

## ***Fr Hoyal Writes***

### **LED BY THE SPIRIT**

St John's gospel gives us important and distinctive teaching about the Holy Spirit.

For example, it is only in John that we have Our Lord's teaching on the Spirit as the Advocate/Comforter/Paraclete sent to us from the Father by Jesus to lead us into truth and make the things of Jesus real to us. For this, and more on the Spirit, we owe John a particular debt of gratitude

But among the three synoptic gospels, it is St Luke's gospel which has most to tell us about the work of the Spirit, and Luke's invaluable sequel – the *Acts of the Apostles* – is even stronger on the Holy Spirit, as we have been reminded in our parish Bible studies of late.

As we prepare to enter the Lenten season we naturally return to the gospel accounts of our Lord's time in the desert and the temptations he experienced.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all place this desert episode immediately after Our Lord's baptism, all recording that the Holy Spirit descended upon him at the baptism.

Mark says that the Spirit then ***drove [Jesus] out into the desert*** and that *he was in the desert forty days being tempted by Satan*.

Matthew softens Mark's language, at the same time emphasizing the purpose of this episode. Thus Matthew writes that Jesus ***was led up into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil***, and (as Luke does) he describes the three famous temptations of Christ.

But both Matthew and Mark seem to understand this time of trial as a deliberate initiation test as he prepares to enter upon his active ministry.

Luke puts matters a little differently. He says that Jesus, **full of [the] Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and that he was led [over a period of time] by the Spirit [while] in the desert. So his baptism in water and Spirit at the Jordan ensures that, from the start, Our Lord is filled with the Spirit; he is spiritually prepared for the challenges ahead. Moreover, throughout his time in the desert Christ is led by the Spirit continuously, and this is a noteworthy and illuminating insight.

Whatever the respective historical merits of their accounts, there is spiritual wisdom in taking something from each of Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospels. They each have something distinctive to contribute as we embrace the Lenten fast – our time in the wilderness as we seek to make do with fewer material comforts and get serious with the devil and all his works.

We do not need to wander haplessly into Lent. Following Mark, rather we can let the Spirit himself actively drive us into our wilderness time. We can let our Lent be God's work for us as we submit to his urgent promptings, rather than paltry works of ours haphazardly fixed upon for little reasons of our own.

With Matthew we can understand that we are being led into the Lenten fast by the Spirit specifically as a time of trial and testing. It is something that will test our mettle and, if we keep faith, help temper us for future ministry and service.

Luke does us particular service by reminding us that the Spirit not only seeks to lead us into Lent. Thanks to Luke we know that the Spirit is equally eager to lead us throughout the time of our Lenten sojourn, as he did Jesus during his time in the desert. But for that it is as well that we enter Lent Spirit-filled, as Jesus did the desert.

In this connection it is worth reminding ourselves once more that Jesus's baptism is the immediate prelude to his time in the wilderness. Perhaps this means for us that renewal of our baptismal purity and spiritual wholeness through penitence, confession and absolution is an excellent way of letting God's Spirit fill us afresh in preparation for Lent.

So not for nothing our theme for Lent this year is “Led by the Spirit”. Both our Sunday morning addresses at 11 am Mass and our Tuesday Lent evenings from 7.30 pm at church will explore different aspects of what it means to be led by the Spirit both into Lent and in Lent.

There will be opportunities to reflect on the work of the Spirit as we look together at the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Bible, in the Church, and in the Christian life. A number of speakers will be giving presentations on these themes at our Tuesday evening meetings.

Hopefully, we shall enjoy a truly Spirit-led Lent. That means Spirit-led prayer, fasting and charitable action as we battle with all the too real temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil – first and last the temptations of Christ, and of us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## **THE NEW “9.30”**

Our new family service has started most encouragingly, and we are grateful to all who have given support. It was a joy to see a good congregation with a wide spread of ages at the first service. And it was a pleasure to see a happy mix of All Saints regulars and new worshippers relaxing over refreshments after the service.

The challenge now is to see that the worship is consistently of good quality, and remains meaningful and attractive for the adults and children it seeks to provide for. In this connection, fostering the service’s growth is an important factor. Numbers make a difference. Do please continue to commend this short, weekly, family-friendly service as widely as you can.

As we seek to consolidate the service, we shall remain grateful to those willing to cover 9.30 jobs in connection with the service, as least for the time being – please see the rota in the porch or have a word with the wardens.

Having a large enough pool of children and young people to draw on to take part in the service is a vital feature. Do see that youngsters and parents are duly encouraged. New recruits (with due parental backing) will always be most welcome. Liz Badman will be glad to hear about possible new servers, and Graham Davies will be delighted to meet possible new musicians and singers, both young people and adults.

The hope is that the service will frequently be a simple family Mass. – it is for the first time on Sunday 4 February. This may be of occasional benefit to 11 o'clock regulars if their weekend timetable makes it difficult to attend the Solemn Mass.

We are all asked to keep the new service in our prayers and to see that new attenders get a warm welcome at All Saints.

## **EPIPHANY 07**

Sermon preached at All Saints on the Feast of the Epiphany by  
Canon Peter Johnson of Bristol Cathedral

*On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother;  
and they knelt down and paid him homage. (Matthew 2.11)*

Throughout the season of Christmastide there run themes which reflect certain fundamental paradoxes which lie at the heart of

Christian faith. Paradoxes, or perhaps better, mysteries, secrets: things too deep for formal logic but which disclose to us something of God's will and purpose for mankind and the whole created order, something too of his very being.

“Today a wonderful mystery is announced: something new has taken place: God has become man; he remained what he was and has become that which he was not: and though the two natures remain distinct, he is one.” “He lay in the manger and still shone in heaven; he came to us, yet remained with the Father.”

And from such mysteries of divine disclosure there flows another mystery expressed in the Pauline teaching of the letter to the Ephesians (v. 6): “the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs...and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus in the gospel.” The mystery of God's self-disclosure leads to the mystery of salvation.

Always we are confronted with the paradox of the particular and the general: we simply cannot avoid it in our faith. God was incarnate in the man, indeed the male person, Jesus of Nazareth, for the salvation of all mankind; God's will had been made known to a particular people; the Christian gospel began its history in a turbulent province of the Roman empire and was initially conveyed in imagery drawn from a combination of Jewish and Hellenistic thought forms. And so on. The very theme of Epiphany touches the universal through the particular.

This particular man was born in Bethlehem, then brought up in Nazareth. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is a given, which needs explanation. It is not invented from prophecies, but understood and interpreted through them. Certainly, Bethlehem was the city from which David originated, so it is not surprising that "great David's greater son" should come from there.

The prophecy of Micah (about seven centuries before Christ) referred to by Matthew looks for a new David in Micah's own time arising to deliver the oppressed people. Bethlehem is described by Micah as one of the "little clans" of Judah: but Matthew changes this to say that Bethlehem is "by no means least among the *rulers* of Israel", in order to go on to say that the ruler who is to arise "will shepherd [God's] people Israel", which is a quotation from another part of the bible referring to David's rise to power (2 Samuel 5). So even the quotation Matthew offers about Bethlehem is a construct, with his own creative adaptation of the scriptures.

S. Matthew, from whose gospel our reading this morning was taken, frequently tells us that something occurred in order to fulfil a prophecy, although we ought to remember that all the gospel writers, and indeed the whole of the New Testament, insist again and again that the life of Jesus fulfilled the scriptures, that is, filled out the patterns of God's dealings with his people.

Matthew in particular applies a good deal of creative imagination to the way prophetic texts are understood and applied. That, for me, is one of the enduring fascinations and causes of wonder

before the mystery of Christ. We are confronted with this question: what was it about the life of Jesus of Nazareth, about his personality, which attracted such interest and retained it even through the dark depression of that final Friday? That is the modern question, almost biographical, and it is a fair question.

But there is a deeper question as well. What was there that could enable those who continued after his crucifixion or came to know Christianity after his crucifixion to believe that stupendous divine power had been at work in an utterly new way for which it was even worth, in many cases, putting their own lives at risk? There we move from historical enquiry to faith, for we after 2000 years are groping after and finding, we pray, an answer to the same question.

The point I am trying to make in all this is that there is a degree of theological creativity in our stories about Jesus, in order to point up by imagery the unique significance of Jesus of Nazareth, child and man. If Jesus were not of fundamental importance for anyone, why bother to tell these stories? And they are public stories, transparent stories—to use contemporary political jargon—because their very construction is open to both sympathetic and hostile analysis.

A star shone forth in the heavens above all stars; and its light was unutterable and its novelty caused amazement; and all the other stars with the sun and the moon formed themselves into a chorus about the star, but the star itself far outshone them all; and there was perplexity about where this strange novelty had come from. Every sorcery and every spell was dissolved from that time forward, the ignorance of wickedness vanished

away...and what had been perfected in the counsels of God began to take effect.

That is a quotation from bishop Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the Christians of Ephesus (*ad Eph.* 19) around 100<sup>AD</sup>. The star has fascinated commentators from the beginning; and astrology of course is much earlier than the time of Christ. Within the context of the time, our quotation shows the making known of God's new act of deliverance in his Son and the doing away of all falsehood. "What had been perfected in the counsels of God *began* to take effect"—that is also important for us today: the work is not completed.

The gospel reading for Epiphany contains the story of the star which discloses to the world the mystery which has been accomplished at Bethlehem. But it contains much else, told not in dry didactics but, like any good story, weaving its themes and images. Clearly, there is a fabulous element, because if the star stopped over the stable why did the magi need to go and seek directions from king Herod in the first place?

But their visit to the king also imports a sinister undertone as the tyrant believes himself threatened by a young child. Their trust in the king turns out to be misplaced. Moreover, Herod's request for them to let him know when they have found the child, so that he too can come to pay homage, must rank high in the lists for spin and duplicity. Around joy circles evil, waiting its chance—just as later the devil, having tempted Jesus and been rebuffed, went away biding his time.



On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. The magi find the child with his mother: his mother shows them the child. Here is another theme in the story: a paradigm of the place of our Lady in the economy of salvation: veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary must always be in a Christological context.

The theme of Epiphany as described in the *Book of Common Prayer* is “the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles”. It takes up the theme of Christ the universal saviour already hinted at in our Old Testament lesson. That passage refers to the restoration of all Israel from the ends of the earth to its homeland, with the glory of the LORD shining over Jerusalem, and the nations seeing its light and coming with tribute and gifts. Clearly, it is a partial vision since the triumph of God is seen in terms of national triumph. Yet it is part of the matrix in which the story of the magi arises; it is a pointer, for if the babe while embodying the hopes and aspirations of Israel embodies them for all mankind, then light for gentiles and tribute is appropriate.

Gold and frankincense are tributes from representatives of now superseded knowledge to him in whom those promises become embodied, the light shining in the darkness, the star outshining all stars. The gifts include myrrh, also a sign of kingship as in Psalm 45. Yet myrrh is also a costly ointment for burial: once again the destiny of the child is prefigured.

Of course, the crib with the baby and his parents and the shepherds and the animals is a most wonderful picture of unity among

mankind and in nature: it is a profound and powerful symbol; but it must do more than merely provide a feel-good experience; it must speak, and challenge to response.

We know how much sentimentality and *kitsch* have come to be associated with Christmas, and how difficult it is to avoid being saturated with Christmas carols before getting anywhere near December 25. Despite all this, our faith confesses that the birth of Jesus is the festival of the incarnation, the Word of God becoming man for our salvation as the Creed says; joy and pain are woven together.

So as we think of what the epistle calls “the great secret” disclosed to us, of God's redeeming purpose for all mankind in Christ, we think too of the call to each one of us to be instruments of Christ's peace, to show Christ not in triumph or advantage, but in love. And let us recall that what we in western Christianity call “Epiphany”, the Eastern churches call “Theophany”, which means “manifestation/showing/revelation of God”. What God has shown us, we must show.

Your Nativity, O Christ, our God, made the light of knowledge dawn on the world; for through it those who adored the stars were taught by a star to worship you, the Sun of righteousness, and to know you, the Dawn from above.

Today the Virgin gives birth to him who is above all being, and the earth offers the cave to him whom no one can approach. Angels with Shepherds give glory, while Magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a little Child, God before the ages.

*Apolytikion and Contakion for December 25 (adapted)*

What God has shown us, we must show. And he shows us himself now in this holy banquet, in the bread of his broken body and the cup of his shared covenant, as we proclaim his coming among us for our salvation and our renewal. “On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.”

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IN THIS MONTH...FEBRUARY 1932

Excerpts from the Vicar, Canon Gillson's notes.

Acting on the advice of the Diocesan Director of Sunday Schools, I have made some changes in the ages for Middle School and Catechisms. At her suggestion the children will go up to the Middle School at the age of eight and remain there till over eleven. At that ripe age they will advance to the Lesser Catechism which Fr Stothert is taking charge of. There they will remain for three full years in order that they may have a thorough grounding in the three subjects of Faith, Grace and Morals. That course completed they will be allowed to proceed to the more advanced teaching administered by Fr Buckwell in the Perseverance Catechism. There I hope they will remain, I am sure with profit to themselves and the Church at large, till at least eighteen. After that we hope to arrange for such as desire to continue their studies, something in the nature of Discussion Classes: one such for young women has already been started by the kindness of Lady Baron. That I hope you will agree is an excellent

scheme on paper, but it is comparatively easy to make such schemes. The usefulness of them, however, depends on the parents and children and young people in taking advantage of the various opportunities offered: I think we have a right to expect a good deal more support than we have had of late. I do resent children and young people being sent in to be prepared for Confirmation and the Communicant life who have received practically no previous instruction through not having availed themselves of the opportunities offered to them. It is not fair to them or to the Church in which they claim membership.

I am sorry to hear that our parochial finances are in much the same condition as those of the Nation: that is to say we are spending considerably beyond our income, a state of things we dare not allow to go on. It is unfortunate that at this moment the Magistrates should have descended upon the Parish Hall and compelled us to make two extra doors into the church garden, so providing six exits from a hall that seats 300. The work has to be put in hand immediately and will, of course, be a considerable expense. Under these circumstances I think we must revert to a plan which has often been adopted before in lean times, and devote our Lent savings to paying off our debts: in the past this source has produced nearly £100, so let us try our best to see what we can save for our church this Lent.

## Tribute to Molly Michael

I want to say a few words to pay a tribute to Molly, or Mum as she always was and always will be to Judith and myself. When you have known and loved someone all your life, and

some of you here today have known her longer than I have, it is hard to do justice to her memory in a few all too brief minutes. Although we are sad and have shed many tears during her long final illness, we should be celebrating the person and her long and full life rather than mourning her passing, which in all honesty was a merciful release from her suffering.

Molly touched the lives of so many people; as a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, a mother-in-law, a grandmother, a teacher, a friend and companion and as a parishioner and church warden of this parish. All of us lucky to have known and loved her were enriched by her ability to love and support without conditions but yet to guide and help with sensitivity and intelligence and general common sense. Mum was always solid and dependable. It is not only my physique that I have to thank her for.

No matter what life threw at her, no matter what challenges or indeed what tribulations she faced nothing fazed her, although when things were particularly difficult the humming used to get somewhat louder.

Born Mary Harborne Bayley in Hastings on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 1915, she was eldest of four children, born to William Henry Bayley a priest and Eunice Harborne Bayley nee Holt, who came from a banking family. I am delighted that my uncle Peter is with us today and that my cousin George is here to represent Mum's sister Lesley who is unfortunately not well enough to be with us today. Mum's eldest brother Roger pre-deceased her.

She was educated at home by a governess initially, then near Malvern and finally at the Abbey School in Reading, as her father had by then, become Rector of the parish of Bearwood on the outskirts of that city.

Teaching was Mum's chosen profession and she went to the Froebel Educational Institute in Roehampton, whence she graduated with 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours. Her first teaching job was at Croydon High School where she worked for a couple of years before volunteering to drive an ambulance in London in the build up to the Second World War. Either because the early days of the war were quiet on the home front, or because her skill in teaching was seen to be better than her skill in manoeuvring an unwieldy Leyland Ambulance, in 1940 she went back to teaching, at Leighton Park School in Reading a Quaker Boys Boarding School where she was the first and for a time the only woman on the staff. The following year Dad joined the staff, coming from a school near Cambridge where he had been teaching with Mum's brother Peter and come to know Lesley whose London College had been evacuated to Cambridge. Mum had little chance, and the rest as they say is history.

They got engaged in late 1941 and were married by her father, at Bearwood Church, on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1942. Looking through some old personal documents I came across a letter from Peter written from an RAF base in Ireland. I quote..."Darling, darling Molly I am so glad that this has happened. I'll wring Ian's blasted neck if he doesn't look after you as I think he should!"

Mum died at the age of 91, the day after their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, which was celebrated with a bottle of champagne in Mum's room at the nursing home. Although she was not able to join in the toast she would undoubtedly have vouched that Dad had fulfilled every expectation put on him by Peter in that letter.

Indeed one of the most important foundations of my life and of Judith's has been the fact that we were brought up in a family where Mum and Dad had an enormously strong relationship based on love, companionship and respect which persisted throughout, in spite of spells of temporary geographical separation and periods of ill health.

Mum went on to fulfil the difficult role of Headmaster's wife before resuming her academic career when we moved to Bristol, lecturing in a further education college. Subsequent moves to Malawi for 9 years, via Khartoum, London for 5 years and finally back to Bristol in 1978, for a well earned retirement for both Mum and Dad.

The last few years have been particularly hard with the remorseless progression of Alzheimer's reducing Mum to a hollow shadow of her former self. Yet Dad's devotion, encouragement and support never wavered. I will never forget the sight of Dad patiently helping Mum to tip over a playing card painfully slowly, as they struggled to maintain their regular games of Canasta in the face of increasing physical and mental frailty. Dad never gave up on or for

Mum, and in so doing and encouraging her, he was giving voice to her own indomitable spirit, which kept her going longer than many of us believed possible.

However let us not dwell on the last few painful years but remember Mum as she was in her prime:-

- 1 A sportswoman of some distinction who was introduced to Dad from the legs upwards as she came down stairs at the school. Legs that Dad later and unwisely, described as “hockey players legs”.
- 2 A teacher of natural talent and skill. Described as the “star” teacher at Leighton Park School.
- 3 A selfless and loving daughter who looked after her ailing parents when they moved into our family home in Bristol for over a decade
- 4 A mother and grandmother who provided love guidance and support to children and Grandchildren alike. Her ability to cook roast chicken to perfection, whilst holding a cigarette in her lips, sip a gin and tonic and discuss the latest problem at school or in adolescent relationships was legendary amongst my children. She taught them and me the basics of housekeeping and supported Grandchildren with the same selfless love and support that she gave to her children a generation earlier.



- 5 A lifelong Christian who devoted many years of her life to this church and congregation, becoming the first female church warden. She was still driving elderly parishioners to church long after I thought that somebody should be driving her.
- 6 A driver of panache, whose experiences with London Ambulances in the war had established a certain style at the wheel. Indeed one of the hardest things we had to do as Mum got frailer was to persuade her to stop driving. Dad decided that it would be best if he set an example by saying that he felt that it was time for him to stop. At which point Mum immediately used that as an irrefutable reason why she needed to continue driving. In the end the car had simply to be removed.
- 7 A person with a heart of gold, the constitution of an ox and a sensitivity for people and situations that typified what is known these days as “emotional intelligence”.

We will remember Molly for all that was so wonderful about her and how she touched other people’s lives. Let us celebrate her life and her memory, not mourn her passing.

JM

13.1.07

## *Churchwarden's Notes*

**1/1/7** Happy New Year, friends. There was a nice Mass this am for such as cared to attend, and I could see no puddles on the floor. I found this very strange, given that the previous night's weather had cancelled my son's planned entertainment and driven Button berserk so that I had little sleep. Odd.

What of the festivities, I hear you say. Candles. Oranges. Liquorice allsorts underfoot. Christingles. Yes, talking of Christingles: Grown ups, I hope you have learnt your lesson: you either advance when so bidden by the Wardens and collect your orange flambé, or you cannot see to read the next carol. Your choice.

I distinctly remember noticing that the Heavenly Twins have become even more Heavenly Triplets: aren't we lucky? And I am very grateful to them for the sterling work done as emergency sidespersons. But whichever one of you was wearing Turquoise knee socks in the sanctuary ought to think again. Just a bit startling, you know. Meanwhile, there is the intriguing story of the Demon Twins and the thuribles, but my lips are sealed.

**3/1/7** Standing Committee. Business transacted, we ended the meeting with the Grace. As soon as she heard these lovely words, Belle rose to her feet, stretched, and indicated that, for her, they carried a different meaning: Walk.

**6/1/7** Despite the rain, the Two or More Wise Men [or Kings] have made it to the Crib. Samson was in good form, but mercifully did not set the fire alarm off, though I saw several streaming eyes. I myself inhaled at the wrong time while singing and was wracked with paroxysms for several seconds. Belle's Pavlovian reaction came back to me at Communion. I chivvied my side ruthlessly, and managed to get to the Baptistry in line with the Senior CW (though he had jumped the gun and let his front row out early). So I let out my own

back pews .... and what did they do? They crossed over and joined Norman's lot. And Norman gave me a grin of pure triumph. Is this kind? or fair? or Christian?

**8/1/7** Someone has taken the Christ Child away. We are very sad, but we suspect that whoever it is needs Him.

**14/1/7** Lost Property. Today's mobile phone has been claimed almost at once, but has anyone lost one silverish dangly earring? Found in the Baptistery I think, over the Christmas period. That's where most of the scarves come from. Goodness knows what they get up to back there. The stock of scarves has diminished slightly, but we have a long way to go. Think! Check your wardrobes!

The Council has NOT taken our Christmas tree away. This may lead to further pyromania. They didn't take mine away either, so I am using it to prop up my fence that blew down. 'Blew down': such an interesting intransitive use of an otherwise extremely active verb.

Time to WD40 my beloved Midnight so that I may return for Evensong. Be good, and don't go out with an umbrella. Later: Mobile phone back in Lost Property. Should have taken it into Church in the first place and let it send forth a clarion call for its owner. Next time ....

**15/1/7** And on the subject of music, clarion or otherwise, we are enjoying Amos at Morning Prayer just now. He doesn't seem keen:  
Amos 5 23

Spare me the din of your chanting,  
Let me hear none of your strumming on lyres.

And 6 4 – 6

They dine on lambs from the flock  
And stall-fattened veal;  
They bawl to the sound of the lyre

And, like David, they invent musical instruments ...

Politically correct re veal, I grant you, but I thort David was Approved by the then Associated Board? Anyway, the owner of that mobile, now identified, had better watch out, lest this philistine outlook prevail.

**16/1/7** Stair rods, Birettas and Unbleached beeswax

This goes back a few days, but I only found the note in my pocket recently, and then I lost it again. It looks like the title of an avant garde novel\*, doesn't it. But it is actually a PERFECTLY LOGICAL train of thought. We had a funeral in church. It was raining stair rods. The arrival of a wondrous vision made me wonder, how waterproof is a biretta? Does Barbour make the ecclesiastical equivalent of my green waxed flat 'at? Answers on a postcard. Later in the day I described to an Oxford friend the church furniture involved, including six red wooden candlesticks. "And unbleached beeswax candles" he cried excitedly. "No" I replied, overcome with doubt and distress, 'ordinary candles'. O tempora, O mores. He was Very Upset and muttered about decline and standards slipping. I felt quite crushed.

\*"A la recherche des papiers perdus" perhaps?\*

Better get on with the report on the lighting, before we are down to wax tapers **16/1/7 7 pm** Mass, interesting scientific observation. There were several of us in the Richard Chapel tonight, and I was lurking right at the back. None of us could see or hear Fr Celebrant approaching, so we leant forward, front rows first, then relaxed,

then leant forward: an absolutely perfect wave effect.

\*\*Well I'm sorry. I do my best. My second language is not French, as anyone who has attended Morning Prayer would know. At least I *have* a second language, unlike some, who publicly mock the Ancient Languages.

**17/1/7** To the New Rooms to collect archives, including some goodies from Baptist Mills School, site of early preaching by J Wesley. One of these volumes included a letter which might well remind our Yoof how lucky they are to live now and not in the 1890s. It is a note to a parent, with the parent's response, accurately transcribed:

Dear Madam, Your little boy's birthday is put down as May on the infants' register, & October on this paper. If it is October, he is not yet old enough to be in Standard 1. Will you please tell Mr Bolam which is right?

Sir Oct 12 is wright (sic) he went to school at 2 ½ years old. A Randall

***Baptist Mills register, 1890s*** (not, I think, one of OUR Randalls.

When I arrived, a tall white haired gentleman was holding the gate into the courtyard open for me. I drove in, parked, and got out of Midnight, expecting to be greeted and led within. He had vanished. Moreover, all doors and gates out of that courtyard were closed and locked. Make what you will of that.

**19/1/7** To Liskeard, to the funeral of a friend who joined us briefly last year and loved our services. The Church, which is beautiful, is under the jurisdiction of the Simeon Trust, but the Priest in Charge had heard what would have appealed. So he borrowed thurible, boat, incense and stand from the local Catholic Church, learnt to use them, explained carefully what it all meant and censed the coffin. Bless his kind heart. People are so nice.

And you should just hear 'Thine be the glory' roared out in a powerful Cornish accent!

