

A few words from the Vicar

Sat in my office on a bright June sunny day writing this article, I can't help thinking that the long school summer holiday is nearly upon us. This is a time when many of us take a break from work to head off with the family for a few weeks in the sun.

I remember it well!



The Jacobite Express, Fort William

For many years, for Polly, the family and me the start of the summer holiday was our signal to jump in the car and drive to Fréjus on the Côte d'Azur where we had a caravan. We'd drive all that way from Bolton only for me to jump on a plan at Nice to fly back to Manchester. Then, after a couple of weeks I'd fly back again to re-join the family for *my* holiday.

The fact is, as a teacher, Polly had longer holidays than me! But, just in case anyone thinks teachers have it easy (they don't), Polly always took her laptop along together with a pile of work in preparation for the autumn term. Working in sunny Fréjus just seemed to be a much more attractive option than rainy Bolton!

Now that our children have flown the nest and Polly has retired from teaching, we can take our holidays at less busy times of the year. But it's still good to take a break from the daily routine once in a while.

Last year it was Bruges and a few weeks ago it was this year's Parish and Chapel holiday in Fort William. The weather and the company were perfect as we toured the Highlands by coach. We even took in a ride on the Jacobite Express from Mallaig to Fort William. It was an enjoyable holiday with lots of fun and good fellowship.

The holiday also left me somewhat intrigued – no I'm talking about why a certain member of the congregation always seemed to do well at bingo or the amount of drink that was put away or why we groaned whenever '*Crystal Chandeliers*' was sung (can't think why!) – the fact is, I was intrigued about my roots.

I'd always known that my surname 'Thomson' is spelt the Scottish way and, therefore, that it's likely a distant ancestor of mine made his or her way from Scotland to London in the dim and distant past. However, before purchasing a pamphlet during a day trip to Aviemore, I hadn't appreciated that there might be a clan connection (either the McTavish or the McThomas clan).

I'm intrigued and so, when I get some time, I'll do some digging into my family history. But, would I look good in a kilt I wonder don't answer that!

Where's the theology in this?

Firstly, it is in our nature to work and play. God has made us that way and the Sabbath is there for our benefit. Jesus said, "*The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath.*" (Mark 2:27) We need to take Sabbath time, not just by taking time out

from our busy schedules to attend Church and to chill out a little on Sundays (I appreciate that many have to work on Sunday) but also we need time with God and a break from work at other times too. And this includes taking a holiday if we can afford one.

And when you go away on holiday, don't forget to attend worship in the local Anglican church (we are worldwide). Oh, and don't forget, our church is open for worship every Sunday during summer too!

Secondly, whatever our family history – and I appreciate that some readers may not have fond memories of theirs – all of us can call God our Father. He loves us more than we could imagine. And if Jesus is the Son of God then we are his brothers and sisters:

For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." (Hebrews 2:11-12)

Now there's an interesting thought!

Every Blessing

Dave