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BOLDRE STILL AND BOLDRE (April 2015)



St John the Baptist Boldre in early spring

*The Reverend Canon Andrew Neaum became the “House for Duty” Anglican priest of the lovely Boldre Benefice in August 2013. The Vicarage in which he and Diana live is on the edge of the New Forest, a couple of miles north of Lymington in Hampshire. He is old fashioned enough a priest to visit his flock in their homes, but “house for duty” clergy are supposed to work only two days a week and Sundays, which means visiting everyone in the parish takes a long time. The following are the **April 2015** weekly ruminations, aired prejudices and footling observations that in the weekly pew sheet augment his visits and help keep folk in touch week in and week out. Earlier articles are available from the Article Page on this Website:*

<http://www.andrewneaum.com/articles.htm>

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“This and That” - 5 April, 2015

It is Eastertide. Daffodils and primroses breathe in deeply to absorb the sunshine's light and warmth. Each one of them, to early bumblebees and butterflies, is an exquisite little sun in its own right.

It is Eastertide. Winter is defeated and in retreat. Birds sing ecstatically, build nests and make love. Christians go to church to breathe in deeply the light and warmth of God's love vindicated. It is Eastertide. Hang all your alleluias out.

It is Eastertide. A booze-free Lent has been negotiated with ease. That first generously filled glass of dense, inky-red wine on Easter day is anticipated with joy, as is an idle week to follow. It is Eastertide. Hang all your alleluias out.

The road not taken

We watched a BBC program about the life and work of the Anglican priest on the Falklands Islands last week. It filled me with a deep nostalgia for wild, clean, isolated, windswept places and for roads not taken.

I tried for the Falklands job myself and very nearly got it in the early nineteen eighties. I knew well the bishop of Argentina who, in those days, was responsible for the islands. He assured me that the job was mine should its incumbent not renew his contract. He did, so I went to St Helena island instead. This change of direction all those years ago had unlikely and unforeseeable consequences for Boldre. It was on St Helena that my family and Diana's family first met and became friends. Our friendship, after mutual tragedies to both families, ensured and enabled our marriage twenty five years later. A further three years on, Diana's friendship with the inestimable Frank and Frances Willets brought about our present, happy conjunction with Boldre and Pilley.

Nostalgia for the road not taken, in this case the Falklands, is always a seductive lie. It is the road taken, in this case to St Helena, that must be allowed to yield, and in this case certainly has, blessings immeasurable.

Sex education in schools

When my two boys were still at primary school in Australia we were informed that they were to be shown a video to do with sex. It was further recommended that parents should come along to view the video as well. My wife persuaded her reluctant husband to go along. Dad with the boys, she argued, mum with the girls. So along I went. I was the only parent present. I cannot remember anything at all about the video, so it must have been reasonably well done, but I do remember that my boys were less than impressed by my presence. Their classmates had said to them afterwards, "Why did your dad come along? Doesn't he know how to do it?"

This reminds me of a broad-minded though cautious parson who was invited by the equally broad-minded headmistress of a superior girls school, to talk to the older girls about Christianity and sex. Not wishing to compromise either his diary or his rather less broad-minded wife, he entered the engagement as *Talk to girls about sailing*. A day or so after his talk the headmistress encountered the parson's wife. *So very good of your husband to talk to my girls the other evening*, she said, *he was quite splendid and helpful*. The parson's wife replied: *I can't imagine what he knows about it. He's only done it twice, the first time he was sick and on the second occasion his hat blew off*.

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