

Saint Stephen's News

SAINT STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

27 January 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

Adventures in ice and snow with an Iron Pig

Nostalgia, I've learned over the years, comes in unanticipated waves. The sudden freeze on last Sunday (16 January), for example, prompted an unexpected nostalgic twinge for the most abominable automobile it has ever been my misfortune to drive.

It was the office car of the Frankfurt Bureau of the Financial Times of London – a 1970 Renault 16 that had seen very much better days long before I first clapped eyes on it early in 1975.

The bodywork appeared to have been worked over with ball-peen hammers, while the upholstery looked as though it was in an advanced stage of automotive leprosy.

Its French automobile builders could not be blamed for the years of abuse it had suffered at the hands my predecessor, a crazed Hungarian as much given to driving on the sidewalk as the roadway. Thumping over kerbstones and grinding along garden walls is not likely to enhance a vehicle's looks.

What, however, its designers should rightly have been berated for was their entire engineering concept.

They had given the Renault front wheel drive and an engine slung slap bang over the front wheels. If they'd left it at that things probably wouldn't have been too bad. Certainly it would have had plenty of traction on slippery roads.

The trouble was they didn't stop there. In an apparent fit of Gallic exuberance, they concluded that one could never have too much of a good thing. So *in front* of the engine they placed the gearbox and, then, *in front* of that they put the clutch.

It being 1970s Europe, power steering was naturally dismissed as an unmanly example of American decadence. Thus, as a consequence of all the front-end leverage, the thing took the strength of an ox to parallel park.

And if the weight over the front wheels made them almost impossible to turn when stationary, things didn't get very much easier at speed. The miserable brute needed constant steering even at 90 miles an hour on the autobahn

Indeed, while most cars will automatically follow a banked curve, the Renault, left to its own devices, would carry straight on over the top of the banking and into the fields beyond.

Its handling was such a challenge that Charlotte, admittedly not a large person, found driving it, much less parking it, utterly impossible. As for myself, two hours of wrestling the beast left me acutely sore across the shoulders for at least two days.

The appalling steering was not the end of its problems: The gear change was equally difficult. The shift was on the steering column and it was connected to gearbox, way out there in front, by a linkage system involving 17 individual links.

Column shifts are not particularly positive at the best of times, but to describe the Renaults as sloppy substantially understates the case. The shift waggled about so much it took an act of faith to let out the clutch.

Not only that, the linkage system was fragile beyond belief. Indeed, a broken link once marooned us – myself, Charlotte, parents-in-law and two howling children – in third gear in the Spessart mountains.

Neither Charlotte nor I are in the custom of naming our vehicles, but the Renault 16 simply begged for it. And, in keeping with its character, we christened it *'Der Eisenschwein'* or 'The Iron Pig.'

But if we thought The Iron Pig was absolutely good for nothing, we were wrong – at least in one respect. Its super heavy front end made it a marvel in ice and snow.

We discovered its extraordinary snow and ice road holding properties on a trip to Denmark in the winter of 1975. We were heading through northern Germany when we unexpectedly encountered a blizzard of epic proportions.

The autobahn rapidly became so slick vehicles were spinning off the roadway in all directions. But not The Iron Pig. It ploughed on

utterly unperturbed at a steady 55 miles an hour with never so much as the hint of a skid. In fact we reached the ferry from Schleswig-Holstein at exactly the time we had planned.

Even so, its performance on the ice-covered autobahn didn't shake my resolve to be rid of it as soon as I could find a suitable replacement.

Shortly after the Copenhagen trip, I was talking to Dr Herman Apps, President of Deutsche Bank and the grand old man of German banking.

'Is that your car, Herr Hawtin?' he asked, looking with some distaste at The Iron Pig. I admitted it was. I explained it was named *'Der Eisenschwein'* and that I was looking around to replace it.

'What vehicle are you considering?' asked Dr Apps. I told him I had been looking a Volkswagen Passat.

The Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Vivian, Jack, John, Donald, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Fran, Edie, Oona, Cary, Janna, Martina, Leela, Isabelle, Julie, Ray, Mary, Phyllis, Liz, Joe, Indra, Marjorie, Steve, Wendy, John, Joy, Walt, Nina, James, Nancy, Janet, Connie, Hobie, Nathan, Matthew

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Lydia, Ann, Melba, Donna, Josh, Kim, Shane, Susan, Paula, Hannah, Scott, Charles, Vinnie, Doug

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt Col. Harry Hughes

'Oh, in that case I'd keep *Der Eisenschwein* if I were in your place,' he said, drily, 'At least it has the benefit of eccentricity.'

I took the hint and ordered a BMW.

But this isn't quite the end of the story. Late in the afternoon on the day in November after I'd taken delivery of my second BMW, snow started falling with a vengeance. That evening we were invited to a dinner party and, living in the Taunus Mountains, snow was not an acceptable excuse.

I was unwilling to risk a car I have never driven, and Charlotte was most certainly not willing to risk hers. So, we did the responsible thing, and took a taxi. Next morning the snow had stopped and the roads had been well ploughed. I got in the new BMW and gingerly began the 3,000 or so feet descent to Frankfurt.

Suddenly at the third hairpin bend on the winding mountain road, I hit a kilometre-long patch of snow covered with two or three inches of melted water. It turned out that our village and the one four kilometres down the mountain were feuding over whose responsibility it was to plough the stretch in question.

I went into that third hairpin at about 20 miles an hour, but by the time I got to the fourth I was aquaplaning at 40. I negotiate the fifth hairpin at about 55 miles an hour, and entered the sixth at nearly 70.

Automobiles are not cut out for the Cresta Run. At the sixth hairpin, I lost it. The car hit the bank, rolled over a couple of times and ended up in a ditch on the opposite side of the road from a sheer 500 feet drop.

I came to, upside down, suspended by my seat belt, with (I kid you not) 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' playing on the tape deck.

'You know,' remarked Charlotte after I'd explained what had happened, 'If you'd been driving The Iron Pig this would never have happened.' Actually, she was probably right. **GPH**✳

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

1 February 2015

8.00, 9.15 & 11.00 AM EUCHARISTS

The Epistle. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

The Gospel. St Matthew 20:1–16

FOR YOUR MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter. Psalms 20, 121

The First Lesson. Joshua 1:1–9

The Second Lesson. 2 Timothy 2:1–13

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE

Red Cross Blood Drive on 27 January

The American Red Cross will be collecting blood donations at Saint Stephen's on Tuesday, 27 January from 2.00–7.30 PM. The need for blood is constant, but it is crucial during the winter months. You can assist the Red Cross in their life-saving efforts by scheduling an appointment today. Please contact Happy Riley in the parish office: **410-560-6776** or dpc@ststeve.com

SAINT STEPHEN'S CHOIR ACADEMY

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Saint Stephen's Anglican Church

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www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P. Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, *Associate Rectors*

The Rev. Mr M. Wiley Hawks, *Deacon* · Adric, *Magister Chori*

Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 AM: Said Eucharist

9.15 AM: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11 AM: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6 PM: Choral Evensong (as announced: evensong.ststeve.com)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6 PM: Evening Prayer

Friday 12 NOON: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5 PM: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Mondays, 6.30 PM: Bridge Club

Tuesdays, 7 PM: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursdays, 10 AM: Knitting Circle

Fridays, 10.30 AM: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Tuesday, 27 January, 2.00–7.30 PM:

American Red Cross Blood Drive

(please phone the Parish Office for an appointment)

Tuesday, 17 February, 5 PM:

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Thursday, 19 February, 2 PM:

Afternoon Tea

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Timonium, MD 21093

11856 Mays Chapel Road

Saint Stephen's Anglican Church

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