

Reflections

By Eleanor Flack, Okehampton Quakers

We have worshipped, with awe and thanksgiving, the miracle of the Birth of Jesus. But, as one of the three Kings said, 'Were we led all that way for Birth or Death? I had seen birth and death but thought they were different.' (T S Eliot)

Now we enter a New Year, our Hope renewed by the Birth, and by snowdrops as harbingers of New Life. Also now we may see a dead salmon on the banks of the Ockment, but this Death, too, means Hope and burgeoning Life.

One of nature's most dramatic and delicate miracles is enacted each year. Salmon are born in the headwaters of the rivers. Then, having lived to maturity at sea, they respond to the call to return, within yards, to the very waters of their birth. Here, in shallow, clear water amongst the stones, they spawn. Each egg, when fertilized, changes colour and is distinct, wrapped in its own little robe of Creation. A white spot on each shows that Life is now there.

The salmon 'spend themselves for the spirit and future of their species, and thus after spawning will die, but achieve immortality.' (Henry Williamson)

We marvel at the miracle. It delights our senses and reconnects us to the complexity and wonder of the natural world, rekindles our imaginations, and edges us away from the clutches of consumerism, and back into the drama of the interconnectedness of Creation, of Birth and Death.

Okehampton Times 3 January 2008