

# HOW GREAT THOU ART by Stacie Marshall 1 of 5 pages

'There's nothing like a good hymn to truly make you feel closer to the Lord. When you sing out those lyrics, it's almost like His strength and love wash over us. And one of the most powerful hymns of all time is 'How Great Thou Art.' I just love hearing this amazing hymn and now that I know the story behind the song, it makes it that much more beautiful.'

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Chorus:

**Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!**

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Chorus:

**Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!**

## The Story Behind How Great Thou Art

Stuart K. Hine was a British Methodist missionary on a mission trip in Ukraine in 1931 when he heard the Russian translation of a German song inspired by Carl Boberg's poem "O Store Gud" (O Great God). Hine began to translate the song to English and added several verses. The third verse was inspired by the conversion of villagers in Russia who cried out to God loudly as they repented and realized God's love and mercy - "And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in."

Stuart Hine and his family left Ukraine as famine and World War Two began, and settled in Somerset, Britain where he continued to serve as a missionary to Polish refugees. The fourth verse of "How Great Thou Art" was inspired by displaced Russians who experienced great loss and looked forward to seeing their loved ones again in heaven - "When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation to take me home, what joy shall fill my heart."

### The Great Plague Eyam 1665

The village of Eyam has become popularly known as the Plague Village, a fact that has made it one of the most visited and well known villages in the Peak District, for it has a fascinating yet tragic story to tell. In August 1665 the bubonic plague arrived at the house of the village tailor George Viccars, via a parcel of cloth from London. The cloth was damp and was hung out in front of the fire to dry, releasing the plague-infested fleas, claiming George as the first plague victim who died of a raging fever on 7th September 1665.



Eyam, Derbyshire

### **Eyam recalls lessons from 1665 battle with plague (from The Observer 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020)**

For the Derbyshire villagers in the mid-1660s, the trade that brought the plague was cloth, and the source of it was London, where thousands were already dying.

Confronted by mounting deaths, the village's newly arrived priest, William Mompesson, was able – in an uneasy alliance with his ejected Puritan predecessor Thomas Stanley – to convince villagers that the right thing to do was quarantine the village, and face a high probability of death, rather than spread the plague. And in 17th-century Eyam, “social distancing” in the midst of a plague outbreak meant not only isolation – as Francine Clifford, the local historian, points out – but also open-air funeral services that reduced physical proximity, and families burying their own dead in fields and gardens rather than the village graveyard.



**Outdoor service at Eyam Photograph: Gary Calton/The Observer**

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“It was June [1666] and the deaths started to go up again,” she explains. “It was then William Mompesson realised that it was going to get a heck of a lot worse before it got better. He knew if he didn't stop people leaving the village in panic, it would spread to the villages and the towns. If it got to Sheffield or Manchester, it would be back to the London proportions.”

**The Boundary Stone acted as a marker separating the residents of the plague affected village of Eyam from the non-affected villagers of Stoney Middleton in 1665. It is here during the plague that money soaked in vinegar (believed to kill the infection) was placed by the villagers of Eyam in exchange for food and medical supplies.**

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### **The Boundary Stone**

As the plague took hold and decimated the villagers it was the selfless decision to quarantine themselves that prevented the spread the disease and it is here that their closest neighbour, Stoney Middleton,



Boundary Stone

just a short stroll across an open field joins the story. To minimize cross infection, food and other supplies were left at the Boundary Stone which was situated midway between the villages. The stone had 6 holes drilled into its surface where money left as payment was left in vinegar soaked holes, believed to kill the infection.



### **Gratitude to the sacrifice**

The Plague in Eyam raged for 14 months and claimed the lives of at least 260 villagers. By 1st November 1666 it had run its course and claimed its last victim. Eyam's selfless villagers, with their strong Christian convictions, had shown immense personal courage and self-sacrifice. They had prevented the plague from spreading to other parishes, but many paid the ultimate price for their commitment. Almost 350 years later a remembrance service is still held every Plague Sunday at Cucklett Delf, on the edge of the village.

### **Emmott Syddall and Rowland Torre a sad tale of a lost love**

Cucklett Delf also represents a story of heartbreak concerning Emmott Syddall and Rowland Torre. Emmott was a young girl of about twenty-two who was betrothed to Rowland Torre from Stoney Middleton. Emmott lived in a cottage across from Mary Cooper's house where the Plague started. Her father John Syddall and four of her siblings were among the first victims of the disease. At first Rowland would visit Emmott in the village, but when they realised this was too dangerous, the lovers would arrange to meet secretly but at a distance minimalizing any risk of Rowland catching the disease. It is suggested that the two would only have looked at each other from a distance, and in silence, lest their plan should be discovered.

When Emmott stopped appearing towards the end of April 1666, Rowland continued to go to their meeting place, with hope that against all odds, she might still show up. He was one of the first people to re-enter the village when it was pronounced safe towards the end of 1666, but was soon told the worst; Emmott Syddall had died in the April.



**Plague/boundary stone  
Coombe Bissett  
Wiltshire**

This stone, now in middle of the village of Combe Bissett was once a parish boundary stone. The depressions in its surface may also be depressions where the local villagers exchanged goods/money during a plague outbreak.