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NEWS

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COTSWOLD VENUE FOR THIS YEAR'S PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY CONFERENCE

The Cotswold town of Cirencester will be the venue for this year's annual conference of the Prayer Book Society (PBS) which encourages rediscovery and use of the majesty and spiritual depth of Thomas Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer (BCP) at the heart of the Church of England's worship.

'The venue for the three-day event (September 20 – 22) will be Cirencester's Royal Agricultural University.

In an echo of a line made popular by the Monty Python team – 'What have the Romans ever done for us?' – the title of this year's PBS conference in what was once the second largest town in Roman Britain and then known as Corinium Dobunorum, is *What has The Book of Common Prayer ever done for us? How the Prayer Book shaped our culture, and why we still need it.*

The first speaker to tackle that question will be Sir Roger Scruton whose topic will be The Language of the Prayer Book. He will address the question of finding the right words to pray.

Sir Roger, an English philosopher and writer who specialises in aesthetics and political philosophy, was knighted in the 2016 Birthday Honours for services to philosophy, teaching and public education.

Other speakers will include John Scrivener, Dr Andrew Gant and Dr Evan McWilliams.

John Scrivener, a part-time tutor in English Literature in Liverpool University's Extra-Mural Department, will speak about The Use of the Book of Common Prayer in the English Novel.

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John, who has been a member of the PBS for 34 years and a Trustee since 2007, has edited the society's twice-yearly publication *Faith & Worship* since 2003.

The Prayer Book and music will be the subject of a lecture by Dr Andrew Gant, a former organist, choirmaster and composer at Her Majesty's Chapel Royal. He is also a singer, author, teacher and politician.

Dr Evan McWilliams is an ordinand at Cranmer Hall, Durham who, following ordination at the end of June, takes up the post of curate at St Mary & St Nicolas, Spalding in Lincolnshire.

The conference, which will include worship from the Book of Common Prayer between talks, is open to all who appreciate the Book of Common Prayer, whether or not they are members of the PBS.

The fee to attend this year's three-day residential conference is £230 to include en suite accommodation and meals. For delegates not requiring accommodation but wishing to attend every day the fee is £132 including meals. Those attending for only part of the time will be charged a fee calculated on a *pro rata* basis.

Generous bursaries are available for licensed or beneficed (non-retired) clergy as well as ordinands and lay or ordained delegates aged under 30. They allow recipients to attend the full residential conference for £50, or £20 for non-residents. For those attending for part of the time, the fees are calculated on a *pro rata* basis. The closing date for bursary applications is August 13, 2018.

- For booking details and more information about bursaries visit www.pbs.org.uk/conference2018 or call the PBS on 0118 984 2582.

BACKGROUND

The Prayer Book Society & The Book of Common Prayer

The Prayer Book Society encourages rediscovery and use of the majesty and spiritual depth of The Book of Common Prayer at the heart of the Church of England's worship.

The society was founded in 1972 amidst liturgical reform in the Church of England. It was feared that the 1662 Book of Common Prayer – despite its continued status as the Church of England's official standard of teaching – would fall into disuse, being replaced by contemporary forms of worship.

Deeply rooted in the Bible, The Book of Common Prayer is the traditional service book of the Church of England and contains its official teaching. Created in 1549 and then revised in 1552 by Thomas Cranmer (1489 – 1556), it was the handbook of the new English church which had just split from Rome.

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Cranmer – a leader of the Reformation and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I – compiled The Book of Common Prayer by drawing extensively on his personal library of 600 printed books and more than 60 manuscripts. Although further revisions were made in subsequent editions published in 1559, 1604 and 1662, the content of the 1662 Prayer Book in use today remains significantly as Cranmer wrote it.

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