



Congratulations on your retirement! You will be Missed!

The end of November will see the retirement of our Portsmouth Stalwart, Cliff Bembridge, from the IBEX part (75%) of his post. He is carrying on for the time being as minister of the Church at Buckland until a replacement can be found. It has already been reported here that this SCM post (Special Category Ministry) was coming to the end of its first five year period, that an extension had been applied for and that this application had been successful. We are aware, however, that the recruitment of a successor will probably take some time.

But in the meantime, Cliff will be missed – with a capital M. He has been with us through some difficult times, and has had a major hand in coming out the other

side with his extraordinary mixture of Vision, realism and common-sense. (I deliberately started Vision with a capital letter for emphasis. He has really made a difference in Portsmouth, not only in the very strikingly different [Church at Buckland](#), but also in its place in both that community and in the wider Portsmouth community – “Buckland is the place to be.”

And he has been tireless in his efforts and support in thinking about the future of IBEX as a whole, this to the extent that we face a potentially exciting future in terms of the Church and how it tackles Justice and Peace issues locally.

So thank you Cliff, a big thank you to both you and Daphne. May you find the time to cruise the world!

Panem et Circenses, Strictly Come Dancing and BREXIT...



What a strange combination! What on earth is going to come out of that, you may be asking? Well I am sitting here on a Saturday evening watching *Strictly Come Dancing*. Or rather my wife is watching it and it is passing me by, because I don't like it. I don't have a problem with dancing, so it is not about that. But I am not here to critique the show.

But I should probably explain “Panem et Circenses” - Bread and circuses. It actually comes from the Roman writer Juvenal in about AD100. I should stress that this isn't just something I have picked up from someone else's writing, because I'll have you

know I gained an A-Level in Latin in 1971, and part of that included studying two of the satires of Juvenal, one of which (No X, or 10), included this. So I could almost enter Alf Garnett mode (remember him?) and say “Listen, I’m trying to learn you something!”

Wikipedia indicates it is about the people of Rome not caring about their Civic Duties or responsibilities as long as they have enough to eat, and are entertained. My memory of it (and I’m afraid I don’t still have my notes to check – it was 45 years ago!) was interpreting it also as the authorities cynically making sure that the people were adequately catered for in this respect so that they would not feel the need to interfere in matters of government.

So what has that got to do with “Strictly” or BREXIT? You might already have worked out that it’s the other way around – that “Strictly” equates to the Circuses bit, while BREXIT is about Bread. I’ve already said I don’t like Strictly, avoid it or ignore it as much as possible, but just about everyone else loves it. But there are about 9 million other television channels, things streamed on the internet, things you can re-watch on iPlayer or YouTube, bars, restaurants, football ad nauseam (and I say that as a football fan and a season-ticket holder at a certain football club in Sussex). And what else – gambling, other sports, reading, music, concerts, opera, theater – there’s not really any excuse ever to be bored. As one 1960’s Prime Minister once said: “You’ve never had it so good!” The Circuses bit is well catered for.

What about the Bread? You could expand that a bit, perhaps, and talk about the necessities of life. I have just scanned through the [United Nations Declaration of Human Rights](#) - but apart from the things like Freedom from Slavery and straightforward equality and the like, it also includes the right to shelter, to education, to rest and leisure, to an adequate standard of living – just try reading the last half dozen articles – very challenging, and all things about which there is some sort of controversy or problem in our country at the moment.

So is the Bread bit not right? Our Prime Minister is interpreting the BREXIT vote as a

massive protest vote from those who are left behind. I don't think it is just that. Firstly the margin of victory wasn't that big – more than 48% of people voted to stay in. And for those who voted to leave, plenty of people were doing it for their own good reasons and concerns about Europe, about immigration (rightly or wrongly), about a perceived lack of democracy – European Union reasons rather than protest.

BUT it must be acknowledged there was protest in there. But why? The Circuses are there. Maybe the bread isn't – the basic necessities. There are more food-banks than ever before, and they are busier than ever before. We have a housing crisis, and those who are suffering most are at the bottom of the housing ladder, who previously might have been better catered for by Council Houses – remember them? Then there are benefit caps and many other things which have gone on to reduce money paid out by the government – and according to Nick Clegg this was the poor deliberately being targeted by our former chancellor for reasons of electoral popularity.

So should one really be surprised at the protest vote? Probably not. At the time of writing – November 2016 – there are indications of expected price rises. Who will be most affected by them? Those with the least flexibility in their budgets, the very people who might have done the protest voting. Can you blame them? Probably not. Panem et Circenses – if the people don't have the bread, they will protest in the politics.

If only they would get more involved. Maybe that's the Corbyn rôle? If it is, he's got a lot of convincing to do.

David Wrighton



The Only Thing Necessary
for the
Triumph of Evil
is that
Good Men Do Nothing

EDMUND BURKE

Holiness and Justice at Tolpuddle 2016

On the way to Tolpuddle on the Sunday morning the roads were busy – everything was busier, more and bigger hold-ups than usual. And that was the story for the whole day – everything was more, bigger, busier. Immediately noticeable when approaching the “Crew” backstage entrance for the wreath-laying was the police

presence, usually discreet and unnoticeable but very much to the fore today. A reflection, I guess, of the troubled world we live in – increasingly troubled over the last couple of weeks since the Leave vote.

That vote obviously influenced today's events at Tolpuddle – how could it not. As our Vice-President, Rachel Lampard, mentioned ironically at the beginning of her address in the Chapel, "A week is a long-time in politics". It raised a laugh, everyone being well aware that an hour has been a long time in politics since June 24th.

[Read the rest of the story here.](#)

How does the Benefit Cap Remain so Popular?

[Posted on 7 November 2016 by Paul Morrison on the [Joint Public Issues Team website](#)]

The Benefit Cap – a cap placed on the amount of benefit a family can receive – is an extraordinarily difficult policy to argue against. This is not because it has merits – it is in almost every respect terrible – but because it so beautifully taps into negative beliefs about the benefits system and the families who need its support.

The Churches have put forward a case that the Cap is unjust and harmful by highlighting the fact that many more children than adults are hit by it; that people who are too sick to work are hit by it; that single parents with new-born babies are hit by it; that huge numbers of families have been driven into debt and rent arrears by it.

Yet despite this many reasonable people inside and outside our churches will support today's tightening of the Benefit Cap...

[Read the rest of the article here.](#)



I came across something a few days ago which looked interesting – it was just a [Facebook page](#).

But when one looked at it more closely, it was actually part of a government initiative about loan sharks and similar phenomena.

Given the recently reduced Benefits Cap covered earlier in this newsletter, such things could well be coming to the fore again, so please consider whether this might be useful in your neighbourhood.

It's far too easy to say that "such things don't happen round here".

[Image from the Stop Loan Sharks Facebook page]

The Passing of Revd Canon Julian Eagle

On 13th October the Revd Canon Julian Eagle died in Hospital in Bournemouth. It may be a name which does not mean much to some, but will mean a great deal to loads of others. He was one of the founding fathers of SHIM, (South Hampshire

Industrial Mission), the predecessor of IBEX.

As Secretary of SHIM I have in my possession the original document founding SHIM as a Charity from 1977. One of the Church Leader signatories on it was coincidentally my father-in-law, Donald Lee, who was the Methodist District Chair at the time, a fact I chose to hide when applying for a job with them in 1993.

I am shocked to realise, from checking dates, that he retired in 1997, so I only worked with him for about 4 years. He taught me an awful lot, some of which was about conviction, about constancy, about caring, about compassion, but also about challenge, justice and righteous anger.

On occasions when we might pray about those who have preceded us who have shown us the way and helped make our faith what it is, Julian is certainly one of those for me.

I think most people realise that all our newspapers in the UK had their own position on BREXIT before the referendum in June, that some of the newspapers were going to be more fair and objective, that others were going to be more forthright in their opinions and the lengths they would go to convince their readers as to how to vote.

It is very easy to say that people will take what is said in their daily newspaper with a pinch of salt – I certainly don't accept everything that I read in mine, but I do go along with much of what it prints and usually agree with its editorial standpoint – let's face it, that's why I buy it.

But I [came across this article recently](#), which I found doubly interesting:

1. It seems to be an objective attempt to assess and quantify the level of bias that

2. It comes from a Muslim publication.

And in general, however sceptical we might be about individual articles in individual newspapers, the general tone set can not help but have some effect, surely, on the final outcome?



PEACE

TO YOU ALL
THIS CHRISTMAS

Who is IBEX?

IBEX – the Church working in the Economy Central South Coast

IBEX is a Christian organisation relating faith to economic life, in Hampshire and Dorset, mainly Bournemouth and Poole.

We are funded by the URC Wessex Synod, Southampton Methodist District and Baptist Home Mission.

Our main areas of activity:

- Support for local churches serving their communities
- Work with Partner Organisations on Community Projects e.g. local authorities, statutory and voluntary organisations
- Support and development of Chaplaincy

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