

Fr Tubbs Writes...

It used to be called Whitsun. It was a major festival in the Church's calendar. It was marked in our Christian country, like so many other feasts, by a holiday. It had a 'Whitsun weekend', with a bank holiday on the Monday. Many traditions grew up around it, including Whit Walks, processions around the parish wearing your new clothes, preferably white, and Whitsun ales, when beer brewed by the church wardens was sold to raise money for the repair and upkeep of the parish church. Feasts and revels, fairs and well-dressing, all were part of the celebration of this feast.

The event which the feast – the second most important feast of the year, after Easter – commemorated happened on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which was a harvest feast when the first-fruits of the corn harvest were presented in the Temple. There were many pilgrims in Jerusalem for this occasion, and it was on this day that the apostles and others – one hundred and twenty in all, including the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1.14; 2.1) – were gathered together and experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a rushing wind and tongues of fire. The effect was immediate. From being men and women in hiding, they became powerful preachers of the Gospel, of the death and resurrection of Jesus. According to Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles, three thousand people were baptised; that might be a slight exaggeration, but it was obviously a pretty significant number.

For many, that is that. It happened; the Church of Christ came into being; people were converted. Yet that is *not* that! The promise of John the Baptist is that the Messiah would baptise with the Holy Spirit, and throughout the Acts of the Apostles we see again and again that amazing outpouring of the Spirit on those who became believers.

You and I received the same Holy Spirit at our baptism and again at our confirmation. He is still able to 'inspire' us – the word means to 'breathe into' – if we let him. Unfortunately we don't seem to want that, or expect that. Our level of Christianity, whether it is church every Sunday and sometimes during the week, or a monthly visit; whether we say our prayers if and when we remember or spend serious time in prayer;

whether we give conscientiously and sacrificially to the work of God in the parish or whether we put in our loose change in our pocket, we are often satisfied with that. Having the Holy Spirit stirring us up might upset our life-style. We might have to do more, say more, give more, devote more time, more energy, take on more responsibility. Let's just stay as we are. So we don't pray for God's gift of the Holy Spirit; we don't expect God's gift of the Holy Spirit; and deep down – or perhaps even consciously – we don't want God's gift of the Holy Spirit. We misquote Isaiah: Here am I, send someone else.

And that's fine. God knows where he is not wanted. He will never force himself on an unwilling person. He may give us some clues; he may nudge us in a number of different ways; he may make us wonder why we are not satisfied with life; he may help us to feel spiritually dry. But he won't come where he is not wanted, nor invited, not made welcome.

Yet on the Feast of Pentecost we shall pray for him to give us that Holy Spirit! We shall sing hymns asking him to come into us, to inspire us, to stir up his gifts in us. 'On the faithful, who adore/ and confess thee, evermore/ in thy sevenfold gifts descend'. 'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire'. 'O Holy Spirit...inflame, we pray our inmost hearts..', and so it goes on.

I hope that you will come to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost *expectant*. I hope that you will *want* to receive something from God on that day. I hope that you might remember your confirmation and the vows you made then. I hope you will ask God to rid you of any apathy that might be affecting you, and that you might dedicate yourself anew to his service.

So whether Whitsun or Pentecost, may it be an occasion of great rejoicing – unfortunately the church wardens won't have brewed any ale! – a time of renewal and a chance to ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you anew for God's work where you are.

Yours sincerely

SERVICES

May is a busy month! In addition to our Sunday services and our usual weekday services, there are two major feasts.

The Ascension of Our Lord, Ascension Day, is on 1 May, and there will be a Sung Eucharist at the Parish Church at 7.00pm on that day.

There isn't much ritual attached to Ascension Day. There was a time when the Paschal Candle was put out, slowly and dramatically, after the Gospel, but now that we emphasise the Fifty Days of Easter rather than the forty days up to Ascension Day, that has disappeared. However, it is still an important – and a lovely – feast, and I hope you will make the effort to be there for it.

The Feast of Corpus Christi, Latin for the Body of Christ, is a feast in honour of the Eucharist. Instituted in the thirteenth century, it reminds us of the great grace of God in that his Son Jesus becomes present on our altars under the forms of bread and wine. So at Corpus Christi we celebrate the Eucharist – not surprisingly! – and give thanks (which is what the Greek word Eucharist means) for the gift of the body and blood of the risen Lord to feed us with his risen life. But then, unlike our usual Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist, we take a consecrated wafer, which we believe to be the very body of Jesus himself, and we process with it around the church, singing the hymn composed by S Thomas Aquinas for this feast, 'Of the glorious body telling'. We honour Jesus present in the consecrated bread, and then, again unlike our usual Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist, the priest does not bless us with words and the sign of the cross. Instead he takes the monstrance, in which the consecrated bread is displayed, and in silence blesses us with it.

Corpus Christi is a kind of spiritual harvest thanksgiving. The idea of giving thanks once a year for our spiritual gifts is surely as important, if not more so, than giving thanks for our material needs.

The Sung Mass will be at S Andrew's at 7.00pm. No 5.30pm Mass at the Parish Church that day.

BRT

ARCHDEACON'S VISITATION

Each year the Archdeacon holds a Visitation Court, at which the clergy elect their rural dean and he is sworn in, and at which the church wardens and sidesmen are also sworn in. Before and after the service at which this takes place the Archdeacon meets with the clergy and church wardens of each parish for a five-minute chat – not time to do a lot, but it does give him an opportunity to thank the wardens for their work during the year.

This year the Archdeacon's Visitation is being held at S Matthias Church in Torquay on Tuesday 20 May. The service is at 7.30pm, and our time with the Archdeacon is at 7.00pm.

Sidesmen and women and other members of the congregation are invited to attend the service at S Matthias at 7.30pm.

BRT

PARISH LADIES' GROUP

Our Annual General Meeting, chaired by Father Tubbs, was held on Monday 31 March. Officers were elected, financial statements were submitted, and our outreach charity for the year was chosen. This charity will be Devon Air Ambulance. Profits from other fund-raising events will go to our Church.

The meeting was followed by an informative and enlightening talk by Father Tubbs who spoke about Tap into Faith.

Our 20 May meeting will take the form of a visit to the Palace Theatre, Paignton, at 7.30pm to see "West Side Story". Tickets are £11 and seats should be booked with Jean Kitson. All members of the congregation, friends and relatives are welcome.

Don't forget the coach trip to Shelter Box Headquarters at Helston on Tuesday 17 June. This is open to the whole parish, friends and relatives. Tickets may now be obtained from Valerie Stephens or from me.

Audrey Smith

THE ARTHUR DAY COLUMN

May 23 is quite an important date in this and the two adjoining towns. On that day in 1968 was held the first meeting of the then newly-formed Torbay Borough Council. I must confess I had not realised this until I received a telephone call from a former Mayor, Mr Dennis Reid, to whom I am very grateful for this reminder.

As most reading this will obviously know, the Torbay Borough had previously been three separate communities – the Borough of Torquay and the Urban Districts of Paignton and Brixham.

It occurred to me that this is an appropriate occasion to remind ourselves that Local Government until 1863 in Paignton was administered by the Church. The origin of Local Government units as secular institutions was – believe it or not – due to the insanitary state of the Country at that time. This change was instigated by a Public Health Act passed in 1848. But it was a later Act – the Highways Act of 1862 which possibly led to the setting up of Paignton's Local Board in 1863. This Act authorised the formation of Highways Boards which dealt with parish matters which would fall to a surveyor. But no highway district could include the area of a Local Board formed under the 1848 Public Health Act, which by then had been amended by a Local Government Act in 1858.

In a book on Paignton's history, published in 1963, and written by the then Town Engineer and Surveyor, the late Mr F Ralph Penwill (after whom Penwill Way is named), it is stated "Large numbers of small districts hurriedly formed themselves into Local Boards merely to avoid inclusion in highway districts, and there is every appearance that Paignton (sic) was one of them".



The upshot of this is interesting. To quote again from Mr Penwill:

"De Castro F Lynd, Churchwarden, conducted the first election of members of Paignton (sic) Local Board of Health on 11th September, 1863, and as Summoning

Officer convened the first meeting of the Board at the Crown and Anchor Inn on 18th September. Thirty-nine candidates polled for twelve seats, Robert Butland headed the poll with 305 votes, the twelfth member was William Towell with 185 votes, the least voted recorded for a candidate was 7" "the election expenses were £9.12s.6d."

This was almost certainly the last occasion on which a Churchwarden of our Parish Church functioned as a Local Government officer, by virtue of his being the Churchwarden.

By the time this article appears in print in the May Parish Magazine we shall have had the Vestry meeting at which Churchwarden will have been appointed. This is a meeting which has taken place for centuries, compared with the Annual Parochial Meeting which usually always follows it, which only dates back to the period after the First World War. I have been told that any ratepayer living in the parish has a right to attend it, but whether or not this proviso is still legal I must admit I do not know. Certainly, the person(s) who will be elected to fill the post will not have, as their long-dead predecessor Castro F Lyne had, the responsibility for organising a Council election!



Still existing are the Accounts Books of the Pre-Local Board Churchwardens. I included some extracts from them in this column some years ago, but, in view of the anniversary which occurs this month, it would be relevant to publish some further extracts. They start in 1699 and go on till the 1870's.

Arthur Day

ST BONIFACE

Wednesday 28 May Bingo at St Boniface 7.30pm
Everyone welcome

Coffee Morning at S Boniface on the second
Tuesday of each month starting on 13 May at 10.00am.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK
11-17 MAY 2008

In Kayabunia, Bangladesh, a glass of fresh water is precious. Because of rising sea levels, fresh water supplies are turning salty. Fresh water can be up to 24 hours' walk away and has to be carried by the women in pots. Rekha Biswas, a 29 year old local woman, found out about rainwater harvesting tanks. For a year she went from house to house persuading families that if they got together – with advice from Christian Aid – they could collect and store clean water for drinking and washing. Now the whole community has fresh water. Rekha explains:

“We give training to help people understand what they need and how to achieve it. But most important is that they understand they can do things for themselves.”

The average Christian Aid collector raises £35-£50, enough to train 67 more women to speak up for their needs and install and use rainwater harvesting tanks.

Please will you help?

House to House collections are the best way of raising money. There will be a list of roads we usually collect from at the back of the Church. It is probably easier to go with a friend, 6pm-8pm is usually the best time to collect. If you can't manage a whole road please take a few envelopes for friends and neighbours to fill, and if you can please Gift Aid it.

There will be a Coffee Morning with raffle and bring and buy stall 10am-noon on Friday 17 May, and a Quizaid at 7.30pm. Details to follow.

Jean Kitson

DO YOU KNOW THE ORIGIN OF SOME OF
OUR WELL-KNOWN EXPRESSIONS?

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying - don't throw the baby out with the bath water..

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying - it's raining cats and dogs.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house.. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying - dirt poor. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance way. Hence the saying - a thresh hold.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot.

They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme - peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leak onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.



And that's the truth ... Now, whoever said History was boring!

Educate someone. Share these facts with a friend!

CLUB 2000

Thursday 5 June: Coach trip to Honey Farm then/Barnstaple/Atlantic Village if we have if time. Price £10. Details on the Hall notice board.

Friday 13 June: Bingo in the Hall 7.30pm.

Thank you to those who supported the Big Band Evening.

SOUNDS FROM THE BELFRY

It is not all beer and skittles for the ringers so why not join us, the church bell ringers, and find out what else happens in the tower. We are always open to new members, young or old, who wish to learn to ring, or we would be delighted to welcome anybody who just wants to pop up and see what happens.

The next big event for us outside of the tower is a trip to the North Devon area on Bank Holiday Monday, 5 May when we plan to visit the churches of Braunton, reputedly the largest village in England, then Georgeham, then Chittlehampton where in the 16th century more people made pilgrimages to Chittlehampton than they do to Glastonbury in modern times. Finally to Chulmleigh where this fine stone-built church dominates the town and is a clear reminder of the prosperous days of the late medieval woollen industry which probably brought about its foundation between 1300 and 1400AD

If you would like to join us on this trip, non-ringers who are interested in visiting churches will find this a very interesting trip, please let John Kelly (556208) or any of the ringers know.

A Bat from the Belfry

PARISH REGISTERS

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|--|----|
| Baptisms: | 27.4.08 | Bradley Elliot Yeomans Madison Celine Lovegrove Ruby Jean Dark | |
| Funerals: | 11.4.08 | Richard Fry | 85 |
| | 11.4.08 | Tatina (Tina) Sandra Dark | 64 |
| | 23.4.08 | Dorothy Evelyn Hatherley | 87 |
| | 28.4.08 | Kathleen Mary Wakeley | 87 |
| | 29.4.08 | Joyce Bird | 83 |

DIARY FOR MAY

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|----|-----|------------------|---|
| 1 | Thu | 7.00pm | Sung Eucharist: Parish Church |
| 4 | Sun | 6.00pm | Evensong & Benediction: Parish Church |
| 6 | Tue | 8.00pm | Baptism Preparation: Parish Church |
| 7 | Wed | 10.00am | Mothers' Union Corporate Communion |
| 8 | Thu | 7.30pm | Organ Recital: Parish Church |
| 11 | Sun | 6.00pm | Evening Service: S Boniface |
| 13 | Tue | 10.00am | Coffee Morning at St Boniface |
| 20 | Tue | 7.30pm | Archdeacon's Visitation |
| 21 | Thu | 9.00am 7.00pm | Magazine material to Vicarage please Sung Mass: S Andrew's |
| 24 | Sat | 12 noon | Wedding: Parish Church |
| 25 | Sun | 6.00pm | Evensong & Benediction: S Andrew's |
| 27 | Tue | | Young People to Buckland Monachorum |
| 30 | Fri | 12 noon | Wedding: Parish Church |
| 1 | Sun | 6.00pm | Am I Bothered? Teaching week begins |

INTERCESSIONS FOR MAY

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|----|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Thu | ASCENSION DAY | Lordship of Jesus in the world |
| 2 | Fri | S Athanasius BD | All theologians |
| 3 | Sat | Feria | Walsingham |
| 4 | Sun | EASTER 7 | Those to be married |
| 5 | Mon | Feria | All travellers |
| 6 | Tue | Feria | Those asking for baptism |
| 7 | Wed | Feria | The Mothers' Union |
| 8 | Thu | Feria | Christians Together in Paignton |
| 9 | Fri | Feria | The Housebound |
| 10 | Sat | Feria | Tomorrow's worship |
| 11 | Sun | PENTECOST | The Church of God |
| 12 | Mon | Feria | Parish Priests |
| 13 | Tue | Feria | The People of S Boniface |
| 14 | Wed | S Matthias A | S Matthias Torquay |
| 15 | Thu | Feria | Our Schools |
| 16 | Fri | Feria | The Medical Profession |
| 17 | Sat | Of Our Lady | Mission in our parish |
| 18 | Sun | TRINITY SUNDAY | Deepening of our faith |
| 19 | Mon | S Dunstan B | The Archbishop of Canterbury |
| 20 | Tue | Feria | Archdeacon's Visitation |
| 21 | Wed | Feria | The poor |
| 22 | Thu | CORPUS CHRISTI | Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament |
| 23 | Fri | Feria | Our country |
| 24 | Sat | Of Our Lady | Those to be married today |
| 25 | Sun | TRINITY 1 | Our church wardens |
| 26 | Mon | S Philip Neri | A sense of humour |
| 27 | Tue | S Augustine B | The Bishop of Ebbsfleet |
| 28 | Wed | Feria | Our young people |
| 29 | Thu | Feria | Our Cathedral Church |

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|----|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 30 | Fri | Sacred Heart Of Jesus | Religious Freedom |
| 31 | Sat | Visitation of the BVM | Pregnant women |

