

08 February 2021



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

One of things re-watching a great old film is how new things jump out. Freed from having to concentrate on a fresh plot, smaller things and snatches of dialogue strike us afresh. As we get older our eyes and ears are attuned to different nuances and parallels.

So I tuned in to the old Ealing comedy, *Whisky Galore!* with some relish when BBC4 re-ran it recently (on BBC iPlayer til 13 Feb). As a child I loved it when it came round each time there was an Ealing season.



The film is set during WWII and was filmed on the 'wild and lonely' island of Barra (on my bucket list!). Rationing had led to a drought of whisky when a ship laden with cases of the 'water of life' ran onto the rocks nearby; it was ironically called *SS Cabinet Minister*... The islanders row out and bring back more than they had ever known but must hide it in ingenious ways from Basil Radford's Home Guard captain (some say the inspiration for Capt Mainwaring).

One scene struck me afresh. As the islanders prepared to go out to the ship for the first time, the clock struck midnight. It was now Sunday - the Sabbath. In that God fearing community the Sabbath was sacrosanct. When their phone rang an overbearing mother refused to answer it and declared to her adult son, 'I do not approve of the use of *that* instrument on *this* day.' In our time, maybe '*that* instrument' should be our laptop and emails? On the island on the Sabbath everything stopped.

In schools in normal times Collective Worship is a kind daily Sabbath (which is why in most, *all* teaching staff as well as pupils pause to attend), though presently that's not possible. However, the image of everything and all people pausing as one to take a Sabbath remains powerful.

Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath." (Mark 2.27). As we labour and struggle so hard without ceasing at present, setting aside time for a half-term and weekly sabbath has never been so vital to our wellbeing.

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