

## Today is ours and today alone

I remember as a youngster, perhaps 8 or 9, the growing excitement of looking forward to Christmas, my birthday, and the annual family holiday in north Wales. The memories of anticipated happiness, togetherness and fun remain still and always make me smile. I always associate those times with laughter, sometimes of hearing jokes that only the adults understood and then pushed away my requested explanation. Time seemed to pass VERY slowly and things to look forward to took ages to arrive. Easter brought a different anticipation, one more focused on gluttony, sugary delights and the excitement, or disappointment, as to the size of each chocolate egg, sometimes heavily camouflaged to give me an illusion of great size, which quite often led to disappointment. At that age, size does matter!

With the passing of time, my sense of looking forward was driven less by self and more by others. School friends enjoying the comradeship of weekend activities, freedom to roam, talk, and push our actions to the limit of acceptable behaviour, and beyond: knock and run, sadly no longer part of my repertoire.

Then looking forward to the companionship of others – girls and girlfriends with arranged meetings to enjoy each other's company. The hopes and fears of leaving school and entering the world of work. Feeling a sense of being in tune with time, my time, all lies ahead, everything is possible, everything is looked forward to.

With a young family, I look forward to Christmas, birthday parties, Easter and holidays away. Remembering and trying to emulate them so that my children also have that sense of looking forward.

Now today, Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024. What am I looking forward to?

This morning, that will bring the birds to our garden, to be able to watch and hear them as they frantically gather seed, feed their young, or take their first tentative steps towards solo flight and landings.

I look forward to my pot of tea, especially the first cup, refreshing and youthful in flavour.

But most of all to meeting friends at 10 o'clock. To see their expressions, hear their stories and laugh and become part of a different and timeless world for 60 minutes. Is there eager anticipation, certainty, dread? No, for my homework is done.

But just as a child halfway through Christmas day or a birthday, there is a growing sense of something passing that won't happen again. Looking forward is tempered, but not extinguished.

I look forward to picking up my pencil and entering the timeless world again, with or without my friends.