740, the tradition of performing inside or outside in return for food and drink is illustrated in the short story *The Christmas Mummies* by Charlotte Yonge, in which

a group of boys run to a farmer's door and sing for "a pantry full of good roast beef, and barrels full of beer."

Personally, I'll stick with the figgy pudding!



Christmas carols continued from page 21

He also wrote the words to *Now the day is over* and *Onward, Christian soldiers*.

Named 'Sabine' (poor chap) after his grandmother's family, and 'Baring' from the family which later founded the unfortunate Baring's Bank, he only spent about two years in formal education. Most of his schooling came from private tutors whilst he accompanied his father on trips to the continent. He eventually ended up at Clare College, Cambridge, gaining a Master of Arts Degree, after which he took Holy Orders in 1864. He was appointed Curate of Horbury Bridge in West Yorkshire, where he met his future wife, Grace Taylor, a mill girl of only fourteen years old! It was arranged for her to live with relatives of his to learn 'middle class manners'! They married in 1868 – a marriage which lasted until Grace's death forty-eight years later. Grace was kept pretty busy, bearing *fifteen* children of whom all but one survived into adulthood – a remarkable fact of life in those days!

In his latter years, he returned as rector of Lew Trenchard, where he was the architect for his own house and the lovely church, and was buried in his own churchyard in 1924. With increasing age came failing memory, and considering the size of his family, I hope we can forgive him for the following lapse of paternal recognition ...



NOW THE DAY IS OVER
Words by Sabine Baring-Gould (1814-1914)



1. Now the day is over, Night is drawing in -
Shut out of the day, and bid a - dore the sky. A - men.

2. Jesus give the weary
Calm and sweet repose,
With Thy tend'ring blessing
May our eyelids close.

3. Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee,
Guard the sailors toiling
On the deep blue sea.

4. Thro' the long night watches
May these angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

5. When the morning wakens
Then may I arise,
Pure and fresh and sinless
In Thy holy eyes. Amen

A sumptuous licensing service marked Lynda's first official day in the parish. No pains, and no expense, were spared. The church was swept and garnished and bright with flowers and candles. The bells rang out, the organ thundered and the choir was in fine voice. The bishop was there, together with the archdeacon and enough clergy to satisfy the most demanding tastes; a positive pontification of prelates, you might say. And the laity (with ill-judged enthusiasm, in my view) pressed their new priest to attend Brownie evenings, bell-ringing practice, school assemblies and heaven knows what.



New Priest-in-Charge Lynda Davies with the Bishop of Huntingdon following the Licensing Service on 16th October

After the service, as the festivities continued in the church hall to the inevitable accompaniment of sandwiches and cake, I whispered to Lynda that here, finally, was her induction into the serious business of parish life. "Remember," I said, "that the five thousand probably wouldn't have stayed around if they hadn't been fed, and regulate your conduct accordingly." She smiled – I hope she believed me!

And now Trumwine, you must imagine your old friend shedding a tear as he writes his next sentence. The interregnum is at an end, my work here is done, and I am to be moved on. Who could have thought, this time last year, that I would be so sad to leave this little settlement of Fenland folk!

Continued on page 8



The Venerable Bede depicted at his desk in a twelfth century manuscript

We know better than to judge a book by its cover (although covers do matter, and I always appreciated the wonderful bindings we had at Jarrow), and I should not have been so quick to suppose that my assignment in Cottenham was intended as a penance.

God knew better than I did (which is only to be expected). I have seen Him at work in a thousand different ways throughout this parish, and I have tried to learn from Him. The community at All Saints will never be far from my thoughts and prayers, and I will take their spirit with me wherever I am sent.

(By the way Trumwine, have you heard anything about that? Any chance of a northern assignment? Just a thought!)

Ah well, no sense putting it off. "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly," as a modern poet has cogently expressed it.⁵ I shall be given a few weeks' leave, I suppose, so I shall hope to see you very soon. We will have lots to talk about.

Ever your own, Bede

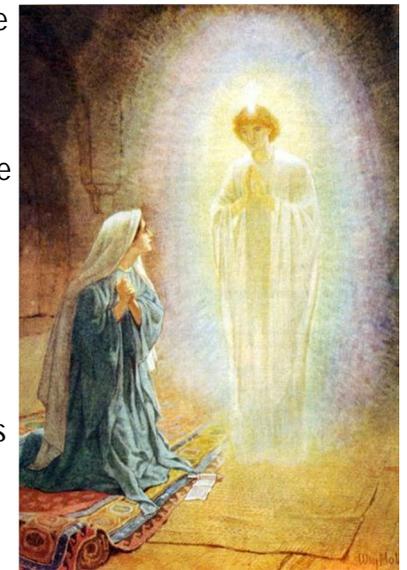
5 Shakespeare *Macbeth*, Act I Scene 7

governess, a prospect Christina dreaded so much she had a nervous breakdown.

In her late teens she became engaged to three prospective suitors – but married none of them. Devoting her time to developing her prose and poetry writing, she has left us, not only with the words to the beautiful Christmas carols, but a touching poem which I'm sure you must know from being read at memorial services – *Remember*. ("When I am dead, my dearest / Sing no sad songs for me . . .")

We covered the musical setting of *In the bleak midwinter* by Gustav Holst in a previous issue. There are a number of settings for *Love came down at Christmas*, including one by John Rutter. As a footnote, you might be interested to know that J.K.Rowling took the title of her novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* from a line in Christina's poem *A Dirge*.

The **Rev. Sabine Baring Gould's** life is a story in itself (he was an Anglian priest, a noted antiquarian and archaeologist, folksong collector, eclectic scholar, prolific writer – at one time having more books listed under his name than any other British writer – and architect – designing his own house and the lovely little church at Lew Trenchard, and even inspiring George Bernard Shaw to write *Pygmalion* which in more recent times was adapted into the much loved *My Fair Lady* – the list goes on!) but to how many of us is his name familiar today? Born in 1834 to the Lord of the Manor of Lew Trenchard in Devon, he is responsible for two of our loveliest Christmas Carols – *Sing Lullaby* and *The angel Gabriel from heaven came* also known as *Gabriel's message*, which he translated from the original French.



Continued on page 22

Christmas carols continued from page 19

Now for something more gentle – **Christina Georgina Rossetti's** *Love came down at Christmas*, and *In the bleak midwinter*.

Christina was almost a Christmas baby, being born on 5 December 1830. Sadly she also died at Christmas on 29 December 1894. Born into an artistic family with strong Italian connections, her father Gabriele, her two brothers and sisters were also poets and artists. The most famous was the brother Dante Gabriel, an artist and founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – using Christina as his model in his painting *The Virgin Mary's Childhood*.



The Virgin Mary's Childhood painted by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Christina was an imaginative child, dictating her first stories to her mother before she could even write! Her Poetry brought her recognition, as after the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, she was hailed as the foremost woman poet of her age. Financial difficulties in the family forced her sister Maria to become a



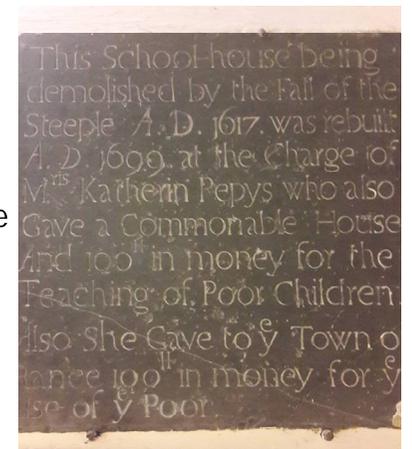
Tower commemoration

by James Miller, deputy Tower Captain

As many of you will know, a momentous event occurred in Cottenham in 1617 when the medieval spire of All Saints Church fell during a storm and crushed the nearby school house (fortunately at night so avoiding any injuries!). The date of 1617 is recorded by contemporaries in graffiti numerous times around the lower stonework of the tower. The distinctive tower which we know and love so well today was duly raised in its place.

Despite some considerable effort by the ringers to research this event, the exact date that the spire fell in 1617 remains shrouded in mystery! With no more than a year to go by we have chosen the 9th December 2017 to attempt a peal to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary.

A peal requires approximately three hours of ringing with a complex combination of changes - different ordering of the bells - which provides a stern physical and mental test for the six ringers. In attempting a peal it is far from certain that it will be completed, but if achieved it will be a fitting commemoration of what must have been a truly notable event in Cottenham four hundred years ago.



Is my free will an illusion?

A talk given by Dr Harvey McMahon, who leads a group researching neurobiology on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. This formed part of the series *Science meets Faith* and is reported by Joe Webster and Mick Lumsden.

It's an age-old question, isn't it? Is the future entirely determined or can I choose? As soon as you start contemplating this question, many more arise, one of which is this: What do faith and science have to say? It is this can of worms that Dr Harvey McMahon was brave enough to open up at the November session of Science meets Faith.

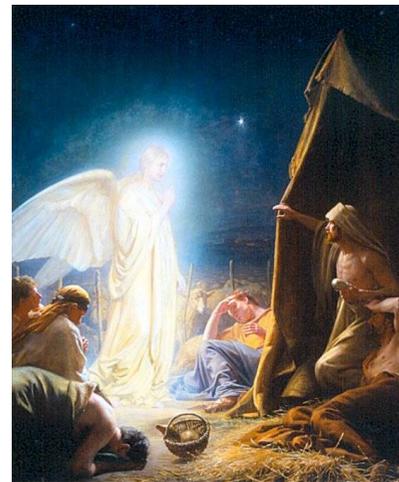
Joe's first challenge was to answer the apparently simple question of whether he could choose to go. He had already booked a place at an online seminar. Did this mean that he was committed to a prior engagement, or could he choose to change his plans? Partly in order to prove that he had some element of free-will, and partly because Mick kept nagging, Joe decided to attend. Either that or the workings of the deterministic Universe forced him to, or Almighty God decided he would, or it was Fate or maybe it was purely random. It did *feel* like a decision, but how can one be sure?



The good Dr McMahon did his best to clarify some of the issues. He made the perfectly reasonable point that there are circumstances in which it is obvious that free-will does not apply. His meticulous definition of free-will is "the ability to choose deliberately between options". Doing something physically impossible is not an option. Choosing an option without thinking about it is not an exercise of free-will.

Firstly he talked about situations where we act in some way but no choice is involved because the response is automatic. He cited the example of reflex response: a blow on the knee will make you

Nahum Tate (1652-1715), Poet Laureate of England to the court of William and Mary, was born into a family of Irish Puritan clerics. His father, Faithful Teate, was unpopular after he passed information to the government about plans for the Irish Rebellion of 1641. His house was burned and the family attacked. After graduating from Trinity College Dublin, Nahum moved to England and made a living by writing. Best known is his libretto to John Gay's *Beggars Opera* which took London by storm. His intemperate living as a drunkard and spendthrift led to his downfall and he died in a debtors refuge in Southwark.



While shepherds watched first appeared in print in 1702, arranged to the 16th century tune Winchester Old – the most familiar of very many settings we have today. Until 1782 it was the only Christmas carol authorised by the Church of England. Before 1700 only the Psalms of David could be sung. Tate started making his own translations, which did not go down too well . . . "As long as you sung Jesus Christ's Psalms I sung along wi' ye, but now that you sing Psalms of your own making, you may sing by yoursels."

Today there are literally dozens of tunes to fit the words – many of them folk songs. Up in Yorkshire we sing them to *On Ilka Moor bah't 'at* (a warning that if you go on Ilkley Moor without a hat you'll catch your death of a cold). Or you can revert to the childish favourite of the shepherds washing their socks...

Continued on page 20

Christmas carols

Continuing the series by Pat Labistour on our favourite hymn writers

First in this selection is **Cecil Frances Alexander** (1818-1895), and yes, she is a lady. Born in Dublin, she began writing verse in early childhood. Famous for the many hymns she wrote with children in mind, probably the most familiar are *All things bright and beautiful*, *There is a green hill far away*, *Jesus calls us o'er the tumult of the world's tempestuous sea* and *Once in Royal David's City*. Her collection of over four hundred *Hymns for Little Children* reached its 69th edition before the end of the century.



Married to the Archbishop of Armagh, she devoted all the profits from her publications to good causes, founding a school for the deaf and dumb, developing a district nurses' service and supporting the Derry Home for Fallen Women! Her husband wrote of her – "From one poor home to another she went. Christ was ever with her, and in her, and all felt her influence." Very humble, she did however, when on one occasion someone told her of the way one of her hymns had converted a man from his bad past life, apparently jump to her feet exclaiming "Thank God! I do like to hear that!"



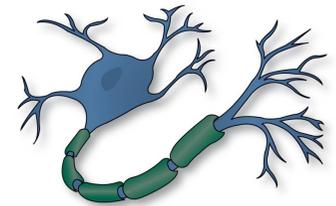
move your leg involuntarily. Likewise, if you touch a hot stove, you will pull your hand away. And we have only limited free-will with regard to breathing! Similarly there is no freedom in a situation of total randomness; Dr McMahon mentioned a nervous tic as being an example of a random action not under the control of free-will.



He envisages a continuum from randomness (no constraint on the future) to determinism (future totally constrained, whether predictable or not). At each end of this spectrum there's stuff you can't control, but in the middle it appears to be different and there may be scope for some freedom.

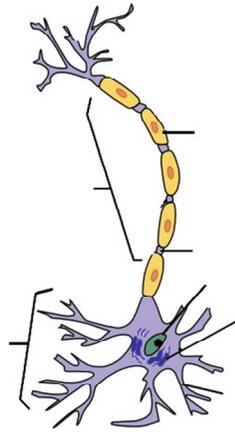
From this point on, Dr McMahon takes it as given that a power of choice exists. This is consistent with Biblical teaching, from God challenging David to make a decision in 1Chronicles 21:11 to the stark choice implied in James 4:4. It also underpins the whole concept of culpability under the law. If there were no power of choice, law would be meaningless, and so too would be the Bible – but what of science?

As far as we are aware, there is, as yet, no scientific theory for a mechanism by which free-will can operate. However, the vast majority of scientists implicitly accept the idea of free-will; as human beings, they instinctively believe that their free-will is real. From a scientific perspective, it makes sense to consider the operation of the brain. Dr McMahon sees this as the infrastructure which provides for our decision-making abilities. Although he said very little about the actual operation of cells within the brain, he did point out three fundamental characteristics of the brain: stability, integration potential and plasticity. These allow us to retain and analyse memories and to learn. We can also develop new behaviours.



Is my free will an illusion continued from page 13

These abilities are constrained, however, not simply by the fact that you can't choose to do the impossible but also by the consequences of earlier choices. In the same way that in our early years we have to concentrate on learning to walk and to speak but these things become automatic through practice, so habits that became established initially through conscious choice eventually become so automatic that it becomes virtually impossible to act differently. The underlying mechanism is similar in that it involves the laying down of neural pathways.



If, then, our ability to choose is so constrained by our earlier decisions that our will is less free today, does that mean that we have no current moral responsibility for our actions? No! It seems that we have some control over the way our brains develop, and therefore our future choices. We are responsible for our actions even if they are inevitable consequences of choices made a long time ago, says Dr McMahon. So, if we have developed bad habits, we have to take the blame. Conversely if we have made it our practice, for example, to respect the law, we will tend to obey it automatically in the future.



Although most people agree that there are many situations in which we do not have free-will, we do in general have an ability to choose. We prize this power, but our choices are constrained not only by issues of physical impossibility but also by our relationships. The good mother, seeing her child in danger, will take huge risks to rescue her – action that would be considered foolhardy in other circumstances. The mother

Church notice gaffes

This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Thanks to Ken and Elizabeth Hewitt for this contribution.



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One way to join the choir continued from page 15

In addition to regular anthems we sang various pieces including Handel's *Messiah* on more than one occasion. The choir also sang for services in Ely, Bury St. Edmunds, Norwich and Coventry cathedrals. We also took part, for several years, in the festivals held in Ely cathedral in the spring and Kings college chapel in the autumn.



The choir in the late 1980s. All photographs supplied by Lynda Unwin.

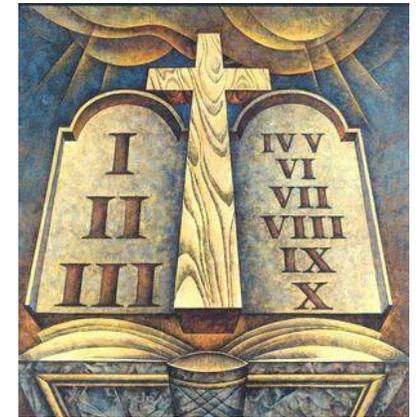
Christmas naturally involved the choir in carol singing. Usually we walked round the village on two evenings with most of the singing performed by invitation, with refreshments frequently available in the houses we visited. Most of us were still capable of singing at midnight mass!

And so we came to the time for retirement just as I was getting used to being a chorister after fifty-plus years.

would have had little choice; loving her daughter is part of her identity; it's what she does.

For the Christian, the relationship with God is the most influential factor; this, however, provides freedom rather than constraint as it actually frees us from society's pressures, its changing standards and its laws.

We are reminded that Jesus said "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). We are not constrained by the world: because of the knowledge that we are Children of God and secure in his care, we can break out of the world's chains and choose to do great things.



The *Science meets Faith* talks occur on the second Monday of the month at the Wesley church in Cambridge. For details of forthcoming subjects see <http://www.wesleycam.org.uk/sciencemeetsfaith.php>.

If you would like to attend but need help with transport, please contact Mick Lumsden or Graham Appleby .

One way to join the choir by Reg Young

My joining the choir was not in the recognised way. When attending an afternoon service, Canon Maurice, the Rector at the time, whispered in my ear, as he passed me on his way to the chancel, "Come to the evening service and we will fix you up with a surplice."

At the time the organist was Sidney Ingle who held no choir practices and the choir was really for appearances only. It was when Eric Shaw arrived and became organist and choirmaster that we were sorted out into parts, attended regular choir practices and began to lead the congregation.



All Saints choir in about 1960. Canon Maurice is seated centre front. Can you spot Reg among the choir men and his future son-in-law John Unwin among the boys sitting on the grass?

As we became more efficient we from time to time entered competitions. On one notable occasion we managed to defeat the police choir in a competition held in the Cambridge Guildhall. Our fears were that as a result we would all be punished and receive parking tickets!

The choir was also singing secular pieces and a concert was staged in the old primary school hall, which stood on the site of the present Cottenham library. We also organised the first concert on the stage of the village college. At this time we had in our ranks a quartet known as the Linnets. An obvious choice of a title with three girls named Lynda, Lynn Dunstan and Lindsey John together with Lindsey's sister Sally. Lindsey went on to marry professional singer Henry Herford. Lindsey, I recall seeing on television when she appeared in the *Val Doonican Show*.

When Eric Shaw moved on, we had a period when various people took charge of the choir until the arrival of David Warham. The choir then blossomed and at one point we numbered around thirty-two members.



The choir in the early 1980s.