

17th December 2021

Kick

**"I get no kick from champagne.
Mere alcohol doesn't thrill me at all,
So tell me why it should be true
That I get a kick out of you?"**

Cole Porter, I Get a Kick out of You (from 'Anything Goes')

My reflection on "rebooting" recently brought a flurry of responses. "Booting up' means giving it a kick start," one of them said. But does everything that breaks down respond to a kick? Well, I know one that did.

I was conducting a graveside funeral on a wet, wintry day. The full Service had been in the church, so we weren't to be in the cemetery for long. The mourners huddled round, braving the elements. With as much dignity as the attendants could manage, the coffin was taken from the hearse and laid across the batons over the grave. The cords were quickly apportioned, the batons removed, and the coffin lowered by the chief mourners into the ground. But the gravediggers had miscalculated the measurements, and the grave was too small. And ... the coffin got stuck! No amount of vigorous jiggling up and down of the cords made any difference. There were mutterings of discontent. What was to be done?

I decided to take a modicum of control, step forward and say, "Let us pray". But I was beaten to it by the old brother of the deceased who shouted to the nearest gravedigger the immortal words (not from *The Book of Common Order* rubrics for a graveside funeral, I discovered), "Gie it a kick wi' yer wellie, son. That'll shift it." The gravedigger boldly stepped forward and did exactly as he'd been bidden, thumping the top of the coffin with his size-ten wellie boot. It worked! With a jolt, the coffin was released and dropped into the grave – almost pulling one of the unsuspecting cord-holders with it. *Now* it was time for me to say, "Let us pray", and the committal and commendation continued without a hitch.

"You'll get no kick" out of me if that happens again at a funeral I'm conducting. You might get a prayer. You might get a well-aimed kick from a gravedigger. You might even get an amusing story. But I'll leave the kicking to those who can trust the workability of such an approach ...

A prayer for today

A kick-start? Yes, I need that sometimes. But not too hard, eh? Amen

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