

## Fusion

*By John Earle, with helpful comments from Fiona.*

We can say with true false courage  
 'Non, je ne regrette rien' or  
 'The past is over, so there's no point in  
 looking  
 Back'.

But will the past stay buried in the past?  
 Docile,  
 Not wishing to harm us in any way. Nor  
 To help us, spur us on – into the still unmade  
 future.  
 No.

I don't think so. 'So, do you put the past in  
 your ruckie  
 Where you can fish it out and look it over?  
 Only some.  
 These are the good parts. Praise, thanks,  
 songs, shared laughter,  
 Love.

Don't forget that the body builds the mind.  
***Mens sana in corpora sano.***  
 So we remember the goals kicked, the  
 passes given and taken  
 Far more than words from the pulpit or from  
 a master, except  
 One.

The submarine commander (with a VC) who  
 told the whole school  
 'You must only think of what you will do to  
 them.  
 Never think of what they might do to  
 You'.

As Commander, he knew how well he could  
 attack and that  
 The sub could be a metal coffin when the  
 depth charges fall.  
 The smell of fear as they get close. To live,  
 do we rise or dive?  
 Decide.

You must show no fear. Yet, the dark days  
 of the past  
 Are like invisible seaweed, with suckers that  
 Binds on our ankles, knees, thighs, minds as  
 We

Struggle to keep on our feet in the present.  
 The beating, on the hand, delivered by the  
 headmaster for some breach  
 Of school rules. The cane selected from a  
 group of canes that stood  
 In an old brass shell case. Beating children.  
 Do all grown-ups do this?  
 How do I avoid growing up like someone I  
 once respected?  
 The teasing that became abuse, verbal,  
 repeated, unexpected  
 Bullying

That leaves no bruises, but wounds a mind  
 That mutters sadly to itself for years 'I'd really  
 rather not'  
 Preferring that, to saying with a grin, 'OK I  
 guess I  
 Can.

In time, we shall collect £200 for our winter  
 fuel allowance.  
 Do they, the grey and misty they, know how  
 we feel the cold  
 Or is it just a tasty bone to throw before the  
 next  
 Election?

The future is being made now, subject to  
 calls from an umpire  
 Who (sometimes) shouts 'No Ball' to one  
 that takes a wicket.  
 But now is made from a mixture of past and  
 Present.

So, to that extent, the future is out of our  
 control as  
 We cannot control the past and only some  
 of today's effects  
 When we realize what these really are and  
 what they  
 Represent.

Yet it will take years for our historians,  
 sociologists,  
 Statisticians, Epidemiologists to become  
 Professors and have  
 Their work published. Reviewed, in kindly  
 fashion?, by

Themselves.

And read by almost no one else. Least of all, a Government Who influences the world we borrowed from our children, What happens? 'All OK when I looked in my backyard.' Oh... Shucks.

\* \* \* \* \*

For the record, 30,000 men in the German U-boat fleet died in the last war. Also 50,000 men in the British Bomber Command.

Soon it will be Remembrance Day. Please remember that a young man or woman who dies in battle, on the roads or in any other way will forfeit about fifty years of life and all the opportunities they could have taken. We who are left grow old (as it says in the Service) but we had/have opportunities.

## **On the discovery of a long lost crypt**

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren,

Since your church is a former cinema, I suspect that were the floor to be removed, cigarette ash, sweet wrappings and tickets for the last Charlie Chaplin film would be revealed. Our marble flooring in the chancel was raised last week to try and find the rat that had died on an underfloor heating pipe. It made its presence so unignorable last Winter that it gave me the excuse to use incense.

But we have made an exciting discovery: the long lost crypt containing the tombs of the Lords Staveley, who flourished in this area until a little domestic disagreement with Henry II made the family realise that life in Italy might be pleasanter if they wished to retain their heads. The stone from their manor house soon became our lady

chapel; an example of re-cycling as a euphemism for theft.

Inevitably, as soon as we had made the discovery, rumours of vast treasure flew round the parish. Long before anyone had descended into it, the treasurer had the fortune earmarked for re-wiring the church, the organist decided it should be spent on enlarging the organ, and Mrs Millington had decided it should keep the flower arrangers in chicken wire until the next millennium-but-one. I confess that even I toyed with the idea of a conservatory with discreet drinks cabinet at the rectory.

Sadly, it was not to be. Our 'treasure' consisted of rows of coffins in various stages of decay, enough bat droppings to keep our Verger's vegetable patch enriched for the coming year and long-lost peppermints dropped by generations of choristers sitting above, as they munched their way through the sermons.

Later that evening, when the workmen had left, I decided to have one last look. Taking a torch, I descended the stone steps, but lost my footing. The now-broken torch went one way and I another. After floundering round in total darkness and unable to find the stairs to get out, I resigned myself to an uncomfortable night in the crypt until daybreak.

In the early hours, I heard steps on the same stairs and in their torchlight, saw it was someone who must have heard the rumours of treasure and decided to liberate some of it. He, too, tripped, fell and lost his torch and in the total darkness I heard him fumbling about at the other end of the crypt among the coffins.

Intending to be helpful, I shouted out that I'd been trying to get out of here myself for a long time and had never made it, so he may as well give up. But do you know, he found his way out in no time.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace