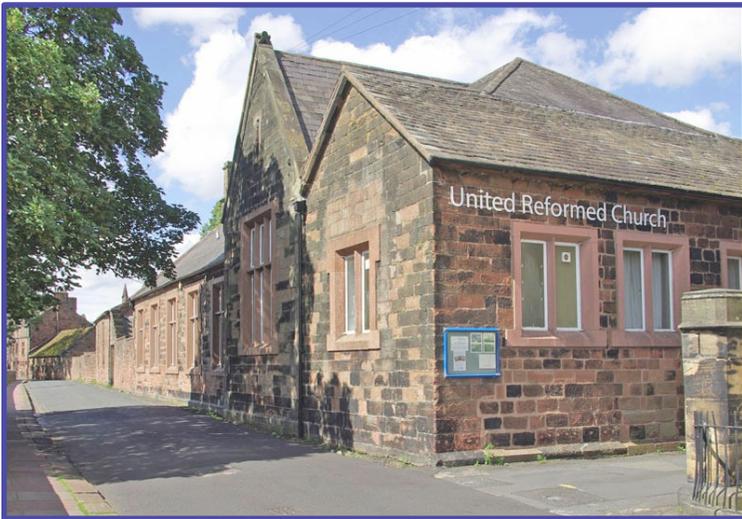


BRIDGE

May 2020



*For the United Reformed Churches in
Bewcastle and Carlisle*

*Part of the
Cumbria URC Missional Partnership*

Contacts and Sunday Service Pattern

THE MINISTER

Following the retirement of Rev Nick Mark

We are entering a period of Vacancy.

Enquiries should initially be directed

to the principal contact of

one of the two churches

as appropriate.

THE KNOWE CHURCH

BEWCASTLE

Services: 1.45pm on the first Sunday in the month

Contact: Mrs Doreen Telford

Telephone: 016977 48447

ST. GEORGE'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

WEST WALLS

CARLISLE

CA3 8UF

www.urccarlisle.org

Services: 10.30am every Sunday

Contact: Mrs Rosalind Fearon

Telephone: 016973 44892

Email: rosrayfearon@talktalk.net

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month

the Service is for both Churches

usually at 10.30am at St George's

ALL SERVICES IN BOTH CHURCHES ARE
SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Reflections

Poetry is a wonderful way of expressing all kinds of emotions in many forms; short, Limerick style, sonnets, odes and ballads. Poems may be descriptive, painting a picture in the mind; about love, daily life, nature or any other subject imaginable. They may be funny, make humour out of a serious situation, such as the one printed on the back of last month's magazine, be sad or thought provoking as a poignant twelve liner read in January. Unfortunately this cannot be printed out due to copyright laws.

The poem was about not speaking out about things that do not concern us, and as a result, no one speaking out or caring about one's own concerns. How often do we say or think, it does not matter as it does not affect me, but we never know when it may do so at a later date. The coronavirus is a case in point. It seemed a long way off in China, but even after arriving here many people seemed to think they would be safe as they were not in the most vulnerable category. As a result they still congregated in groups. Now it's apparent it can be dangerous for anyone.

We are living in strange times but there are many positives to be taken from the situation. Families having more time to spend together, communities offering help to those who need it most, the friendliness of others as we move away to avoid them, the coming together at 8pm to clap for those on the front line and sharing worship together through the means of the internet, radio and television from Churches across the country which gives great comfort. The 'phone too has never been more important for keeping in touch.

A relative was recommended Psalm 91 to read and found it gave great comfort. Maybe it will be useful for others as well.

On a lighter note, the days are longer, hopefully getting warmer. Blossom and fresh green leaves are on the trees, and gardens are getting more colourful (providing plants can be bought!)

Let us, with God's help, look forward to better times.

Under House Arrest

Throughout history many illustrious figures have found themselves incarcerated, not for committing crimes but for holding views which were at odds with those of the prevailing authorities. Saint Paul, Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel and Aung San Suu Kyi come to mind. Non of them criminals but all of them prisoners at one period during their lives.

And now we are all prisoners in our own homes due to Covid 19. None of us are criminals. The withdrawal of the freedom of movement comes as a shock to those of us who are citizens of a liberal democracy. How do we come to terms with this?

The first step is acceptance. It's pointless railing against the new restrictions. We owe it to ourselves, and everyone else to stick rigidly to the new reality. Lives, quite literally, depend upon it.

Then we must learn to cope with our newly restricted life. Like all prisoners we need routine. We must find ways of filling the enforced leisure time. The internet has been a boon in this respect. From reading newspapers to watching worldwide broadcasts to enjoying endless films and documentaries the whole world of entertainment and information is literally at our fingertips. Speaking face to face with family abroad or in the next street is so easy and so important.

It's also important to keep our minds active, especially at our age! Reading, puzzles, crosswords all these help, and for those who can, a daily walk is vital for good health.

But I foresee a danger in all this: "institutionalisation". It happens to prisoners, hospital patients, folks in residential homes to mention a few. Maybe we'll become so used and happy with our restricted existence that we'll find returning to normalcy too daunting. To that end we must learn to make the most of the present but not lose sight of the future.

People in prison tend to get through their days by looking forward to a time when they'll be free again. Sometimes they have a specific date to focus on, often they just have to live in hope that eventually their freedom will be granted.

We all now fall into the second category. We know that sometime in the future we'll be free to come and go as we please, but have no idea when. But it is always important to have something to look forward to. When we are finally released I doubt many of us will write gospels or lead nations, but hopefully we can regain our old lives and remake our contacts and most importantly get back to church.

Being a prisoner, however loosely that word is defined, is challenging, but it will come to an end and like the prisoners in history we must never lose hope or our faith.

SUSPENSION OF SERVICES **AND GATHERINGS**

In common with other Churches we are having to suspend all Services and Gatherings until further notice following guidance from the Government as they follow scientific advice aimed at slowing down and limiting the spread of coronavirus.

The age profile and underlying medical conditions of our membership means that many of us have gone into, or as nearly as possible into, self isolation. Whatever level of isolation we have to endure, what is important is to keep aware of one another in our thoughts and prayers. The telephone is one way to keep in touch, but do remember to keep in touch using email and our website www.urccarlisle.org

Jennifer Burgess Obituary

Jennifer Burgess was born on 1st February 1942, the elder of the two daughters of Ronnie and June Watt.. The family lived in Hawick Street and Jennifer was educated at Caldewgate School, and then later, at the Margaret Sewell School. On leaving school she worked for the Cumberland Building Society, and later, after Susan was old enough, at the Halifax.

Jennifer and Alan Burgess were married on 15th October 1966, and they honeymooned at the little Perthshire village of Killin - a location that they often revisited in subsequent years. To their delight , their daughter, Susan, was born on 2nd July 1971.

Holidays were spent in a caravan, usually at Newquay every summer. She was a good housewife, and I'm told she was a fantastic cook and baker.

Both Alan and Jennifer had a strong commitment to St George's United Reformed Church, and for many years Jennifer served on the Board of Management, and both she and Alan, along with several other couples, were part of the "Friday-Niters", a group who put on entertainments, little sketches and songs, at church social evenings. The group would also go together on trips to London, for weekends and to take in a show.

Jennifer Burgess was a lovely person, a dear friend and much loved. She had a calm personality and was seemingly imperturbable, taking the ups and downs of life calmly in her stride. She had a ready smile and lovely sense of humour. She was kind and gracious.

She was devoted to her husband, Alan, and cared for him faithfully and tirelessly these past few years. She was a good and loving mother, and she absolutely doted on her granddaughters Rachel and Jemma.

Jennifer Burgess was a lovely lady and we are all going to miss her terribly.

Iain Mackenzie

St George's Notes

Thanks for Support (*John Ware & Michael Overs*)

From our Treasurer and Finance & Property Committee and on behalf of St George's, we would like to express our thanks to all Members for the support given to the Church during the past year, both financially and through fellowship. This has been especially appreciated.

Although we are presently enduring difficult times, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and suspension of Church Services, we look forward to resuming activities as soon as we are able. In the meantime, we send you all every blessing in the coming year.

Spring Gift Day (*Pamela Martin, Gift Aid Secretary*)

Regrettably our Gift Day, scheduled for Sunday 29th March, required to be cancelled, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and suspension of Church Services. Four cheque donations, which had been received in advance, were either returned to Members or shredded.

Hopefully our next event, planned for Sunday 27th September, will be able to proceed. Further details will be advised nearer to the time.

Carlisle Food Bank (*Olive Cronie*)

For anyone who wishes to make money contributions to the Food Bank now we are unable to make donations of food due to the restrictions on travel and socialising, details are as follows:

If you would like to make a regular payment, please instruct your bank to set up a Standing Order using the following details:

Cumberland Building Society, Account Name: Carlisle Foodbank, Sort code: 16-52-21, Account number: 53624261.

If you would like to make a single donation, it should be by cheque made payable to Carlisle Foodbank, and sent to Carlisle Foodbank, The Courts, Nisi Prius Building, English Street, Carlisle, CA3 8LZ.

Any further information from Olive. To find out about gift-aid visit <https://www.carlislefoodbank.org.uk/support-us/>

Sorry for misapprehension *(Ed)*

The poem in April Bridge, 'Tae a virus', was written by Willie Sinclair and sent to Olive by a friend. The footnote was a personal addition from Olive to the editor. Olive is at pains to point out that she is not the author of 'Tae a virus' and she is also not the author of 'I'm fine, thank you' which is included in this magazine.

The United Reformed Church Year Book *(John Robinson)*

Usually, early each year, I order a copy of the Year Book from our Church House in London. This gives a list of all our congregations in the UK, together with a list of all our Ministers and retired Ministers.

Recently I requested a copy of the Year Book for 2020, and paid by telephone. The Staff at Church House sends out, hundreds of copies; so it was easy on this occasion, mistakenly, to send me two copies in separate parcels and just charge me for the one copy! So I phoned their office and spoke with the Staff member, who had sent them to me.

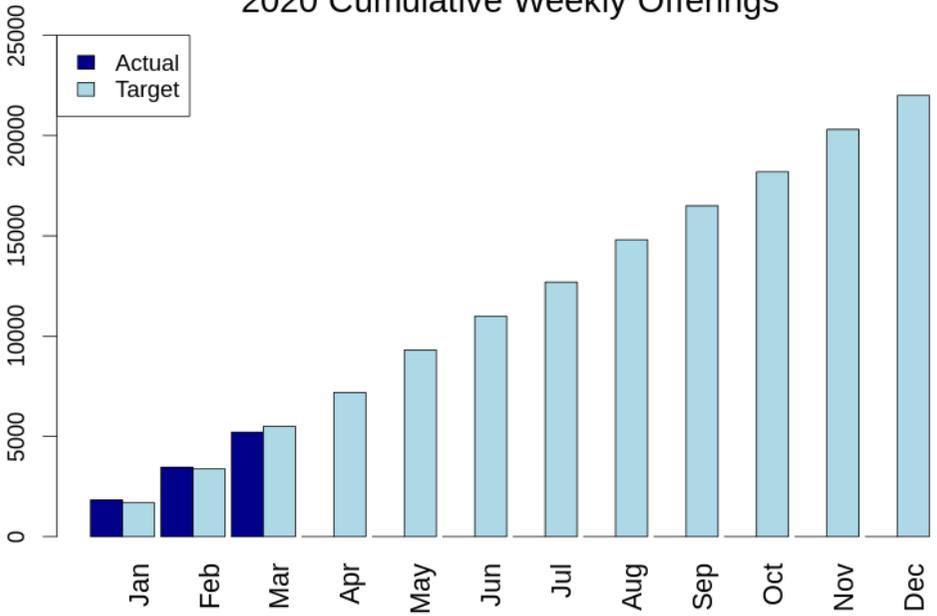
I was willing to return it, but as it was quite heavy, I asked if it would be a good idea to retain it and leave it on a table in the congregation where members and elders could see it, saying that anyone could look through it, or if they wished, borrow it and return it the following Sunday for others to see.

The Staff member kindly agreed. So when all is well and we are able to return to Church on Sundays, it will be on the large Table in the congregation.

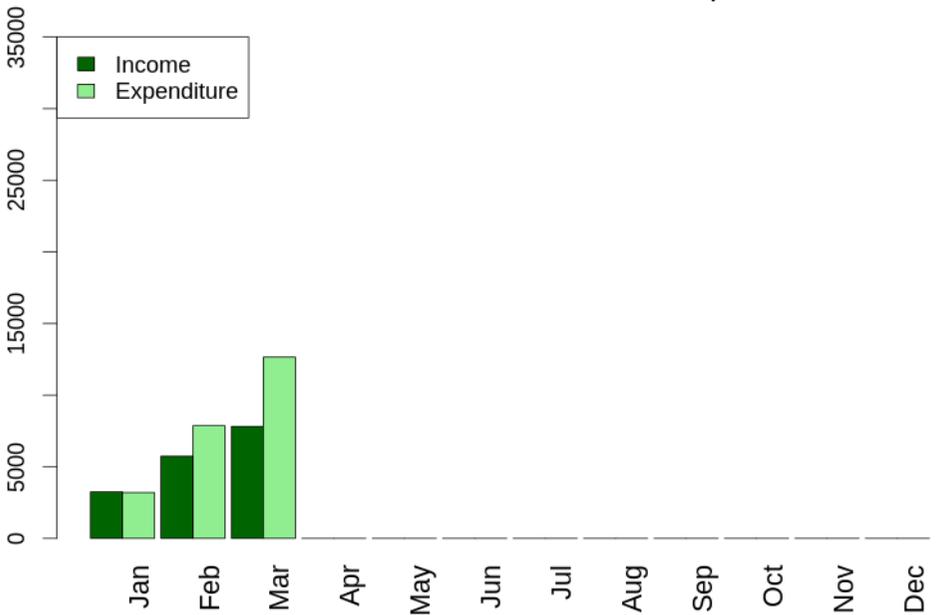
Thanks for safe return *(Ed)*

Last but not least, we are all very pleased to welcome Ros and Ray Fearon, safely back in the UK following their lock-down in New Zealand for the best part of a fortnight beyond the planned duration of their holiday.

St. George's URC Carlisle 2020 Cumulative Weekly Offerings



2020 Cumulative Total Income / Expenditure



Rest, Reflect, Reimagine and Reset

Covid-19 hasn't only shown us the fragility of human life, but of the way we have constructed our systems together – the vast injustices afforded to more than half the world's population and the damage we are doing to the planet itself. This virus has created an enforced rest for the majority of us and made us stop. And whilst we do so, the earth itself is regenerating – perhaps we are too.

(Ed) This is a very small extract from an article titled Reimagining Health and credited to Kitty O'Meara. The whole article is quite extensive and thought-provoking and worth exploring via the internet on <https://reimagininghealth.com/tag/kitty-omeara/>

A poem by Kitty O'Meara

"And the people stayed home.
And read books, and listened, and rested,
and exercised, and made art, and played games,
and learned new ways of being, and were still.
And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some
prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows.
And the people began to think differently.

"And the people healed. And, in the absence of
people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and
heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

"And when the danger passed,
and the people joined together again,
they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and
dreamed new images, and created new ways to live
and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

Kitty O'Meara

Twelve Faces of Hope (7)

A new way of thinking

You can neither have hope nor peace without justice. Who is justice for? Is it just for Jews or for all? If Palestinians don't have justice, there can't be hope for them, or for anyone else in this land. All their hopelessness - not just 50 years back, but 70 years back - compels us to reform our idea of what it means to live here. We cannot resolve the problem in the same condition as it was created. The belief that two peoples on the same land can be divided has caused 70 years of strife, struggle and occupation. To emerge from that, we need to create a new way of thinking, where we can live together in one land recognised as both Israel and Palestine. I hope that in ten years time, a Federal Republic of the Holy Land comprising the States of Israel and Palestine on the same land



becomes a reality. A republic with two different parliaments held together by a senate representing both Palestine and Israel equally.

Telling the Palestinians that they can have only 22% of the territory will cause more struggle, more injustice, more resentment and continued lack of

peace. Instead, we must be part of a process with the Palestinian people where we address historical grievances and wrongdoings in an authentic manner which incorporates the traditional principles of Sulha and Conflict Transformation. We have to find a new way to solve the problem which teaches us how to live together.

The current situation is not sustainable and it is inevitable that change will take place. But it requires a change in rhetoric and a new model where conflict is transformed into opportunity.

Conflict transformation begins on the ground among the masses and works its way up. Education is crucial in order to effectively change mindsets and reach a critical mass of support for nonviolent change. We are not there yet and we will encounter setbacks along the way. But I am convinced that our peoples can be brought together and create a brighter future for all. Better times will come!



Raanan Mallek

Rabbinical student at the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary

Commitment for Life

Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

Recognition for women and girls

Christian Aid's programme in Israel and the occupied Palestine territory works to protect rights, promote resilience and transform conflict.

In 2019, our partners successfully challenged discriminatory legislation such as rules intended to intimidate Palestinian citizens of Israel and prevent them from voting in elections.

They also supported women to make claims through family courts in Gaza, and stood with communities at checkpoints and other flashpoints across the West Bank to go about their lives without violence.

Our partners work to ensure the programmes they implement with communities are inclusive and gender equitable. The Culture and Free Thought Association (CFTA) works to provide safe, supportive and interactive spaces and opportunities for children and young people, with a special focus on marginalised groups.

The communities in which CFTA works are conservative and customs are often limiting to women and girls, particularly in activities related to education and sports. CFTA promotes awareness on gender equality, providing opportunities for people that might otherwise be left out.

During 2019, 67 women and girls aged between 12-25 (including 12 who are hearing impaired)

participated in CFTA activities. These helped them build their confidence and open opportunities for community engagement and capacity building.

Malak, aged 13, said: 'Before 2019, I had never ridden a horse because there weren't places available for girls to go. Once I joined the CFTA centre my dream was achieved when I joined a horse-riding activity. It was an amazing feeling.'

Thank you for your support through Commitment for Life, which is ensuring gender equality and inclusion.



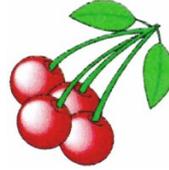
A group of girls enjoy learning to dance in one of CFTA's centres in Gaza

To laugh often and much,

*To win the respect of intelligent people
and affection of children,*

*To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends.*

To appreciate beauty,



To find the best in others,

*To leave the world a better place, whether
by a healthy child, a garden patch or a
redeemed social condition,*

*To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.*

This is to have succeeded.

Croftfield

Normally we would have been sharing worship with the residents this afternoon (20th April). I texted Christine on Saturday and am glad to let you know that they are alright at present and send their best wishes to us at St. George's.

We look forward to joining them when restrictions are eased and in the meantime we hold them in our prayers.

Olive

Hvem er min nabo?

Nothing like this has ever happened before. There have been plagues - but none affecting every continent at once. There have been restrictions imposed on the lives of ordinary people - but none so universal.

The crisis has brought out the best and the worst in people. The latter makes for bolder headlines and more striking images of panic buying and of those who chose to interpret 'you must self-isolate' as 'other people ought to self-isolate, but we are going to the seaside'. It is however the former that should encourage us and challenge us. It is heart-warming to read of acts of imaginative unselfishness. Two have registered with me in particular: one of the person who handed every household in their street a green card and a red card, and asked that they display the first if all was OK and the second if any help was needed; the second is of the gentleman who called to ask his neighbours - both in their 70s - if all was well (he is in his 90s).

We are all used to describing the gospel as 'good news for the whole world'. We readily and gratefully quote John 3:16 and celebrate the truth that it conveys. But what do we have to say to a world where the only news appears to be bad news - where a reduction in numbers of fatalities or confirmed cases is more than matched by an increase elsewhere? Each of us will know how we ourselves might best react or take an initiative.

Let me suggest five things that might be considered:

- Active engagement in prayer - for swift and safe progress in the search for an effective treatment and a cure; for resilience, strength and good health for all who involved in the treatment of patients; for good judgement on the part of those who have to take decisions at central government and local levels
- Discernment as to how best we can assist - in caring for others and keeping in contact with friends and family members.

- Alertness to the need to spread news of imaginative initiatives and to encourage their adoption locally.
- A sense of perspective - that ability to recognise that, while one cannot set a time frame for it, this will pass. The world will not always be in lockdown. Someday, 'normal' will once again be a word that can be used with the present tense.
- A sense of humour - let us not lose the ability to laugh (even if humour may currently appear rationed).

Let me end with a word of explanation for the title of this piece. For any who have resisted the temptation to Google the wording, it translates as 'Who is my neighbour?' As 'neighbour' is Scandinavian in origin, it seemed appropriate to give the piece a Danish heading. This may serve to remind us - though surely no reminder is needed - that the challenges we face find an echo elsewhere. Let not our praying or our concern be limited in any way. Who is my neighbour? The world is my neighbour - as never before.

David Richardson

Treasurer of

Churches Together in Cumbria



Thinking - Writing - Reading - Reflecting - Pondering

Years ago, when our congregation met on Sundays in our beautiful St. George's Church on the Warwick Road, there was at the back of the Church, on the left-hand side, as one enters, a table full of books, magazines and other items of interest. It was looked after by Maureen Bewley's dear husband, David; and at the close of the Service, members of the congregation could buy any for a small sum, just as one can from the bookcase on the wall near where tea and coffee are served in our present St George's.

One of the books I noticed then - a long time ago - was a slim volume by the author Edward de Bono, a Maltese physician, consultant, psychologist, author and inventor, whose book was entitled: *The Use of Lateral Thinking* (a term he coined), first published in 1967, and in later editions called: *Teach Yourself to Think* (by Penguin).

On its opening pages was/is a fascinating short story, illustrating what lateral thinking means, and it this story I should like to summarise here. There are, apparently, two main ways of thinking: rational thinking and imaginative, creative thinking. Mostly we think in a rational, reasonable, everyday kind of way.

The story begins by reminding us that many years ago, if a person who owed money (either for rent, or whatever) could be put into jail. (The 19th century novelist, Charles Dickens, related such stories).

So in the London of that time, there was a good merchant, who unfortunately owed a large amount of money to a money-lender. This unpleasant money-lender, fancied the merchant's young and beautiful daughter! So he proposed a bargain: saying he would cancel her father's debt 'if he could have the girl instead'!

Naturally, the girl and her father were horrified. So this cunning money-lender proposed to let, what he termed 'providence' decide the matter. As his garden pathway was full of black and white pebbles, he said he would put a white pebble and a black pebble into an empty money-bag, and that the girl would have to reach in and pick out one of the pebbles. If she chose the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be cancelled; whereas, if she took out the white pebble, she would stay with her father and his debt would be cancelled. But if she refused to participate and pick out a pebble, then her father would be jailed and she would go hungry.

Very reluctantly, therefore, the merchant agreed. So the money-lender stooped down to pick up the two pebbles; but fortunately,

the girl, sharp-eyed with utter fright, noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles! and thrust them quickly into the bag! He then asked her to pick out a pebble that would decide her fate!

What would you, or I, have done, if you or I were in that girl's situation, or had to advise her what to do? Would careful reasoning solve the situation? This kind of thinking is straightforward, vertical thinking; but the other type is lateral, creative thinking, which pauses and imaginatively explores various ways or angles of looking at things.

And here is the pivotal point of the story, which overcame that dreadful situation: Using her God-given, creative, insightful intelligence, the girl put her hand into the money-bag and drew out a pebble; but, without looking at it, she intentionally fumbled to let it fall onto the pebble-strewn path, where it was lost among all the others.

'Oh, how clumsy of me, she said to the money-lender; but never mind, if you look into your money-bag, you'll be able to tell which pebble I took out, by noticing the colour of the pebble left in it.'

And since the remaining pebble is naturally black, it must be that she had taken out the white pebble, because the money-lender dared not admit his dishonesty.

So by such lateral, creative thinking, she transformed the whole situation into a most advantageous one. Moreover, the girl is now much better off than if the money-lender had honestly put one black and one white pebble into the bag, because in that case she would only have had an even chance of being saved. As it is, she is now sure of remaining with her father and also having his debt cancelled.

Lateral thinking is best appreciated, explains the author, when it is seen in action, just as in that pebble story; and he concludes by reminding the reader that, happily, whenever we face a problem or a situation arises which seems or is difficult to solve, by pausing

awhile, suddenly or eventually a simple solution may reveal itself; and once noticed, one may wonder why it hadn't occurred to us before. And thus ends that wonderful story.

In this modern world, as I reflect now about our finite fragile earth for which we realise increasingly we are responsible, we have the great advantages of all that science, medical research and technology have gained for us - and this thankfully continues.

Yet, paradoxically, there can be a reverse side, because so-called progress is not always to our world's advantage or betterment: eg. the discovery of the atom and splitting it, did not have to be, but was followed by the atom bomb. The current coronavirus, unknown before, has been and is, as we know, causing terrible havoc throughout the globe. Had there not been the invention of aeroplanes or fast trains, this terrible life-destroying virus, originating in China in the East, may not have reached us here in the West and become the pandemic that it is.

This invisible new lethal virus, seen under the microscope, and enlarged into a coloured picture on daily newspapers, is engaging scientists and medical experts around the world, as we know, trying dedicatedly and desperately to find a vaccine, an antidote, an injection, that will fight against it and cure those affected and hopefully prevent one getting it at all, as the flu injection does. Our hopes and prayers are with them in all their endeavours.

A traditional prayer

*O Thou, Who hast given us minds to know Thee, hearts to love Thee, and voices to sing forth Thy praise. Grant that we may know Thee, that we may fully love Thee; love Thee, that we may fully serve Thee, whose service is perfect freedom, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.*

John Robinson

I'm fine, thank you (author unknown)

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

I think my liver is out of whack
and a terrible pain is in my back.
My hearing is poor, my sight is dim
but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet
or I wouldn't be able to walk down the street
Sleep is denied me night after night
but every morning I find I'm all right.
My memory's failing, my head's in a spin
but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The more of this tale I unfold, -
that's for you and me who are getting old,
it's better to say 'I'm fine,' with a grin
Than to let them know the shape you are in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well, my 'get up and go' has got up and went!
But I really don't mind, I think with a grin,
of all the fine places my 'get up' has been.

Old age is golden I've heard it said
but sometimes I wonder as I climb into bed
with my ear in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,
my eyes on the table until I get up.
E're sleep overcomes me, I could say to myself,
"Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?"

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

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