

17th November 2020

Lights

“Turn up the lights; I don’t want to go home in the dark.”

O Henry, quoting the title of a song by Harry Williams

As we move into the winter months, I need lights when I go out for a run or a cycle-ride after dark. For my running, the usual routes are well lit. So I haven’t yet succumbed to the woolly-hat with the built-in torch! But cycling is a different matter. It usually means a longer journey, and that takes me quickly from the lights of the village onto dark country roads.

So, I’ve invested in lights for my bike. Two lights – a white-light for the front, and a red light for the back. They weren’t expensive, but each of them has three settings – a continuous bright light, a slow-flashing one, and a rapid flashing one. The lights on my bike are important.

For one thing, it’s the law! But it’s more than that. The red light on the back is a reminder to other road-users there’s a cyclist up ahead. I need *that* light to keep me safe. It means I can be seen and not be in danger. And the light at the front is my security that, whatever lies ahead, I can deal with it. It’s not strong enough to help me see a *long* way. But then, I don’t need to! There’s enough light for the distance I can cope with. And it doesn’t light up *everything*. I can still slam into a pothole or hit a large puddle. So I still have to stay alert and take care.

I hope you have lights for your journey, especially on the darkened roads of Covid, to tell others you’re around and help you see far enough ahead. They don’t need to be fancy, all flashing and adjustable, with a variety of settings, and they may not protect you from all the potholes and puddles of your journey. But they *will* be enough to see you through.

William Sydney Porter was an American short-story writer whose pen name was O Henry. He lived a somewhat dissolute life and died aged 47 in 1910. His last words quoted a popular song of his day by Harry Williams: “Turn up the lights; I don’t want to go home in the dark.” So, whatever lights you have, make sure they’re turned up too. For we may yet have a lot of dark nights to endure, and we all want to get home safely.

A prayer for today

*Lord, be my light when I want it; my guide when I seek it;
my protection when I require it; my security when I need it. Amen*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon
Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>