

**THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM
WITH HENSHAW
Parish Newsletter June 2020**



Remembering the role of military chaplains

June 27 is Armed Forces Day. When we were recently celebrating VE Day, and remembering the horrors of war, did you ever wonder what sustained our service men and women in the Second World War when no doubt they were gripped by fear or by loneliness? Many may have drawn support from a loving family at home, from letters to and from their loved ones, and Red Cross parcels. There is also the support to be drawn from their comrades, with strong friendships formed in the heat of battle. And we should not underestimate the support given by faith and prayer, and in turn, the role of the military chaplains.

In some ways, it is strange to think about the name “military chaplains”, as it might almost seem like a contradiction but of course they play a huge part in sustaining our forces. Some who served in that role during the Second World War were heroes in their own right, and returned to serve with distinction in parishes and diocese around the country. One such was the Right Reverend Launcelot Fleming, who became Bishop of Portsmouth and then Bishop of Norwich. He was also a renowned Arctic and Antarctic explorer, and in 1937 he had been awarded the Polar Medal by King George VI for his bravery and research.

During times of conflict, reflecting on their view of their role, one military chaplain said: “The army and the armed forces are the ultimate place where you can make contact with people who would never come into church, in situations where they will accept you where maybe they wouldn’t in the outside world – what an opportunity!” Another commented: “Jesus went into some challenging places, some tough places, where actually he wasn’t even wanted, but he went and I want to follow that model.” And yet another commented: “In a situation of violence, of despair, of evil, there is a need for

somebody to be an agent of the presence of God, and perhaps part of the function may be to humanise the army as much as possible.”

We are all too well aware now of the price which may be paid by our service people, not only those who make the ultimate sacrifice and give their lives in the service of their country, but those who return seriously harmed physically or mentally. But what are the messages that we might all take from these stories about war and death and suffering and injury?

First, we might reflect on the horrors of war, and be readier to give thanks for the freedom, the peace and the beauty that we enjoy daily. We might spare a thought for those service people still in areas of conflict and value and appreciate their service and sacrifice. We should applaud the support and love given to them by their families and comrades, and be thankful for that special breed of churchmen, the military chaplains. We should recognise the support our forces personnel give in times of need, especially remembering their role during the current coronavirus pandemic. And above all, we should continue to pray for peace and reconciliation between nations, so that suffering of the sort experienced in the Second World War would become a thing of the past.

How to Grin and Bear it.

This is a poem that I found when clearing out some family stuff recently. It has a pencilled note on it, saying that it was read at the conclusion of the meeting of the Women's Guild – my mother in law was a member of that Guild, so I imagine she got this copy in the 1960s.

There's nothing the matter with me
I'm as healthy as I can be,
I've got arthritis in both my knees;
when I talk, I talk with a wheeze;
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

Arch supports in my shoes for me feet,
or I wouldn't be able to walk down the street,
Sleep is denied me night after night,

yet every morning I find I'm alright.
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

The moral is this, as my tale I unfold,
That for you and for me who are now growing old,
It's better to say "I'm fine", with a grin,
than to let people know the shape we are in.

How do I know that my youth has been spent,
Well, my "Get up and go" has "Got up and went",
But I really don't mind, when I think with a grin
Of all the grand places my "get up" has been.

Old age is golden, I've heard it said,
but sometimes I wonder, as I get into bed
With my "ears" in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,
my "Eyes" on the table until I wake up.
Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself,
"is there anything else I can put on the shelf?/"

When I was young, my slippers were red,
I could kick my heels well over my head,
When I grew older, my slippers were blue,
but still I could dance the whole night through.
Now I am old, my slippers are black,
I walk to the shops and puff my way back.

I get up each morning and dust up my wits,
and pick up the paper and read the "obits".
If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead,
so I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

Answers to last month's quiz

- 1. Which actress played the Vicar of Dibley? Dawn French**
- 2. Who is known as the Vicar of Christ? The Pope**
- 3. What is the derivation of the word vicar? From the latin, vicarious, meaning a substitute or deputy.**
- 5. The name of the clergyman in Pride and Prejudice? Mr Collins**

- 6. Which clergymen have won the Nobel Peace Prize? Archbishop Desmond Tutu**
- 7. Architect who designed Coventry Cathedral? Basil Spence**
- 8. How many hymns did Charles Wesley write? Over 6000**
- 9. Who wrote the coronation anthem "I was glad"? Hubert Parry**
- 10. What did Archbishop Justin Welby do before he entered the church? He worked in the oil industry.**
- 11. In which month was St Cuthbert born? March**
- 12. Who is the patron saint of music? St Cecilia**
- 13. In which novel does Bishop Proudie feature? The Warden**
- 14. Who wrote The Vicar of Wakefield? Oliver Goldsmith**
- 15. Who created the character Father Brown? G K Chesterton**
- 16. What is the name of Gaudi's unfinished church in Barcelona? Sagrada Familia**
- 17. Religious order founded by Ignatius Loyola? Jesuits**
- 18. Who wrote Elegy written in a Country Churchyard? Gray**
- 19. Which female saint is associated with Whitby? St Hilda**
- 20. What was the name of the ship on which the Pilgrim Fathers sailed? Mayflower**
- 21. Where did Buddhism first come into being? India**
- 22. Shinto is the indigenous religious belief and practice of which country? Japan**
- 23. What do Jehovah's Witnesses call their place of worship? Kingdom Hall**
- 24. What does the name Benjamin mean? Youngest son**
- 25. What was the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy kidnapped in Beirut in 1987? Terry Wait**

During the period of lockdown for the coronavirus pandemic, we will not be publishing our usual Parish Newsletter. However, we will aim to publish something of interest each month for inclusion on the website and for circulation to those for whom we hold email addresses.