

7th August 2021

Confused

**“With ruin upon ruin, rout upon rout,
Confusion worth confounded.”**

John Milton, Paradise Lost

At the height of the Vietnam War, the veteran US news-anchor, Ed Murrow, said: “Anyone who isn’t confused doesn’t really understand the situation.” Which makes me feel OK about Milton’s words when I’m confounded by confusion with another situation I don’t understand. Why, in the summer of 2021 does all the Olympic signage say 2020?

I was watching the athletics, and there was a big sign in the empty stadium proclaiming TOKYO 2020. I had to do a double take to check the year. I have enough trouble remembering the date and changing the month for these “Thought for the Day” pieces (it *is* still August, isn’t it?) without being thrown a wobbly with a suggestion that I’m in the wrong year. 2020? No, Olympic people, it really is 2021.

Now, before you start hectoring me with information that the Games were *supposed* to be in 2020 and were postponed for a year because of Covid, I KNOW THAT ALREADY. And I also know that all the signage, marketing and paperwork will have been prepared years in advance. It would have cost a fortune to have it all replaced. But why didn’t some imaginative person put a big red cross over the “0” on the stadium sign and write a big “1” with a felt-tip pen beside it to stop me being confused?

In *The Steeplejack* by the American poet, Marianne Moore, the central character surveys his world from his high vantage point, and says:

It is a privilege to see so much confusion.

We might say the same, because we know that nothing is perfect, and that most things are subject to change. Covid has taught us that.

Which reminds me ... the clock in my car hasn’t been put forward an hour since British Summer Time began in the Spring. So it’s still reading an hour slow. Am I confused? Nah! It’ll correct itself in October without me having to fiddle with it. Though I suspect that, come the Autumn, I might find something else to be confused about, knowing me ...

A prayer for today

Confused? A bit, if I’m honest. A solution? I’ll just wait and see.