

January 1st, time to look back, time to look forward! Do you remember Mrs. Dale's Diary, first broadcast January 5th 1948, I guess she has stopped worrying about her husband Jim! I can remember listening to the first broadcast of The Archers at Noon on January 1st 1951 (70 years ago). It was on the Light Programme having run for a few months on a regional station. Perhaps like the Queen you marked the 75th Anniversary of Women's Hour.

This Sunday however it is looking forward, it is Plough Sunday, the beginning of the year on the land. After 12 days of Christmas merrymaking the farm lads needed a reminder to go back to work. Plough Sunday is the first after the twelve days ended on Epiphany, January 6th. (It is the first of the four Sundays which reflect life on the land in the church calendar. The others being Rogation Sunday, Lammas Day and Harvest Thanksgiving.) This was the Sunday when the plough was brought into church to be blessed to mark the beginning of the work on the land. Mind you, it was first taken round the parish on Plough Monday for folk to give money to the lads! Some will remember not so many years ago when Ted Bailey brought the plough each year to Evensong on Plough Sunday, I remember Blessing the Plough a good number of times. A forward looking event, to the year ahead.

I have seen the first signs of a daffodil plant pushing itself up in my garden. Perhaps you have snowdrops, they should be in the garden by Candlemas, February 2nd. The sign of spring – of hope – of looking forward.

Although the number of Coronavirus cases are still alarming – there is hope in sight in the vaccine. Hope in the God given skills which have enabled the provision of the vaccines. We still need to remember and extend our gratitude

to all in the NHS, carers and supporters, all who are helping us through the lockdown.

As the days get lighter and the warmth of Spring comes we must look forward with confidence. 'We will all meet again', we offer our prayers for ourselves and each other for the clear support of God in the days ahead.