

Psalm 121 NRSV

*I lift up my eyes to the hills- from where will my help come?
 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
 He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
 The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
 The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on
 and forevermore.*



'I will lift up mine eyes to the hills'. This line in particular has been on my mind throughout this week. A week when, for various reasons including the weather, I haven't always been out on my morning walk. This photo from early in the week showed that those beautiful oxeye daisies are still making a fantastic show. Now (Friday am) the sun has come out though as I write this, so it will be a garden morning – grass cutting.

It's now got to Saturday evening. It seems to have been a busy day, starting with a walk, with company this time. I introduced my near neighbour to one of my walks, a part of which was completely new to her – as it had been to me earlier in the lockdown - the area I call my Vale of the Oaks. She loved it. Then it's been an afternoon in the garden tidying up, dead heading and planting out the plants which I acquired following an exploratory visit to Townsends GC. – I was the only person there on a dull Wednesday morning, so social distancing was no problem but I did wear my mask. It's been a week of firsts – hairdresser, dentist, garden centre! A week of new experiences.



*Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
 pilgrim though this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty;
 hold me with thy powerful hand;
 Bread of heaven,
 feed me now and evermore.*

*Open now the crystal fountain,
 whence the healing stream doth flow;
 let the fiery cloudy pillar
 lead me all my journey through;
 strong Deliverer,
 be thou still my Strength and Shield.*

*When I tread the verge of Jordan,
 bid my anxious fears subside;
 bear me through the swelling current,
 land me safe on Canaan's side;
 songs of praises,
 I will ever give to thee.*

So this seemed an appropriate hymn as lockdown is eased and we are preparing for a whole lot of new experiences. Things are different now. Certainly in town and in day to day life. But go into the countryside on a beautiful morning like today, and it's almost impossible to understand that all is not quite as it should be in our world.



Dew covered cobweb in the grass

Another new experience this week, was to be involved in a project being developed by one of the Museum staff. Her job title Community Curator includes bringing aspects of the museum into the community. This

project is entitled Reminiscence Response videos with the aim of creating short videos to be shown in a Care home or similar, to stimulate memory and conversation. Three volunteers rooted round for things at home that brought memories for us. We talked about our items in a Zoom meeting (another new experience), the



comments being recorded and used as a basis of the RR videos. I'll share one of my items with you. This is Ted. He is 100 years old! He's only just come into my possession though. He belonged to my aunt who has recently died. It was given to her on her 1st birthday in 1920. He lived on a chair in her bedroom, and was still with her when she died. Perhaps you can see he is now a little threadbare in places. He brings back memories. My daughter Frances still has the crooked eyed teddy bear we acquired free with a cereal packet when she was a baby. Now Avalon (his name is another story) has a twin! It transpired that her husband Richard also had a similar ted with crooked eyes from the same source. Both teddies attended the wedding reception!

*Precious memories, how they linger
How they ever flood my soul
In the stillness of the midnight
Precious, sacred scenes unfold*

*Precious father, loving mother
Fly across the lonely years
And old home scenes of my childhood
In fond memory appear.*



Any memories stimulated?

So this week's Rambles and Reflections combine Reminiscing and Looking Ahead. The former may be comforting (but not always), the future is unknown



Timeless countryside

Changing town



*Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.*

Dear Lord.

When times are hard, walk beside us.

When we are unsure of which way to turn, dwell within us.

When we need to listen to others, encourage us.

When our lives and work bear fruit, rejoice with us.

So may the blessing of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all today and forever more. Amen.

Prayer of blessing from Methodist Church service for 12/7/20