

CONCORD ~ January 2011

Prayer for the Month ...

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity, give us grace to love the instruction you give us, and to long for what you promise us; so that in all the changes and chances of this world and in all the uncertainties of a new year, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true and lasting happiness is fixed and is to be found.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Northenden Rectory, Ford Lane. 0161 998 2615

Dear Friends,

Welcome to 2011's Concord ~ and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

You will notice that we are giving a month and a half's worth of diary dates in this issue. All too often, especially in cold weather, copies have not got distributed until well into the new month and this is an attempt to compensate for this, so that you do know what is happening. February's issue will start on 1st, but go on till mid-March, and so on. If you have diary items for inclusion, please let me know them well in advance.

You will also notice that the cover price is now **45** pence, as we warned you in November. That means that payment for the whole year at once would be **£5.40p**. We obviously hope that this will not put you off ~ the increase amounts to less than the cost of two second class stamps. Many, if not most, comparable magazines are 50p, of not more. If Concord is delivered to you by post you will have got a separate note of the cost. Some of you, especially if you have recently been married here, or have brought children for baptism, are receiving copies, probably without the diocesan part (*Crux*), for free. We do this to keep you in touch. If you would like to pay towards it we won't say no! But don't think you have to.

This coming year sees the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the bible. We mark this with an extended article. Magpie has been thinking about the weather (haven't we all!) and David Cameron has been thinking about Happiness. So with the wish, "Happy new year" now read on.

Yours faithfully, **Greg Forster** (Rector)

The Children's Society ...

... has a charity shop at 356 Palatine Rd.

Normal opening hours are 9.00am – 5.00pm.,
with a range of Good-as-New goods, especially books.

There is also a wide selection of new, end-of-run, wallpapers.

Volunteers are needed in the shop; contact Debbie on 945-7384

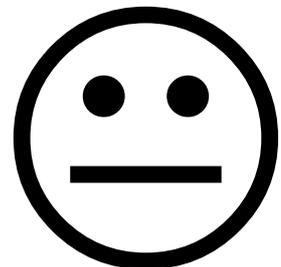
HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Greg Forster

Yes, Happy New Year! The phrase, like happy Christmas, trips off the tongue, and is no doubt well meant. But what do we mean by it? There was a certain amount of amusement and hilarity when the Prime Minister suggested that from April 2011 there should be an index of happiness published for the country, alongside the Retail and Consumer Prices Indices and the like. Did that hilarity mean that the policy was a success even before it was implemented? The ramifications are endless; will there be a ministry of happiness? what should it be called? the Department for Happy Affairs? (rather ambiguous) the Happitry? (like the Treasury). And who might be the minister? They could put Ken Dodd in the Lords and give him the job, perhaps. And there could be new University departments devoted to it (no, I don't mean the student bar) offering differing degrees of happiness.

It is easy to smile at the idea, and not take it seriously, but (joking apart) there *is* a serious side to it. It is part of the well-being of society and it is good that Government should recognise that there is more to life and its purpose than economic success and growth. And the topic of happiness had indeed been the subject of learned debate as well as cynical comment for centuries. The University departments concerned are usually Philosophy, not Economics or Politics.

Even so, I am tempted in my more sceptical moments to say, "How sad!" and suggest that anyone who has to ask whether they are happy undoubtedly is not. It is like digging up a tree to see whether its root system is thriving! We are perhaps at our happiest when we are so absorbed in what we are doing, whether a long term project or a short term activity, that we forget about how we feel. But am I right to think





of happiness as this absence of self-conscious self-examination, or even to look at my own feelings at all? How should we think of happiness, even before we measure it?

When I referred to Ken Dodd earlier it was not a random choice. Thanks to the wonders of modern technology I have been able to consult that song of his, *Happiness*, which he sang for our diddification back in 1964. *I've got no silver, ... he sang; happiness to me is an ocean tide, ... a sunset fading on a mountain side, ... the arms of one I love, ... measure my success by counting ... my happiness.* and so on. And the chorus? *I thank the Lord that I've been blessed.* The song still looks at the singer's feelings and experiences, but sets them in the context of a beautiful and generous world and recognises that it is in that beauty and in the relationships which colour it that happiness is to be sought, not in monetary success or fame. It recognises that such happiness is a blessing, a gift from God. Perhaps he's got it about right.

One of the old Greek philosophers said "Call no-one happy until he is dead!" Cynic! But he was right to look beyond success which could turn sour, or jollity that could turn bitter. He was looking outside the person's immediate experience for some absolute, and "true" happiness that is not dependent on our feelings at the moment. He thought of happiness in terms of the person's whole life, looked at from beyond. I think there is something in that, but I want to take it further. Who sets the standard for "happiness"? Is it set by human evaluation, or God's perspective?



There are actually a number of places in the Bible where happiness is defined ~ except we don't always realise this because it is hidden in churchy language. We call them "beatitudes". Maybe we should re-christen them "happiattitudes". And they are stating what gains God's approval, not what we necessarily feel. *Blessed are those who mourn* is not saying that when you are sad you are really jolly; it is saying that God cares. When Jesus said *You are blessed, you who are poor*, he is saying that God understands, is listening and is on your side, and will reverse what the world sees as success when his kingdom comes ~ and it begins when we start thinking and treating each other that way now. **Happy New Year!**

Northenden Methodist Church

Minister: The Revd. David Bown,
5 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden, M 22
0161 – 998-2158

Sunday Services.

- Jan. 2nd 2011 11.00am Morning Worship: The Rev. David Sanders
9th 11.00am Mr. Duncan Rutter
6.30pm **United Service** @ Methodist Church
(avoiding the aftermath of the New Year.)
16th 11.00am Mr. Nic Harding
23rd 11.00am Mrs. Mary Langton
30th 11.00am The Rev. David Bown
Feb. 6th 11.00am Morning Service
6.30pm United Service @ St. Wilfrid's
(There are some odd entries in the programme here ~
listen out for possible corrections or changes!)
13th 11.00am Holy Communion The Rev. D. Sanders

Community Lunch

Weds. 12th Jan. 12 noon – 1.30pm

Also Weds. 9th Feb. ~ to be confirmed.

Fun Bingo

Last Saturday of the Month (29th), 12.00 noon - 2.00pm.
(to be confirmed in weekly notices)

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) South Manchester Meeting

There is a meeting for worship

at the Friends' Meeting House, Wythenshawe Rd.,
at 10.30am every Sunday.

Children welcome. *Details from Roger Hensman, 980-5158.

The main hall and smaller rooms are available for hire;
~ contact Peter Todhunter (Meeting House Warden) 834-5797,

St. Wilfrid's Church, Northenden.

Ford Lane, M22 4WE

Rector ~ the Revd. Greg Forster,
Northenden Rectory, Ford La., M 22 4NQ
Tel. 0161 998 - 2615

Email; gsf @ stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk

Services:

On Sundays there will be a communion service at 8.00am.

On Thursdays at 10am there will also be a communion service.

We run "Scramblers" ~ which I mustn't call a Sunday School ~
for children from 3½ to 7 ~ in the Church Hall, ...

... and "Sunday Club" ~ for children from 7 upwards ~ in the
Rectory between 10.30 and 11.30am Sundays ...

... except 2nd when there is a Family Service in church.

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|------------------------|---------|---|
| Jan. 2 nd | 10.30am | Family Communion & Carols |
| | 6.30pm | Evening Worship (@ St. Wilfrid's) |
| 9 th | 10.30am | Holy Communion |
| | 6.30pm | United Service @ Methodist Church |
| 16 th | 10.30am | Holy Communion + |
| | 6.30pm | Evening Worship |
| 23 rd | 10.30am | Holy Communion. |
| | 6.30pm | Evening Worship |
| 30 th | 10.30am | Morning Prayer |
| | 6.30pm | Holy Communion |
| Feb. 6 th | 10.30am | Family Communion & Parade Service |
| | 6.30pm | United Evening Service @ St. Wilfrid's |
| 13th | 10.30am | Holy Communion ~ St. Valentine's Day |
| | | (Details next month ~ come specially if you were married here!) |
| | 6.30pm | Evening Worship. |

Drop in ...

On Sundays from 2pm till dusk the church is open,
for private prayer, for enquiries, or just to look around.

Dates for your Diary ~ it's all happening! (or not)

Jan. 2011 **No** Farmers' Market on Sat. 1st Jan.!

Mon. 3rd **No** Women's Group

Wed. 5th **No** Bible Study.

Weds. 12th, 19th, 26th, Bible Studies, 8.00pm, Rectory.
 Tues. 18th Meeting re facilities for teenagers in Northenden
 In the church Hall (small room). 7.00 ? pm.
 Thur. 20th PCC meeting, 7.30pm. Church Hall.
 Mon. 24th School Governors' Meeting.
 Sat. 29th Coffee Morning + books; Church Hall, 10 – 11.30am

February

Wed. 2nd, 9th Bible Studies, Rectory, 8pm.
 Sat. 5th **Farmers' Market**, 10 – 4.
 Mon. 7th 7.45 for 8.00pm Women's Group. Rectory
 Sat. 12th **CONCERT** Poynton Male Voice Choir
 In Church, 7.30pm details next month.

The Parish Registers

Baptised at St. Wilfrid's ...

Sun. 12th Dec. Samuel Evan Brooks,
 Faye Amy Norton, James John Norton, Zoë Louise Norton.

In Memoriam

Charlotte Hallett (Northen Moor),
 Ian Bennett (ex Chapel Rd.).

Women's Group.

The group will not be meeting in January, so the next date will be Mon. 7th February, 2011.

And that 240th birthday party!

Those of you who were at the December Women's Group meeting, which was billed as a Christmas Party, will know that it doubled up as a combined birthday party for Joyce Blackburne, Margaret Sherratt, and Joan Mycock, all of whom had significant birthdays in December:

Joan has written the following thank you on their joint behalf.

Joyce, Margaret and Joan would like to say thank-you to all our friends in the Women's Group for the surprise party and presents for their respective special birthdays.



Picture: A surprise card and present for Joyce Blackburne! (Sumi Sundar)

Magpie...

... has been giving some thought to weather forecasts lately. He knows that it has been bitterly cold ~ especially at the beginning of December ~ and he does not want to play that down. However, weather forecasting then ran into some problems. Prior to those weeks we had been suffering from weather inflation. The temperature dropped to 10° C (50° F), and the forecasters announced that it was going to be cold. It dropped another degree or two and it became very cold. Then it dropped a further ten or so degrees around us in Manchester, and they had run out of superlatives. Even where it was still colder, what were they to say? And because we had been told that 50° was cold (when in fact it is about average for the time of year, and not too bad really, so long as you put on a coat) we all thought we were in Siberia or somewhere like that. For the record, when it was "very cold" (8°) here, Magpie's spies in St.Petersburg told him it was about 4° there, and in Calgary it was -25° with wind-chill bringing it down to -30°. Now that *is* cold. You don't need superlatives; just say it "**COLD**".

... was talking with a friend recently, when a text message came through on the friend's mobile. (Yes, Magpie does know a bit about modern communications) It shared the stunning news that in a recent survey, six out of seven dwarves said they were not Happy.

... last month Magpie mentioned the hope of some facilities for teenagers at or near the Riverside Park. The City parks and leisure people are holding consultations about a skate park, or similar, in the area near Palatine Rd. The meeting in December was postponed due to the (imagined ?) cold and (genuine) ice. There should be a re-run in mid-January. Watch out for publicity. Any ideas, especially from teenagers, to Magpie, or your councillor, please. And note the meeting, probably to be on Jan. 18th in St.Wilfrid's Hall

The Grandeur of the Authorised Version

2011 sees the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible. We are already hearing and reading pieces by the great and the good championing its merits ~ which are many. For its day it was an excellent effort and it has shaped both religion and language in Britain since 1611. However, not is all that it seems. This article,

which I wrote in 1980,

when the Alternative Service Book was being introduced, suggests that the AV, and to a lesser extent the BCP used language in a rather different way from Shakespeare, with whose splendours they are often compared. Whatever the merits of each of these corpora of literature, it is a mistake to bracket them together as all of a single kind. Hence my title for the piece ~ “The Languages of Cranmer and Shakespeare.” I have made some minor stylistic corrections to my original text, and there are a couple of comments (in this typeface) indicating where I have gained additional information.

Greg Forster. 24th Nov. 2010.

THE LANGUAGES OF CRANMER AND SHAKESPEARE.

Comparison is often made between the language of Shakespeare and that of the King James Bible (AV) and the 1662 Prayer Book. So I decided to look more closely at some Shakespeare, and compare the three. I used Henry IV part ii, partly because I had a copy to hand, and also because it moves from palace to pub quite freely, and might be taken to reflect English usage in 1597 at various levels of society. It does not, however, reflect dialect variations, so far as I can see. The Northerners in the play are not obviously using language different from the Londoners.

I honestly found it difficult to follow, despite the fact that I once acted in it, and have read it in this light before. I am sure that even with slow reading I missed many of the jokes, and much of the nuance in the more serious speeches. While not a foreign language it was strange language to me. This would be partly due to the change in the meanings of words, or their lapse from use altogether, and partly because of the change in patterns of speech and sentence construction.

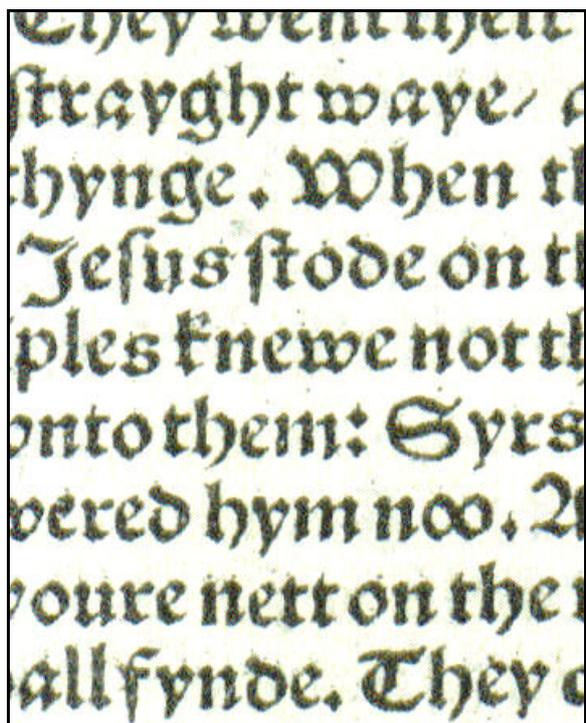


James VI & I, from an official portrait

I now understand, too, that Shakespeare invented many words which did not in the end enter the common language.

Henry VI ii dates from c.1597. The Book of Common Prayer

dates for the most part from 1552, though it was reissued in its present form in 1662. Over this span of 110 years the English language changed considerably. 1662 BCP does not correspond to the language of Pepys' diary, but then it is not likely to have done so, belonging a century before. But neither does it correspond to the language of Shakespeare only half a century after Cranmer. I will demonstrate this with reference to the very obvious indicators of verbal forms and personal pronouns.



Part of a page of Tyndale's Bible, 1526

BCP uses *Thou* and *Thee* at all times as the second person singular with the verbal ending *-est* or *-st*. In the second person plural *Ye* is the subject, and *You* the object of verbs. In the Third Person singular the verbal ending is always *-eth* or *-th*, in the present tense. Shakespeare's use is different, and more complex. *You* is both nominative and accusative in the plural. The 3rd sing. ending is usually *-es* or *-s*, except in words like *doth* and *hath*, which are somewhat irregular anyway.

Shakespeare's usage for the 2nd singular is complex. Even in a single conversation one speaker can shift from *you* to *thee* and back in addressing the same person. However, the following points can be made; i) *You* is the normal respectful form. An inferior addressing his superior will always use 'you'. 'Your Worship' is always the correct form, never 'Thy Worship'. ii) *You* also appears to be the correct form between husband and wife, as seen in Northumberland's talk with his lady. iii) *Thou* is used by superiors to their inferiors; a lord to a servant, or even the King to his son, who has just been caught, as it seems, stealing the crown ~ but also after he is forgiven. iv) *Thou* is used disparagingly. The prince addresses his father as *you*, but the crown, scathingly, as *thou*. The archbishop of York, after addressing his fellow-conspirators as *You*, launches into a tirade against the vulgar mob (seen as a single individual) using *Thou*. Here I wonder whether Shakespeare is also actually 'taking off' the new ecclesiastical language. v) *Thou* is

normal in pub banter, but is dropped when the landlady wishes to be polite to her customer. vi) *Thou* is the form between 'buddies'. Poin addresses Prince Hal as *You* until the latter has shown that he is being pally, but later in the scene the Prince hints that come his kingship the palliness will be over, and Poin lapses back to *You*.

It is this last usage which is nearest to Cranmer's. It corresponds to the use in middle English (eg. Chaucer — a Londoner) in which *Thou* is the word of closeness, and *You/Ye* even in the singular the more distant. Cranmer's *Thou/thee* indicates the closeness of the worshipper to God and of the pastor to his flock. Even 50 years later this was becoming obsolete. It is retained now only in northern dialect (where correct use might be e.g. *Tha knows*, for BCP *Thou knowest*) where *You* is used for the outsider who may not know the dialect, and *Tha* with one's mates.

The mention of dialect brings out another point. Cranmer's book was a southerner's book. His use of *Thou/Ye* holds good for both Chaucer (southern) and the author of *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight* (North Cheshire). However the third person *-eth* ending is more distinctly regional; the north has always used *-es*, as seen in the *Gawain* Author's *-es* or *-eþ*. (*-eþ* = *-es* in plural nouns). But Southern or Northern, Cranmer is clear in his preface that what he intended was that his language should be "understanded of the people". In that now so quaint and dated phrase he asserted that Latin or any other special churchy language was out, and that we should be able to talk to God, and hear his word, in ways that make sense to us. That principle still holds good, I believe!

So where, in all this, does the King James/Authorised Version bible come? It uses *Thou/Thee* for all singulars and *Ye/You* for all plurals. Thus it does not correspond to the almost contemporary Shakespeare, but superficially appears to match Cranmer, except that it draws no distinction between intimate and non-intimate conversations, honour or insult. I would suggest that its usage is in fact modelled not on English at all, but on Greek and Hebrew, which do not have this distinction between intimate and distant in the 2nd Sing. To ascertain this for certain one would have to study the documents indicating the intentions of the translators, and also of their predecessors. I have neither the pre-AV texts, nor the reference books, to go into this further. The bible used in the 1549 prayer book, like AV, follows 'translators' usage of *thou* for

singular and ye for plural.

But I have recently seen a copy of Tyndale's 1526 New Testament, in which the *ye/you, thee/thou* usage is the same as AV, and 3rd singulars are *-eth*. Its modern introduction describes Tyndale's tribulations as a refugee translator, but does not refer to his translation principles. His own preface is not reproduced.

What conclusions may be drawn from what I have said about use of those elements of our language in worship today? Probably nothing is proved directly, but a number of myths are removed.

i.) The modern use of *Thee* and *Thou* as exalted language either (rarely) in poetry or (more often) in hack verse, or in addressing the Almighty, is a complete reversal probably of Cranmer's and certainly of Shakespeare's intended usage.

ii.) One of the most significant contributions of the AV and its predecessors, and also the BCP, to the development of the English language is the *destruction* of the subtlety found in the Shakespearian use of *Thee/thou*, and so it paves the way for its complete abandonment in modern standard English except ecclesiastically. Such are the dangers of 'translationese'! Perhaps those matters are best left to the professors of English who indicated how they value of the BCP & AV in a petition back in 1980, but do not, so far as I know, include them in their curricula. In a recent radio broadcast, however, the former Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion, did in fact indicate that as a student he had studied the AV as a literary text.

We may evaluate the use of *Thou* and *You* in our contemporary worship, and if *Thou* seems right, in the light of its contemporary connotations, and the theology we wish to express, then so be it. For the record, I read once (but cannot recall where) that the first use of *Ye* in addressing God is in the 13th Century.

So we should not, think that by keeping the words of the BCP or the King James' Version we are holding true to their writers' or translators' intentions.

GSF 14 - 11 - '80

Some other incidental points arise from all this. I have recently seen a school display about the Ten Commandments, which among other quirks seemed to suggest that King James I was the *author* of the bible translation that goes by his name, including the commandments themselves. King

Jamie was a complex character, but even he did not, I think, claim that! Rather, when he became king of England, to keep the more Protestant element in the kingdom happy, he commissioned a revised translation which was eventually published in 1611 and was “appointed to be read in churches”. And sometimes it gets called the *Saint James* version. That king Jamie never was!