

ON THE OTHER HAND

Last Remembrance Sunday I learnt what was for me a new word, 'evaders', being escaped POW's and service personnel, typically RAF flyers shot down over enemy territory and trying to get back to their own lines. One such evader, when achieving this goal, that of crossing the Rhine to be welcomed by his compatriots, said that he felt an immediate sense of freedom.

Being a young boy growing up in the post WWII years in the sunny countryside freedom was something we took for granted, indeed it was only in later years one appreciated the extent of that freedom. Everyone was poor, which meant we were all equal. As kids when not in school, we lived outdoors in the parks and woods, or wherever our feet would take us. Of course, this freedom was tempered by a respect for authority especially the local 'bobby', who always seemed to have the knack of turning up when you were committing some heinous crime. In those days riding on a crossbar or lighting a bonfire would qualify.

The fight for freedom and its preservation is an integral part of English history and as we witness the struggle for democracy taking place in the Middle East it's vital that young people all over the world protect their freedom by not wasting their vote. Apathy is a great danger. The scales of justice and liberty are constantly under pressure as we witness the precarious balance between freedom and anarchy that is to say freedom subject to law as against total freedom to do as you please.



The protests against government cuts and boardroom excess were to be expected but the sudden pitching of tents outside St. Pauls Cathedral took everyone by surprise, not least the protesters themselves, who I understand were targeting the London Stock Exchange initially but having been shooed away from there, found St. Pauls Churchyard to be a far softer touch.

It annoys me that the church, that you and me, represented in this instance by St. Pauls Cathedral, should have received such bad press and criticism when the focus of the protest was meant elsewhere. Even more annoying is the tactic by some protesters to claim that Jesus would be on their side.

Immediately after the recent riots, the Bishop of London was quick to condemn mindless violence and vandalism, but equally to draw attention to the problems that exist in our City, that through the London Challenge our church had been trying to address and he launched an appeal for financial assistance to help defray the costs many inner city churches faced as they opened their doors in the aftermath of the riots. Go anywhere in the British Isles and you find churches working for the community, helping children, the elderly, the disaffected. And that's where Jesus is.

The Christian church does not need to defend or excuse itself, its doing a great job, and St. Pauls Cathedral is leading the way as a centre of excellence. So my message to those camped outside the Cathedral is, show the strength of your convictions and go back to the LSE and leave St. Pauls to get on with its job.

On the other hand and on a lighter note, I am thinking of getting a tent myself. Imagine this scenario :

Hubby and wife talking to each other...

"Put your glad rags on darling, we're going up west to paint the town red."

"That sounds nice dear but how are we going to get home if it's late at night?"

"Not a problem, I've packed the tent and the electric blanket, we can plug into a charging station the electric cars use."

"Won't the Police move us on, dear."

"No, No, No, where have you been? It's Health & Safety and Human Rights these days. No, the police send two armed officers to protect us while getting an injunction to remove us. By then we'll be safely home."

Sounds far fetched!! Perhaps, but I'm going to see if the scouts can't find me a tent.

Peter Scully