

Friends

I expect you, like me, are frustrated by the terrible state of our roads. Potholes the size of small ponds appear out of nowhere and threaten our tyres, axles and suspension and make for a bumpy ride, unless we engage our inner-racing driver and slalom down the road which is generally frowned upon by police and other drivers.

David Hope, the author rather than the erstwhile Archbishop of York, wrote:

“We cheer the express as it thunders along
The driver and crew - I would add to the song
A word for the gangers who, sunshine or snow,
Have been out to check every yard that we go.”

It's rather old-fashioned and sentimental now, and when I tried to date it, even Google couldn't find it, but it reminded me how spoiled I have become in my complaints about the roads. Train tracks must remain true and even or there are terrible accidents, and there are people who take that job and do it, usually at night when there is time for them to measure and balance safely.

That checking of each yard of metal and wood that keeps everything safe is something that we also try to do each day for our own souls through our Bible reading and prayer, aligning ourselves with God so that we can hear what he wants from us. It's why Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians tells us: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17).

Over the last two decades or so, people of all faiths and none have discovered that the Christian habit of giving thanks for all sorts of things is actually very good for the soul. Mindfulness books, self-help writers and counsellors dealing with depression and anxiety may all advocate keeping a journal of blessings. I sometimes say to the AV team at Windsor that we only notice them at all when it has gone wrong, because they are always so quietly and brilliantly efficient. Perhaps the wonky roads,

and the other little annoyances that meet us in our daily lives help to remind us that there are people who fulfil these jobs for us. Perhaps we should be less angry about the potholes and more grateful for those who will (eventually!) get round to filling them.

God bless, Vicci