

TT 13 Day 45 (What's good about it?)

St. Jude is the Patron Saint of Hope and impossible causes and one of Jesus' original twelve Apostles. He preached the Gospel with great passion, often in the most difficult circumstances. The Gospel tells us that St. Jude was a brother of St. James the Less, also one of the Apostles. They are described in St Matthew's Gospel as the 'brethren' of Jesus, probably cousins. St. Jude is often confused with Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus. It wasn't him!

Why was he brought to mind here this week? First, the Guvnor's daughter who is isolating here as a vulnerable adult lost her wedding ring on the lawn (as a matter of fact it is a patch of grass interspersed with the odd molehill and clumps of weeds and stretches of moss) while playing ball with her dog. I don't do balls, although I appreciate that many JRTs do, and that is why they are called 'those terriers that chase balls'. Using the well-known method of despatch that volley-ball players adopt, the inside of her wrist, her wedding ring flew off and was 'lorst and gorn' as their great grandparents used to say.

The Guvnor brought all his experience of the TV series CSI Miami into play and issued instructions: 'keep off the grass; we'll tape off lanes four metres long and two metres wide; then, two to a lane, we'll conduct a finger-tip search on our hands and knees until we find it.' Such confidence, and we hadn't even consulted St Jude yet but after two hours there was no sign. They gave up saying optimistically, "tomorrow's another day (well, it would be wouldn't it, I thought) and fresh eyes and an approach from the opposite direction will help."

The next day dawned bright and clear and the grass was dry from the start. One more trawl and when that produced nothing, the Guvnor called St Jude; "Hello, Jamie, is that the famous Codford Detectorist? Might you have half an hour to spare to come down here with your magic metal detector and, using your unique skill, have a go at finding a lost wedding ring?" It was good timing as Jamie was on his break and he came at once. Having fired up his kit, he explained that our garden was full of metal and that the area of the mishap looked as if it might have been the farm dump. Add to that the fact that the detector reacts to gold and silver in exactly the same way as it does to aluminium, so for every gold ring found about a thousand beer can ring-pulls have to be investigated. Our hearts sank but he gave a couple of sweeps and, amazingly, found the ring in less than five minutes.

The Guvnor and his daughter couldn't hug him in gratitude but we dogs have no such inhibitions about social distancing so I brushed myself against his legs and muttered, "Thanks; I know it is a brilliant bit of kit and that you are a true expert in its use, but don't tell me that you never call upon St Jude for a bit of help?"

Second, the fact is, or at least the anecdote is, that 'some things are not meant to be lost'. The Guvnor was left a signet ring by his father and inherited it on his eighteenth birthday. He wore it proudly, but stupidly, on an outward-bound course in Wales and was horrified to realise three miles after leaving the overnight campsite by the river, that it was missing. Imploring his mates to wait for him, he ran back and in total despair kicked a random clump of grass. A little band of gold rolled out in the morning sunshine. That was fifty-five years ago, and the memory still haunts him.