

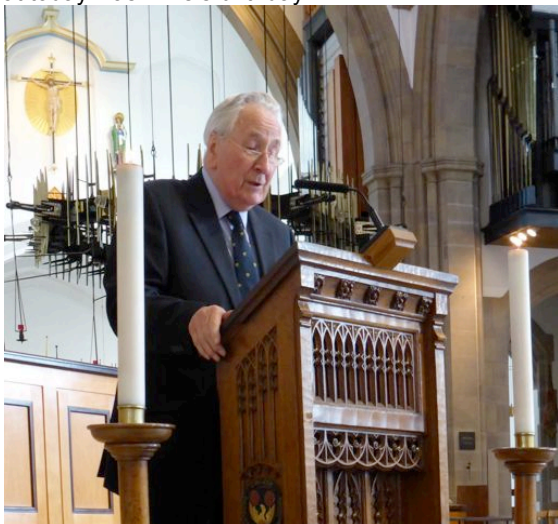
Blackburn Cathedral Saturday 25th April 2015

PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY FESTIVAL

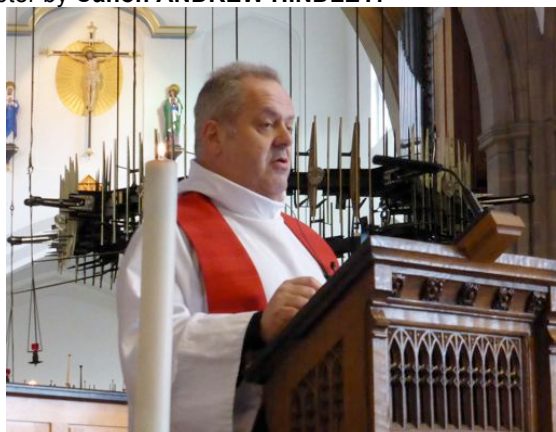
Music & More Online Supplement 2015 No.7

It was again a joy and delight to welcome lovers of our 1662 Book of Common Prayer to Blackburn Cathedral for a day of celebration in March with fine music, inspiring addresses, a delicious luncheon and enriching fellowship.

Members were welcomed, first, by our redoubtable secretary/treasurer **NEIL INKLEY** who, on our behalf, welcomed our preacher, the **Revd. Dr. Mike Kirby**, and told us that today was Mike's birthday!



Then we were all welcomed on behalf of the Dean and Chapter by **Canon ANDREW HINDLEY**.



Canon Hindley is not only our Canon Sacrist (ultimately responsible for the cathedral's fine Liturgy and Music) but also responsible for much of the construction of our new Cathedral Close, which will include a Deanery, town houses for Residentiary Canons and Director of Music, spacious apartments for the Assistant Director of Music and for the Virgers and their families, accommodation for organ and choral scholars, plus cathedral offices, a library and a cafeteria.



The building work is going on apace, and we expect it to be ready by January 2016.

Our choir was **OCTAVIUS**: a group of volunteer singers whose musicianship has blessed us for many PBS Festivals.



They were directed by **David Scott-Thomas** and accompanied by our own Director of Music, **Samuel Hudson**.



The music for our Eucharist, chosen by Neil Inkley, who had been a lay clerk in the choir of Peterborough Cathedral under the direction of the legendary Dr Stanley Vann, was:

Introit: *If ye love me* (Tallis)

Setting: *Ireland in C*

Communion anthem: *Blessed be the God* (S.S.Wesley)

Our distinguished Celebrant was the Venerable **John Hawley**, Archdeacon of Blackburn.



Archdeacon Hawley said, afterwards, that this was the first time he had had the privilege of celebrating at the cathedral's central altar. His presence lent an air of gentle authority which added so much to our Festival that day.

Every year we invite a special preacher for our 11.00 am Eucharist. Last year it was our recently consecrated Bishop, the Rt. Revd. Julian Henderson.

This year our preacher was our Cathedral Curate, The Revd. Dr. Mike Kirby who is a distinguished medical doctor. He is a former Consultant at Christie's Hospital in Manchester, and now is a lecturer in Medical Physics at Liverpool University.

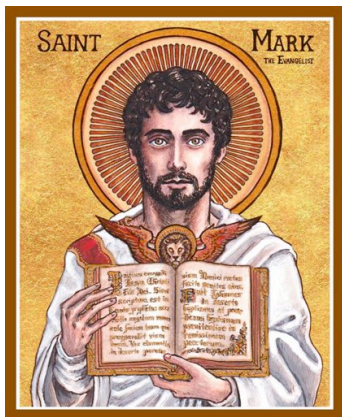
Here's his sermon in full:

St Mark's Day
Sermon by the Rev'd Dr Mike Kirby,
Blackburn Cathedral Curate (SSM)
Eph 4:7-16; John 15:1-11



In all honesty, I guess my name should be Mark. For today, although we celebrate the feast of St Mark – there is also a minor celebration for me, something which seems to happen with ever increasing frequency, in that I was born on this day, many years ago!

But this morning, it is a time to remember, perhaps something of St Mark the Evangelist, and the gospel which bears his name – even though, quite interestingly, the gospel we have within the prayer book for this very day is not from St Mark but from St John.



But what of Mark, the Evangelist? The name of Mark was not uncommon in the Roman Empire; it was probably John Mark, if we hold with some theories that the gospel writer was also the Mark written of in the Acts of the Apostles.

He was most likely a Jew, but some scholars outline the fact that his full understanding of local geography and Jewish customs and laws is sometimes suspect – so perhaps he wasn't a Palestinian Jew.

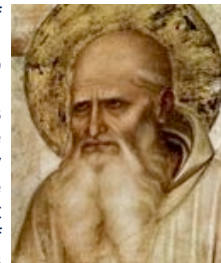
If he is John Mark, he is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament – most notably in his missional journeys detailed in

Acts. For example in Acts 12:25, we hear that 'after completing their mission, Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark'.

In Paul's letter to the Colossians (4:10), we hear that this Mark, active in the first missional work of the early church, is the cousin of Barnabas. He accompanies his cousin and Paul in the first great mission; a journey beginning in Antioch in Syria in about 44 AD and then goes onto Cyprus; he parts company with Paul and his companions in Perga in Pamphylia and returns to Jerusalem. Mark's journeying eventually brings him back to Paul and they go to Rome

together. He is with Paul in his first imprisonment and there is also a disciple of Peter, who goes on to call him 'my son Mark'.

In about 130 AD, **Papias**, the bishop of Hierapolis, wrote that Mark was 'an interpreter of Peter'; leading many to consider his gospel was probably written in about 60-70 AD, based upon Peter's teachings. This makes it likely to be the earliest of the gospels – where source theory predicts that it provided Matthew and Luke with a common account for their gospels. At that time, the context would have been one of extreme suffering and persecution; it was most likely written for a Gentile Christian community experiencing the hardship and cruelty of the emperor Nero in the 60s.



So his writing is based upon Peter's teaching but also possibly on Mark's own memory. For, going back to the time of Jesus' own ministry in Judea, some mention that Mark's family sometimes housed the apostles in Jerusalem and that he himself was a Levite, possibly a minister in the synagogue.

Rather uncertainly, some regard Mark as being the young man who followed Jesus after his arrest who, when caught by the guards, ran away naked into the countryside. But, one might say, like that young man, Mark's gospel is brief, fleeting – a writing often described as rushing along headlong and breathless at times; it is the shortest of the four gospels, nearly 40% (by verse) shorter than Luke or Matthew and about 20% shorter than John. But still within all its brevity, it manages to maintain a delightful sharpness and immediacy for the life and work of Jesus, and the good news that Jesus brings.

As I said earlier, it is interesting that today of all days, within the 1662 Prayer Book, we don't have an extract from St Mark's Gospel.

As you know I am a scientist, a radiotherapy physicist to be precise, so I like my numbers and scientific analysis. So for fun, I did a little bit of a quick 'back of an envelope' analysis on the Prayer Book itself and the extracts of St Mark that are actually within it – for the different Sundays of the year and the Holy Days and Saints' Days.



We know that the Prayer Book calendar invites us into a cycle of readings which allows for a continuous reading of the scriptures (a *lectio continua*) rather than a selective or piecemeal set of lessons; allowing the New Testament (and so, too, St Mark's Gospel) to be read in its entirety three times throughout the year, when considering Morning and Evening Prayer. But what about those lessons actually contained within the Prayer Book, for Holy Communion?

Sadly, considering that St Mark's was most likely the oldest gospel and a source for both Matthew and Luke, St Mark does not feature quite as prominently as the other three gospel writers within the Prayer Book.

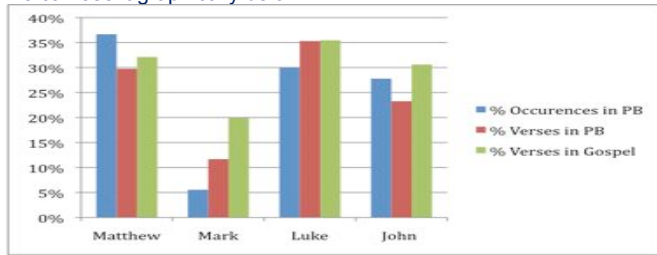
In terms of occurrences, St Mark is used only twice for Sundays and three times on other occasions – a total of 6% of the total lessons. St Matthew has the most with 37% of the total number, followed by St Luke and St John each with approximately 30%. But examining just the occurrences is perhaps too crude a measure, when the lessons in the prayer book can vary dramatically in length. So, analysing it in terms of verses, as a percentage of the total number of verses in the prayer book, what happens?



Well, things become a little more even, with St Mark now representing 12% of the verses. St Luke now takes the top spot with 35%, 30% for St Matthew and 23% for St John. But, considering the gospels themselves are of varying lengths, perhaps we read a more equal proportion of the gospels themselves within the prayer book?

So, as a percentage of the verses in each gospel, the Prayer Book lays before us 20% of St Mark's Gospel, 32% of St Matthew's, 35% of St Luke's and 30% of St John's. So, the statistics show that the

representation is a little bit more even when considered that way, and we can see it graphically below.



But quantity is not always quality; and it is interesting to note what readings of St Mark are used.



The two Sundays are the 7th and 12th after Trinity when we read about the feeding of the four thousand and the healing of the deaf mute respectively. Beautiful readings, especially when we linger on the beauty of the language within the

Book of Common Prayer. For example – we read in the first,

'So they did eat, and were filled'

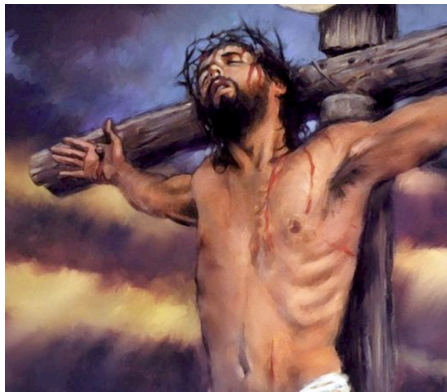
A sharp and decisive reflection of the abundance of God's love, so that all may feast at his banquet and be filled to contentment. Or in the second, we can draw a vivid picture of the action of Jesus in his entire ministry when we read

'He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak'.

The other three occurrences are for the Ascension and on the Monday and Tuesday before Easter; for these latter two we read great extracts from the gospel, with vivid descriptions of the last supper, the arrest and condemnation of Jesus, and his cruel death on the cross.

And perhaps for the elements of Christ's death, the language of the Prayer Book allows us all to truly experience the foot of the cross.

'And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, eloi, Lama sabachthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'



'And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God'.

And so, perhaps within all this, learning about St Mark, his writing as Evangelist, the extracts that we have in the Prayer Book and the beauty of the language in which it is portrayed – all lends itself to fulfil the meaning of the lessons we have heard this morning for St Mark's Day; lessons that we might take home ourselves in being brothers and sisters with St Mark himself.

That all of us are given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ – that we all have our individual gifts for our ministry in Christ's name – for through our baptism and reception of Holy Communion we are one as the body of Christ, with Christ as its head.



In the same way, too, as the branches need the vine off which to feed for its life – we too, like St Mark, abide within Jesus Christ, the true vine, through the nature of reading and learning from the scriptures, from the Gospels, from the evangelists like St Mark.

So that with every re-reading of the gospel passages, God may speak into our hearts afresh and anew as the vinedresser, as the husbandman – if we allow him to nurture and care for us through the body of Jesus Christ in whom we abide and who abides in us, and if

we respond in him by following his commandments. For, like St Mark, we too are those branches, we too can ask what we will and it shall be done unto us – and in so doing, bearing much fruit, shall we glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Amen.



Our Festival Luncheon was a most happy event – held in the cathedral crypt.

Seated at 'top table' were not only our President, His Honour Judge Edward Slinger, and Vice President the Rt Hon The Lord Clitheroe, but also our guest speaker for that afternoon, PAM RHODES, who is well known through her active involvement in the BBC's TV **Songs of Praise**.



Presentations were made by our President to Dr Kirby (two Westcott House mugs – as he had studied at Cambridge)



and to our Celebrant, Archdeacon Hawley.



But before Pam spoke we enjoyed our Annual General Meeting.

Enjoyed? Yes, because (a) it is always led with such sparkling humour by our Chairman, the Revd. **Alan Reid**, and (b) because it is always so efficient, thanks to the meticulous preparation by our Secretary/Treasurer, **Neil Inkley**.



L-R: President Edward Slinger, Chairman Alan Reid, Secretary/Treasurer Neil Inkley and Minutes' Secretary Chris Norton.

And then Pam Rhodes spoke!

Not only was she a gracious speaker – her subject, needless to say, was **Hymns** – but she also involved her audience in her presentation, for she asked us what our favourite hymns were, and what hymns we would choose for this or that occasion.



She held us in the palm of her hands. That was a most delightful 45 minutes.

After which many people queued up to buy copies of her book – which was all about hymns, of course.



The day ended with a glorious Choral Evensong, sung again by Octavius:

The music was:

Introut: *Never weather beaten sail* (Wood)

Responses: *Smith*

Canticles: *Stanford in C*

Anthem: *Te lucis ante terminum* (Gardiner)

Hymns: *O strength and stay*
Rejoice, O land, in God thy might



Octavius and Samuel Hudson rehearsing for Choral Evensong

And to add to our enriching experiences that day, there was a moving display of 100,000 poppies in the South Transept called **FALLEN**, by the artist Martin Waters.



Blackburn Cathedral

FALLEN

An installation by artist Martin Waters

The 100,000 Red Remembrance Poppies were collected, with the help of many donations, for the Poppy Installations at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Hull and the North of England in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. These installations are in response to my feelings towards war.

I wanted to create something large enough to describe the immense empathy people have towards those killed in or as a result of war and conflict, including civilians. I wanted to emulate the poppies growing in the fields of Flanders after the battles of the First World War.

As I walk through this beautiful building the words of the old memorials echo in my thoughts, solemn, sad yet heroic and commemorated, lost but still loved.

“lest we forget”

“when you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today”

Please feel free to add your own red remembrance poppy to the installation.

Martin Waters