

## Service 20120205 on History

### *Light the chalice*

The chalice is lit.  
In the bowl is contained all the past  
Reflecting upwards  
And the light is the future  
Illuminating downwards  
And up again.

### *From Ayfo Oree:*

Where is my light? My light is in me.  
Where is my hope? My hope is in me.  
Where is my strength? My strength is in me – and in you.

The theme of today's service is Historiographies: History and History-Like.

**HL 150 Monks Gate choir** The first hymn, 150 in Hymns for Living, is transferable to so many situations, and does not imply any particular belief in being a pilgrim - just an attitude of purpose. In this choir backed version they sing fly away in the third verse, not flee away, and also the introduction is very short. Hymn 150.

### Prayers

In the actions of the Holy Spirit  
We apologise when we should apologise  
Putting right with those we have wronged.  
Make us merciful as mercy has been shown in full;  
Make us forgiving as with those who have truly forgiven;  
These are gifts to be given and gifts to receive:  
They are not contracts to be measured.

A prayer written by an English bishop, George Appleton, who lived between 1902 and 1993:

Grant us to look with your eyes of compassion,  
O merciful God, at the long travail of humankind:  
The wars, the hungry millions,  
The countless refugees, the natural disasters,  
The cruel and needless deaths,  
Our inhumanity to one another,

The heartbreak and hopelessness of so many lives.  
Hasten the coming of the messianic age  
When the nations shall be at peace,  
And all shall live free from fear and free from want,  
And there shall be no more pain or tears,  
In the security of your will,  
And the assurance of your love.

*Braybrooke, M. (2001), Learn to Pray: A Practical Guide to Enriching your Life through Prayer, London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 134.*

A prayer adapted from part of a liturgy by the Anglican priest Andrew Linzey:

Let us sing a new song:  
A song for all the creatures of the earth;  
Let us rejoice about the beauty seen in the little things;  
Let us rejoice in the magnificence of the larger things;  
We marvel at the creatures who act in all innocence  
And we extol around the complexity of them and their interacting lives.  
We are not to be too proud: out there is another world sublime and mysterious.  
There are the worms below and the skylarks above  
And here are foxes and rabbits running around on our level.  
We find horses and cattle, pigs and sheep.  
These animals all face us with their consciousness.  
Let us hear the divine rejoicing throughout the whole active earth.  
They are created in Spirit and die back into the dust;  
Our response becomes one of praise;  
And to respect this symphony of animal life:  
To stand and stare, to look in awe,  
And interact with care with these creatures alongside us.  
Through their sacrifices they have sustained us,  
and too often met our crueller exploitation,  
Which is not as it must be  
When we sing a new song.

*See Linzey, A. Animal Rites: Liturgies of Animal Care, London 1999, 26-28.*

A prayer of the Objibwa in North America:

Grandfather, look at our brokenness. We know that in all creation only the human family has strayed from the sacred way. We know that we are the ones who are divided and we are the ones who must come back together to walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather, Sacred one, teach us love, compassion and honour, that we may heal the Earth and heal one another.

*Braybrooke, M. (2001), 137.*

Adapting a Reformed Christian liturgy we can say:

We remember thus the whole earthly family,  
Especially those who hunger for food and justice;  
Those that lack places to rest or their due dignity;  
So many are unknown to us -  
And yet they are known with divine love.  
So save us from hatred, fears and jealousies;  
Help us to live as one larger family on this earth our shared home  
In our wider liberty to be as we are meant to be fulfilled.

*Expanded and joined liturgical snippets highlighted by Searle, D. C. (1999) 'Universalism in Common Order (1994) and the Book of Common Worship (1993)' in Spinks, B. D., Torrance, I. R. (1999), To Glorify God: Essays on Modern Reformed Theology, 132.*

Finally a short Buddhist prayer:

Even as a mother at the risk of her life would watch over her own, her only child, so let us with boundless mind and goodwill survey the whole world.

*Braybrooke, M. (2001), 137.*

## Reading Part 1

There is just one reading today but divided into two parts, which I should put into context.

The material I am reading from today can be seen as a continuation of that conflict mentioned by Bill Darlison last week. Bill said about the secularist Mary Ann Evans writing as George Eliot in *Middlemarch*, that life's events are really random and it is we who shape them into a narrative - as if random scratches take a circular shape when illuminated by a candle flame. And Bill questioned this. He was drawing on the later nineteenth century conflict between science and the supernatural as intellectual disciplines became more categorised and settled. What I am doing here is talking about doing history, and this source is an example of doing postmodern history today about the past. Judith R. Walkowitz is writing in 1988 about a clash in the 1880s between the secular medical profession and the Spiritualists, in how this larger clash of ideas was used by a husband to try and put his wife into a

house of lunatics so that he could be free of her. She writes:

Mrs [Georgina] Weldon was a target of lunacy confinement because her husband tried to use a public controversy between doctors and spiritualists to further his private designs - that is, to rid himself of a nuisance wife. Medical men, alarmed by the growing popularity of spiritualism among the educated classes, had themselves instigated this larger conflict. They caricatured spiritualists as crazy women and feminised men engaged in superstitious, popular, and fraudulent practices. Spiritualists responded by elaborating an iconography of male medical evil, imagining the doctor as a trader in lunacy and as a sexually dangerous man, a divided personality, whose science made him cruel, bloodthirsty, and hypermasculine, because it suppressed his feminine, spiritual part... In so doing spiritualists and their adversaries took up positions already marked out by feminists and doctors in the campaign against the state regulation of prostitution and echoes contemporaneously in the anti-vaccination and anti-vivisection movements.

...

[But on the other side of the argument] Adversaries of spiritualists believed their own materialist scientific culture was under attack and, as experts in the 'morbid' and 'abnormal' states of the brain, they wanted to assert an 'epistemological sovereignty' over the discussion. The brain, insisted William Clifford, the noted physiologist, 'is made of atoms and ether, and there is no room in it for ghosts.'

...

The talented and beautiful daughter of a Welsh landed gentleman, Georgina Traherne had married the impecunious Henry Weldon against the wishes of her family in 1860. Their 1860 marriage was a love match, but also a way for Georgina to escape the control of her authoritarian father and gratify her desire for a theatrical career. Since Harry had only a small private income, she insisted that, as a condition of her marriage, he agree that she be permitted to 'go on the stage and make a fortune'.

Georgina soon learned that a marriage contract - even with an inadequate breadwinner - was no ticket to the stage. Once married, Henry reneged on his promise and Georgina had to settle for amateur theatrics and charity musical-benefits. She kept the household afloat by observing the 'strictest economy' and by 'Singing for her supper' and society events. However, by the late 1860s her popularity began to wane, and she herself found the role of amateur performing increasingly distasteful. Disillusioned with her childless marriage and fed up with 'singing for her supper', she returned to teaching as a new avenue for fulfilment. In the ninth year of her marriage, she developed

the idea of a National Training School to teach music to poor children in a 'naturalistic' mode. She persisted with this plan, over the objections of her husband, who disliked her proposal to recruit 'dirty, diseased orphans' from the streets and place them 'beneath the roof to be fed, clothed and educated'. As a result, Henry Weldon (who in the meantime had come into a comfortable inheritance) separated from his wife in 1875, giving over to her the lease to Tavistock House, their Bloomsbury townhouse, and a thousand pounds a year.

*Walkowitz, Judith R., 'Science and the Seance: Transgressions of Gender and Genre in Late Victorian London, Representations 22 (Spring 1988), 3-29 in Troup, K., Green, A., The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 309, 310, 313-314.*

So more on her later.

[Music Yusuf Islam \*The Beloved\*](#). Yesterday is marked as the birth of Muhammad by Muslims. So we can hear Yusuf Islam's song *The Beloved*.

[HL 072 Luckington choir](#) A traditional hymn now, 072 My God and King in Hymns for Living. These hymns are so well worn that they can come to mean sentiments we hold in general about transcendence, Church and giving praise. There is a very short lead in, and my advice is to be disciplined and stick to the main melody in the second verse as sung by the adult males. Hymn 72.

## Reading Part 2

We rejoin Mrs Weldon as told by our historian as she gets interested in Spiritualism.

Spiritualism was a natural extension of [Mrs Weldon's] countercultural interests. Her progressive views on child rearing were compatible with the innovative pedagogies of the spiritualist Progressive Lyceums, that featured, according to one historian, 'variety, 'learning by doing' and dancing, no harshness'...

...

The seance reversed the usual sexual hierarchy of knowledge and power: it shifted attention away from men and focused it on the female medium, the centre of spiritual knowledge and insight.

...

Mrs Weldon undoubtedly found spiritualism's penchant for theatricality very appealing. What most attracted her were the opportunities it offered women for vocal performance...

Mrs Weldon first attended seances in France, but soon found that she was temperamentally unsuited for mediumship. Although she continued with other forms of spirit communication, her taste tended to run to the mystical (hence, her attraction to French spiritualism and to a heterodox Catholicism) and she herself had little interest in the physical phenomena of spiritualism.

[Now we come to 'the plot that failed' and what we might call some Bill Darlison moments to help her. She first had a premonition that she must return from her work with orphans in France, and go home to Tavistock House. When back home, an older and younger man knocked on her door and asked questions on musical reform and children and she said she was a firm believer in Spiritualism. They went away. Two more came asking her about spiritual communications, if any of the children she taught were mediums and if animals had souls. At first Mrs Weldon thought this was all about possible rich and mysterious orphans. - But then...]

Mrs Weldon began to feel 'dreadful' and sensed 'some horrible trap'. She remembered there were rumours afoot about her suffering from delusions and began to suspect that this masquerade might be part of an attempt to confine her to lunacy. She told the servant to 'lock and bolt up the house'. Within twenty minutes a carriage arrived and the bell rang. "Who's there?" "A gentleman and two ladies to see Mrs Weldon!" Bell, the caretaker, spoke to them outside. Finally he shut the door in their faces. [Said Mrs Weldon,] 'They knocked and they rang three times, but we turned out the gas, they finally got tired of waiting, and at last we heard the carriage drive off.'

'For the first time in my life I felt nervous'. Something I call my guardian angels, had given me a sign warning me I was in very imminent and grave danger.

[She sent letters out to friends, including one to a Mrs Lowe.]

Mrs Lowe, a former inmate of a private asylum, had warned spiritualists of the dangers of wrongful confinement in lunatic asylums. 'Nothing in England, wrote Mrs Lowe, 'was easier than to get a sane person into a lunatic asylum.' None were likely to be 'put away' without due cause than 'women in general' and 'wives in particular'.

[All that morning Mrs Weldon dared herself to go out and see Mrs Lowe.] At 2 pm the following day the 'bell rang again'. [It was Mrs Lowe] '...The very

woman I was praying for'. Mrs Weldon had begun to tell her story when the bell rang again. The caretaker appeared much agitated. "Those three have come have pushed their way in and say they will wait till they come to see you."

Mrs Lowe took command of the situation and went off to fetch the police; when she arrived with 'two stalwart policemen', a newly emboldened Mrs Weldon confronted the 'trio' at [the] door. The two women [, said Mrs Weldon,] 'darted upon me and siezed me'. Mrs Weldon felt inclined to fetch a poker and break their heads, but Mrs Lowe advised a more discreet course. "Give them in charge for assaulting you," said Mrs Lowe. "Policemen," said [Mrs Weldon], "take them in charge for assaulting me." ... [The policeman didn't respond, so] On the advice of Mrs. Lowe, she barricaded herself in her room.

At last a friendly policeman (who had been warned the evening before) arrived and forced the two to produce the lunacy order, signed by her husband and the family friend, General de Barthe, who had previously visited Mrs Weldon the previous afternoon.

[Mrs Weldon insisted the signature of her husband was a forgery and sent for him] but the cynical Mrs Lowe responded, '{You} don't know how bad husbands {are}.' Both her servant and the kindly policeman supported Mrs Lowe'[s advice [for Mrs Weldon] to 'go' rather than trust her husband's benevolent intervention.

[And thus the policeman stopped a cab, Mrs Weldon went into hiding for the seven days of the lunacy order, and then went to Mr Flowers of the Bow Street Police Court] ...

Mr Flowers sympathised with her ordeal and condemned the action of Dr Winslow as 'an unjustified design upon her liberty'; but he could offer no legal redress against the assault. Legal authorities were powerless to take up her case, he explained, unless she had been confined to a lunatic asylum; nor could she, as a married woman, institute a civil suit against them.

Georgina had nevertheless won a moral victory. Mr Flower's statement of sympathy legitimated her case and quickly established her sanity, even to the medical press, who acknowledged her to be a 'lady abundantly capable of enjoying her liberty without harm to herself or others.

...

Mrs Weldon survived her husband's conspiracy and proved herself a forceful antagonist to psychiatric medicine...

*Walkowitz, Judith R., 'Science and the Seance: Transgressions of Gender and Genre in Late Victorian London, Representations 22 (Spring 1988), 3-29 in Troup, K., Green, A., The Houses of History: A Critical reader in Twentieth Century History and Theory, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 315, 316, 317, 318-321.*

[Hymn 036 Abridge choir tape](#). Last week with Bill Darlison we had Hymns for Living 36 *Star Born* to the tune of Abridge, and I chose the organ music one with some pace to it; so for an alternative a week later I have picked one with choir backing from York. But it is slow and we'll just have to sing it slow. Number 36.

### Intercessions

Let us pray. We sit in this place in the train of martyrs and those holy people doing ordinary simple things, creating and recreating faith but not ignorant of all that has gone before. In the light of the past we meet the present. In freedom we apply our will to the task, under the work of the Spirit, and seek peace and harmony.

And so we think of the people of faith, including our Unitarian family in this country and around the world in all its varieties; and we give thought to the Church of England General Synod meeting next week as it considers its major issue of approving women bishops ahead of a likely final decision in July. We pray with those who have just celebrated Mawlid an-Nabi- or the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. And we pray for Jews celebrating Tu Bishvat from dusk on 7th February to the 8th as one of their four new years, the New Year for Trees, and used for when the agricultural year starts. Jews will enjoy their grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. [pause]

We think of the world and its strife, including the continuing economic problems of the European Union. We pray for an ease of tension around Iran and the threats for shipping at the Straits of Hormuz. We hope that Egypt comes to a political settlement away from the distrust that is added to recent footballing tragedy. [Add anything else relevant, pause]

We pray for those we know who are in ill health, that they may recover swiftly and live life to the full. [pause]

And those who have lived, and live no more, let us not just mourn but celebrate the completion of each life and able to tell its story, its contribution to the stories of our lives. [pause]

Let us praise, sing praises and chant songs; for those hearts who seek the



holy we rejoice. We seek the presence of the holy in all these things and derive a proportionate strength of will. We covenant together in our concern for faith and the world and for all our personal journeys.

**Music Incredible String Band *Half Remarkable Question*** So a case now of Prog Rock goes eastern, and The Incredible String Band with a song apparently a favourite of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. Don't try and get all the words, but just the drift of what is *The Half Remarkable Question*.

## Sermon

My space for readings today was taken up with the story of Mrs Weldon, the woman who wanted to make money at the theatre, but who could not thanks to her husband, but who valued the spiritualist movement for its expression it gave to women, and then found it used against her by her separated husband who, obviously, wanted to save himself some money and move on by having the wife placed in a lunatic asylum, using the larger debate between secular science and the magic of spiritualism.

Judith Walkowitz gets classified as a postmodern historian. She is postmodern because she works at the level of a clash of narratives and weaves more in: so we have science verses magic and we also have feminism. She is in the slipstream of postmodernist theoretician Michael Foucault who talks about the history of distinct phases of ideas - and here we see ideas clearly in the nineteenth century - and the operation of power at micro as well as macro levels. More than this, Walkowitz as a historian uses Mrs Weldon's ability to tell her own story as she went on to do in public, on a retributive and rather valuable attack on the abuses of psychiatry. Psychiatry has not been a neutral science but, in country after country, including in our own, has been used as an instrument of power and, from the days of Sigmund Freud onwards, a heap of theories imagined and real that have been used to abuse. Power is always relative to the situation, and it can be crafty.

Walkowitz is perhaps one type of historian set among many different types. There are strict empirical historians, who think they are scientists analysing documents. There are historians emphasising numerical statistics, those who use social sciences for collective relationships and causality, historians that do draw on psychoanalysis to look at individuals like dictators, those who look at geography - as in such a question as: "What is the effect of those mountains on this region's history?" You get postcolonial historians who look at the ethnic legacy of colonialism; then there are oral historians who admit that their source is people speaking *now* about memories of the past; and you get effectively ethnographers of the past who look at culture, habits and

taboos in times gone by using the techniques of those who live among different cultures and write what are called thick descriptions before constructing their summary essays.

So history is in many houses, or different *schools*, and each method carries its own rules. And there are more, like historians that emphasise producing narratives, and we might think of Michael Wood on TV who is a modern day storyteller like those Anglo-Saxons he studies. So many types, then.

Last week Bill Darlison set up a clash between the secularist, Mary Ann Evans, who eagerly translated some of the latest German biblical criticism, and Bill contrasted her approach and the possibility of consciousness having a magical relationship across people, but connecting in a manner that today's most public physicist, Professor Brian Cox, would describe dismissively as "woo woo". Professor Cox states that there is enough that is bizarre and strange in quantum reality, but which has real mathematical and experimental support, than to have to go off into strange undemonstrated and unsupported beliefs like ESP and crystals and other strange claims about consciousness.

As I become less postmodern than I used to be, my answer to Bill is this: the probability of something happening that is remarkable and rare is very small, and this is why it happens rarely and is well remembered when it does. He of course reads *The Guardian* which contains all kinds of ideas and when he finds a bit that relates to a topic he notches it down; such is going to be more frequent but he doesn't contrast that with all the ideas that are unrelated in there week after week. Well, he might be right, but then we have to think what kind of operating universe does this imply if he is right.

We do actually live in a universe that is highly improbable in its parameters for sustaining itself. People say, this is so improbably it needs a designer. But the fact that we are in it shows that it has happened and improbability is not an argument against it happening. It is like looking at a well shuffled pack of 52 cards laid out where only one order will allow you start the time of playing a game, otherwise you have to shuffle again. If you are playing the game, that's the layout that simply has to have happened. What are the chances that a well shuffled pack of cards will give you hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades in perfect order aces to kings in each suit? Well, exactly the same as any other arrangement.

To give an example again. I have never bought a lottery ticket of any kind. I have saved so much money. Yet every week someone wins it. I will never win it because I don't afford a ticket, but the chances are I won't win it anyway even through several lifetimes. When on a boring afternoon I have watched *Dickinson's Real Deal*, I might go on the website to give my free answer to the stupid quiz question. Of course I have never won and these odds are

much better than for the National or Euro Lotteries.

Now history, like science, is not about the woo woo of things. It is about what is demonstrable in documents and then some careful argument, even if within a school of history. Well, the empiricist school is critical of other schools for indiscipline of methods or clouding the issues, but all historians observe rules.

Yesterday is the day Muslims mark the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. The history available about Muhammad is stronger than it is about Jesus, though even that on Muhammad is subject to tradition. It further tries to argue that the Angel Gabriel gave the messages to Muhammad in his mystical cave retreat, that Muhammad passed on the messages to those with perfect memories and abilities to write accurately (it is said he was illiterate). This aspect is simply indemonstrable as history. But it is surely not beyond explanation that Muhammad's first mystical experiences of having to recite were those of general religious principles about one God and his later mystical experiences were those about how to organise the Muslim community. And the history of Muhammad includes his practical skills of organisation, including his attack on the Jewish community of Madina, seen as disloyal in the face of the enemy, and the continuing raiding of other camel trains coming through the desert. Muhammad did set up a remarkable plural and tolerant community, so long as you *were* loyal, and these were much different from the closed communities that followed the later shrunken understanding of the Ulema, in other words the later clericalisation of Islam whether Sunni or Shia, and the authoritarian nature of later States, although the postcolonialist historians will argue that Western imperialist fingers were too deeply interfering in the Muslim pie.

I could have done a sermon today on Muhammad, but these days anyone can go and find out about him. There is less historical material about Jesus, and the gospels are really a proto-orthodox communities view that is biography-like and history-like about Jesus. The need for secondary methods regarding Jesus gives rise to all kinds of textual postmodern theologies today; and postmodern theologies are notoriously ahistorical, even deliberately so. But recently on my blog I've been tackling the question, 'What can you say historically about Jesus?' I've asked things like what languages did he speak, and you can just about summarise that he spoke both Aramaic and Greek, and also I've asked the much thornier question of who Jesus thought he was. To do history like this you need to do some ethnography back in time, and thus use cultural studies, and a bit of historical sociology. Unfortunately you cannot be Doctor Who and travel back in time to do some ethnography, so you do need some historical imagination. But do it and you arrive at a very strange individual who is so different in thought patterns from our own. The idea that the orthodox have a religion about Jesus and Unitarians have had a religion of Jesus is, it must be said, a bit of Victorian and Edwardian self-

delusion among liberal Protestants. Jesus was no liberal and no socialist. There is evidently a clash of ideas within Judaism at the time of Jesus, but surely little doubt that Jesus comes within the cosmic ideas of the Pharisees more than most: the clashes between him and the Pharisees emphasised by later believers is a matter of detail. Yet surely at Passover Jesus participated in the Temple in the slaughter of animals - sorry to upset the animal rights people in this, but Jesus probably did believe that demons removed from humans went into pigs, so much that the pigs would kill themselves.

So a postmodern theologian will instead say the Church should be faithful to the biblical stories as text and Church tradition as text and use these as a standard of role performance. So there is a difference between the postmodern theologian and the postmodern historian regarding the content of history.

I have a blogging friend - the only online friend I have actually gone on to physically meet - who writes quite a bit of conservative postmodern theology. She is a Church of England evangelical and curate. I wrote to her that:

"You know that my interest is in how you equate all this so called postliberal poststructuralist stuff you write about and then the highly subjective (to me) personal experience approach you have."

She in turn wrote back that it is; "...good to connect with one who so 'gets' what I am talking about."

And indeed I write more comments on her blog than most people have done, including various evangelicals.

History is a funny thing. In the last church magazine both Michael and I wrote some historical things. We both referred to open trusts, but I at least would want to insist that the open trusts were no *cause* of theological liberalism, it is just that they did not prevent theological liberalism that had other causes. If we try to go back to the Puritans, then we have to, I think, do some careful imaginative work as well as documentary sifting, that is to say – do some ethnography of the past culture and people, to understand how most ordinary people really disliked the Puritans, to produce for ourselves now a narrative that can tell a story as to how a strict congregation from 1680 could become something else. The narrative produced is open to challenge, but the Presbyterians as pew renters allowed their ministers to be remote ideas-merchants, and to therefore develop new ideas learnt in their academies, and thus when a new ideological liberalism came about it happened within our middle class congregations and thus revived some struggling Presbyterian chapels, the first of two main revivals from the late 1700s to the late 1800s. What is evident from documents relating to this congregation is the switching

from denominationalist minister to Free Christian minister and then back again, and this begs a story to be told. Ann Peart at the recent YUU meeting spoke of transition from a 1950s Unitarianism to something quite different today, and so this must be part of the same narrative.

Bill Darlison is saying that if this denomination is truly free and truly plural, then it has a place for the likes of him and his connecting of say *The Gospel and the Zodiac*, which is the title of his book, and I bought a copy. And I agree. We ought to have these ideas, all of them, and clash them while valuing everyone regardless. But to me his association is between what we know and can demonstrate, and what Brian Cox - and I agree with him - calls woo woo. I see the importance to social life played by people who believe in the Zodiac, just as those who believed in spiritualism were an important feature of Victorian life. But in the spirit of debate I will argue against both the Zodiac and Spiritualism. In fact I'd also argue against a great deal of psychiatry, and many a scientist would. It isn't an argument against being imaginative, however, either in science or in history.

Being imaginative is allowed: many a scientist, many a mathematician, has gone for walks in parks to clear the mind and bingo something comes to them that makes the connection. Being imaginative allows us to look out and beyond, but it also means a discipline of coming back again.

Of course there is more about than dreamt of in my philosophy. At the recent YUU meeting I was having occasional arguments with Jim Stearn. He is a logical, mathematical thinker, and it does matter how your brain is wired up. He thinks Jesus is remarkable, whereas I don't, but he was certainly being materialist about consciousness. And I said if there is anything in the continuation of consciousness away from our brains it will surely be something to do with its existence at a quantum level. He was sceptical. So I said, to reinforce, does he not think that consciousness involves the quantum level? He said that is a very good question.

Of course that's what we have, in the end: very good questions. Without them we get nowhere. Last week Bill Darlison asked some very good questions; I just have a problem with his implied answers (many of which he was reluctant to offer), but then many people have problems with my implied answers.

Anyway I shall do a sermon about music and reality on another occasion, perhaps. You might however prefer me to be sat behind the curtain, like in *The Wizard of Oz*.

[Collection Dresden Dolls](#) [Coin Operated Boy](#) extract and [Notices](#).

[HL 220 Lehr choir](#). Final hymn is 220 from *Hymns for Living and Break not*

*the Circle*. It is written by the late Fred Kaan and it happens that Alison Kaan, his daughter, is one of my Facebook friends and Alison, along with her friend 'Little Frock' or Rebecca, has been the subject of a number of my drawings. So to the tune of Lehr we sing with the soloist and then with the choir. Hymn number 220.

## Benediction

*The Yearbook of Hope and Inspiration* edited by Celia Haddon has this entry for February 5<sup>th</sup>:

“Go and give a penny to that blind beggar,” said the Rabbi of Witkowo to his son, when they were walking together. The boy did so. When he rejoined his father, the Rabbi asked, “Why didst thou not raise thy hat?” “But he is blind,” replied the boy. “He could not have seen me.” “And how dost thou know,” retorted his father, “that he is not an imposter? Go, raise thy hat.”

Haddon, C. (1989), *The Yearbook of Hope and Inspiration*, London: Michael Joseph, for February 5<sup>th</sup>.

## End Music

Now Stuart, he comes in at the end and he likes to hear a good beat, perhaps say like the Bee Gees. And Kath [if she was here], she likes to hear Pink Floyd. Now I quite like the Bee Gees and I also like Pink Floyd. But which one is better? *There's only one way to find out* – put them together!

*Stayin Alive Another Brick in the Wall*